

Federal Performance Management Course

Develop the skills to evaluate, track, and improve employee performance in alignment with federal performance management systems.

Group classes in Live Online and onsite training is available for this course. For more information, email onsite@graduateschool.edu or visit: <https://sdfm.graduateschool.edu/courses/federal-performance-management>



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Course Outline

Module 1: Introduction and Overview

- Review the federal performance management landscape, history, and merit system principles.
- Explain the OPM performance management model and 2025 updates that align plans to mission and policy priorities.
- Define the basis for all performance decisions and the “performance management process” (plan—monitor—develop—rate—reward).
- Contrast traditional Title 5 and alternative systems (e.g., pay banding, pay-for-performance) and their implications.

Module 2: Planning and Measuring Performance

- Link organizational mission/strategic goals to unit and individual expectations.
- Identify performance elements (critical/noncritical) and write measurable standards.
- Select appropriate measures—quality, quantity, timeliness, cost-effectiveness, manner of performance.
- Tailor generic standards and document expectations clearly in written plans.
- Communicate expectations effectively and verify employee understanding.

Module 3: Monitoring Performance

- Track progress against elements and standards through ongoing check-ins and milestones.
- Provide timely feedback and course corrections using skillful listening and clear documentation.
- Diagnose root causes of gaps (resources, skills, clarity) and adjust plans when warranted.
- Maintain records that support fair mid-year discussions and end-of-cycle decisions.

Module 4: Developing Employees

- Identify development needs tied to mission goals and performance elements.
- Use coaching, training, stretch assignments, and job aids to build capability.
- Create and update development plans that target measurable outcomes.
- Reinforce engagement and accountability through collaborative goal setting.

Module 5: Rating Performance

- Summarize performance against standards and apply rating levels consistently.

- Write clear narratives that tie evidence to elements, avoiding common rating errors.
- Ensure ratings reflect meaningful distinctions and contributions to agency goals.
- Communicate results constructively and outline next-cycle expectations.

Module 6: Performance Consequences

- Connect ratings to rewards and recognition in alignment with agency policy.
- Address unacceptable performance via swift, standards-based actions where required.
- Leverage performance information for workforce decisions (development, reassignment).
- Promote a performance culture that values fairness, equity, and mission results.