UNITED STATES OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT
Washington, DC 20415

MEMORANDUM

TO: Chief Human Capital Officers and Deputy Chief Human Capital Officers

FROM: Veronica E. Hinton, Associate Director, Workforce Policy and Innovation, U.S. Office of Personnel Management

DATE: November 16, 2026

RE: Issuance of Competency Based Classification Standards for Administrative Occupational Series

The U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) is issuing Competency Based Classification Standards for the administrative occupational series covered by Cycles 1 and 2 of the Reclassification and Requalification (RCRQ) initiative, OPM's effort to modernize classification and qualification standards for more than 600 Federal occupational series around validated skills. The Director's memorandum on the RCRQ initiative dated November 16, 2026, sets out the initiative, its release cadence, and the implementation expectations that apply to every cycle. The series covered by this issuance are:

- 0301, Administration, Operations, and Coordination
- 0306, Government Information Specialist
- 0308, Records and Information Management
- 0340, Program Management
- 0341, Administrative Officer
- 0343, Management and Program Analysis
- 0346, Logistics Management
- 2291, Telecommunications (formerly the 0391 series)

These series encompass approximately 220,000 positions governmentwide — currently classified across the Federal government.

Effective March 22, 2027, these standards supersede the prior position classification standards for the covered series. OPM will issue the corresponding Competency Based Group Qualification Standards separately. They are still in development, and OPM expects to release them by November 30, 2026. Until then, existing group qualification requirements for the covered series remain in effect. Apply them to new and reclassified positions in the covered series no later than March 22, 2027, and complete the review of existing positions in the covered series no later than November 29, 2027. Agency prioritization of mission-critical work governs how the review is sequenced within the 365-day window; it does not extend the completion date.

What Each Standard Contains

Each standard replaces the prior classification standard for its series and includes:

- Updated series definitions and titling guidance, and occupational distinctions clarifying the boundaries between the series and adjacent or overlapping work.
- Detailed occupational information organized by work series, and revised work examples, illustrations, and crosswalks, including descriptions of superseded series and titles.
- Modernized Factor Level Descriptions (FLDs) for evaluating work from the lowest to the highest grade levels covered by the series.
- Associated qualification requirements expressed in terms of competencies and proficiency levels, integrating competency-based concepts to support skills-based hiring, assessment, and workforce planning.

Implementation for the Covered Series

Apply these standards when you establish, evaluate, and classify positions in the covered series, and when you develop qualification and assessment requirements for those positions. OPM asks agencies to carry out the following:

1. **Identify affected positions.** Inventory all encumbered and vacant positions currently classified in the covered series, along with positions in adjacent series whose duties may fall within the revised occupational definitions.
2. **Review each position against the new standard and its qualification requirements.** Compare current position descriptions to the revised series definitions, occupational information, titling guidance, and Factor Level Descriptions, and assess whether current qualification and assessment practices reflect the new competencies and proficiency

levels. Identify where position descriptions, vacancy announcements, assessment instruments, and career-path documentation need to be updated.

3. **Apply agency expertise and validate any Super Intelligence (SI)-assisted output before acting on it.** Classification Specialists should lead, working with Industrial-Organizational Psychologists, HR Advisors, and program subject-matter experts whose judgment about how the work is performed in the agency's mission context is the authoritative input. Agencies may use SI, automated text-analysis capability, or other classification tools including OPM's USA Class to expedite the review workload; these tools triage and prioritize, they do not classify. No classification, titling, grading, or qualification determination should rest on an SI-generated result that a qualified human reviewer has not examined and approved. See the SI-assisted position review toolkit for prompts and the guardrails that apply to their use. The toolkit is published separately and is not attached.
4. **Process classification actions and update qualification and assessment materials.** Where the review indicates a change, process the appropriate classification action under existing agency procedures, including applicable notice, appeal, and pay-setting rules, and update position descriptions, vacancy announcements, and assessment materials to reflect the new standard.
5. **Designate points of contact, participate in OPM sessions, and report insights.** Please email fedclass@opm.gov with your agency's points of contact for this effort. OPM asks that agency classification and staffing branch chiefs participate in ongoing implementation sessions, announced through the CHCO community, and encourages agencies to share classification insights, application questions, edge cases, and implementation obstacles as the review proceeds.

Comments and Feedback

Your classification insights and implementation experience shape the standards issued in the next cycle. To keep review efficient, please submit consolidated comments from all components or bureaus through the following link: surveys.opm.gov. The comment period remains open on an ongoing basis, and comments received will be considered for the next issuance cycle. OPM will communicate the series in scope for the next cycle, together with expected issuance timing, in advance of that issuance.

For any questions regarding these standards, contact the OPM Classification team at fedclass@opm.gov. We will respond directly and, where a question affects agencies governmentwide, reflect the answer in the next release.

Attachments

- Competency Based Classification Standards for the occupational series covered by Cycles 1 and 2 (0301, 0306, 0308, 0340, 0341, 0343, 0346, and 2291).
- Reclassification and Requalification Frequently Asked Questions (Appendix A).

Reference: SI-Assisted Position Review Toolkit (published separately; not attached).

Appendix A: Frequently Asked Questions

1. Which series does this issuance cover?

This issuance covers the occupational series in RCRQ Cycles 1 and 2. The Cycle 1 and 2 series are: 0301, Administration, Operations, and Coordination; 0306, Government Information Specialist; 0308, Records and Information Management; 0340, Program Management; 0341, Administrative Officer; 0343, Management and Program Analysis; 0346, Logistics Management; and 2291, Telecommunications (formerly the 0391 series).

2. What is RCRQ?

Reclassification and Requalification (RCRQ) is OPM's initiative to modernize Federal classification and qualification standards around skills. It uses SI-enabled, human-validated workflows to transition more than 600 occupational series to skills-based standards through 22 issuance cycles beginning in FY 2026, representing a historic transition of policy governmentwide.

3. What is a Competency Based Classification Standard, and how does it differ from the standard it replaces?

Competency Based Classification and Qualification Standards retain the familiar structure of a classification standard — series definition, titling guidance, occupational information, and Factor Level Descriptions and illustrations — along with minimum qualification requirements (e.g., experience and other requirements), but express the work in terms of validated competencies and proficiency levels drawn from an integrated evidence base. This allows classification, qualifications, and assessment to draw on the same validated source material and supports skills-based hiring. OPM will issue the companion Competency Based Group Qualification Standards separately, with release expected by November 30, 2026.

4. When are agencies expected to implement the new standards?

Agencies should apply the standards to new and reclassified positions no later than 120 days after the date of this issuance and complete the implementation tasks within the windows set out in the Implementation for the Covered Series section. Your agency's prioritization of

mission-critical work governs the order in which positions are reviewed within those windows; it does not change whether the windows apply. Agencies experiencing constraints that affect an outside date should contact fedclass@opm.gov before that date passes. OPM anticipates the volume of updates will require a strategic approach for implementing the standards. OPM will provide additional guidance to help agencies update position descriptions and align recruitment, assessment, and hiring with skills-based practices.

5. Do these standards require agencies to reclassify existing positions?

The standards require agencies to review existing positions for alignment. Reclassification is required only where the review shows that a position's current series, title, or grade no longer reflects the work performed under the revised standard. Many positions will require no action beyond documented confirmation that the current classification remains correct.

6. What happens to incumbents whose positions change series, title, or grade?

Agencies process any resulting classification action under existing procedures, including applicable notice, appeal, and pay-setting rules. Nothing in this issuance changes an employee's entitlement to those protections, and nothing in the revised standards is intended to be applied retroactively to completed personnel actions.

7. Do the new qualification requirements eliminate degree requirements?

Consistent with the Merit Hiring Plan and Executive Orders 13932 and 14170, degree requirements are not treated as automatic proxies for ability. Where a degree is required by law for the occupation, agencies will validate the required education along with the skills needed to perform the work. Validated technical or alternative assessments and competency-based standards provide direct evidence of capability.

8. How was SI used to develop these standards, and how do we know the results are defensible?

SI was used to convert large volumes of occupational data — including classification/qualifications policy, competency/tasks data, job postings, position descriptions, survey responses, external skills data, and other taxonomy-related data — into structured skill data, and to generate draft competency clusters, crosswalks, and knowledge, skills, abilities, and tasks (KSAT) linkages. Every output was validated by Human Resources Specialists, Industrial-Organizational Psychologists, Data Scientists, and Statisticians using established methods, including principal components analysis, hierarchical clustering, inter-rater reliability, internal consistency reliability, and proficiency scale distribution analysis, together

with merit system governance and compliance review. No SI-generated output became policy without expert review and OPM approval.

9. May agencies use SI to review their own positions against the new standards?

Yes, and OPM encourages it as a way to manage the review workload. SI and automated text-analysis tools may be used to parse position descriptions at scale, extract tasks and competencies, cluster similar positions, flag apparent misalignment, and draft crosswalks. These tools support triage and prioritization only. A qualified human reviewer must examine and approve any SI-assisted result before it informs classification, titling, grading, or qualification determination, and agencies must apply their own SI governance, privacy, and records policies. See the SI-Assisted Position Review Toolkit, published alongside the Skills-Based Hiring Guide, for prompts and the guardrails that apply to their use.

10. Who in the agency should lead this review?

Classification Specialists should lead, working with Industrial-Organizational Psychologists, HR Advisors, and/or program subject-matter experts who understand how the work is performed in the agency's mission context. Agency expertise, not the tooling, is the authoritative input to the determination.

11. How do these standards affect assessment and vacancy announcements?

Agencies should review job analyses, vacancy announcements, assessment instruments, and rating criteria for the covered series to confirm they measure the competencies and proficiency levels identified in the new standards and update them where they do not.

12. Will these standards be updated again, and how?

Yes. After OPM completes the current issuance cycles, agencies can expect more modular revisions. OPM monitors labor-market signals for emerging skills, changing terminology, and outdated requirements, and will issue targeted updates rather than waiting for a full-cycle rewrite. Agency implementation feedback is a direct input to that process.

13. Is this a one-time issuance, or will more standards follow?

More will follow. The Director's memorandum to Heads of Departments and Agencies sets the release cadence and the standing implementation timelines. OPM will issue Competency Based Classification Standards in 22 successive cycles, of which this issuance is Cycles 1 and 2. Each cycle uses the same development workflow, the same package of products, and advance announcements of upcoming standard updates. The series in scope for the next cycle, and the expected issuance timing, will be communicated in advance.

14. Where do we send questions or comments?

Agencies should submit consolidated comments from all components or bureaus through the survey link provided with this issuance. Consolidated comments should reflect headquarters-level priorities so that OPM can align the standards with your agency's mission-critical requirements. Questions may be directed to fedclass@opm.gov.