COURSE SYLLABUS

Suitability and Fitness Adjudication Course

Adjudicators who are authorized by their agencies to handle suitability case processing and adjudication as delegated by OPM under Title 5 CFR, Part 731.

> 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/suitability-and-fitness-adjudication



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Course Outline

Module 1: Introduction to Suitability and Fitness Adjudication

- Overview of suitability and fitness adjudication regulations.
- Roles and responsibilities of agencies, OPM, and adjudicators in the suitability and fitness process.
- Understanding the concept of "fitness" and "suitability" for federal employment.

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

- Designating federal public trust and national security positions based on risk levels.
- Understanding the investigative products provided by OPM/DCSA and how reciprocity applies.
- Recognizing the role of subject engagement in the suitability and fitness process.

Module 3: Suitability and Fitness Factors

- Understanding the nine suitability and fitness factors outlined in 5 CFR 731.
- Applying these factors to suitability and fitness issues and evaluating mitigating conditions.
- Recognizing the relationship between suitability, fitness, and qualifications for federal employment.

Module 4: Suitability and Fitness Pre-Employment Screening/Vetting Process

- Performing pre-employment screenings to identify suitability and fitness issues.
- Using the OF-306 form for initial screenings and referrals for adjudication.
- Applying suitability and fitness referral guidelines during the vetting process.

Module 5: Traditional Suitability and Fitness Adjudication Determination Guidelines

- Understanding the traditional suitability and fitness adjudication determination process.
- Applying the issue characterization chart and considering the recency and frequency of issues.
- Applying upgrades, downgrades, and additional considerations during adjudication.

Module 6: OPM’s New Suitability and Fitness Adjudication Determination Process

- Exploring the differences between traditional adjudication and OPM's new process.
- Understanding how to use OPM’s new worksheet for suitability and fitness determinations.

Module 7: Evidence – Supporting Your Determination

- Understanding the burden of proof in suitability and fitness cases.
- Identifying types of evidence and materials relied upon in adjudication.
- Exploring options for issue resolution and ensuring the dissemination and safeguarding of investigation materials.

Module 8: Identifying Merit Fraud

- Recognizing various types of merit fraud and the adjudicator's role when merit fraud is found.
- Understanding the importance of maintaining the integrity of the merit system.

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

- Understanding the steps involved in taking unfavorable actions under 5 CFR 731.
- Exploring the appeals process and the role of the Merit Systems Protection Board (MSPB) in suitability cases.

Module 10: Significant Precedent-Setting Cases

- Examining significant and precedent-setting cases in suitability and fitness adjudication.
- Understanding how case law influences future suitability and fitness decisions.