

(a) The employee's performance must be at an acceptable level of competence, as defined in this subpart. To be determined at an acceptable level of competence, the employee's most recent rating of record (as defined in § 430.203 of this chapter) shall be at least Level 3 ("Fully Successful" or equivalent).

(1) When a within-grade increase decision is not consistent with the employee's most recent rating of record a more current rating of record must be prepared.

(2) The rating of record used as the basis for an acceptable level of competence determination for a within-grade increase must have been assigned no earlier than the most recently completed appraisal period.

(b) The employee must have completed the required waiting period for advancement to the next higher step of the grade of his or her position.

(c) The employee must not have received an equivalent increase during the waiting period.

[51 FR 8420, Mar. 11, 1986, as amended at 58 FR 65536, Dec. 15, 1993; 60 FR 43948, Aug. 23, 1995]

§ 531.405 Waiting periods for within-grade increase.

(a) *Length of waiting period.* (1) For an employee with a scheduled tour of duty, the waiting periods for advancement to the next higher step in all General Schedule grades (or the next higher rate within the grade, as defined in § 531.403) are:

(i) Rate of basic pay less than the rate of basic pay at step 4-52 calendar weeks of creditable service;

(ii) Rate of basic pay equal to or greater than the rate of basic pay at step 4 and less than the rate of basic pay at step 7-104 calendar weeks of creditable service; and

(iii) Rate of basic pay equal to or greater than the rate of basic pay at step 7-156 calendar weeks of creditable service.

(2) For an employee without a scheduled tour of duty, the waiting periods for advancement to the next higher step of all General Schedule grades (or the next higher rate within the grade, as defined in § 531.403) are:

(i) Rate of basic pay less than the rate of basic pay at step 4-260 days of creditable service in a pay status over a period of not less than 52 calendar weeks;

(ii) Rate of basic pay equal to or greater than the rate of basic pay at step 4 and less than the rate of basic pay at step 7-520 days of creditable service in a pay status over a period of not less than 104 calendar weeks; and

(iii) Rate of basic pay equal to or greater than the rate of basic pay at step 7-780 days of creditable service in a pay status over a period of not less than 156 calendar weeks.

(b) *Commencement of a waiting period.* A waiting period begins;

(1) On the first appointment as an employee of the Federal Government, regardless of tenure;

(2) On receiving an equivalent increase; or

(3) After a period of nonpay status or a break in service (alone or in combination) in excess of 52 calendar weeks, unless the nonpay status or break in service is creditable service under § 531.406 of this subpart.

(c) A waiting period is not interrupted by non-workdays intervening between an employee's last scheduled workday in one position and his or her first scheduled workday in a new position.

[46 FR 2319, Jan. 9, 1981, as amended at 58 FR 65536, Dec. 15, 1993; 59 FR 40794, Aug. 10, 1994]

§ 531.406 Creditable service.

(a) *General.* Civilian employment in any branch of the Federal Government (executive, legislative, or judicial) or with a Government corporation as defined in section 103 of title 5, United States Code, is creditable service in the computation of a waiting period. Service credit is given during this employment for periods of annual, sick, and other leave with pay; advanced annual and sick leave; service under a temporary or term appointment; and service under an interim appointment made under § 772.102 of this chapter. Depending on the specific provision of law or regulation, service may be creditable for the completion of one waiting period or for the completion of successive waiting periods. Paragraph (b) of this section identifies service which