

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
FOOD SAFETY AND INSPECTION SERVICE
WASHINGTON, DC

FSIS NOTICE

54-22

10/3/22

FY 2022 QUALITY STEP INCREASE INSTRUCTIONS

I. PURPOSE

This notice provides instructions on how FSIS Program Areas are to complete Fiscal Year (FY) 2022 Quality Step Increase (QSI) nominations for their employees. [Departmental Regulation \(DR\) 4040-430, Employee Performance Management](#) and USDA Office of Human Resources Management (OHRM) Advisory Quality Step Increase (QSI) Changes, dated July 15, 2022, set forth the policies for the USDA QSI process. This notice covers the FY 2022 performance rating cycle, ending September 30, 2022.

II. BACKGROUND

The OHRM Advisory updates employee eligibility for QSIs. The updates reduce the timeframe for measuring performance by only requiring the most recent performance appraisal and reducing the length of time when another QSI may be awarded from 24 months to 12.

III. ELIGIBILITY

A. QSIs are reserved for the most exceptional performance. No single accomplishment merits a QSI; it may be granted only to those employees who have demonstrated sustained exceptional performance, commensurate with the classification of the employee's position, over at least a 12-month period in the same grade and type of position.

B. Employees are to meet the following criteria to be considered eligible for a QSI:

1. Be at the full performance level of their position;
2. Have performed in the same grade and type of position for at least 12 months before the end of the appraisal cycle;
3. Be below step 10 of their grade level;
4. Received a rating of record of Fully Successful in FY 2022;
5. Not have received a QSI within the previous 52 weeks;
6. Have demonstrated sustained performance of the highest quality, and demonstrably above the expectations defined at the Fully Successful level of their performance plan; and

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7. Have attained accomplishments that contributed substantially to the organization's goals, commensurate with the classification of their position.

IV. RECOMMENDATIONS

- A. Each FSIS Program Area is provided with allocations for the number of QSIs that may be granted. The allocations vary annually. Requests for additional QSI allocations may be made to the Office of Human Resources and will be considered by the Office of the Administrator on a case-by-case basis.
- B. Each Program Area is to submit a [Form AD-3115](#), *Recommendation and Authorization of Quality Step Increase* for each QSI nominee by the due date communicated to the FSIS Management Council via e-mail, which will also include their QSI allocations.
- C. [Form AD-3115](#) is to be prepared by either the nominee's first level or second level supervisor.
- D. The AA is to provide final approval for their respective Program Area's QSI nominations.

V. SUBMITTING RECOMMENDATIONS

Designated Program Area points of contact are to submit completed and signed QSI packages to the FSIS Awards mailbox at FSISAwards@usda.gov by the due date.

VI. QUESTIONS

Refer questions regarding this notice to FSISHR1@usda.gov with the subject "QSI Policy."



Assistant Administrator
Office of Policy and Program Management