

Qualification Standard Secretary Series, 0318

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Overview

This section provides general information and guidance on using **competency-based qualification standards** for establishing minimum qualifications of job applicants.

Competency-Based Qualification Standard

This standard identifies a set of required competencies and related proficiency levels by grade. Competencies may be general (for example, Problem Solving), meaning they may be required for many occupations, or technical, meaning they are required for a specific series. OPM has identified the required proficiency levels for all the general competencies. As technical competency requirements differ from agency to agency, and position to position, agencies are responsible for identifying the required proficiency level for any technical competencies identified in a standard.

Applicants must demonstrate the required proficiency level on all required competencies **and** the required experience and/or education. If an applicant fails to meet the required proficiency level on any of the competencies, the applicant is ineligible and is automatically disqualified from further consideration for the position.

Competency-based qualification standards are individual qualification standards, that is, these standards are NOT used in conjunction with any of the Group Coverage Qualification Standards established for many Federal occupations.

Supervisory Positions

For supervisory or managerial positions, use the [Supervisory Qualification Guide](#) in conjunction with the Individual Occupational Requirements below.

Classification Standard

The classification standard for the Secretary Series, 0318, may be found at: <http://www.opm.gov/fedclass/g0318.pdf>.

Individual Occupational Requirements

Qualifications by Grade Level

As specified for each grade level, applicants must qualify by: 1) meeting or exceeding the minimum proficiency level for all required competencies; and, 2) meeting the applicable education or experience.

NOTE: Education and experience can be combined for those grade levels where both are qualifying.

- For GS-3 and GS-4 level positions, determine the applicant's total qualifying experience as a percentage of the experience required for the grade level; then determine the applicant's education as a percentage of the education required for the grade level; then add the two percentages. The total percentage must equal at least 100 percent to qualify an applicant for that grade level.
- For GS-5 level positions, only education in excess of the first 60 semester hours (i.e., beyond the second year) is creditable toward meeting the specialized experience requirement. One full academic year of study (30 semester hours) beyond the second year is equivalent to 6 months of specialized experience.

For additional information on how to combine education and experience, please refer to the General Policies section of the [Qualification Standards Policies and Instructions](#).

Grade 1 (GS or Equivalent)

- No experience or education required.

Grade 2 (GS or Equivalent)

- Three months of general experience, defined as progressively responsible clerical, office, or other work experience; OR
- High school graduation or equivalent.

Grade 3 (GS or Equivalent)

Applicants qualify at the GS-3 grade level by meeting or exceeding the minimum proficiency level established for each of the required competencies, **and** meeting one of the Qualifying Experience or Education requirements.

Required Competencies	Minimum Proficiency Level
Interpersonal Skills	2 – Basic
Customer Service	1 – Awareness
Attention to Detail	2 – Basic
Planning and Organizing	2 – Basic
Learning	2 – Basic

Qualifying Experience or Education

- Six months of general experience, defined as progressively responsible clerical, office, or other work experience; OR
- One year of education above the high school level. Education must have been obtained in an accredited business, secretarial or technical school, junior college, college or university. One year of full-time academic 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, secretarial, or technical school.

Grade 4 (GS or Equivalent)

Applicants qualify at the GS-4 grade level by meeting or exceeding the minimum proficiency level established for each of the required competencies, **and** meeting one of the Qualifying Experience or Education requirements.

Required Competencies	Minimum Proficiency Level
Interpersonal Skills	2 – Basic
Customer Service	2 – Basic
Attention to Detail	2 – Basic
Planning and Organizing	2 – Basic
Learning	2 – Basic

Grade 4, continued

Qualifying Experience or Education

- One year of general experience, defined as progressively responsible clerical, office, or other work experience that indicates the ability to acquire the competencies needed to perform the duties of the position to be filled; OR
- Two years of education above the high school level. Education must have been obtained in an accredited business, secretarial or technical school, junior college, college or university. One year of full-time academic 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, secretarial, or technical school.

Grade 5 (GS or Equivalent)

Applicants qualify at the GS-5 grade level by meeting or exceeding the minimum proficiency level established for each of the required competencies, **and** meeting one of the Qualifying Experience or Education requirements.

