



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.

**JOSEPH
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Suitability Director
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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

PREVIOUS AND REVISED SUITABILITY ADJUDICATOR TRAINING & ENABLING OBJECTIVES – CROSSWALK – MARCH 2025

The tables below provide a crosswalk between the Previous Suitability Adjudicator Training and Enabling Objectives (2018) and the March 2025 Revisions.

Training Objectives – Intended measurable outcome that learners will achieve

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

Introduction	
Training Objective	
Existing Training Objective	Revised Training Objective
Interpret the scope, purpose, and processes of suitability review and adjudication	Understand the scope and purpose of the Federal personnel vetting process, including the criteria for making and reporting suitability and fitness trust determinations (Introduction Training Objective (ITO) 1)
Enabling Objectives	
Existing Enabling Objective	Revised Enabling Objective
Identify the principles established by Executive Orders and other authorities that govern suitability/fitness adjudication	- Identify the purpose of Federal personnel vetting (Introduction Enabling Objective (IEO) 1) - Recognize the elements of Federal personnel vetting¹ (IEO 2) - Identify the principles established by Executive Orders and other authorities that govern Federal personnel vetting (IEO 3) - Recognize the adjudicative process framework² (IEO 4)
Define related terminology	Define related terminology (IEO 5)
	Recognize the five personnel vetting scenarios (IEO 6)
Recognize criteria used in the Position Designation System and Automated Tool to determine the appropriate level of investigation for a given position	Recognize the position designation process and investigative tiers (IEO 7)

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.

• Identify the standards for reciprocal acceptance of investigation and adjudication for suitability/fitness	• Identify the standards for reciprocal acceptance of investigations in Transfer of Trust or Re-establishment of Trust scenarios (IEO 8) • Identify the standards for reciprocal acceptance of suitability/fitness trust determinations in Transfer of Trust or Re-establishment of Trust scenarios (IEO 9)
• Identify the suitability factors • Identify the additional considerations	• Identify the specific factors and the additional considerations (IEO 10)
• Recognize the adjudicative process for determining suitability	• Recognize the adjudicative process for determining suitability and fitness (IEO 11)
• Recognize adjudication reporting requirements	• Recognize the importance of trust determination reporting requirements (IEO 12)

Fundamentals

Training Objectives

Existing Training Objective	Revised Training Objective
• Interpret the process for evaluation of character and conduct issues for determinations • Interpret the parts of the adjudicative process that are specific to delegated suitability determinations	• 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 Training Objective (FTO) 1)

Enabling Objectives

Existing Enabling Objective	Revised Enabling Objective
• Identify the purpose of the Suitability Adjudication Program	• Identify the purpose of Federal personnel vetting (IEO 1)
• Identify the role and responsibilities of the Adjudicator	• Identify the role and responsibilities of the Adjudicator (FEO 1)
• Define an issue	• Describe what may constitute a suitability or fitness issue (FEO 4)
• Apply the suitability factors	• Apply the specific factors (FEO 5)
• Decide the potential impact of the seven additional considerations on the adjudicative decision • Evaluate the severity of potential concerns	• Decide the potential impact of the additional considerations on an issue (FEO 7) • Evaluate the severity of issues in order to make a suitability or fitness trust determination (FEO 17)
• Identify the types of personnel background investigations, the requirements for each type of investigation, and other sources of information necessary to review (e.g., résumé, OF 306, and/or supplemental application material)	• 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 8)
• Determine if falsification is both material and intentional	• Determine if falsification is both material and intentional (FEO 6)
• Determine appropriate actions to take when potential counterintelligence and counterterrorism concerns are identified	• 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 10)

