

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 in Washington, DC and onsite training is 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.