COURSE SYLLABUS

Personnel Security and Suitability Adjudication Course (Self-Paced)

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

> Group classes (Live Online) and onsite training are available for this course. For more information, email onsite@graduateschool.edu or visit: https://www.graduateschool.edu/courses/personnel-security-and-suitability-adjudication-course-self-paced



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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.