• Compare and analyze data elements to identify issues/discrepancies, find inconsistencies, or highlight incomplete information that may affect the case decision	• 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 9)
• Identify need for resolution of an issue for suitability/fitness adjudicative decisions	• Identify need for additional information to substantiate or resolve an issue (FEO 11)
• Analyze investigative information to make a determination • Exercise reciprocal recognition of prior adjudicative decisions when required	• 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 13)
• Recognize the pre-employment screening process	• Recognize the screening process (FEO 12)
• Determine the appropriate course of action when pre-employment inquiries or the results of a background investigation contain an actionable issue	• Evaluate the severity of issues in order to make a suitability or fitness trust determination (FEO 17)
• Process favorable adjudication decisions	• Demonstrate an understanding of the different types of suitability or fitness trust determinations (i.e., favorable, unfavorable, exceptions) (FEO 15)
• Recognize reporting requirements and safeguarding, retention, and destruction of adjudicative records	• Recognize reporting, information sharing, safeguarding, retention, and records destruction requirements including steps necessary to protect the privacy of individuals (FEO 18)
• Differentiate between agency and OPM suitability authorities and responsibilities	• Differentiate between agency and OPM suitability authorities and responsibilities (FEO 2)
• Recognize procedures required by 5 CFR 731 for suitability actions	• Recognize procedures required for suitability actions in cases involving competitive service and career Senior Executive Service positions (FEO 19)
	• Recognize civil liberties and other protections, such as whistleblower, that may be pertinent when making a trust determination (FEO 3) • Recognize self-reporting requirements for trusted insiders (FEO 14) • Demonstrate an understanding of the importance of critical thinking when making trust determinations in personnel vetting (FEO 16)

Advanced

Training Objectives

Existing Training Objective	Revised Training Objective
Demonstrate comprehension of the process for evaluation of derogatory investigative information for a proposed and final suitability adjudicative determination and action	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 Training Objective (ATO) 1)

Enabling Objectives

Existing Enabling Objective	Revised Enabling Objective
	Demonstrate an understanding of the process for taking suitability actions (Advanced Enabling Objective (AEO) 1)
- Analyze investigative material to make a suitability determination - Evaluate the weight of evidence to make adjudicative decisions	Evaluate the weight of evidence necessary to support a suitability action (AEO 2)
Prepare cases for unfavorable agency adjudication	
Recognize the importance of proper grammar, organization, accuracy, & inclusion of sufficient details to establish why the conduct is in question	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 5)
Apply appropriate procedures to write a proposed action letter in accordance with 5 CFR 731	Apply appropriate procedures to write a proposed action letter in accordance with 5 CFR 731 (AEO 6)
Evaluate answers to proposed action letters; determine if the proposed action is still appropriate	Evaluate answers to proposed action letters; determine if the proposed action is still appropriate (AEO 8)
Determine when questions or concerns need to be resolved before a decision can be made	Determine when questions or concerns need to be resolved before a decision can be made (AEO 9)
Determine appropriate actions	Determine appropriate action(s) (AEO 10)
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	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 4)

• Apply appropriate procedures to write a final action letter in accordance with 5 CFR 731	• Apply appropriate procedures to write a final action letter in accordance with 5 CFR 731 (AEO 6)
• Determine information to be released in response to a “materials relied upon” request & resolve any issues or restrictions related to material	• Determine if there are any restrictions related to use of certain information (AEO 3) • Determine information to be released in response to a “materials relied upon” request (AEO 7)
• Recognize appeal procedures	• Recognize appeal procedures (AEO 12)

Suitability Adjudicator: Basic Skill Standards

This document describes the suitability adjudicator function. It consists of a delineation of the work-oriented (i.e., critical work functions, key activities, and performance indicators) and worker-oriented (i.e., academic/employability knowledge and skills, and specific occupational/technical knowledge and skills) components of the skill standards for this function.

The skill standards described in this document are based on the general expectations provided below:

- *Individual has completed all of the basic training associated with the Suitability Adjudicator function (Basic training includes the Introduction to Suitability Review and Adjudication course and the Fundamentals of Suitability Review and Adjudication course)*
- *Individual has received a passing grade in the Suitability Adjudication assessments for both courses*
- *Individual has received on the job training to learn agency-specific procedures for administrative functions*
- *Individual will require some supervision in performing the critical work functions and associated key activities in order to meet the relevant performance indicators*

**WORK-ORIENTED COMPONENT OF SKILL STANDARDS
SUITABILITY ADJUDICATOR: BASIC**

CRITICAL WORK FUNCTION 1 (CWF1): Manage case/workload

Critical Work Functions describe the major responsibilities involved in carrying out the Adjudicator function.

