



**Tips and Tidbits
Issue #: 8-2007**

15 August 2007

Question: If an employee/applicant meets time-in-grade requirements when applying for merit promotion vacancies does that mean specialized experience requirements are automatically met? If not, how are they different?

The requirement for an employee to meet time-in-grade stipulates that for all positions above the GS-05 level, an employee must have completed 52 weeks at the next lower grade in order to qualify for positions [at the next higher grade level] in the normal line of progression for the occupation in the organization. Time-in-grade restrictions do not apply to NSPS positions; however, applicants applying from Legacy positions into NSPS positions, must have one year of specialized experience at the next lower pay band or equivalent under the General Schedule (GS) or other pay system.

Specialized experience, sometimes referred to as quality experience, requires that an employee must have acquired at least one year of experience, normally gained in a field of work similar to that of the vacancy, that provided the applicant the knowledge, skills, and abilities, to successfully perform the tasks of the vacancy. To be creditable, the experience must have been equivalent to at least the next lower grade level [of the position to be filled]. For one-graded interval positions, in those instances where there is no position in the normal line of progression in an organization this is one grade lower than the position being filled, one year of specialized experience at the second lower level is creditable for in-service applicants. For outside applicants, however, (i.e. those without current or prior Federal competitive or excepted service), 1 year of specialized experience equivalent to at least the next lower grade is required. Education or a combination of education and experience may be used as an appropriate substitute for specialized experience. As such, where appropriate, either may qualify an applicant for referral.

These two concepts are not one in the same. Meeting time in grade requirements does not necessarily mean the specialized experience requirement has been satisfied. For instance, if an employee has worked 4 years as a GS-09 Management Analyst and applies for a GS-11 Human Resources Specialist, even though this employee may satisfy time-in-grade requirements [in order to advance to a higher grade], the employee does not [automatically] satisfy specialized experience requirements as that applicant may not have the knowledge, skills, and abilities required for the position. The reverse is also true.

It is through meeting both specialized experience and time-in-grade requirements that an applicant demonstrates suitability for a position in terms of the required knowledge as well as satisfies regulatory requirement for advancement to the next grade.

Please contact your servicing HR Specialist with questions or for additional information.

BLANCHE D. ROBINSON

Human Resources Officer

Fort Benning CPAC

Phone: 545-1203 (Coml.); 835-1203 (DSN)

E-Mail: blanche.d.robinson@us.army.mil