

Lesson 1: Introduction to FQS

Course Overview

The FEMA Qualification System (FQS) establishes the system for the qualification and certification of the FEMA workforce through experience, training, and demonstrated performance. This course provides an overview of FQS, orients FEMA employees to the processes and procedures of the system, and explains how FQS benefits the Agency, communities and disaster survivors, and FEMA employees.

By the end of this course, you will be able to:

- Explain how FQS benefits FEMA, communities impacted by incidents, and the FEMA workforce.
- Describe the processes and procedures of FQS.
- Describe how an employee progresses through FQS from trainee to qualified status.

Screen Features

- Click on the Course Menu button to access the menu listing all lessons of this course. You can select any of the lessons from this menu by simply clicking on the lesson title.
- Click on the Glossary button to look up key definitions and acronyms.
- Click on the Help button to review guidance and troubleshooting advice regarding navigating through the course.
- Track your progress by looking at the Progress bar at the top right of each screen. To see a numeric display, roll your mouse over the Progress bar area.
- Follow the bolded green instructions that appear on each screen in order to proceed to the next screen or complete a Knowledge Review or Activity.
- Click on the Back or the Next buttons at the top and bottom of screens to move backward or forward in the lesson. Note: If the Next button is dimmed, you must complete an activity before you can proceed in the lesson.

Navigating Using Your Keyboard

Use the “Tab” key to move forward through each screen’s navigation buttons and hyperlinks, or “Shift” + “Tab” to move backwards. A box surrounds the button that is currently selected.

Press “Enter” to select a navigation button or hyperlink.

Use the arrow keys to select answers for multiple-choice review questions or self-assessment checklists. Then tab to the “Submit” button and press “Enter” to complete a Knowledge Review or Self-Assessment.

Warning: Repeatedly pressing “Tab” beyond the number of selections on the screen may cause the keyboard to lock up. Use “Ctrl” + “Tab” to deselect an element or reset to the beginning of a screen’s navigation links (most often needed for screens with animations or media).

JAWS assistive technology users can press the Ctrl key to quiet the screen reader while the course audio plays.

Receiving Credit

To receive credit for this course, you must:

- **Complete all of the lessons.** Each lesson will take between 20 and 30 minutes to complete. It is important to allow enough time to complete the course in its entirety.
- Check the length of the lesson on the overview screen.
- **Remember... YOU MUST COMPLETE THE ENTIRE COURSE TO RECEIVE CREDIT.** If you have to leave the course, do not exit from the course or close your browser. If you exit from the course, you will need to start that lesson over again.
- **Pass the final exam.** The last screen provides instructions on how to complete the final exam.

Lesson Overview

You should now be able to navigate through this course. The rest of this lesson will explain the purpose, background, importance, and benefits of FQS.

Learning Objectives

By the end of this lesson, you will be able to:

- Define the purpose, background, and importance of FQS.
- Define incident management and incident support.
- Describe the relationship between force structure and FQS.
- Identify the benefits of FQS to members of the FEMA workforce.

What is FQS?

FQS qualifies and certifies the FEMA workforce through experience, training, and demonstrated performance. It applies to all incident management and incident support positions in:

Regional and National Incident Management Assistance Teams (IMATs).

- Joint Field Offices (JFOs).
- Regional Response Coordination Centers (RRCCs).
- National Response Coordination Center (NRCC).

FQS applies to all employees regardless of their position grade and appointment status including:

- Disaster assistance employees (DAEs.)
- Permanent full-time (PTF) employees.
- Cadre of on-call response and recovery employees (COREs).
- Temporary full-time (TFT) employees.

What is the Difference Between Incident Management and Incident Support?

FEMA's Incident Management and Support Keystone (IMSK) differentiates between incident management and incident support in the level and nature of response and recovery support provided to communities impacted by an incident.

