



HR Broadcast

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Proposed elimination of Time-in-Grade

For many years, Office of Personnel Management (OPM) regulations required that Federal employees in General Schedule (GS) competitive service positions at GS-5 and above have at least 52 weeks of service at their current grade in order to qualify for promotion to the next higher level. This rule was known as the "time-in-grade" regulation. In addition to meeting the TIG requirement, employees had to meet any OPM and job-related qualifications requirements for the specific position and grade level.

OPM has proposed elimination of the TIG requirement, effective May 18, 2009. Although the proposal is to eliminate the 52-week waiting period, employees must continue to meet OPM qualifications standards (including experience and/or appropriate education) and any other job-related qualifications requirements for the specific position, in order to be considered for a promotion.

As a result of the proposal to eliminate TIG, Human Resources has developed a process through which MRP employees can be considered for a promotion based on previous work experience (*outside* of his/her current position), or based on the attainment of education that may be qualifying for promotion.

Qualifications Requirements

Almost all OPM qualifications standards require that an employee have at least one year of "specialized" experience equivalent to the next lower grade in the Federal service in order to be eligible for promotion. Most employees will have to serve at least one year at their current grade in order to gain the specialized experience required for promotion to the next higher grade. However, some employees may have acquired qualifying specialized experience prior to placement in their current jobs, for example, through military service or prior employment in the private sector, state and local government, or in a nonprofit setting. Such experience (of the appropriate amount, type and complexity) *may* result in the employee being qualified for promotion to a higher grade based on previous experience or the completion of education, where appropriate. Also, current and previous Federal civilian service will be credited at the grade level (or pay band) to which it is classified.

Other Requirements

In addition to possessing the required experience and/or education for promotion, the employee must also:

1. Have at least a “fully successful” performance rating in his/her current position (or the supervisor has determined that performance meets that level); and
2. Demonstrate the ability to perform successfully at the higher grade.

Promotions are discretionary and must be authorized by the supervisor/manager of record. The servicing human resources office (SHRO) will need the documentation listed below in order to determine if the employee’s previous work experience or completed education is qualifying for promotion.

The following table describes the process for requesting the promotion and the documentation that is required:

Step:	Who:	Does What:	
1.	Supervisor	Decides to recommend promotion.	
2.	Employee	Provides supporting documentation to the supervisor for the SF-52, Request for Personnel Action, as follows:	
		If the promotion request is based on:	Then the employee will provide:
		Previous work experience	Resume or OF-612, Optional Application for Federal Employment, that includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A detailed description of the previous work experience (including duties, responsibilities, and accomplishments) considered qualifying for promotion. Such experience must describe regular and recurring work (not one-time or ad-hoc assignments) that is the same type of work performed in the employee’s current position, or in a type of work that is so similar that it provided the same knowledge, skills, and competencies. • Dates the work was performed (e.g., March 28, 1997 through July 31, 2004). • The number of hours in a work week the qualifying experience was performed. (e.g., performed duties 20 hours per week). • The name of the previous employer, address, telephone number, and name of the immediate supervisor. • Employee’s signature and date.

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		Completion of formal education	An official copy of his/her college transcript (with school seal), showing completion of qualifying formal education at an accredited college or university.
3.	Supervisor	<p>Prepares a request package for the SHRO, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - SF-52 Request for Personnel Action, indicating the grade level to which promotion is requested. - If the promotion request is based on previous work experience: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A description of specialized experience necessary to perform successfully at the higher grade level, and - A brief statement describing how the employee's relevant work experience is directly related to the employee's current position. - Supervisor's signature and date. <p>Submits the SF-52 and all supporting documentation to the SHRO.</p> <p>Note: All necessary documentation must be submitted to the SHRO at least two weeks prior to the proposed effective date.</p>	
4.	SHRO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reviews documentation and certifies that the action meets regulatory requirements (if all eligibility requirements are met), - Notifies the supervisor or program administrative contact of the effective date (the first day of the next full pay period following completion of the SHRO's evaluation), and - Maintains appropriate records, including everything that was prepared by the supervisor and employee in Steps 2 & 3. 	



