

**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT  
Office of Fire and Aviation  
3833 S. Development Avenue  
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To: State Directors

From: Director, Office of Fire and Aviation

Subject: GS-401 Series Draft Supplemental Guidelines DD: 7/2/99

A work group of personnel specialists and fire management specialists have assembled the attached document, the draft "Supplemental Qualification Standard for the Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Department of the Interior." This document is needed to help clear up a number of problems encountered with interpretation of the Office of Personnel Management qualifications for the GS-401 job series. As the primary professional series in use for Bureau of Land Management fire management positions, the consistent interpretation of qualification standards for this job series is extremely important to the fire program.

Please have your fire management staffs review this document for clarity, organization and readability. Comments on this draft document should be returned to Larry Sutton, BLM Training, the National Interagency Fire Center, no later than July 2, 1999. The consolidated comments from fire program managers will be forwarded to Melissa Dukes, National Human Resource Management Committee, Human Resource Specialist, for inclusion in the final document.

Signed by:  
Lester K. Rosenkrance  
Director, Office of Fire and Aviation

Authenticated by:  
Pat Lewis  
Supervisory Mgmt. Asst.

1 Attachment

1- Draft Supplemental Qualification Standard for GS-401 Fire Management Specialist (6 pp)

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**SUPPLEMENTAL QUALIFICATION STANDARD FOR THE  
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT,  
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR**

**GS-401**

**FIRE MANAGEMENT SPECIALIST**

This document supplements the requirements outlined within the Qualification Standards for General Schedule Positions Operating Manual published by the Office of Personnel Management and must be used in conjunction with those requirements. Additional or clarifying information can be obtained from the Operating Manual.

**Basic Requirement:**

A Degree: biological sciences, agriculture, natural resources management, or related discipline.

- OR -

B Combination of education and experience: courses equivalent to a major in biological sciences, agriculture, or natural resources - or at least 24 semester hours in biological sciences, natural resources, wildland fire management or forestry course work equivalent to a major field of study -- plus -- appropriate experience or additional education that is comparable to that normally acquired through the successful completion of a full 4-year course of study in the biological sciences, agriculture, or natural resources.

Education, to be creditable, must meet the requirements of the Qualification Standard for General Schedule Positions Operating Manual, published by the Office of Personnel Management. The nature and quality of the education must have been such that it would serve as a prerequisite for more advanced study (graduate level or professional education). Educational course work must include a significant amount of upper level (junior/senior) course work. Course titles and numbers may help determine level . (Courses entitled "Introduction to..." or with numbers beginning with "A" or "1" are almost always lower level courses.) College course catalogs can also help you determine which courses are appropriate.

The Wildlife Resources program at the University of Idaho, for example, includes the following 3 semester unit courses:

- WLF 102      The Wildlife Profession
- WLF 221      Natural Resources Ecology
- WLF 290      Principles of Wildlife Biology

|             |  |
|-------------|--|
| WLF 299     | Directed Study                             |
| WLF 301/302 | Wildland Field Ecology                     |
| WLF 305     | Field Research in Wilderness Ecology       |
| WLF 314     | Wildlife Ecology                           |
| WLF 441     | Wildlife Behavioral Ecology and Management |
| WLF 442     | Wildlife Management                        |

All but WLF 102, The Wildlife Profession, would count towards meeting the 24 semester hour requirement. WLF 102 would not count because it is not required for a degree, nor is it a technical or skills course. It describes the profession and identifies possible employment and employers. If the applicant has qualifying experience in addition to their experience, they would meet basic qualifications.

To be creditable, the education must meet one of the following:

- Conventional - Obtained from a college or university, applicable school within the college or university, or applicable curriculum at the college or university that has been properly accredited.
- Other education - Education obtained from other than an accredited institute of higher learning that meets the requirements of the Operating Manual. Attached is a list of current "other education" that the Bureau accepts as creditable under this requirement.
- Credits from the USDA Graduate School, or equivalent.