Incident Management is the incident-level operation of the Federal role in emergency response, recovery, logistics, and mitigation. Responsibilities include:

- Direct control and employment of resources
- Management of incident offices and operations
- Management of the delivery of Federal assistance through all phases of emergency response

Incident Support is the coordination of all Federal resources that support emergency response, recovery, logistics, and mitigation at the Regional and National level. Responsibilities include:

- Deployment of national-level assets
- Support of national objectives
- Support of the program affected during the disaster
- Support of incident operations with resources, expertise, information, and guidance.

Why did FEMA Design FQS?

FEMA designed FQS in order to:

- Meet requirements outlined in the Post Katrina Management Reform Act of 2006 (PKEMRA).
- Ensure FEMA is consistent with the National Incident Management System (NIMS) and the Incident Command System (ICS).
- Ensure qualified workforce based on performance standards.
- Establish minimum, consistent, and fair qualification requirements for all workforce positions regardless of employment status.
- Strengthen the training and qualification standards for all workforce by implementing improvements based on analysis.
- Professionalize the workforce similar to other emergency management professions.
- Create a clear pathway for career development opportunities.
- Assist in the creation of analysis of the FEMA force structure.
- Improve Federal assistance to disaster-impacted families and communities.

What is the Background of FQS?

In designing FQS, FEMA determined a performance-based qualification system was most appropriate. FQS builds on previous agency credentialing efforts, such as previous draft Task Books, as a foundation to develop more robust capabilities within incident management and incident support Position Task Books (PTBs).

FQS:

- Follows best practices for performance-based qualification systems.
- Improves FEMA and interagency teamwork during incidents.
- Reflects employee knowledge and skills of ICS and programmatic expertise.

What is Force Structure?

The purpose of force structure is to have the appropriate number of personnel trained, exercised, and equipped to fulfill FEMA's disaster mission.

FEMA has evaluated its existing force structure requirements to establish minimum requirements for a trained and fully qualified workforce capable of responding to all-hazards incidents.

In its evaluation of force structure requirements, FEMA not only reviewed historic data on past incidents (such as size, scope, and staffing requirements), but also considered the types of incidents that were likely to occur in the future.

How Does FQS Relate to Force Structure?

Identifying force structure requirements help:

- Determine how many qualified individuals are needed for each FQS position.
- Minimize capability gaps.
- Ensure resources are effectively allocated to the highest priority needs.

FEMA does its best to accommodate its disaster workforce employees' preferences and interests when making FQS assignments. However, to meet its disaster mission, FEMA's FQS assignments must ultimately be guided by force structure needs and existing staffing gaps. Consequently, once you are qualified in a position, FEMA cannot guarantee you will be issued another PTB for advancement.

How Does FQS Benefit Me?

FEMA's disaster workforce is a valuable national asset. Your commitment as an incident management or support team member is invaluable to the Agency and our disaster survivors. The Nation depends on you during times of crisis and uncertainty to ensure we work together to achieve our Mission. You are the managers, and subject matter experts (SMEs), who bring technical and leadership capabilities to Federal disaster operations.

How was FQS Designed to Benefit Me?

FEMA designed FQS with you—the end user—in mind to:

- Recognize and build on your knowledge and experience.
- Certify the status you have earned through experience, performance, and training.
- Provide a pathway for your career development and goal achievement.
- Allow you to build your skills, experience, and confidence through training, education, and deployment opportunities.
- Ensure you have an opportunity to help survivors and communities recover.
- Ensure an even playing field with objective and transparent evaluations for all personnel.
- Establish minimum, consistent, and fair qualification requirements for all workforce positions regardless of employment status.

Lesson Summary

This lesson presented the following topics:

- Define the purpose, background, and importance of FQS.
- Define incident management and incident support.
- Describe the relationship between force structure and FQS.
- Identify the benefits of FQS to members of the FEMA workforce.

The next lesson presents information on FQS processes and procedures.

Lesson 2: How FQS Works

Lesson Overview

To increase your understanding of how FQS works, this lesson explores the various components and processes of the FQS, including the function and role that Qualification Review Boards (QRBs) play in FQS.

