

## Which **Grade** Do I Apply for & How Much Experience or Education Do I Need?

**EXPERIENCE AND EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS** The following table shows the amounts of education and/or experience required to qualify for positions covered by this standard.

| GRADE          | EXPERIENCE |                                                      | EDUCATION                                                                                                                   |
|----------------|------------|------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                | GENERAL    | SPECIALIZED                                          |                                                                                                                             |
| GS-1           | None       | None                                                 | None                                                                                                                        |
| GS-2           | 3 months   | None                                                 | High school graduation or equivalent                                                                                        |
| GS-3           | 6 months   | None                                                 | 1 year above high school with course(s) related to the occupation, if required                                              |
| GS-4           | 6 months   | 6 months                                             | 2 years above high school with courses related to the occupation, if required                                               |
| GS-5           | None       | 1 year equivalent to at least GS-4                   | 4-year course of study above high school leading to a bachelor's degree with courses related to the occupation, if required |
| GS-6 and above | None       | 1 year equivalent to at least next lower grade level | See the <a href="#">NOTE</a> under the Education section                                                                    |

Equivalent combinations of education and experience are qualifying for all grade levels and positions for which both education and experience are acceptable.

**General Experience:** (1) Any type of work that demonstrates the applicant's ability to perform the work of the position, or (2) experience that provided a familiarity with the subject matter or processes of the broad subject area of the occupation.

**Specialized Experience:** Experience that equipped the applicant with the particular knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSA's) to perform successfully the duties of the position, and that is typically in or related to the work of the position to be filled. To be creditable, specialized experience must have been equivalent to at least the next lower grade level. Applicants who have the 1 year of appropriate specialized experience, as indicated in the table, are not required by this standard to have general experience, education above the high school level, or any additional specialized experience to meet the minimum qualification requirements.

**Education:** High school graduation or the equivalent is qualifying for GS-2.

Successfully completed post-high school education is qualifying for grades GS-3 through GS-5. This education must have been obtained in an accredited business or technical school, junior college, college or university for which high school graduation or the equivalent is the normal prerequisite. One year of full-time undergraduate study is defined as 30 semester hours, 45 quarter hours, or the equivalent in a college or university or at least 20 hours of classroom instruction per week for approximately 36 weeks in a business or technical school.

**Combining Experience and Education:** Equivalent combinations of successfully completed post-high school education and experience are also qualifying. The combinations described below are those most typical for these positions, i.e., for grades GS-3 through GS-5. If education is used to meet specialized experience requirements, then such education must include courses directly related to the work of the position. (When crediting education, prorate the number of hours of related courses required as a proportion of the total education to be used.)

**For GS-3 level positions,** determine the applicant's total qualifying experience as a percentage of the 6 months' experience required for GS-3; then determine the applicant's education as a percentage of the 1 year of education that meets the requirements for GS-3. Add the two percentages. The total percentage must equal at least 100 percent to qualify an applicant for GS-3.

**For GS-4 level positions,** determine the applicant's total qualifying experience as a percentage of the 1 year of experience required for GS-4; then determine the applicant's education as a percentage of the 2 years of education that meets the requirements for GS-4. Add the two percentages. The total percentage must equal at least 100 percent to qualify an applicant for GS-4.

**For GS-5 level positions,** only education in excess of the first 60 semester hours of a course of study leading to a bachelor's degree is creditable toward meeting the specialized experience requirements. Two full academic years of study, or 60 semester hours, beyond the second year is equivalent to 1 year of specialized experience. Determine the applicant's total qualifying experience as a percentage of the year of specialized experience required at the GS-5 level. Then determine the applicant's education as a percentage of the education that meets the requirements for GS-5. Add the two percentages. The total percentage must equal at least 100 percent to qualify an applicant for GS-5.

### Which Job Series Do I Apply For?

#### Entry Level Jobs

GS-404 Biological Science Technician\*

GS-499 General Natural Resources Management and Biological Sciences Student Trainee Series

GS-462 Forestry Technician\*

#### Advanced Jobs

GS-401 General Natural Resources Management and Biological Sciences

GS-410 Zoology Series

GS-460 Forestry Series

GS-482 Fish Biology Series

GS-408 Ecology Series

GS-430 Botany Series

GS-470 Soil Science Series

GS-486 Wildlife Biology Series