

Federal Labor Relations Course (Intermediate)

Build the in-depth knowledge of federal labor relations needed to advise management and effectively handle scope of bargaining, negotiations, grievances, unfair labor practices, and more.

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



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Course Outline

Module 1: Historical Overview

- Trace the development of U.S. unionism and federal-sector labor relations leading to the CSRA.
- Explain how executive orders and legislation shaped today's federal LR framework.
- Connect labor-management history to current day bargaining and dispute practices.

Module 2: Legal Principles and Third Parties

- Summarize the Labor-Management Relations Statute (5 U.S.C. Chapter 71) and its key provisions.
- Differentiate rights and responsibilities of employees, management (§7106), and unions.
- Identify roles of FLRA, FMCS, FSIP, arbitrators, and DOL in the LR system.

Module 3: Representation and Meetings

- Apply union representation rights and duties under 5 U.S.C. §7114.
- Determine when meetings are "formal discussions" requiring union presence.
- Exercise Weingarten rights during investigatory interviews.

Module 4: Scope of Bargaining

- Distinguish prohibited, permissive (§7106(b)(1)), and mandatory subjects of bargaining.
- Analyze negotiability issues tied to management rights and appropriate arrangements.
- Address other scope topics including procedures and implementation details.

Module 5: Negotiations and Applying the Contract

- Plan for term and mid-term bargaining; prepare teams, data, and strategies.
- Use models and techniques that prevent negotiability disputes and impasses.
- Navigate FMCS/FSIP processes, agency-head review, ratification, and contract signing.
- Interpret and apply the agreement; manage changes during negotiations.

Module 6: Role of the Union Steward

- Clarify steward responsibilities and representational boundaries.
- Practice day-to-day interactions grounded in the “robust debate” principle.
- Address and de-escalate abusive conduct while maintaining statutory rights.

Module 7: Official Time

- Define official time purposes and limits under the Statute and case law.
- Document, approve, and control official time use with practical methods.
- Resolve disputes over reasonableness and availability.

Module 8: Information Requests

- Meet §7114(b)(4) requirements for furnishing data to the exclusive representative.
- Establish and evaluate “particularized need.”
- Balance disclosure with confidentiality, privacy, and security constraints.

Module 9: Grievances

- Design and follow negotiated grievance procedures through binding arbitration.
- Assess grievability/arbitrability and select appropriate remedies.
- Coordinate, document, and settle grievances effectively.

Module 10: Unfair Labor Practices (ULPs)

- Identify management and union ULPs, defenses, and remedies.
- Follow FLRA Office of General Counsel investigation processes.
- Implement preventive practices to reduce ULP exposure.

Module 11: Consultation Rights

- Explain national consultation rights and when they apply.
- Integrate consultation into agency policy development and changes.

Module 12: Developing and Working Proposals

- Draft clear, negotiable proposals and counterproposals aligned with mission and law.
- Assess impact/costs and prepare justification packages.
- Refine language to avoid unintended obligations and negotiability pitfalls.