The quality of the combination of education and experience must be sufficient to demonstrate the applicant possesses the knowledge, skills, and abilities required to perform work in the occupation and is comparable to that normally acquired through the successful completion of a full 4-year course of study in the biological sciences, agriculture, or natural resources. In addition to courses in the major and related fields, a typical college degree would have included courses that involved analysis, writing, critical thinking, research, etc. Therefore, creditable experience should have demonstrated similar skills and abilities

For example, if an applicant has 30 semester hours of creditable education, they still must have 3 years of appropriate experience to meet the basic requirement.

### **Specialized Experience:**

One year of specialized experience is required for GS-7 and above (unless the applicant is qualified based on Superior Academic Achievement or graduate level education). To be creditable, specialized experience must have been equivalent to at least the next lower grade in the normal line of progression for the occupation in the organization. Superior Academic

Achievement or graduate level education can be used to qualify candidates, in lieu of specialized experience, as the GS-7 level is an advanced trainee.

*For GS-7:* Experience that demonstrated an understanding of fire behavior relative to fuels, weather, and topography and how fire impacts natural and cultural resources. Typical assignments include:

- ▶ participating in implementing prescribed burn or fire use plans to ensure resource objectives can be met from a fire management standpoint; or
- ▶ developing low complexity incident management strategies and tactics to ensure that the strategy or tactics will meet the stated resource objectives.

*For GS-9:* Experience that demonstrated understanding of fire effects on cultural and natural resources. The assignments must have shown participation in:

- ▶ developing prescribed burn plans or fire management plans to ensure plan objectives plan can be met from a fire management standpoint; and
- ▶ conducting field inspections before and/or after prescribed burns or wildland fires to ensure short- and long-term objectives have been met.

In addition to fire effects, specialized experience must have included either prescribed fire/fuels management - OR - fire management operations as described below:

Prescribed fire/fuels management - experience in activities such as:

- ▶ inventory methods and procedures,
- ▶ fuel treatment methods and programming, or
- ▶ evaluating prescribed burn plans or fire management plans to ensure containment is possible and identify contingencies if containment is not obtained.

Fire management operations - in addition to analyzing and applying fire management strategies, experience in at least four of the following activities:

- ▶ mobilization and dispatch coordination,
- ▶ fire prevention,
- ▶ training,
- ▶ logistics,
- ▶ equipment development and deployment,
- ▶ fire communication program, or
- ▶ suppression and preparedness.

*For GS-11 and above:* Experience must have included the full range of fire program management as defined below:

- ▶ reviewing and evaluating prescribed burn plans and fire management plans for ecological soundness and technical adequacy,

- ▶ conducting field inspections before and after prescribed burns or wild fires to determine habitat conditions and utilization of wildlife and/or livestock,
- ▶ planning and conducting biological studies to determine the manner and extent to which populations are effected by prescribed burns and wildland fire,
- ▶ conducting research and/or studies based on past fire history into the role and impacts of fire on the ecosystem,
- ▶ developing analyses on the ecological role of fire and its use and/or exclusion, and smoke management.

In addition to fire program management, specialized experience must have included either prescribed fire/fuels management - OR - fire management operations as described below:

Prescribed fire/fuels management - experience in a broad range of activities such as:

- ▶ inventory methods and procedures,
- ▶ fuel treatment methods and programming,
- ▶ land use planning and environmental coordination, and
- ▶ evaluating prescribed burn plans or fire management plans to ensure containment is possible and identify contingencies if containment is not obtained.

Fire management operations - in addition to analyzing and applying fire management strategies, experience in all of the following activities:

- ▶ mobilization and dispatch coordination,
- ▶ fire prevention,
- ▶ training,
- ▶ logistics,
- ▶ equipment development and deployment,
- ▶ fire communication program, and
- ▶ suppression and preparedness.

According to the Qualification Standards Operating Manual, one-grade interval experience may be qualifying for two-grade interval positions, provided that "...the experience demonstrated the KSA's required to perform the work successfully. This is true for either lateral or promotion actions. The basic requirements for type and level of experience and/or education apply to all applicants, whether their experience has been in the same occupation as the position being filled or in related support ... occupations...Since two-grade interval positions may differ significantly in the nature of the work...it is important that applicants be evaluated on the variety and progressive nature of their work assignments and on any applicable training or course work completed."

