



**United States Department of Agriculture**

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Packers and Stockyards  
Administration

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TO: FGIS POLICY BULLETIN BOARD

FROM: Samantha Simon, Director /s/ *Samantha Simon*  
Field Management Division

SUBJECT: Accuracy Requirements for Written and Practical Inspector  
Exams

ORIGINATING OFFICE: Policies, Procedures, and Market Analysis Branch

## 1. PURPOSE

This policy memorandum serves to notify all official service providers (OSP) that FGIS is clarifying and revising the “passing score” requirement for written and practical exams for functions performed under the authority of the U.S. Grain Standards Act (USGSA) and the Agricultural Marketing Act of 1946 (AMA), for both Licensed Inspectors (LI) and FGIS Agricultural Commodity Graders (ACG).

This policy memorandum also serves to notify all OSPs that all classes of licenses for inspectors will terminate every five years, in accordance with the reauthorization of the USGSA in 2015.

## 2. BACKGROUND

LIs and ACGs provide official service using the same standards and procedures. In order to be licensed to perform inspection and weighing functions, official personnel, whether employed by FGIS or an official agency, are required to take written and practical examinations to demonstrate proficiency in the full range of technical areas as well as knowledge of the USGSA, AMA, and Regulations.

Under Administrative directive 4335.3, dated 1978, an ACG must achieve a proficiency evaluation score of at least 70% to be authorized. Conversely, per FGIS Directive 9230.1, dated 9-4-00, a minimum score of 80% on an examination is the requirement for official agency personnel to become licensed. However, FGIS Directive 9230.1 was not fully implemented after it was introduced.

FGIS believes that all persons providing official service should be held to the same standard of proficiency. Additionally, FGIS believes the minimally successful score for proficiency is 80%, based on a review of separations. Therefore, FGIS is harmonizing the passing score requirement for written and practical type examinations (e.g. analysis of interpretive factors) to provide uniformity for all LIs and ACGs. This Policy Bulletin serves to clarify and enforce the 80% passing score requirement.

Further, the reauthorization of the USGSA in 2015 required that all classes of licenses for inspectors terminate every five years, whereas previously inspector licenses terminated after three years.

### **3. POLICY**

Effective November 1, 2016, all written and practical examinations require a minimum passing score of 80%. Official personnel already licensed or authorized are automatically grandfathered in and are not required to retake examinations. Personnel who are licensed or authorized for some grains and/or commodities, but must take additional examinations, are required to achieve a minimum score of 80%.

### **4. PROCEDURES**

After the Board of Appeals and Review grades an ACG proficiency evaluation, the score is written on paper and filed with the ACGs personnel file. The only change for FGIS personnel is that a score of 80% or more is considered passing whereas previously 70% or more was considered passing.

The FGIS Official Service Provider Licensing (FOL) program will be configured to accommodate a minimum passing score of 80% for licensing tests taken after November 1, 2016. Additionally, to conform to the 2015 reauthorization of the USGSA, the FOL program will be configured to terminate licenses after five years for new and renewing licenses issued after July 29, 2016.

## **5. FILING INSTRUCTIONS**

Retain a copy of this bulletin with Directive 9230.1, dated 9-4-00, until the directive and the Licensing Handbook have been updated to reflect the change. Field Office managers must ensure that a copy of this memorandum is provided to official agencies operating within their circuit. A copy of this bulletin should also be kept with Administrative Directive 4335.3, dated 1978.

## **6. QUESTIONS**

Direct any questions regarding this procedure to the local Field Office or to Patrick McCluskey, Policies, Procedures, and Market Analysis Branch at [Patrick.J.McCluskey@usda.gov](mailto:Patrick.J.McCluskey@usda.gov) or (816) 659-8403.