

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/information-employees/fema-qualification-system>