

Human Resources Clarification Guidance for DOI Personnel Bulletin 19-09 BIA FWS BLM NPS

Subject: Departmental Policy on Qualification Requirements for GS-0401 Fire Program Management

Reference: Department of the Interior (DOI) Personnel Bulletin (PB) 19-09, effective July 31, 2019

This issuance supersedes DOI PB 07-13, dated December 4, 2007, and attachments.

Implementation Date: August 15, 2019

This document was prepared by bureau Human Resources Specialists for the Wildland Fire Program to assure clarity and consistency in implementing DOI PB 19-09.

As stated in the DOI PB 19-09, the DOI supplemental qualification standard for recruitment of fire program management is to ensure consistency across the DOI fire bureaus. Although OPM's basic education requirements have not changed, the edits to the updated GS-401 Supplemental Qualification Standards include:

- Updated naming convention (i.e. General Schedule Qualification Standards).
- Adjusted format to make document flow easier.
- Added GS-5 grade level specialized experience for qualifying at the GS-7.
- Added definition for Specialized Experience Requirements, Superior Academic Achievement, and Graduate Education in Lieu of an Advanced Degree.
- Added table format for additional specialized experience, and education requirements.
- Updated examples of specialized experience requirements at grades GS-7 through GS-11.
- Supervisors consult with HR on development of specialized experience requirements for GS-12 and above grade levels.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose of the Implementation Guidance for DOI Personnel Bulletin 19-09

This implementation guidance along with the DOI Personnel Bulletin (PB) 19-09, contains specific information on qualifying coursework and experience when making qualification determinations for GS-401 Fire Program Management Specialist positions.

2.0 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

2.1 Supervisory and Managerial Responsibilities Wildland Fire Management:

- It is essential that wildland fire supervisors, managers and selecting officials of related fire management positions familiarize themselves with the explanatory information accompanying the course listings and qualifying specialized experience.
- Communicate with subordinate staff the content and requirements of GS-401 Fire Program Management Specialists to assure familiarity with the basic education and specialized experience requirements.
- Verify the GS-401 supplemental standard and related information is adequately retained and clearly accessible at all times by subordinate hiring officials recruiting and filling wildland fire positions.

2.2 Human Resources Management Responsibilities:

- Ensure that all Human Resource staff implement the DOI PB 19-09, and correctly apply the GS-401 Supplemental Qualification Standards for GS-401 fire program management specialist positions.
- Ensure that operating office Human Resources Specialists are educated on the policies and references which they need to properly recruit and qualify applicants for GS-401 fire program management specialist positions. This includes a working knowledge of the content and location of the most current references, and any/all websites, associated forms, templates, and job aids.
- HR specialists should follow their bureau guidance in requesting college transcripts for recruitment to these positions.

3.0 SPECIAL EXCEPTIONS LISTED IN THE GS-401 SUPPLEMENTAL QUALIFICATIONS STANDARD - QUALIFYING COURSEWORK

3.1 Technical Fire Management Program (TFM) Attachment 1 “Staffing Guidance” Specialized Experience Part A.

Part A. Technical Fire Management Courses (TFM): A TFM certificate of completion is creditable for 18 semester hours of partial credit toward the total of 24 hours of required coursework for GS-401 fire program management specialist positions. During the period of 1981 to 2013, the Washington Institute conducted a Technical Fire Management program for employees of both DOI and the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). The program was accredited through two universities Colorado State University (CSU) and Humboldt State University (HSU). Successful completion of the program at either of these universities was accomplished by completing six program modules, (six, three credit, 400 level courses, totaling 18 semester hours). However, the TFM certificate of completion may lack the course number and title, and semester hours of college credit; but will contain the name of the university and a dated signature from an official of the college or the Washington Institute.

If a TFM student did not complete all of the required modules then they were not awarded a TFM certificate of completion. In this case all semester hours earned must be listed on a transcript to be creditable.

Individuals possessing these certificates of completion were credited 18 semester hours toward meeting the GS-401 basic education requirement. The certificate of completion remains creditable for 18 semester hours toward the 24 total semester hours required.

3.2 National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG) Attachment 1 “Staffing Guidance” Specialized Experience Part B

- Employees who met qualification requirements using NWCG courses, without academic transcripts, **prior** to February 15, 2005, and were appointed, either promoted, or reassigned into the GS-0401 by that date, as Fire Management Specialists were not affected by these changes if they remained in their current position.
- After February 15, 2005, NWCG courses are only creditable when listed on a transcript from an accredited educational institution and they must be in one of the disciplines listed in the GS-401 Supplemental Qualification Standard.

4.0 CLARIFICATION OF BASIC EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS FOR GS-401 POSITIONS

- Per OPM guidance, applicants for any GS-401 position may qualify in two ways: A. Degree in a related discipline as listed in Part A of the Basic Qualification Requirements, or B. a combination of education (which includes 24 semester hours in one or more of the disciplines) AND qualifying, creditable experience that when added to the coursework, totals four years.
- DOI PB 19-09 contains the Policy Interpretation of the Supplemental Qualification Standard for the GS-401 Fire Management Specialist to include the listing (see Staffing Guidance, Attachment 1) of related fields of study which may be used to meet the basic education requirements. Having a concentration of coursework in one or more of these fields as listed, meets the requirement for a related discipline appropriate to a Fire Program Management Specialist position (this must consist of a combination of closely related subject areas from the list). Individuals applying for these positions may qualify in two ways: A. a degree in a related discipline, OR a combination of education (which includes 24 semester hours reflecting a progression of completed coursework in one or more of the disciplines) courses showing a demonstrated progression as would be typical toward a major in a particular field of study, plus qualifying, creditable experience that when added to the coursework, totals four years.
- HR Specialists should familiarize themselves with the explanatory narrative accompanying the course listings found in the Staffing Guidance Attachment 1.

5.0 SPECIALIZED EXPERIENCE AND POSITION REQUIREMENTS FOR GS-401-12 AND ABOVE FIRE PROGRAM MANAGEMENT SPECIALIST POSITIONS

GS-401-12 and above grade levels

- Hiring managers in consultation with Human Resources Specialists must now develop the job analysis and provide examples of specialized experience in accordance with the duties and responsibilities of the job description.
- Specialized experience is typically in or related to the work of the position to be filled. The applicant's experience must demonstrate that he/she possesses the knowledge, skills and abilities to perform the work of the GS-401 Fire Program Management Specialist occupation.
- The final result is a narrative description of specialized experience described at the next lower grade level or equivalent, required for the vacancy announcement and used in evaluating the applicants for the basic qualifications of the position.

Please direct questions on the information contained in this guidance to your respective Bureau Human Resources Specialists for the Wildland Fire Program: