COURSE SYLLABUS

FPM: Entry Level Certificate Program

The Entry Level FAC-P/PM certificate provides federal professionals with essential knowledge of the project and program management life cycle, contracting fundamentals, cost and financial principles, and leadership skills required in the acquisition environment. This program builds the foundation needed to contribute effectively to federal projects, PMOs, and Integrated Project Teams.

> 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/fpm-entry-level-certificate-program

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Course Outline

FAC-P/PM: Entry Level Certificate Program

FPM 131: Fundamentals of Project and Program Management

Module 1: Federal Acquisition Overview

- Explain the purpose, goals, and structure of the Federal Acquisition System.
- Identify key stakeholders and their roles in the acquisition environment.
- Describe how the project management function supports agency mission outcomes.
- Recognize the relationship between acquisition planning, budgeting, and requirements management.

Module 2: Requirements Development and Program Management

- Define mission-driven requirements that align with strategic objectives.
- Translate stakeholder needs into measurable performance outcomes.
- Apply requirement traceability to manage scope and control change.
- Demonstrate how effective requirement management supports acquisition success.

Module 3: Systems Engineering

- Explain the systems engineering process and its role in federal program management.
- Identify how technical baselines are established and controlled throughout the project life cycle.
- Apply system decomposition and interface management principles to ensure solution integrity.
- Integrate risk management and configuration control within technical planning.

Module 4: Test and Evaluation

- Describe the purpose and phases of test and evaluation in the acquisition lifecycle.
- Develop simple verification methods to assess whether requirements are met.

- Differentiate between developmental and operational testing activities.
- Explain how test results inform milestone and investment decisions.

Module 5: Life-Cycle Logistics

- Define life-cycle logistics and its role in sustaining systems over time.
- Identify planning considerations for maintenance, supply, and disposal.
- Evaluate how supportability decisions affect total ownership cost.
- Discuss the importance of planning for sustainment during early acquisition phases.

Module 6: Putting It All Together

- Integrate requirements, systems engineering, test, and logistics into a unified project plan.
- Develop a high-level acquisition strategy that addresses technical, cost, and schedule factors.
- Collaborate in a simulated Integrated Project Team (IPT) to balance competing priorities.
- Present project recommendations that demonstrate understanding of acquisition integration.

FPM 132: Fundamentals of Contracting

Module 1: Federal Acquisition Overview

- Describe the guiding principles of the Federal Acquisition System and the FAR.
- Identify the roles and responsibilities of Contracting Officers, CORs, and Program Managers.
- Explain how the acquisition lifecycle supports agency mission execution.
- Recognize the project manager’s responsibility for acquisition oversight.

Module 2: Acquisition Planning

- Conduct market research to inform acquisition strategy decisions.
- Determine appropriate contract types based on risk, complexity, and performance requirements.
- Draft elements of a Statement of Work (SOW) or Performance Work Statement (PWS).
- Prepare pre-solicitation documentation aligned with project objectives and funding.

Module 3: Contract Formation

- Outline the solicitation and evaluation process that leads to contract award.
- Identify key solicitation sections and how technical evaluation criteria are developed.
- Describe the program manager’s role in source selection and proposal review.
- Explain how pricing, past performance, and risk affect award decisions.

Module 4: Contract Performance and Administration

- Monitor contractor performance against cost, schedule, and quality targets.
- Coordinate with the COR and KO to address modifications, disputes, or delays.
- Apply proper procedures for managing change orders or scope adjustments.
- Describe the documentation and reporting required during contract execution.

Module 5: Putting It All Together

- Develop an integrated acquisition plan that addresses planning, formation, and administration.
- Apply best practices for communication and collaboration with acquisition stakeholders.
- Evaluate a case study to identify risks and improvement opportunities in contract execution.
- Summarize lessons learned and how they apply to the participant’s work environment.

FPM 133: Fundamentals of Business, Cost, and Financial Management

Module 1: Building Business Cases

- Define the elements and purpose of a project business case.
- Identify qualitative and quantitative decision factors that support investment justification.
- Develop an initial problem statement, alternatives analysis, and recommendation.
- Explain how the business case supports agency strategic goals and budget requests.

Module 2: Cost Estimating

- Apply common cost estimating techniques, including analogy, parametric, and bottom-up methods.
- Develop a Work Breakdown Structure (WBS) to organize project costs.
- Document cost assumptions, constraints, and risk factors.
- Validate estimates by comparing them with historical data or benchmarks.

Module 3: Federal Budgeting

- Explain the federal budget cycle and how it impacts project funding.
- Identify major appropriation types and their allowable uses.
- Describe the roles of OMB, Congress, and agencies in budget formulation and execution.
- Recognize common funding constraints, such as the Anti-Deficiency Act and continuing resolutions.

Module 4: Allocating Funds

- Allocate funds across project phases in compliance with appropriation law.
- Develop time-phased spending plans linked to project schedules.
- Identify indicators of potential funding shortfalls or overruns.
- Apply corrective actions when project spending deviates from plan.

Module 5: Performance Measures

- Identify key performance indicators (KPIs) that monitor project health.
- Relate performance metrics to cost, schedule, and technical progress.
- Interpret performance data to assess whether corrective action is needed.
- Communicate results effectively to senior management and stakeholders.

Module 6: Earned Value Management

- Calculate and interpret key EVM metrics, including EV, PV, AC, CPI, and SPI.
- Assess cost and schedule variances and determine project status.
- Forecast project completion cost using Estimate at Completion (EAC).
- Use EVM data to support performance-based management decisions.

Module 7: Putting It All Together

- Integrate cost estimation, budgeting, and EVM into a single financial management plan.
- Develop and present a business case supported by quantitative analysis.
- Apply learned techniques to a project scenario through team-based exercises.
- Evaluate the financial health of a sample program and propose improvement actions.

FPM 134: Fundamentals of Leading Projects and Programs

Module 1: Leadership and the Project Manager

- Distinguish between managing processes and leading people.
- Identify traits and behaviors of effective project leaders.
- Apply emotional intelligence principles to build team trust and motivation.
- Demonstrate ethical and professional behavior in leadership decisions.

Module 2: Fostering Accountability

- Set clear, measurable performance expectations for team members.
- Use coaching and feedback techniques to reinforce accountability.
- Recognize and address underperformance constructively.
- Create a team culture of ownership and mutual responsibility.

Module 3: Building Relationships, Solving Problems, and Managing Conflict

- Identify common sources of conflict in project environments.
- Apply the Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode framework to manage conflict effectively.
- Use collaborative problem-solving techniques to reach mutually beneficial outcomes.
- Strengthen team relationships through trust and open communication.

Module 4: Leadership and Communication

- Communicate clearly and persuasively with diverse stakeholder groups.
- Adapt messages and communication channels for different audiences.
- Practice active listening and constructive feedback in project settings.
- Develop communication plans that promote transparency and alignment.

Module 5: Serving the Acquisition Customer

- Define who the customer is in a federal acquisition context.
- Align project outputs and team priorities with customer and mission needs.
- Balance stakeholder interests while upholding fairness and procurement integrity.
- Demonstrate commitment to customer satisfaction and ethical decision-making.