

For: FSA Employees

Quality Step Increases (QSI's)

Approved by: Acting Deputy Administrator, Management



1 Overview

A Background

In October 2005 FSA changed from a 2-tier (Pass/Fail) appraisal program to a 5-tier performance appraisal program. This change has raised some questions about employee eligibility for QSI's.

B Purpose

This notice informs employees of the eligibility requirements for QSI's under a 5-tier performance appraisal program.

C Definition of QSI

QSI's are:

- faster-than-normal within-grade increases used to reward employees, at any grade level, who display high quality performance of assigned duties and responsibilities sustained over a period of time
- earned by employees that have far exceeded job expectations and their performance is expected to continue into the future.

D Contacts

If there are questions about this notice, contact either of the following:

- Stephanie Brown at stephaniesybil.brown@wdc.usda.gov or 202-401-0694
- Angela Jackson at angela.jackson@wdc.usda.gov or 202-401-0682.

Disposal Date	Distribution
October 1, 2008	All FSA employees; State Offices relay to County Offices

Notice PM-2598

2 QSI Information

A QSI Eligibility

5 CFR 531.504 states that a QSI may only be granted to an employee who does either of the following:

- receives a rating of record at level 5 (“Outstanding”)
- when covered by a performance appraisal program that does not use level 5, receives a rating of record at the highest level used by the appraisal program.

When FSA was under a 2-tier appraisal program, a “Pass” rating was the highest level used and so an employee with a “Pass” rating was eligible for QSI. Now that FSA uses a 5-tier performance appraisal program that includes “Outstanding”, only a rating of record of “Outstanding” makes an employee eligible for QSI.

FSA’s 5-tier performance appraisal program applies to **all** GS and CO employees; therefore, all employees **must** receive a rating of record of “Outstanding” to be eligible for a QSI.

B Processing QSI’s

NFC will **not** permit a QSI to be processed for a GS employee without that employee having an “Outstanding” rating as their most recent rating of record. However, there is no such edit for CO employees. Processing offices **must**:

- remember that the eligibility requirements for a QSI apply to CO as well as GS employees
- **not** process QSI’s for CO employees who do **not** have an “Outstanding” rating as their most recent rating of record.