COURSE SYLLABUS

Federal Classification Principles Course

Learn to classify and analyze General Schedule (GS) positions by mastering federal classification principles, procedures, and evaluation systems.

Group classes (Live Online) and onsite training are available for this course. For more information, email onsite@graduateschool.edu or visit: https://sdfm.graduateschool.edu/courses/federal-classification-principles



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Course Outline

Module 1: The General Schedule (GS) System & Primary References

- Trace how classification history shaped today's GS structure and grade definitions.
- Differentiate the two GS approaches: quantitative FES vs. non-quantitative narrative.
- Identify core references (Introduction to PCS, Classifier's Handbook, Occupational Groups & Families, Digest).
- Review GS building blocks (occupational groups, series, grades, factors) and the classifier's toolkit.

Module 2: FES, Job Family Standards, and Classification Guides

- Apply the FES framework: nine factors, factor-level descriptions, and the grade conversion table.
- Follow step-by-step FES procedures: select series, compare factors, assign points, total, and document.
- Use Job Family Standards to evaluate multiple related series efficiently.
- Leverage classification guides and PD cover-sheet requirements to support determinations.

Module 3: The Narrative System

- Classify positions by "best fit" against narrative grade-level criteria (no point values).
- Decide when narrative evaluation is appropriate vs. FES, based on occupation and standards.
- Document rationale linking duties to narrative levels and precedent for defensible results.

Module 4: Introduction to GS Leaders, Supervisors, and Managers

- Distinguish work leaders, team leaders, supervisors, and managers across the GS continuum.
- Understand how leader/supervisory coverage connects to evaluation guides (e.g., GSLGEG, GSSG).
- Relate scope, complexity, and delegated authorities to titles, series, and grades.

Module 5: Guiding Principles for Federal Classification

- Reinforce Merit System Principles and avoid Prohibited Personnel Practices in all decisions.
- Promote equity, consistency, and legal sufficiency across organizations.
- Recognize "factors not considered" for grade decisions and apply non-classification remedies.

Module 6: Putting It All Together

- Integrate GS references, FES, narrative methods, and leader/supervisory guidance in a capstone case.

- Write PDs and evaluation statements that align with standards and withstand review.
- Produce complete classification packages with clear documentation and QA checks.