



UNITED STATES OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT

Washington, DC 20415

Suitability Executive
Agent Programs

Suitability and Credentialing Executive Agent Notice

Notice No. 25-04

March 24, 2025

Subject: Revised Suitability Adjudicator Training and Enabling Objectives

This notice communicates approval of revised Suitability Adjudicator Training and Enabling Objectives. The objectives maintain alignment to the Trusted Workforce (TW) 2.0 policies and reform efforts and are updated in support of recent Presidential directives. As a reminder, the Suitability Adjudicator National Training Standards (NTS) are comprised of the following three components: 1) the Training and Enabling Objectives for Suitability Adjudicators; 2) the Suitability Adjudicator Basic Skill Standards; and, 3) the Suitability Adjudicator Core Competencies. The attached documents supersede all prior versions of these documents, to include the updated objectives issued in January of 2023, and collectively.

The purpose of the NTS remains intact in that it continues to promote standardized training that will support uniformity in the continued professional development of the adjudicator workforce, and to foster reciprocal recognition of suitability and fitness trust determinations enabling swift mobility across the trusted workforce.

Departments and agencies (D/As) continue to be responsible for ensuring those conducting suitability reviews and/or making suitability determinations are trained to the National Training Standards. D/As are encouraged to continue using these standards as the model for training their fitness adjudicators as well.

OPM offers Government-wide suitability adjudicator training, including training on Trusted Workforce 2.0, that is compliant with these standards. OPM updated these training offerings to align with new Executive Orders. D/As may elect to send adjudicative personnel to OPM courses to meet the training requirements. D/As that use another option for training will need to review the revised training and enabling objectives, skill standards, and core competencies, against current training curriculum to ensure such training is compliant with the National Training Standards. To assist with implementation, the attachments include a crosswalk between the 2018 version and the newest version of the training and enabling objectives.

As a reminder, adjudicators must be trained to the revised training and enabling objectives before the new TW 2.0 three-tiered investigative model is implemented by their investigative service provider (ISP).

Please direct questions regarding suitability adjudicator training and enabling objectives to SuitEA@opm.gov.

Joe Knouff
Suitability Director
Suitability Executive Agent Programs

Attachments:

1. Training and Enabling Objectives for Suitability Adjudicators
2. Crosswalk of Current and Revised Training and Enabling Objectives
3. Suitability Adjudicator Basic Skill Standards
4. Suitability Adjudicator Core Competencies

SUITABILITY ADJUDICATOR TRAINING AND ENABLING OBJECTIVES

(REVISED 03/24/2025)

Training Objectives (TO) – Intended measurable outcome that learners will achieve

Enabling Objectives (EO) – Supporting objectives that break down the training objective in a manner that states the expectations of the learner’s performance

Introduction

Introduction Training Objectives (ITO)

ITO 1. Understand the scope and purpose of the Federal personnel vetting process, including the criteria for making and reporting suitability and fitness trust determinations

Introduction Enabling Objectives (IEO)

- IEO 1. Identify the purpose of Federal personnel vetting
- IEO 2. Recognize the elements of Federal personnel vetting¹
- IEO 3. Identify the principles established by Executive Orders and other authorities that govern Federal personnel vetting
- IEO 4. Recognize the adjudicative process framework²
- IEO 5. Define related terminology
- IEO 6. Recognize the five personnel vetting scenarios
- IEO 7. Recognize the position designation process and investigative tiers
- IEO 8. Identify the standards for reciprocal acceptance of investigations in Transfer of Trust or Re-establishment of Trust scenarios
- IEO 9. Identify the standards for reciprocal acceptance of suitability/fitness trust determinations in Transfer of Trust or Re-establishment of Trust scenarios
- IEO 10. Identify the specific factors and the additional considerations
- IEO 11. Recognize the adjudicative process for determining suitability and fitness
- IEO 12. Recognize the importance of trust determination reporting requirements

¹ The elements of Federal personnel vetting are found in the Federal Personnel Vetting Guidelines issued in February 2022, Section IV, Paragraph F.