Learning Objectives

By the end of this lesson, you will be able to:

- Identify the purpose of the FEMA Position Task Books (PTBs), Position Qualification Sheets, and Qualification Progression Flowcharts.
- Describe the FQS qualification process.
- Describe the Qualification Review Board (QRB) certification process.
- Describe FEMA's process for implementing FQS for the incident management workforce.
- Identify FQS support and resources available to FEMA employees.

What Are the Components of FQS?

The three main components of FQS include Position Task Books, Position Qualification Sheets, and Qualification Progression Flowcharts.

Position Task Books (PTBs) list and define the specific performance requirements for each position. The PTBs specify performance requirements through a hierarchy of:

- Competencies
- Behaviors and activities
- Tasks

Each task within the PTB must be successfully demonstrated in the presence of a qualified evaluator to receive credit for task completion. The PTBs also contain forms and signature blocks for evaluator sign-off.

Position Qualification Sheets list the required FQS experience and required training for each position. They may also include a list of other position assignments that maintain currency in that position, and other training that supports the development of skills and knowledge applicable to the position.

Qualification Progression Flowcharts graphically demonstrate how qualification for various positions is related and which positions are qualification prerequisites.

The flowcharts also provide employees a frame of reference for career progression in emergency management.

Together, these three components clearly define the training, experience, and behaviors that an individual needs to demonstrate to become fully qualified in any specific disaster workforce position.

Who Are the Key Players in FQS?

A number of individuals and organizations play key roles in administering FQS, including Certifying Authorities, Certifying Officials, Coach-Evaluators, Regional and National Cadre Managers, Regional Training Managers, Incident Training Units, and Supervisors.

A certifying authority is the FEMA official who has direct reporting responsibility to the FEMA Administrator and has authority to certify FEMA personnel as qualified in identified positions. A certifying authority may be located in a headquarters (HQ) entity (such as an Office, Bureau, or Administration) or a Regional office. He or she is responsible for:

- Administering FQS for all employees, who have assigned disaster roles, within the certifying authority's area of responsibility
- Establishing Qualification Review Boards (QRB) to review the qualifications of employees who have been recommended for certification in a specific position
- Certifying employees as qualified for positions when the employees have met pertinent FQS standards

Certifying officials are designated at the headquarters and regional levels to manage the day-to-day operation of FQS. A Certifying Official is responsible for:

- Identifying employees to become trainees in a specific position based on the agency's force structure requirements and strategic goals
- Issuing PTBs to those identified trainees and ensuring they meet all required prerequisites
- Providing opportunities for evaluation and/or making trainees available for evaluation
- Explaining to the trainee the purpose and process of the PTB as well as the trainee's responsibilities
- Tracking the trainee's progress
- Confirming PTB completion
- Certifying the trainee for those positions falling within their certification authority as outlined in the FQS Guide for Incident Management and Incident Support Positions

Coach-evaluators are individuals certified under FQS as evaluators, who are qualified in the position(s) being evaluated, and are assigned at an incident to coach trainees and evaluate their performance.

Specifically, coach-evaluators assist trainees to:

- Demonstrate achievement of specific qualifications through coaching
- Assessing their performance against established standards.

Effective coaching and evaluation is important to the success of the trainee and to effective incident support and incident management.

Regional and National Cadre Managers coordinate to:

- Maintain deployment records for cadre personnel
- Coordinate with Certifying Official on PTB distribution
- Maintain training records for cadre personnel in collaboration with the Emergency Management Institute (EMI)
- Analyze the status and progress of all trainees within the cadre at least annually and use the results to identify training and deployment priorities
- Collaborate with Regional Training Managers to identify training needs and priorities
- Prioritize training and deployment requirements for individual cadre members in consultation with certifying authorities and certifying officials and Regional Training Managers based on existing deployment standard operating procedures and Force Structure requirements
- Maintain, and revise as necessary, the PTB technical tasks within their cadres

Regional Training Managers support FQS in their efforts to:

- Identify and communicate training needs and priorities to National and Regional Cadre Managers
- Coordinate the delivery of needed training in the Regions
- Training Units at JFOs work with National and Regional Cadre Managers to:
- Identify and prioritize training needs and requirements at their JFO
- Coordinate the delivery of training onsite at the JFO

Additionally, for situations in which an individual deploys without a PTB, and with the approval of a certifying official, the Incident Training Unit may issue the individual a PTB, when authorized by the Certifying Official.

