



Natural Resources Conservation Service
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Helping People Help the Land

Is that something you would like to do?

Picture Yourself





Quick Qualification Guide for typical

USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) positions



Quick Qualification Guide for Typical USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) Positions

Position	Degree	Curriculum
Natural Resources Specialist, GS-401	Biological sciences, agriculture, natural resource management, chemistry, or related disciplines appropriate to the position.	Successful completion of a full 4-year course of study in an accredited college or university leading to a bachelor's or higher degree that included a major field of study listed here. OR 24 semester hours of related course work that would be accepted as part of the program majors listed here.
Rangeland Management Specialist, GS-454	Range management or a related discipline 	Study must have included at least 42 semester hours in a combination of the plant, animal, and soil sciences, and natural resources management, as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Range Management: At least 18 semester hours of course work in range management, including courses in such areas as basic principles of range management, range plants, range ecology, range inventories, range studies, range improvements, and ranch or rangeland planning. • Directly Related Plant, Animal, and Soil Sciences: At least 15 semester hours of directly related courses in the plant, animal, and soil sciences, including at least one course in each of these three scientific areas, i.e., plant, animal, and soil sciences. Courses in areas such as plant taxonomy, plant physiology, plant ecology, animal nutrition, livestock production, and soil morphology or soil classification are acceptable. • Related Resource Management Studies: At least 9 semester hours of course work in related resource management subjects, including courses in areas such as wildlife management, watershed management, natural resource or agricultural economics, forestry, agronomy, forages, and outdoor recreation management.
Soil Conservationist, GS-457	Soil conservation or a related agricultural or natural resource discipline such as agronomy, soil science, forestry, agricultural education, or agricultural engineering	Study must have included 30 semester hours in a natural resource or agricultural field, including at least 12 semester hours in a combination of soils and crops or plant science. Of the 12 semester hours, a minimum of 3 semester hours must have been in soils and 3 semester hours in crops or plant science.
Soil Science, GS-470	Soil science or a closely related discipline	Study must have included 30 semester hours or equivalent in biological, physical, or earth science, with a minimum of 15 semester hours in such subjects as soil genesis, pedology, soil chemistry, soil physics, and soil fertility.
Agronomist, GS-471	Agronomy or related discipline of science	Study must have included at least 30 semester hours of course work in the basic plant sciences, including at least 15 semester hours in agronomic subjects, such as those dealing with plant breeding, crop production, and soil and crop management.
Civil or Agricultural Engineers, GS-810 or 890	Engineering 	To be acceptable, the program must: (1) lead to a bachelor's degree in a school of engineering with at least one program accredited by the Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology (ABET); or (2) include differential and integral calculus and courses (more advanced than first-year physics and chemistry) in five of the following seven areas of engineering science or physics: (a) statics, dynamics; (b) strength of materials (stress-strain relationships); (c) fluid mechanics, hydraulics; (d) thermodynamics; (e) electrical fields and circuits; (f) nature and properties of materials (relating particle and aggregate structure to properties); and (g) any other comparable area of fundamental engineering science or physics, such as optics, heat transfer, soil mechanics, or electronics.