² The adjudicative process framework is found in the Common Principles in Applying Federal Personnel Vetting Adjudicative Standards issued July 2022, Section V.

Fundamentals

Fundamentals Training Objectives (FTO)

- FTO 1. Make suitability and fitness determinations in accordance with title 5 Code of Federal Regulations part 731, accounting for principles that protect the individual's privacy and civil liberties

Fundamentals Enabling Objectives (FEO)

- FEO 1. Identify the role and responsibilities of the Adjudicator
- FEO 2. Differentiate between agency and OPM suitability authorities and responsibilities
- FEO 3. Recognize civil liberties and other protections, such as whistleblower, that may be pertinent when making a trust determination
- FEO 4. Describe what may constitute a suitability or fitness issue
- FEO 5. Apply the specific factors
- FEO 6. Determine if falsification is both material and intentional
- FEO 7. Decide the potential impact of the additional considerations on an issue
- FEO 8. Identify the Federal personnel vetting investigative tiers and the coverage and trigger requirements for each tier, including the purpose of information categories, high yield checks, and information seriousness categorization; understand when reporting is required for quality oversight purposes
- FEO 9. Compare and analyze data elements (i.e., OF 306, resume, application material, investigative results, etc.) to identify issues/discrepancies, find inconsistencies, or highlight incomplete information that may affect the adjudicative decision
- FEO 10. Identify behaviors and conduct that may be indicative of potential counterintelligence or terrorism concerns, indicators of insider threat, or that may be illegal in nature and determine appropriate actions to take
- FEO 11. Identify need for additional information to substantiate or resolve an issue
- FEO 12. Recognize the screening process
- FEO 13. Demonstrate an understanding of making suitability or fitness adjudicative determinations in the five vetting scenarios (Initial Vetting, Continuous Vetting, Upgrades, Transfer of Trust, and Re-establishment of Trust)
- FEO 14. Recognize self-reporting requirements for trusted insiders.
- FEO 15. Demonstrate an understanding of the different types of suitability or fitness trust determinations (i.e., favorable, unfavorable, exceptions)
- FEO 16. Demonstrate an understanding of the importance of critical thinking when making trust determinations in personnel vetting

- FEO 17. Evaluate the severity of issues in order to make a suitability or fitness trust determination
- FEO 18. Recognize reporting, information sharing, safeguarding, retention, and records destruction requirements including steps necessary to protect the privacy of individuals
- FEO 19. Recognize procedures required for suitability actions in cases involving competitive service and career Senior Executive Service positions

Advanced

Advanced Training Objectives (ATO)

- ATO 1. Take suitability actions in cases involving competitive service and career Senior Executive Service positions in accordance with the requirements specified in title 5, Code of Federal Regulations parts 731 and 1201 and specified in case law

Advanced Enabling Objectives (AEO)

- AEO 1. Demonstrate an understanding of the process for taking suitability actions
- AEO 2. Evaluate the weight of evidence necessary to support a suitability action
- AEO 3. Determine if there are any restrictions related to use of certain information
- AEO 4. Make a recommendation to take a suitability action by outlining issues by relevant suitability factor, listing the evidence that supports each issue, showing the additional considerations that were deemed pertinent, and the actions to be taken
- AEO 5. Recognize the importance of proper grammar, organization, accuracy, & inclusion of sufficient details to establish why the conduct is in question in the proposed action letter
- AEO 6. Apply appropriate procedures to write a proposed action letter in accordance with 5 CFR 731
- AEO 7. Determine information to be released in response to a “materials relied upon” request
- AEO 8. Evaluate answers to proposed action letters; determine if the proposed action is still appropriate
- AEO 9. Determine when questions or concerns need to be resolved before a decision can be made
- AEO 10. Determine appropriate action(s)
- AEO 11. Apply appropriate procedures to write a final action letter in accordance with 5 CFR 731
- AEO 12. Recognize appeal procedures