Submitting Employee Fingerprint Cards to HR Personnel Security

It is recommended that employee's fingerprint cards are submitted to HR with the new-hire or on-boarding paperwork as instructed on the New Employee Orientation web site:

http://www.aphis.usda.gov/mrpbs/publications/new_employee_orientation/index.shtml

HR Processing will then forward all necessary documents, including the fingerprint cards, to Personnel Security for further processing of the required background investigation. In the event it is not possible to send them with the



original on-boarding documents, HR then needs to know that they will be sent under separate cover; noting such on the HRO AD-1197 Supplement. To secure and adhere to Departmental PII Policy, these need to be sent using double envelope/taped certified/return receipt mail or FedEx for tracking purposes. Please attach the fingerprint cards to the HRO AD-1197 Supplement form. Fingerprint cards should NEVER be sent without documentation of who and/or what MRP Program they are assigned to (note next article). This form can be found at:

<http://www.aphis.usda.gov/mrpbs/downloads/forms/mrp/hro1197.pdf>

HRO AD-1197 Supplemental Form

With the implementation of HSPD-12's USAccess System for USDA's LincPass credentials/ID badges, there are occasions when the AD-1197 form is no longer required. As an example, if the employee's duty station is within a two hour drive of a permanent fixed LincPass credentialing site and the employee does not require a temporary site ID badge, HR Personnel Security does not require the AD-1197. However, because pertinent information is still required to initiate employees into OPM's secure on-line portal to complete their background investigations, the HRO AD-1197 Supplemental Form is a very important and useful tool.

<http://www.aphis.usda.gov/mrpbs/downloads/forms/mrp/hro1197.pdf>

If a site ID badge (non LincPass) is required, Personnel Security can direct you to the appropriate office within MRP that issues these badges.

Effects of Incorrect Position Sensitivity Codes (PSC)

Personnel Security relies on the accuracy of the HR Classification Specialist's determination of position sensitivity codes (PSCs), which are based on the position description and other extenuating factors. In the event of a discrepancy and prior to proceeding with an employee's background investigation, Personnel Security will notify both the Program Manager and the servicing Specialist in Classification to resolve any inconsistencies. Information regarding type of investigations based on position sensitivity designations can be found at:

http://www.aphis.usda.gov/mrpbs/hr/personnel_security.shtml#determinations

Classified Visit Authorizations

Any employee attending meetings or training at other Federal facilities wherein classified information is being discussed *must* have their security clearance information forwarded to the host Agency through USDA's Personnel Security Branch (PSB). They should *not* be requesting the visit authorization through MRPBS, HR Personnel Security nor should they provide a copy of their Certificates of Clearances to the host



Agency on their own behalf. Visit requests submitted other than the official form and without a signature are subject to rejection. USDA's PSB will confirm the authorization with the point-of-contact hosting the event that the visiting

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employees have the necessary security clearance to attend the classified portions of the event. Clearance verifications should be faxed to 202-720-1689 at least 48 hours prior to the meeting. The official request form can be found at:

http://www.da.usda.gov/pdsd/Request_for_PassingSecurityClearance5-08.doc

Coming Soon! HSPD12 LincPass Tip Sheet

Watch the Personnel Security web page and the Summer Edition of HR Broadcast News for an "HPSD-12 LincPass Tip Sheet" to guide you and your employees through the LincPass process.

http://www.aphis.usda.gov/mrpbs/hr/personnel_security.shtml

EPP access problems?

If you experience problems with your NFC Employee Personal Page ID or password, please contact the NFC Operations and Security Center at 1-800-767-9641 or email them at osc_etix@usda.gov

To use your Employee Personal Page (EPP), go to <https://www.nfc.usda.gov/> and click on the "My EEP" icon. If you haven't used the EPP or you don't know your EPP password, you may request a password at the EPP website.

Processing Tidbits

TALX: The Work Number for Everyone

TALX is a nationwide employment verification service that banks, loan processors, etc., can contact to verify the employment of an MRP employee. The service is provided by TALX Corporation, with the assistance from the National Finance Center. When using this service, employees need to provide the caller a Company Code and PIN number. The company code for MRP employees is 10284 and the PIN is the month and day of the employees' birthday, e.g., 0525 (May 25.)

eOPF : Where is it now?

eOPF will be coming to desktops soon. The Human Resources Division plans to start a phased roll out of employee access to eOPF within the next couple of months. The plan is to complete a total rollout to all MRP by the end of calendar year 2009. The phases will be by agency and program. Once dates are finalized for program access, the dates will be shared, so stay tuned! Additional information will be forthcoming in the near future.