COURSE SYLLABUS

Position Classification Course (Washington, D.C.)

Master the skills to classify federal positions, write evaluation statements, and apply classification standards for General Schedule (GS) positions.

> Group classes (Washington, DC) and onsite training are available for this course.
> For more information, email onsite@graduateschool.edu or visit: https://sdfm.graduateschool.edu/courses/position-classification



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Course Outline

Module 1: Introduction to Federal Classification

- Review the history and purpose of federal position classification and how it underpins other HR functions.
- Compare the two evaluation methods used in government (non-quantitative narrative vs. quantitative FES).
- Understand the role of job-related “factors” as the common denominator across systems.

Module 2: The General Schedule System

- Explain the legal basis (5 U.S.C. §5104) and 15-grade structure of the GS system.
- Identify components: occupational groups, series, grades, and factors.
- Use core OPM references (Intro to PCS, Classifier’s Handbook, Occupational Groups & Families, Digests).

Module 3: The Factor Evaluation System (FES)

- Apply the nine standard factors, defined levels, and point values to determine grade.
- Use the Primary Standard, occupational standards, and job family standards (and know when benchmarks/illustrations apply).
- Follow procedures to evaluate positions, total points, and document determinations.

Module 4: The Narrative System

- Classify positions by “best fit” against narrative grade-level criteria (no points involved).
- Recognize narrative factors and steps for evaluating and documenting results.
- Contrast narrative with FES to choose the appropriate approach.

Module 5: Writing Evaluation Statements

- Know when and why to prepare an evaluation statement and what it must substantiate.
- Organize content: references, background, series/title determination, grade determination, and factor analysis.
- Use clear analysis and examples to support pay plan/series/grade decisions.

Module 6: Position Descriptions

- Define responsibilities for management, HR, and incumbents in developing PDs.

- Write FES-style PDs: major duties plus Factors 1–9 (knowledge through work environment).
- Complete OF-8/cover-sheet blocks and other PD features to support downstream HR actions.

Module 7: Classification Guides

- Use OPM guides (e.g., Grade Level Guide for Clerical & Assistance Work, Administrative Analysis GEG, Research GEG).
- Apply the General Schedule Supervisory Guide where leadership/supervision is present.
- Select the right guide and evaluation criteria for the work being classified.

Module 8: General Schedule Leaders, Supervisors, and Managers

- Differentiate work leaders, team leaders, and supervisors along the management continuum.
- Apply the General Schedule Leader Grade Evaluation Guide (Parts I & II) and the GSSG.
- Determine title/series/grade by applying GSSG factors and criteria to position summaries.

Module 9: Introduction to the Federal Job Grading System

- Trace history, references, and structure (families, series, job grading standards).
- Understand coding plan, pay categories, grade levels, and key ranking jobs.
- Evaluate trades & labor jobs using the four factors and the job-grading method.

Module 10: Fair Labor Standards Act

- Determine FLSA coverage and apply exemption criteria (executive, administrative, professional, computer).
- Document determinations and ensure alignment with OPM/agency guidance.

Module 11: Classification Appeals

- Identify what can be appealed and the processes for GS.
- Prepare complete appeal documentation and understand possible outcomes.

Module 12: Guiding Principles for Federal Classification

- Reinforce Merit System Principles and avoid Prohibited Personnel Practices.
- Apply guiding principles to ensure equity, consistency, and legal sufficiency in classification.