Within the context of FQS, supervisors refer to the individual to whom you report while deployed on an incident. Supervisors work to ensure that their personnel are prepared to perform their assignments proficiently and safely. Supervisors are also responsible for supporting trainees in the completion of their PTBs, and for assessing the performance of their direct reports separately from FQS task evaluation.

What Is the FQS Qualification Process?

The FQS Qualification Process requires employees to complete three steps in order to become certified as qualified for a specific position.

- Step 1: Complete any qualifying experience for the position (if applicable)
- Step 2: Complete any mandatory training required for the position, establish any external certification, and demonstrate successful performance in the required activities (per the relevant PTB)
- Step 3: Undergo and pass the certification process including review, approval, and currency validation

FQS Qualification Process: Step 1

As a first step in the FQS Qualification Process a certifying official:

- Identifies an employee with requisite experience.
- Validates that candidate's experience against FQS requirements.
- Issues that employee a PTB.

With the issuance of the PTB, the individual becomes a trainee and is eligible for deployment in that position.

If an employee is already qualified in an FQS position, and seeks to advance to the next position in the applicable Progression Flow Chart, he or she will:

- Work with his or her Cadre Manager to determine eligibility for advancement based on force structure needs.
- Ensure he or she is qualified in all pre-requisite positions.
- Complete all required training requirements (as outlined in the position Qualification Sheet).
- Ensure he or she has a history of satisfactory performance reviews.

If the employee is selected for advancement from the pool of potential candidates able to progress, the certifying official will issue the employee a new PTB.

FQS Qualification Process: Step 2

Step 2 of the qualification process has three possible components—training, external certification, and performance—depending upon the specific position:

- Complete Mandatory Training Required for the Position
- Establish External Certification
- Demonstrate Successful Performance in the Required Activities

Complete Required Training

Specific training listed on the Position Qualification Sheet for the target position reflects the knowledge and skills a trainee must have in order to perform the tasks of the position successfully.

Complete Recurrent Training

Some positions require refresher training more frequently than others to maintain qualification. This Recurrent section only appears on Position Qualification Sheets when a position requires such training.

Establish External Certification (when applicable)

This section lists certification(s) that are essential for the performance of a position's duties, but which are awarded and governed by authorities outside of FQS. Examples include contracting officer's representative (COR) certification, contracting warrants, and professional certifications required by the target FQS position. This subsection only appears on Position Qualification Sheets when a position requires such certification. Not all positions require external certifications.

Demonstrate Successful Performance

A trainee must complete his or her PTBs before they can be considered for certification. PTBs can only be completed by successfully demonstrating PTB tasks for a FQS Coach-Evaluator while on deployment to an incident or exercise, and having that Coach-Evaluator sign off on those tasks in the trainee's PTB.

FQS Qualification Process: Step 3

Certification is the administrative process that validates, approves, and documents the fact that an employee is qualified for a specific FQS position. Qualifications are based on standards established for the position and documented in the PTB and the Position Qualification Sheet.

Successful completion of PTBs, required FQS experience, and required training do not guarantee that a trainee will be certified for a position. Certification and recertification also involve professional judgment and evaluation. Evaluators consider the variety of incidents (e.g., floods, tornados, hurricanes); their size and complexity; and the number of assignments.

A Qualification Review Board (QRB) evaluates each trainee, based on:

- Evaluations of tasks documented in the PTB.
- Performance appraisals.
- Deployment experiences (such as JFO start-up versus close out, duration of deployments, and size of disasters).