Required Competencies	Minimum Proficiency Level
Interpersonal Skills	2 – Basic
Customer Service	2 – Basic
Attention to Detail	3 – Intermediate
Planning and Organizing	3 – Intermediate
Learning	3 – Intermediate
Reading Comprehension	2 – Basic
Self Management	2 – Basic

Qualifying Experience or Education

- One year of specialized experience that is in or related to the position to be filled, equivalent to at least the GS-4 level; OR
- Four years of education above the high school level. Education must have been obtained in an accredited business, secretarial or technical school, junior college, college or university. One year of full-time academic 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, secretarial, or technical school.

Grade 6 and Above (GS or Equivalent)

Applicants qualify at the GS-6 grade level and above by meeting or exceeding the minimum proficiency level established for each of the required competencies, **and** meeting the Qualifying Experience requirement.

Required Competencies	Minimum Proficiency Level
Interpersonal Skills	3 – Intermediate
Customer Service	2 – Basic
Attention to Detail	3 – Intermediate
Planning and Organizing	3 – Intermediate
Learning	3 – Intermediate
Reading Comprehension	2 – Basic
Self Management	3 – Intermediate
Flexibility	3 – Intermediate
Stress Tolerance	3 – Intermediate

Qualifying Experience

One year of specialized experience, equivalent to at least the next lower grade level, in or related to the position to be filled.

Competency Information

Competency Definitions

Attention to Detail - Is thorough when performing work and conscientious about attending to detail.

Customer Service - Works with clients and customers (that is, any individuals who use or receive the services or products that your work unit produces, including the general public, individuals who work in the agency, other agencies, or organizations outside the Government) to assess their needs, provide information or assistance, resolve their problems, or satisfy their expectations; knows about available products and services; is committed to providing quality products and services.

Flexibility - Is open to change and new information; adapts behavior or work methods in response to new information, changing conditions, or unexpected obstacles; effectively deals with ambiguity.

Interpersonal Skills - Shows understanding, friendliness, courtesy, tact, empathy, concern, and politeness to others; develops and maintains effective relationships with others; may include effectively dealing with individuals who are difficult, hostile, or distressed; relates well to people from varied backgrounds and different situations; is sensitive to cultural diversity, race, gender, disabilities, and other individual differences.

Learning - Uses efficient learning techniques to acquire and apply new knowledge and skills; uses training, feedback, or other opportunities for self-learning and development.

Planning and Organizing - Organizes and prioritizes own work; utilizes a systematic approach to planning and accomplishing tasks.

Reading Comprehension - Understands and interprets written material, including technical material, rules, regulations, instructions, reports, charts, graphs, or tables; applies what is learned from written material to specific situations.

Self-Management - Sets well-defined and realistic goals; displays a high level of initiative, effort, and commitment towards completing assignments in a timely manner; works with minimal supervision; is motivated to achieve; demonstrates responsible behavior.

Stress Tolerance - Deals calmly and effectively with high stress situations (for example, tight deadlines, hostile individuals, emergency situations, dangerous situations).

Teamwork - Encourages and facilitates cooperation, pride, trust, and group identity; fosters commitment and team spirit; works with others to achieve goals.

Proficiency Level Scale

The table below provides the proficiency level scale associated with the competency proficiency levels.

Proficiency Level Scale	General Competencies	Technical Competencies
Level 5 - Expert	<p>Applies the competency in exceptionally difficult situations.</p> <p>Serves as a key resource and advises others.</p>	<p>Applies the competency in exceptionally difficult situations.</p> <p>Serves as a key resource and advises others.</p> <p>Demonstrates comprehensive, expert understanding of concepts and processes.</p>
Level 4 - Advanced	<p>Applies the competency in considerably difficult situations.</p> <p>Generally requires little or no guidance.</p>	<p>Applies the competency in considerably difficult situations.</p> <p>Generally requires little or no guidance.</p> <p>Demonstrates broad understanding of concepts and processes.</p>
Level 3 – Intermediate	<p>Applies the competency in difficult situations.</p> <p>Requires occasional guidance.</p>	<p>Applies the competency in difficult situations.</p> <p>Requires occasional guidance.</p> <p>Demonstrates understanding of concepts and processes.</p>
Level 2 - Basic	<p>Applies the competency in somewhat difficult situations.</p> <p>Requires frequent guidance.</p>	<p>Applies the competency in somewhat difficult situations.</p> <p>Requires frequent guidance.</p> <p>Demonstrates familiarity with concepts and processes.</p>
Level 1 – Awareness	<p>Applies the competency in the simplest situations.</p> <p>Requires close and extensive guidance.</p>	<p>Applies the competency in the simplest situations.</p> <p>Requires close and extensive guidance.</p> <p>Demonstrates awareness of concepts and processes.</p>