

OPM Guide to Processing Personnel Actions (GPPA)

Quick Sheet: Introduction to Within-Grade Increases (WGIs)

This quick sheet provides an overview of within-grade increases (WGIs), defined as periodic increases in an employee's rate of basic pay that moves the employee from one step to the next higher step within their grade, for General Schedule (GS) and Federal Wage System employees.

Eligibility Criteria	General Schedule (GS)	Federal Wage System Nonsupervisory pay schedules (WG), Leader pay schedules (WL), Supervisory pay schedules (WS)
Maximum Step Advancement	10 steps	5 steps
Creditable Service (also see Creditable Service for Non-Pay Status below)	<p>Federal civilian service if appointment not limited to 1 year or less. Service under temporary appointments if the employee receives a permanent appointment without a break in service or is separated and reemployed within 52 weeks to a permanent position. All the time spent in the temporary appointments is creditable toward <u>one</u> WGI.</p> <p>Honorable active-duty military service is creditable when the employee is reemployed with the Federal Government not later than 52 calendar weeks after separation from such service.</p>	Federal civilian service including permanent and temporary appointments.
Waiting Period	<p>For employees on <u>full-time or part-time</u> work schedules:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To step 2, 3, or 4 = 52 calendar weeks • To step 5, 6, or 7 = 104 calendar weeks • To step 8, 9, or 10 = 156 calendar weeks <p>For employees on <u>intermittent</u> work schedules:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To step 2, 3, or 4 = 260 days of creditable service in pay status over a period of at least 52 calendar weeks • To step 5, 6, or 7 = 520 days of creditable service in pay status over a period of at least 104 calendar weeks • To step 8, 9, or 10 = 780 days of creditable service in pay status over a period of at least 156 calendar weeks 	<p>For employees on <u>full-time or part-time</u> work schedules:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To step 2 = 26 calendar weeks • To step 3 = 78 calendar weeks • To step 4 or 5 = 104 calendar weeks <p>For employees on <u>intermittent</u> work schedules:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To step 2 = 130 days of creditable service in pay status over a period of at least 26 calendar weeks • To step 3 = 390 days of creditable service in pay status over a period of at least 78 calendar weeks • To step 4 or 5 = 520 days of creditable service in pay status over a period of at least 104 calendar weeks
Creditable Service During Non-Pay Status	<p>For employees on full-time or part-time work schedules, the following amounts of non-pay status are fully creditable toward WGI waiting period. Non-pay status in excess of the creditable amounts extends the waiting period by the amount of excess time.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To step 2, 3, or 4 = 2 workweeks of non-pay status • To step 5, 6, or 7 = 4 workweeks of non-pay status • To step 8, 9, or 10 = 6 workweeks of non-pay status <p>No amount of non-pay status is creditable for intermittent employees.</p> <p>Absence due to compensable injury, military duty if the employee returns through exercise of a restoration right, or service in the Federal Emergency Management Agency as intermittent personnel under section 306(b)(1) of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5149(b)(1) is fully creditable.</p>	<p>For employees on full-time or part-time work schedules, the following amounts of non-pay status are fully creditable toward the WGI waiting period. Non-pay status in excess of the creditable amounts extends the waiting period by the amount of excess time.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To step 2 = 1 workweek of non-pay status • To step 3 = 3 workweeks of non-pay status • To step 4 or 5 = 4 workweeks of non-pay status <p>No amount of non-pay status is creditable for intermittent employees.</p> <p>Absence due to compensable injury or military duty is fully creditable.</p>

Eligibility Criteria	General Schedule (GS)	Federal Wage System Nonsupervisory pay schedules (WG), Leader pay schedules (WL), Supervisory pay schedules (WS)
Must Not Have Received an Equivalent Increase During the Waiting Period	<p>The following are NOT considered an equivalent increase:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality Step Increase (QSI), <i>but if the QSI places the employee in step 4 or step 7 of their grade a longer waiting period is required.</i> • An interim within-grade increase if that increase is later terminated • General structural increase or nationwide pay adjustment • Locality pay adjustment • Additional pay such as COLA, premium pay, differentials, etc. • Temporary promotion if, at the end of that temporary promotion, the employee is returned to the grade from which promoted • A promotion to a higher-graded supervisory or managerial position when the employee does not complete a probationary period and is returned to the lower grade held before promotion • A promotion to a higher grade or work level in a non-GS pay system if it is cancelled and the employee's rate of basic pay is redetermined as if the promotion had not occurred • Application of the maximum payable rate rule in a demotion to the extent that the employee's rate of basic pay after demotion does not exceed the lowest step rate that equals or exceeds the employee's rate of basic pay immediately before demotion • Placement on a special rate schedule • Placement under a new basic pay schedule within the same non-GS pay system, when such placement results in a nondiscretionary basic pay increase to account for occupational pay differences 	<p>The following are NOT considered equivalent increases:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local wage area pay adjustment • Additional pay such as premium pay, differentials, etc. • Temporary promotion
Performance	Must have performed at an acceptable level of competence (fully successful or equivalent).	Must have performed at an acceptable level of competence (fully successful or equivalent).
Reference(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 U.S.C. 5335 • 5 CFR Part 531, Subpart D • Fact Sheet: Within-Grade Increases • OPM FAQs • Quality Step Increase (QSI) Fact Sheet 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 U.S.C. 5343(e)(2) • 5 CFR 532.417

