



Human Resources Bulletin: 08-01

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

Reference: Department of the Interior Personnel Bulletin 07-13

Distribution: Regional Directors, Associate Director, Visitor and Resource Protection, Regional Human Resources Managers

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Effective Date: December 20, 2007

Sunset Date: Until rescinded or superseded

Attached is Department of Interior Personnel Bulletin 07-13, containing qualification requirements for GS-401 fire program management positions within the Department of the Interior. The guidance has been issued to the bureaus to ensure consistency in application of the GS-401 supplemental qualification standard for fire program management positions. OPM has changed its guidance on interpreting the standards.

The DOI bulletin also contains the supplemental qualification standard for GS-401 Fire Management Specialist positions. The supplemental standard contains the unchanged listing (Attachment 1) of related fields of study. Having a concentration of coursework in one or more of these fields meets the requirement for a related discipline appropriate to a fire program management 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 B. a combination of education and experience that when combined must add up to a total of four years.

Due to the Office of Personnel Management's February 15, 2005, revision of Part E.4-E.4(a) of the Operating Manual for Qualification Standards, General Policies and Instructions, there are significant changes regarding the course listings starting on page five (5) of Attachment 1. It is essential that Human Resources (HR) Specialists familiarize themselves with the explanatory information accompanying the course listings. Part B National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG) courses were creditable towards the minimum education requirements prior to February 15, 2005, but are no longer creditable unless listed for credit on a transcript from an accredited educational institution.

OPM and DOI have agreed to accept certificates of completion for 18 semester hours of “TFM” (Technical Fire Management) courses if the certificate contains the name of the college, course number and title along with the number of semester hours of college credit and a dated signature from an official of the college (registrar, dean, etc.). At this time, certificates are only issued for TFM when the student has completed all six modules (18 semester hours). Therefore, completed individual module coursework (less than 18 hours) must be supported by an official transcript in order to be creditable. DOI has asked that we strongly encourage current and future TFM participants to purchase TFM course credits so that they are reflected on a transcript.

Based upon a review of transcripts of GS-401 fire program management employees, a listing has been compiled of DOI GS-401 fire program management employees who do not meet the educational requirements of their current position. A similar review of GS-401 employees has taken place within the U.S. Forest Service. As movement of wildland fire employees is constant across bureaus and between agencies, it is important to determine educational qualifications accurately for each employee by use of transcripts.

Effective immediately, NPS HR Specialists should require transcripts in the posted vacancy announcement as a necessary part of the application package when recruiting for GS-401 fire positions. HR specialists should use the transcript itself to verify that applicants indeed meet the education requirements as outlined in this Bulletin. In some cases – such as when the course title is unclear as to content - the HR Specialist must also require/obtain a description of the course content in order to determine if the course is creditable. This should be done for each applicant and for each recruitment.

Employees Who Entered Their Current Positions Before 2/15/05

Some GS-401 fire employees entered their current positions prior to 2/15/05, by using NWCG courses which were creditable towards the GS-401 positive education requirements at that time. These employees are now “frozen in place” until they meet the current GS-401 education requirements. That is, they may remain in their current position; however, the employee may not be detailed, promoted or reassigned to any other GS-401 position until he or she meets the qualification requirements now in place.

Employees Entering Their Positions On or After 2/15/05

Those employees who entered their current position on or after 2/15/05 and have either used NWCG courses (no transcript) in conjunction with other creditable courses to meet the positive education requirement, or have been found not qualified due to lacking other appropriate coursework requirements, are considered not qualified for their current position. These employees will be notified individually in writing and will have until June 4, 2009, to complete the necessary coursework in order to meet the current GS-401 fire program management qualification requirements.

For those employees who do not meet the requirements for their current position, the HR Specialist in their Servicing Human Resources Office, and the NPS Wildland Fire

Training Program Manager, will work with them on course enrollment, course funding, and monitoring their progress. A Servicewide quarterly report by the NPS Office of Human Resources to OPM and DOI must be submitted, through June 2009. The report will reflect individual employee progress toward meeting the minimum qualifications. Once WASO HR determines that an employee has met the qualification requirements for their position, it will be documented and the information forwarded to DOI and OPM.

We want to thank all the HR specialists in Regional Offices and Servicing HR Offices who have worked so hard on this challenging project. Please feel free to contact Melissa Anglin at (252) 473-3468 if you have any questions.

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Attachment