Key Activities Key Activities are the duties and tasks involved in carrying out a critical work function.	Performance Indicators Performance Indicators provide information on how to determine when someone is performing each key activity competently.
KA1: Manage adjudicative workload (Note: training for this function will be primarily on the job since specific procedures vary from agency to agency)	PI_1. Case load is appropriately prioritized and managed (e.g., high priority or time-sensitive cases are expedited to support special requirements) PI_2. Tasks within individual cases are appropriately prioritized and managed PI_3. Content of case files is safeguarded and protected; accountability is maintained PI_4. Assigned cases are regularly tracked

**WORK-ORIENTED COMPONENT OF SKILL STANDARDS
SUITABILITY ADJUDICATOR: BASIC**

CRITICAL WORK FUNCTION 2 (CWF2): *Review Case File*

Critical Work Functions describe the major responsibilities involved in carrying out the Adjudicator function.

Key Activities Key Activities are the duties and tasks involved in carrying out a critical work function.	Performance Indicators Performance Indicators provide information on how to determine when someone is performing each key activity competently.
KA2: Review investigative information for completeness	PI_5. Case file is reviewed to ensure that all necessary paperwork is on file and pertains to the subject and the appropriate level of investigation has been conducted (requires familiarity with the position designation process) PI_6. Case data is reviewed to ensure accuracy and currency of information PI_7. Potential sources of needed information are identified
KA3: Complete required administrative actions	PI_8. Needed information is requested/obtained through telephone calls and/or letters to potential sources of information in accordance with the provisions of the Privacy Act; information to be obtained by investigation service provider is identified PI_9. Responses to information requests are reviewed to determine if information is adequate for continuing adjudication process PI_10. Case file is reviewed to determine if further adjudication is warranted based on severity of suitability concern PI_11. Responses to routine inquiries concerning case status are completed in a timely manner PI_12. Case-related telephone calls, correspondence and any other investigative inquiries are documented to ensure accurate record of case activity; personal identifying information (PII) is properly protected
KA4: Review all information and identify conditions that could raise a suitability concern	PI_13. Case information is reviewed to identify presence of all conditions that could raise a suitability concern and may warrant a negative suitability determination; documentation and evidence of suitability concerns is obtained PI_14. Subject matter experts are consulted, as required PI_15. Unique or complex cases are discussed with a subject matter expert in order to obtain advice concerning sufficiency, credibility or authenticity of adjudicative information, and proper application of the suitability factors and additional considerations as outlined in 5 CFR 731

**WORK-ORIENTED COMPONENT OF SKILL STANDARDS
SUITABILITY ADJUDICATOR: BASIC**

CRITICAL WORK FUNCTION 3 (CWF3): Apply Adjudication Standards

Critical Work Functions describe the major responsibilities involved in carrying out the Adjudicator function.

Key Activities Key Activities are the duties and tasks involved in carrying out a critical work function.	Performance Indicators Performance Indicators provide information on how to determine when someone is performing each key activity competently.
KA5: Analyze suitability related issues or other concerns against suitability factors and additional considerations	PI_16. Severity of suitability issues is determined PI_17. Suitability issues are associated with suitability factors listed in 5 CFR 731 PI_18. "Additional Considerations" listed in 5 CFR 731 are considered to determine if pertinent as aggravating or mitigating to the individual case PI_19. Cases are reviewed to determine which ones warrant referral to OPM for Government-wide debarment consideration and which warrant agency suitability action
KA6: Determine and document recommendation	PI_20. Cases warranting OPM referral for Government-wide debarment consideration are prepared and packaged; cases warranting agency suitability action are reviewed to determine which specific suitability action will be proposed to include determination of the appropriate length of debarment to propose PI_21. Adjudicative process used to render recommendation/ determination is properly documented

**WORK-ORIENTED COMPONENT OF SKILL STANDARDS
SUITABILITY ADJUDICATOR: BASIC**

CRITICAL WORK FUNCTION 4 (CWF4): Document Decision/Recommendation

Critical Work Functions describe the major responsibilities involved in carrying out the Adjudicator function.