Appendix: Table for Determining Completion of General Schedule WGI Waiting Periods

To use this table:

1. Locate on the table the date the employee entered on duty or received last equivalent increase.
2. The completion date is shown in the block opposite the waiting period under consideration. A federal within-grade increase (WGI) is effective on the first day of the first pay period that occurs after the required waiting period is complete. This is in accordance with [5 U.S.C. 5335](#) and [5 CFR 531.412](#).
3. If the waiting period includes February 29th (i.e., is a leap year), subtract one day from the completion date determined under step #2. Leap years occur every four years and include 2004, 2008, 2012, 2016, 2020, 2024, 2028, 2032, etc.
4. See below example.

Example:

1. Identify the Start Date

Locate the date the employee entered on duty or received their last equivalent increase. Find the month in the “Month” column on the far left, and then locate the specific day across the top of the table. The example shown is for an employee that entered on duty or received their last equivalent increase on February 2nd.

Month	WGI Waiting Schedule				
		1	2	3	4
Jan	52 weeks	30-Dec	31-Dec	1-Jan	2-Jan
	104 weeks	29-Dec	30-Dec	31-Dec	1-Jan
	156 weeks	28-Dec	29-Dec	30-Dec	31-Dec
Feb	52 weeks	30-Jan	31-Jan	1-Feb	2-Feb
	104 weeks	29-Jan	30-Jan	31-Jan	1-Feb
	156 weeks	28-Jan	29-Jan	30-Jan	31-Jan

2. Select the Waiting Period

In the “WGI Waiting Schedule” column, identify the appropriate waiting period for the within-grade increase (WGI): 52 weeks, 104 weeks, or 156 weeks. The example shown is for an employee on a 104 week WGI waiting schedule.

Month	WGI Waiting Schedule				
		1	2	3	4
Jan	52 weeks	30-Dec	31-Dec	1-Jan	2-Jan
	104 weeks	29-Dec	30-Dec	31-Dec	1-Jan
	156 weeks	28-Dec	29-Dec	30-Dec	31-Dec
Feb	52 weeks	30-Jan	31-Jan	1-Feb	2-Feb
	104 weeks	29-Jan	30-Jan	31-Jan	1-Feb
	156 weeks	28-Jan	29-Jan	30-Jan	31-Jan

3. Find the Completion Date

To determine the completion date of the WGI waiting period, locate the intersection of the employee’s start date (Month/Day) with the chosen WGI waiting period. For example, if an employee received their last equivalent increase on February 2nd and is on a 104 week WGI waiting schedule, the completion date of the WGI waiting period is 104 weeks after Feb 2nd or January 30th.

Month	WGI Waiting Schedule				
		1	2	3	4
Jan	52 weeks	30-Dec	31-Dec	1-Jan	2-Jan
	104 weeks	29-Dec	30-Dec	31-Dec	1-Jan
	156 weeks	28-Dec	29-Dec	30-Dec	31-Dec
Feb	52 weeks	30-Jan	31-Jan	1-Feb	2-Feb
	104 weeks	29-Jan	30-Jan	31-Jan	1-Feb
	156 weeks	28-Jan	29-Jan	30-Jan	31-Jan

