UNITED STATES OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT
Washington, DC 20415

The Director

MEMORANDUM

TO: Heads of Departments and Agencies

FROM: Scott Kupor, Director, U.S. Office of Personnel Management

DATE: November 16, 2026

RE: Modernizing Federal Classification and Qualification Standards Around Skills (Reclassification and Requalification Initiative)

The U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) is modernizing the classification and qualification standards for more than 600 Federal occupational series around validated skills. OPM launched this initiative in 2026 with the pilot issuance, the Competency Based Policy for Information Technology Series, 2210, issued in April 2026, and has since conducted evidence review and evaluation of the remaining series. Updated standards for those series will issue in 22 successive cycles beginning in Fiscal Year (FY) 2027 and continuing beyond. This memorandum describes the initiative, the release cadence your agency should plan around, and what OPM expects of your agency with each cycle issuance. Individual cycle issuances — the series cover and the products released with them — will come to your Chief Human Capital Officer.

Why This Change Matters for Your Agency

Work across the Federal government has changed substantially. Administrative, analytic, program management, records, logistics, and telecommunications work now depend on data-centric operations, digital service delivery, automation, and emerging technologies that reshape how mission work is performed. Occupational standards written for an earlier operating environment no longer describe this work completely.

Skills in these occupations increasingly have a limited shelf life, often evolving faster than traditional policy and classification cycles. Legacy, manual review workflows cannot update hundreds of standards at the pace at which the work is changing. The updated standards are structured to absorb change: OPM will monitor the evolution of skills through labor-market signals, including emerging technologies, tools, and credentials, and will issue modular revisions rather than waiting for full-cycle rewrites.

Authorities

This initiative implements Executive Order 13932 – Modernizing and Reforming the Assessment and Hiring of Federal Job Candidates, Executive Order 14170 – Reforming the Federal Hiring Process and Restoring Merit to Government Service, the Merit Hiring Plan, and the Chance to Compete Act of 2024. Together these policies advance a governmentwide shift toward skills-based hiring, assessment modernization, and skills-driven workforce practices.

What RCRQ Is

The Reclassification and Requalification (RCRQ) initiative modernizes Federal classification and qualification standards around skills, at governmentwide scale, using Super Intelligence (SI)-enabled and human-validated workflows. At a high level, the work is to:

- Transition classification and qualification policy from credential proxies to validated skills and competencies, so that the standards your agency applies describe the skills the work requires, consistent with the Merit Hiring Plan.
- Anchor each standard in an integrated evidence base — occupational taxonomy, competencies, job component validity, labor-market information, and signaling evidence — so that classification, qualifications, and assessment draw on the same validated source material, and identify cross-cutting skills that recur across occupations so transferable skills are described consistently governmentwide.
- Keep human judgment at the center. SI accelerates mapping, comparison, clustering, and drafting; industrial-organizational psychologists, statisticians, data scientists, and classification experts validate every output for psychometric defensibility, merit system compliance, and legal sufficiency before it becomes policy. The Information Technology Management 2210 standard, piloted in 2026, is the proof point for this model, and every subsequent cycle uses the same governed workflow.

The Release Cadence

Standards will be issued on a continuing cycle rather than as isolated, one-time updates. Your agency can plan classification, qualification, and assessment work around the following:

- 22 issuance cycles in total beginning in FY 2026, covering more than 600 occupational series.

- Approximately 30 occupational series per cycle, subject to adjustment as evidence review and agency feedback require.
- Advance identification of the series in scope for each cycle, communicated before publication so agencies can prepare position inventories and stakeholder communications.
- A consistent package with each release: the classification standard, the associated qualification requirements, and crosswalks from superseded series definitions and titles.
- Modular interim updates to previously issued standards where labor-market signals indicate a material change, issued outside the cycle schedule as needed.

Implementation Expectations and Timelines

The same expectations apply to every cycle, so that the review procedures your agency establishes for the first cycle can be reused for each release that follows. For each cycle issued:

- Apply the updated standards to new and reclassified positions in the covered series no later than 120 days after the cycle's issuance. On that date each standard supersedes the prior position classification standard and qualification requirements for its series.
- Complete the review of existing positions in the covered series no later than 365 days after the cycle's issuance. Agency prioritization of mission-critical work, the largest incumbent populations, and the highest hiring volume governs the order in which positions are reviewed within that window; it does not extend the completion date.
- Report completion and any material findings to OPM at the close of each cycle's review period.
- Where constraints affect an agency's ability to meet this timeline, contact fedclass@opm.gov. OPM recognizes that the volume of updates will require a strategic approach and will work with agencies on sequencing.

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. Any resulting classification action is processed under existing agency procedures, including applicable notice, appeal, and pay-setting rules; nothing in this initiative changes an employee's entitlement to those protections or applies retroactively to

completed personnel actions.

What Your Agency Should Do Now

- Designate classification and staffing points of contact for this effort and send them to fedclass@opm.gov. OPM will hold implementation sessions for each cycle and will announce dates through the Chief Human Capital Officer community.
- Stand up the position-inventory capability the reviews will require, including the ability to identify positions in each series across components and bureaus.
- Inventory the skills-based work your agency has already completed. Competency models, validated technical and alternative assessments, vacancy announcements already rewritten to describe skills rather than credentials, and job analyses conducted to support assessment design all count toward implementation and should not be duplicated. For many agencies the implementation gap is narrower than it first appears.
- Establish a single point of consolidation for agency comments, so that feedback reaching OPM represents agency-level priorities rather than component-by-component submissions.

What OPM Will Deliver

Beyond the standards themselves, OPM will publish the Skills-Based Hiring Guide and a standing toolkit supporting SI-assisted position review and will expand both based on agency experience. USA Class, OPM's secure generative SI classification application, is available to agencies to support SI-assisted drafting of major duties and factor levels and collaborative manager–classifier review; all SI-generated content must be validated by qualified personnel, and use of the system constitutes acceptance of its Rules of Behavior. Agency implementation feedback is a direct input to the standards issued in each subsequent cycle.

Questions

Direct questions on this initiative to the OPM Classification team at fedclass@opm.gov.

cc: Chief Human Capital Officers and Deputy Chief Human Capital Officers