When all three steps are successfully completed, the certifying authority determines the trainee to be qualified for the target position. The trainee receives an FQS qualification letter indicating that his or her status has been changed from "trainee" to "qualified."

What Is the QRB?

The QRB:

- Evaluates employees' qualification against established standards.
- Provides recommendations for certification that are fair and consistent.
- A QRB, in accordance with their level of authority, reviews a trainee's completed certification package, and recommends what action the certifying authority should take.

How Many QRBs Are There?

There are a total of 12 QRBs—two at FEMA headquarters and one for each of the 10 Regions—that meet quarterly.

One of the headquarters QRBs reviews certification packages for all Type I positions, as well as Type II and III positions assigned to FEMA Headquarters. The other headquarters QRB reviews certification packages for non-typed positions, including:

- Division Supervisor
- Group Supervisor
- Task Force Leader
- Unit Leader
- Assistant External Affairs Officer

The Regional QRBs review certification packages for Type II and III positions, including all of the listed positions above.

Who Sits on the QRBs?

QRBs include at least five voting members, who serve 2-year terms. QRB members include qualified PFT incident management and incident support staff.

Each QRB must have among its members a qualified functional or program designee at the equivalent, or higher position level than the employee under review for qualification determination.

Who Chairs the QRBs?

The QRB is chaired by an individual with extensive disaster response and recovery experience, such as a Federal Coordinating Officer (FCO), a Regional Incident Management Assistance Team (IMAT) Team Leader, a General Staff member, Division Director, or a Branch Chief.

QRBs also include ad-hoc, non-voting advisors, such as representatives from:

- Office of Equal Rights
- Office of Chief Counsel
- Office of the Chief Component Human Capital Officer (CCHCO)
- At-Large Labor-Management Partner Council (LMPC)/Union Representative

These ad-hoc advisors are included in the QRB to ensure the rights of all employees are maintained throughout the FQS Certification Process.

What Is the QRB Certification Process?

Employee submits certification package to Cadre Manager

The employee compiles a certification package, which includes clear copies of the following:

- Completed PTB
- Records documenting completion of required training (per the FQS Qualification Sheet)
- Incident performance appraisal(s)
- Letters of recommendation (if available)
- Records documenting any training and experience as part of other ICS-based organizations (if applicable)

The employee submits this hardcopy package to his or her Cadre Manager, but should retain copies of all personal FQS records for future reference and use.

Note: The employee should retain all original copies of the documentation submitted for the certification review process.

Cadre Manager Processes the Certification Package

Upon receipt of the certification package from the employee, the Cadre Manager forwards the certification package to the certifying official and enters the certification information into FEMA's FQS information tracking database.

Certifying Official Submits Certification Package to QRB

The certifying official reviews the certification package to ensure it is complete, and then sends the package to the QRB for review and evaluation.

QRB Reviews the Package and Makes Recommendation

The QRB will review and evaluate the certification package—reviewing the overall quality of the employee experience(s), including:

- Scope of involvement in trainee position(s)
- Complexity of incidents supported
- Phase(s) of deployment(s) supported (for instance, response versus recovery)
- Documented pattern(s) of incident behavior that suggest questionable judgment or concerns of maturity which may negatively impact the operation or organization

After reviewing the entire certification package, the QRB determines a recommendation for certification for the certifying authority. The QRB then prepares and sends the decision letter, with appropriate rationale, for the certifying authority's approval and signature.

Certifying Authority Approves or Disapproves QRB Recommendation

The certifying authority reviews the QRB recommendation, decision letter, and associated rationale, and then approves or disapproves the QRB recommendation. If the certifying authority approves the recommendation, the employee, Cadre Manager, and Deployment Unit will receive copies of the qualification letter.

How Did FEMA Make the Initial FQS Qualification Evaluations?

To initially implement FQS, FEMA comprehensively and systematically evaluated the current FEMA disaster workforce against the FQS qualification requirements. FEMA only evaluated the incident management workforce, reserving the NRCC or RRCC positions to be evaluated at a later date.

