

Frequently Asked Questions – IT 2210 Competency-Based Position Classification Standard (PCS)

1. What is the purpose of the updated IT 2210 Competency-Based Position Classification Standard?

The PCS provides updated series definitions, titling instructions, occupational information, and grade-level evaluation criteria for administrative IT positions. The newly updated classification standard modernizes classification guidance to reflect today's IT functions, technologies, and organizational needs.

2. Who is covered under the 2210 Information Technology Management Series?

The series covers two-grade interval administrative positions that manage, oversee, develop, deliver, secure, or support information technology systems and services across the federal enterprise. This includes work in IT Operations & Security, IT Development & Analysis, and IT Strategy & Planning.

3. How does the PCS distinguish between IT Workers and IT Users?

IT Workers (classified to 2210) perform duties where IT knowledge is the paramount requirement, such as system administration, cybersecurity, systems design, and enterprise IT planning.

IT Users rely heavily on IT tools to perform non-IT work but do not directly develop, deliver, or support IT systems. These positions belong in the appropriate subject matter- series, not the 2210 series.

4. What are the three primary IT clusters described in the PCS?

IT Operations and Security – Systems engineering, systems administration, cybersecurity, customer support, and network operations.

IT Development and Analysis – Software development, application engineering, data management, systems analysis, and web/internet services.

IT Strategy and Planning – Enterprise architecture, IT policy, capital planning, strategic governance, and organizational IT planning.

5. Why does the PCS emphasize competencies?

Competencies are essential to skills based- hiring, assessment, classification, and workforce development. The PCS links competencies to Factor 1 (“Knowledge Required”) and aligns classification elements with modern competency models, enabling agencies to hire and develop the workforce based on demonstrable skills and capabilities, not credentials alone.

6. How should agencies use competencies when classifying IT 2210 positions?

Competencies help identify the paramount knowledge and skill requirements of a position.

- They support accurate grade level determination through Factor 1.
- They guide hiring managers and HR in identifying required technical skills and supplementary competencies for recruitment and assessment.

Agencies may also use selective factors where appropriate.

7. What role does automation and emerging technology play in classification?

While IT tools (e.g., AI, automation, cloud services) change how work is performed, they do not change the paramount knowledge needed to classify a position. Classification depends on what work is done, not on the tools used to complete it. Tools may enhance performance but do not drive series determination.

8. How should HR Specialists determine whether work belongs in the 2210 series or another series?

Refer to the PCS’s Additional Occupational Considerations, which outline when IT-related duties do not justify placement in 2210. For example, when:

- HR, accounting, or program knowledge is paramount
- The position is a technical support role (e.g., 0335, 0332)
- Work reflects professional science, engineering, math, or data science series

The PCS includes a detailed crosswalk with examples.

9. What documents or factors should be used to assign grades?

Agencies should use:

- Factor Level Descriptions (FLDs) for Factors 1–9
- Factor Illustrations as reference points (not hard requirements)
- The Grade Conversion Table for GS-5 through GS-15

- The Position Evaluation Summary Worksheet for documentation

10. What is the difference between Factor Level Descriptions and Illustrations?

- FLDs are the authoritative source for assigning factor levels or evaluating work.
- Illustrations are examples intended to clarify work performed at specific grade levels aligned with the most frequent grade levels but should not be used as stand-alone criteria or justification.

11. How does the PCS address cybersecurity work?

Cybersecurity functions fall under IT Operations & Security and/or the title IT Cybersecurity Specialist, with alignment to NICE roles and OPM cyber job codes. Work involving cyber defense, incident response, security architecture, vulnerability analysis, or secure systems is included within 2210, provided the paramount knowledge is IT-based. OPM also considered other agency cyber models when updating this standard.

12. How does the PCS address emerging technologies like AI, cloud, and machine learning?

The PCS acknowledges these technologies as part of the modern IT ecosystem and includes them across clusters and factor examples. They help illustrate work context but do not override the paramount knowledge test for classification.

13. Can agencies use parenthetical or organizational titles?

Yes. Agencies may supplement the official title “Information Technology Specialist” with parenthetical titles (e.g., “(Cybersecurity)”) or organizational/functional titles (e.g., Chief of Network Management) to support recruitment or internal clarity. Official titles must still comply with OPM policy.

14. How do the PCS support enterprise-level workforce planning?

The PCS links classification to:

- Competencies
- Workforce skills validation
- Assessment modernization
- IT strategy and organizational mission alignment

This enables agencies to plan for skills-based recruitment, advancement pathways, and alignment with the broader federal IT strategy.

15. Does the PCS incorporate SOC codes?

Yes. The PCS includes a crosswalk to Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) codes, aligning federal IT work with broader labor categories. These SOC codes do not influence classification decisions but support statistical reporting and align federal/industry skills models.

16. What if a position includes mixed duties or spans multiple IT clusters?

Use the paramount knowledge required, the reason the position exists, and the highest level of work performed to determine the proper series and grade—not the percentage of time spent per task. Mixed duties are common in multi-disciplinary IT environments.

17. How often should agencies revisit classification decisions for IT positions?

Because IT skills and work evolve rapidly, agencies should periodically reassess:

- Work assignments
- Required competencies
- Technical skill requirements
- Grade-level factors

The PCS acknowledges this fast pace and encourages regular updates to organizational classification frameworks on a regular basis or as needed based on signals from the labor market.

18. How long do agencies have to implement the new PCS?

Agencies have 1 year from the date of issuance to implement the new Competency Based IT 2210 PCS.

19. What support will OPM provide to agencies to implement the new IT 2210 PCS?

OPM will provide guidance, resources, and technical assistance to help agencies implement the new Competency-Based IT 2210 Position Classification Standard.