Month	WGI Waiting Schedule	Day of the month the employee entered on duty or received last equivalent increase																														
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31
Sep	52 weeks	30-Aug	31-Aug	1-Sep	2-Sep	3-Sep	4-Sep	5-Sep	6-Sep	7-Sep	8-Sep	9-Sep	10-Sep	11-Sep	12-Sep	13-Sep	14-Sep	15-Sep	16-Sep	17-Sep	18-Sep	19-Sep	20-Sep	21-Sep	22-Sep	23-Sep	24-Sep	25-Sep	26-Sep	27-Sep	28-Sep	
	104 weeks	29-Aug	30-Aug	31-Aug	1-Sep	2-Sep	3-Sep	4-Sep	5-Sep	6-Sep	7-Sep	8-Sep	9-Sep	10-Sep	11-Sep	12-Sep	13-Sep	14-Sep	15-Sep	16-Sep	17-Sep	18-Sep	19-Sep	20-Sep	21-Sep	22-Sep	23-Sep	24-Sep	25-Sep	26-Sep	27-Sep	
	156 weeks	28-Aug	29-Aug	30-Aug	31-Aug	1-Sep	2-Sep	3-Sep	4-Sep	5-Sep	6-Sep	7-Sep	8-Sep	9-Sep	10-Sep	11-Sep	12-Sep	13-Sep	14-Sep	15-Sep	16-Sep	17-Sep	18-Sep	19-Sep	20-Sep	21-Sep	22-Sep	23-Sep	24-Sep	25-Sep	26-Sep	
Oct	52 weeks	29-Sep	30-Sep	1-Oct	2-Oct	3-Oct	4-Oct	5-Oct	6-Oct	7-Oct	8-Oct	9-Oct	10-Oct	11-Oct	12-Oct	13-Oct	14-Oct	15-Oct	16-Oct	17-Oct	18-Oct	19-Oct	20-Oct	21-Oct	22-Oct	23-Oct	24-Oct	25-Oct	26-Oct	27-Oct	28-Oct	29-Oct
	104 weeks	28-Sep	29-Sep	30-Sep	1-Oct	2-Oct	3-Oct	4-Oct	5-Oct	6-Oct	7-Oct	8-Oct	9-Oct	10-Oct	11-Oct	12-Oct	13-Oct	14-Oct	15-Oct	16-Oct	17-Oct	18-Oct	19-Oct	20-Oct	21-Oct	22-Oct	23-Oct	24-Oct	25-Oct	26-Oct	27-Oct	28-Oct
	156 weeks	27-Sep	28-Sep	29-Sep	30-Sep	1-Oct	2-Oct	3-Oct	4-Oct	5-Oct	6-Oct	7-Oct	8-Oct	9-Oct	10-Oct	11-Oct	12-Oct	13-Oct	14-Oct	15-Oct	16-Oct	17-Oct	18-Oct	19-Oct	20-Oct	21-Oct	22-Oct	23-Oct	24-Oct	25-Oct	26-Oct	27-Oct
Nov	52 weeks	30-Oct	31-Oct	1-Nov	2-Nov	3-Nov	4-Nov	5-Nov	6-Nov	7-Nov	8-Nov	9-Nov	10-Nov	11-Nov	12-Nov	13-Nov	14-Nov	15-Nov	16-Nov	17-Nov	18-Nov	19-Nov	20-Nov	21-Nov	22-Nov	23-Nov	24-Nov	25-Nov	26-Nov	27-Nov	28-Nov	
	104 weeks	29-Oct	30-Oct	31-Oct	1-Nov	2-Nov	3-Nov	4-Nov	5-Nov	6-Nov	7-Nov	8-Nov	9-Nov	10-Nov	11-Nov	12-Nov	13-Nov	14-Nov	15-Nov	16-Nov	17-Nov	18-Nov	19-Nov	20-Nov	21-Nov	22-Nov	23-Nov	24-Nov	25-Nov	26-Nov	27-Nov	
	156 weeks	28-Oct	29-Oct	30-Oct	31-Oct	1-Nov	2-Nov	3-Nov	4-Nov	5-Nov	6-Nov	7-Nov	8-Nov	9-Nov	10-Nov	11-Nov	12-Nov	13-Nov	14-Nov	15-Nov	16-Nov	17-Nov	18-Nov	19-Nov	20-Nov	21-Nov	22-Nov	23-Nov	24-Nov	25-Nov	26-Nov	
Dec	52 weeks	29-Nov	30-Nov	1-Dec	2-Dec	3-Dec	4-Dec	5-Dec	6-Dec	7-Dec	8-Dec	9-Dec	10-Dec	11-Dec	12-Dec	13-Dec	14-Dec	15-Dec	16-Dec	17-Dec	18-Dec	19-Dec	20-Dec	21-Dec	22-Dec	23-Dec	24-Dec	25-Dec	26-Dec	27-Dec	28-Dec	29-Dec
	104 weeks	28-Nov	29-Nov	30-Nov	1-Dec	2-Dec	3-Dec	4-Dec	5-Dec	6-Dec	7-Dec	8-Dec	9-Dec	10-Dec	11-Dec	12-Dec	13-Dec	14-Dec	15-Dec	16-Dec	17-Dec	18-Dec	19-Dec	20-Dec	21-Dec	22-Dec	23-Dec	24-Dec	25-Dec	26-Dec	27-Dec	28-Dec
	156 weeks	27-Nov	28-Nov	29-Nov	30-Nov	1-Dec	2-Dec	3-Dec	4-Dec	5-Dec	6-Dec	7-Dec	8-Dec	9-Dec	10-Dec	11-Dec	12-Dec	13-Dec	14-Dec	15-Dec	16-Dec	17-Dec	18-Dec	19-Dec	20-Dec	21-Dec	22-Dec	23-Dec	24-Dec	25-Dec	26-Dec	27-Dec