

U.S. OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT

PAY & LEAVE PAY ADMINISTRATION

Fact Sheet: Within-Grade Increases

Description

Each General Schedule (GS) grade has 10 steps. Within-grade increases (WGIs) or step increases are periodic increases in a GS employee's rate of basic pay from one step of the grade of his or her position to the next higher step of that grade.

Earning Within-Grade Increases

Employees who occupy permanent positions earn WGIs upon meeting the following three requirements established by law:

- The employee's performance must be at an acceptable level of competence. To meet this requirement, an employee's most recent performance rating of record must be at least Level 3 ("Fully Successful" or equivalent).
- The employee must have completed the required waiting period for advancement to the next higher step.
- The employee must not have received an "equivalent increase" in pay during the waiting period. (See 5 CFR 531.407.)

Permanent Positions

WGIs apply only to GS employees occupying permanent positions. "Permanent position" means a position filled by an employee whose appointment is not designated as temporary and does not have a definite time limitation of 1 year or less. "Permanent position" includes a position to which an employee is promoted on a temporary or term basis for at least 1 year.

Required Waiting Periods

For employees with a scheduled tour of duty, the required waiting periods established by law for advancement to the next higher step are as follows:

Advancement from...	Requires...
step 1 to step 2	52 weeks of creditable service in step 1
step 2 to step 3	52 weeks of creditable service in step 2
step 3 to step 4	52 weeks of creditable service in step 3
step 4 to step 5	104 weeks of creditable service in step 4
step 5 to step 6	104 weeks of creditable service in step 5
step 6 to step 7	104 weeks of creditable service in step 6
step 7 to step 8	156 weeks of creditable service in step 7

Advancement from...	Requires...
step 8 to step 9	156 weeks of creditable service in step 8
step 9 to step 10	156 weeks of creditable service in step 9

References

- 5 U.S.C. 5335
- 5 CFR part 531, subpart D
- [Questions and Answers on General Schedule Within-Grade Increases](#)
- [Pay and Leave Page](#)