Panels of subject matter experts (SMEs) convened, which were comprised of individuals selected by regional administrators, National and Regional Cadre Managers, and National IMAT representatives, as well as selected SMEs.

Each cadre had a panel, and those panels reviewed its own cadre.

What Information Did FEMA Consider in Its Initial FQS Qualification Evaluations?

To ensure consistent evaluations, panels thoroughly reviewed each employee's personnel, deployment, and training records against set criteria for each position. The evaluation criteria included:

Critical tasks in the PTB.

- Length, size, and complexity of deployments (including deployments with FEMA as well as other agencies).
- Deployment experience at the start up and close out of JFOs.
- Cadre or position-specific criteria defined by the panel, such as completion of a specific course or achievement of a certain experience required to be considered qualified in the position.

Through these evaluations, FEMA qualified each individual to the highest position possible under the new FQS standards.

What Employees Support and Resources Are Available?

As with the implementation of any new program of this magnitude, employees will have questions about the FQS process. To help answer these questions, FEMA has set up several resources for its employees:

FQS Call Center

The FQS Call Center at 1-855-377-FEMA provides referral and guidance on FQS. It does not supersede Cadre Managers, and will refer individuals to Cadre Managers for qualification determination and reconsideration questions. The FQS Call Center will track and report inquiry trends (to support effective system implementation) and also track reconsideration requests.

FQS Mailbox

As an alternative to calling into the FQS Call Center, FEMA has also set up a FQS mailbox, FEMA-FQS-Program@fema.dhs.gov, for employees to submit their questions in writing. The FQS Call Center monitors and responds to inquiries submitted to the FQS Mailbox.

FQS Web Page

The FQS Web Page, <http://www.fema.gov/information-employees/fema-qualification-system> is a publicly-available Web page with information about FQS that includes a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) section, links to FEMA doctrine, and contact and referral information.

In addition to the call center, mailbox, and Web page, employees with FQS may also reach out to their Regional Incident Workforce Management Office (IWMO) Liaisons, and their Regional and National Cadre Managers.

Lesson Summary

This lesson presented the following topics:

- The purpose of the FEMA PTBs, Position Qualification Sheets, and Qualification Progression Flowcharts
- The FQS Qualification Process
- The QRB certification process
- FEMA's process for implementing FQS for the incident management workforce
- FQS support and resources available to FEMA employees, including:
 - FQS Call Center: 1-855-377-FEMA
 - FQS Mailbox: FEMA-FQS-Program@fema.dhs.gov
 - FQS Web Page: <http://www.fema.gov/fqs>

The next lesson presents a scenario for how a FEMA employee may progress from trainee to qualified status as part of the FQS process.

Lesson 3: Scenario: FQS Progression

Lesson Overview

This lesson will apply the concepts and processes described previously in this course, in a hypothetical scenario, to illustrate how FEMA employees may progress from trainee to qualified status for a specific FQS position.

Learning Objectives

By the end of this lesson, you will be able to summarize how the FQS process applies to a hypothetical FEMA employee.

Meet Novice Nick

Novice Nick, a FEMA employee:

- Holds a masters degree in emergency management.
- Has worked for FEMA for 6 months.
- Is currently a PFT in Region XI supporting Mitigation.

Since joining FEMA, Nick has been completing the required Agency training of all FEMA employees, including required mission support training and basic ICS courses.

He has gained familiarity with the different cadres and position titles within those cadres by speaking with his supervisor, colleagues, and several different Regional Cadre Managers.

He is also completing additional professional development training to more quickly acclimate to FEMA, including various introductory response courses made available by EMI.

FQS Process: Step 1

As described in Lesson 2, Step 1 of the FQS Qualification Process is the point at which an employee's experience is compared to FQS requirements. If the employee has the required experience, the certifying official issues the employee a PTB and the individual becomes a trainee.

