

Personnel Security and Suitability Adjudication Course

Master the principles and procedures of personnel security and suitability adjudication to make informed determinations on security clearances and federal employment eligibility.

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/personnel-security-and-suitability-adjudication>



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Course Outline

Module 1: Introduction to Suitability and Fitness Adjudication

- Understanding the fundamentals of suitability and fitness adjudication.
- Key concepts and guidelines as per 5 CFR 731.
- Differences between adjudication for suitability and fitness, and security clearance determinations.

Module 2: Position Risk Designations, Reciprocity, and Subject Engagement

- Designating positions based on risk levels (Public Trust vs. National Security).
- Understanding the investigative products provided by OPM/DCSA.
- Analyzing reciprocity and subject engagement procedures.

Module 3: Suitability and Fitness Factors

- Review of the nine key suitability and fitness factors for federal employment.
- Exploring disqualifying and mitigating conditions for each factor.
- Understanding how to apply these factors in real-life adjudication cases.

Module 4: Suitability and Fitness Preemployment Screening/Vetting Process

- Performing preemployment screenings for potential suitability and fitness issues.
- Understanding the role of the OF-306 form in screening applicants.
- Applying the suitability and fitness referral guidelines.

Module 5: Traditional Suitability and Fitness Adjudication Determination Guidelines

- Step-by-step process for making suitability and fitness determinations.
- Characterizing suitability issues and applying upgrades or downgrades.
- Determining the impact of patterns and additional considerations.

Module 6: OPM's Suitability and Fitness Adjudication Determination Process

- Differences between traditional adjudication and OPM's new process.

- Understanding OPM's role and responsibilities in adjudicating suitability cases.
- Using the new OPM determination worksheets to make decisions.

Module 7: Evidence: Supporting Your Determination

- Understanding the burden of proof in suitability and fitness cases.
- Assessing the probative weight of evidence and supporting documentation.
- Exploring options for resolving issues and safeguarding investigation materials.

Module 8: Identifying Merit Fraud

- Recognizing different types of merit fraud cases and their impact on suitability determinations.
- Identifying bogus degrees and false qualifications.
- Adjudicator's responsibilities in handling merit fraud cases.

Module 9: Taking Action in Suitability and Fitness Cases: Unfavorable Determinations

- Steps for taking unfavorable suitability or fitness actions under 5 CFR 731.
- Understanding the appeals process and the role of the Merit Systems Protection Board (MSPB).
- Agency and OPM actions on unfavorable determinations.

Module 10: Significant Precedent-Setting Cases

- Discussion of significant cases that set precedents in suitability and fitness adjudication.
- Reviewing key legal cases and their impact on future adjudications.

Module 11: Decision Standards for National Security Positions: Executive Order 12968

- Understanding the coverage and requirements of Executive Order 12968.
- How the order affects the adjudication of national security positions.
- Key decision standards for eligibility for access to classified information.

Module 12: National Security Adjudicative Guidelines for Determining Eligibility for Access to Classified Information or Eligibility to Hold a Sensitive Position

- Reviewing the National Security Adjudicative Guidelines for personnel security determinations.
- Exploring the disqualifying and mitigating conditions for national security positions.
- Discussing eligibility requirements for access to classified information.