



**File** 6130/5100  
**Code:**  
**Route**  
**To:**

**Date:** October 15, 2008

**Subject:** Extension to Meet the OPM Qualifications Requirements for the GS-0401 Fire Management Specialist Series

**To:** Regional Foresters, Station Directors, Area Director, IITF Director, Deputy Chiefs and WO Directors

The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) has approved an extension until October 1, 2010, for “employees currently in Fire Management positions in the GS-0401 professional series to obtain their positive education requirements through Department of Education accredited institutions.” This extension will allow these individuals to remain in their positions while they work toward meeting the new OPM standards.

It can take several weeks during the qualifications review process to make a final determination. Therefore, we are establishing an internal deadline of May 28, 2010, for affected employees to provide supporting documentation necessary to make a qualification determination. This will ensure sufficient time to identify any remaining employees whose qualifications have not been met and address each situation individually prior to October 1.

As you may know, OPM issued new guidance on the Acceptability of Higher Education for Meeting Minimum Qualification Requirements on February 15, 2005. The new policy prohibited the use of NWCG course completion certificates not supported by transcripts from accredited institutions as an option for meeting GS-0401 education requirements. The Human Capital Management Staff (HCM) reviewed all employees placed in GS-0401 positions after OPM updated their policy and found approximately 30 employees that had been erroneously placed or promoted into GS-0401 fire management series positions.

Through formal correspondence, the erroneously placed or promoted employees have been notified that they do not meet OPM requirements for their current positions. The letter will include specific information as to what is lacking and what is needed in order to meet the requirements.

The National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG), who oversees the Interagency Fire Program Management (IFPM) implementation effort, has agreed to extend the implementation deadline for all incumbents in IFPM positions until 2010, to coincide with the deadline to meet OPM qualification requirements. This means that all incumbents in designated IFPM positions will have an additional year to meet the qualification standards and must provide supporting documents to verify qualifications no later than May 28, 2010. This includes those employees in the GS-462 and GS-401 series in IFPM positions who are required to meet OPM and/or NWCG qualification requirements.

In addition to the extension for IFPM implementation, the NWCG has made additional changes. These include elimination of the IFPM Resolutions Board, the GS-0401 Education/Training Assessment Board, and the removal of the Prevention and Mitigation positions from the “key 14



positions”. Any decisions regarding the IFPM qualification standards will be communicated to the wildland fire community through NWCG correspondence and posted within the Interagency Fire Program Management Qualification Standards and Guide on the IFPM web site. In addition, HCM will soon establish a process and call for those in positions designated to transition from the GS-0462 to GS-0401 series review documentation and determine if OPM qualification requirements have been met.

Please use this letter as a reminder to your employees that they should continue to seek education and coursework that would help them to meet the new OPM requirements. Demonstrate commitment to their success with financial support and flexible work schedules to facilitate their efforts in meeting the positive education and other requirements for their positions.

Should you have any questions about the status of the qualifications review of affected employees, please feel free to email Chris Vaught of the HCM Staff at [cvought@fs.fed.us](mailto:cvought@fs.fed.us). If you have questions about the fire aspects of this letter, please email James Barnett of the F&AM Staff at [jbarnett02@fs.fed.us](mailto:jbarnett02@fs.fed.us)

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