To credit one-grade interval experience as qualifying specialized experience for Fire Management Specialist, GS-401, within the Bureau of Land Management, the experience must have included both fire program management and at least one of the other two specialties

described above.

**Creditable Education:**

Creditable education includes education from other than an accredited institute of higher learning that meets the requirements of the qualifications standards. To meet the 24 semester hour requirement, the other education must be equivalent to course work in a Bachelor of Arts or Bachelor of Science degree in biological sciences, natural resources, wildland fire management, or forestry. Therefore, most technology type course work will not meet this requirement.

**Other Education Creditable Towards 24 Semester Hours Requirement**

Washington Institute (Per Colorado State University - upper division) 18 semester hours  
All modules must be successfully completed before college credit can be given.

- Module I/IA Statistics/Computers & Math
- Module II Economics
- Module III Fuels Management
- Module IV Fire Ecology and Fire Effects
- Module V Fire and Land Management
- Module IV Final Reviews

NWCG/NARTC Courses (Per U of Idaho/Colorado State/U of Montana - upper division)

- S-490 Advanced Wildland Fire Behavior Calculations 1 semester hour
- S-491 National Fire Danger Rating System 1 semester hour
- S-492 Long Term Fire Risk Assessment 1 semester hour
- S-493 Fire Area Growth Simulation 1 semester hour
- S-520 Advanced Incident Management 2 semester hours
- S-590 Fire Behavior Interpretation 2 semester hours
- RX-590 Prescribed Fire Behavior Interpretation 2 semester hours  
(To be combined with S-590)
- S-620 Area Command 1 semester hour
- RX-450 Smoke Management Techniques 1 semester hour
- RX-540 Applied Fire Effects 1 semester hour
- NFMAS National Fire Management Analysis System 1 semester hour
- Fire in Ecosystem Management 1 semester hour
- National Parks and Wilderness Fire Mgmt 1 semester hour
- Fire Program Management 1 semester hour

NWCG/NARTC Courses (Per U of Idaho/Colorado State/U of Montana - lower division)

|        |  |                 |       |
|--------|--|-----------------|-------|
| P-151  | Wildfire Origin and Cause Determination      | 1 semester hour | S-290 |
|        | Intermediate Wildland Fire Behavior          | 1 semester hour |       |
| S-390  | Intro to Wildland Fire Behavior Calculations | 1 semester hour |       |
| RX-300 | Prescribed Fire for Burn Bosses              | 1 semester hour |       |
| RX-340 | Introduction to Fire Effects                 | 1 semester hour |       |

NWCG/NARTC Courses (Per Truckee Meadows Community College - lower division)

|       |                                     |                  |
|-------|-------------------------------------|------------------|
| S-260 | Fire Business Management Principles | 1 semester hour  |
| S-336 | Fire Suppression Tactics            | 3 semester hours |

**Other Education Creditable Towards General Education But Not  
24 Semester Hour Requirement**

NWCG/NARTC Courses (Per Truckee Meadows Community College)

|       |   |                    |
|-------|---|--------------------|
| S-110 | Fire Orientation  | 1.5 semester hours |
| S-130 | Firefighter Training combined with<br>S-190 Introduction to Fire Behavior | 3 semester hours   |
| S-200 | Initial Attack/Incident Commander   | 1.5 semester hours |
| S-201 | Fire Suppression  | 2 semester hours   |
| S-205 | Fire Operations in the Urban Interface                                    | 3 semester hours   |
| S-211 | Portable Pumps and Water Use  | 1.5 semester hours |
| S-212 | Power Saws  | 1.5 semester hours |
| S-214 | Engine/Engine Boss  | 2 semester hours   |
| S-215 | Firing/Firing Boss  | 1.5 semester hours |
| S-216 | Driving for Fire Service  | 3 semester hours   |
| I-220 | Basic Incident Command System   | 1 semester hour    |
| S-230 | Crew Boss   | 1 semester hour    |
| S-231 | Engine Boss   | 1 semester hour    |
| S-232 | Dozer Boss  | 1 semester hour    |
| S-234 | Firing Methods and Procedures   | 2 semester hours   |
| S-244 | Field Observer  | 1 semester hour    |
| S-270 | Basic Air Operations  | 1.5 semester hours |