Step 1: Getting on the FQS Track

After about 6 months, Nick meets with his Regional Training Manager and his supervisor to review his official training record and his prior emergency management experience. They discuss several possible specialist-level positions in incident management and incident support for which he may be suitable.

Nick mentions that he is very interested in planning, and his Regional office currently needs to develop new planners based on current Force Structure requirements.

The certifying official, in coordination with the Regional Planning Cadre Manager, issues Nick an Information Specialist (INSP) PTB.

FQS Process: Step 2

In the second step of the FQS Qualification Process, the employee is deployable as a trainee, thereby having the opportunity to not only engage in required training, but also to demonstrate performance of tasks contained in the PTB.

Step 2: Gaining Experience

Over a period of 18 months, Nick deploys as a trainee to several Type III and II disasters. During these deployments, Nick works alongside qualified INSPs, shadowing them and learning how to perform the responsibilities of the position.

He also works with the FQS Coach-Evaluator at each disaster, who is qualified not only as an INSP but also a Situation Unit Leader (SITL). The coach-evaluator not only coaches Nick on task completion and competency development, but also evaluates Nick on task completion when he is ready to demonstrate independent completion of those tasks.

As Nick successfully demonstrates tasks for his coach-evaluator, the coach-evaluator signs off on those tasks in Nick's INSP PTB.

While on deployments, and in between, Nick completes the training requirements for the INSP position, as outlined on the INSP Position Qualification Sheet.

FQS Process: Step 3

In Step 3 of the FQS qualification process, the employee engages in the certification process, submitting a certification package—including a completed PTB—for review by the QRB.

Step 3: Ready to Apply for Certification

After 18 months, Nick has completed all training requirements (per the INSP Position Qualification Sheet) and has had Coach-Evaluators sign off on all competencies and associated tasks in his INSP PTB.

Nick prepares his certification package, which includes:

- A copy of his completed PTB.
- Records of training he completed through EMI and at the JFOs where he was deployed.
- Copies of his incident performance appraisals.
- A copy of a letter of recommendation from a Situation Unit Leader he worked under at his last deployment.

While not all these materials are required for certification, Nick wanted to make sure all current and valid information was available for review upon request.

Nick submits the certification package to his cadre manager. After the QRB reviews his certification, Nick receives notification that the certifying authority has approved Nick to be a qualified INSP.

FQS Process: Step 3—Becoming Qualified

Also in Step 3, the certifying authority will review the QRB's recommendation on certifying the employee, and confer upon the employee "qualified" status.

Step 3: Working as a Qualified INSP

As a qualified INSP, Nick deploys to several more incidents over the next few years.

On some of those incidents, he now has INSP trainees shadowing him in his role, and he shows these trainees how to perform the INSP responsibilities.

When not deployed, Nick continues his PFT duties in Mitigation.

He continues his professional development, discussing with his supervisor additional training that will help open opportunities for him to advance within FEMA. For Nick, this has included a mix of technical, leadership, and operations training courses, some of which are outside of Nick's assigned cadre.

FQS Process: Required for Qualification in All Positions

For each new position in which an employee seeks to become qualified, he or she must follow the FQS qualification process.

FQS Advancement

After several deployments as a qualified INSP, Nick's supervisor recommends that Nick advance to a SITL.

While retaining his qualified INSP status, Nick receives his SITL PTB and Position Qualification Sheet from the certifying official. This makes Nick eligible to deploy either as a qualified INSP or as a SITL trainee.

Over time, Nick continues to advance through the Planning Progression Flow Chart, and eventually becomes qualified as a Planning Section Chief.

Lesson Summary

This lesson covered the FQS process applied to a hypothetical FEMA employee.

This lesson concludes this introductory training on the FQS and QRBs.

For more information on FQS, or if you have additional questions, feel free to:

- Contact the FQS Call Center at 1-855-377-FEMA
- Email the FQS mailbox at FEMA-FQS-Program@fema.dhs.gov
- Visit the FQS Web Page at <http://www.fema.gov/fqs>