Key Activities Key Activities are the duties and tasks involved in carrying out a critical work function.	Performance Indicators Performance Indicators provide information on how to determine when someone is performing each key activity competently.
KA7: Notify appropriate personnel of decision/recommendation (within individual authority)	PI_22. Favorable decision is made; appropriate officials within the agency and the subject are notified PI_23. Letter of proposed action is issued (when warranted) PI_24. If applicable, materials relied upon are processed and sent PI_25. Answer to proposed action letter is evaluated to determine if the proposed actions are still appropriate PI_26. Final determination letter is written; refer for secondary review, if required PI_27. Final determination letter is issued
KA8: Close case	PI_28. Final determination is recorded appropriately PI_29. Appropriate retention/destruction action is taken PI_30. Appeal procedures are followed and processed within required timeframes

**WORKER-ORIENTED COMPONENT OF SKILL STANDARDS
SUITABILITY ADJUDICATOR: BASIC**

Academic and Employability Knowledge and Skills

Describes what a worker needs to know or be able to do to perform the critical work functions of the job

Knowledge/Skill Category		Definition
Criticality	Relevancy	Complexity
Ability to Learn (1)		Recognize and use learning techniques to recall available information to apply and adapt new knowledge and skills in both familiar and changing situations; use multiple approaches when learning something new; assess how they are doing when learning or performing duties; and, keep up to date technically and know assigned and related duties.
Critical	CWF1 CWF2 CWF3 CWF4	➤ Requires the use of learning tools and techniques such as note-taking, studying manuals/handbooks, learning exams, performing work samples/simulations to learn a series of tasks or new procedures
Adaptability (2)		Change behavior or work methods to adjust to other people, changing situations or work demands; be receptive to new information, ideas or strategies which help achieve goals.
Critical	CWF1 CWF2 CWF3 CWF4	➤ Changes are somewhat ambiguous or unpredictable and they vary in clarity or predictability ➤ Somewhat frequent or gradual changes necessitates some degree of openness to change ➤ Some precedents, guidelines, processes, or training resources are available
Analyzing and Solving Problems (3)		Identify problems and their causes; develop and analyze potential solutions or improvements using rational and logical processes or innovations and creative approaches when needed.
Critical	CWF1 CWF2 CWF3 CWF4	➤ Problems encountered are moderately unique or difficult with some similarity to prior problems but also some novel features, making them somewhat difficult to anticipate ➤ Problems encountered require some new or innovative solutions and some solutions guided by existing precedents or known procedures ➤ A few solutions are possible; some judgment is required to select the best solution

**WORKER-ORIENTED COMPONENT OF SKILL STANDARDS
SUITABILITY ADJUDICATOR: BASIC**

Academic and Employability Knowledge and Skills

Describes what a worker needs to know or should be able to do to perform the critical work functions of the job

Knowledge/Skill Category		Definition
Criticality	Relevancy	Complexity
Building Consensus (4)		Build consensus among individuals or groups by facilitating agreements that involve sharing or exchanging resources in such a way as to promote mutual goals and interest; by persuading others to change their points of view or behavior without losing their future support; and by resolving conflicts, confrontation, and disagreements while maintaining productive working relationships.
Critical	CWF2 CWF3	➤ Work is often done in support of a team and/or work group ➤ Debating and defending decisions with peers, senior personnel and supervisors is likely
Gathering and Analyzing Information (5)		Obtain, analyze and evaluate facts contained in written reports to: interpret and apply criteria contained in policies, regulations and guidelines in a fair and impartial manner; draw sound conclusions considering positive and negative circumstances; render consistent, rational, unbiased and objective determinations and link them to specific research information and supporting policy guidelines.
Extremely Critical	CWF1 CWF2 CWF3 CWF4	➤ A moderate amount of information needs to be gathered to perform this job ➤ Several different information gathering methods are used to obtain information from somewhat different sources ➤ Information sources are partially defined or known, but additional research may be required after initial information gathering ➤ Information is moderately complex, or technical, or is of varying complexity, requiring analytic approaches of moderate or varying rigor or sophistication ➤ Some information is of questionable or unknown reliability, or information is of varying reliability, requiring some vetting of information or sources; relevance of information is sometimes apparent ➤ Some guidelines, precedents, or models are available to guide organization or analysis of information, or such guidance is available for some of the information
Initiative/Motivation (6)		Exert a high level of effort and perseverance towards goal attainment; work hard to become excellent at doing tasks by setting high standards, paying attention to details, working well and displaying a high level of concentration even when assigned an unpleasant task; display high standards of attendance, punctuality, enthusiasm, vitality and optimism in approaching and completing tasks; and, demonstrate willingness to take on responsibilities and challenges and do what is needed without being asked.
Critical	CWF1 CWF2 CWF3 CWF4	➤ Moderate level of independent effort required to accomplish task or organizational goal

**WORKER-ORIENTED COMPONENT OF SKILL STANDARDS
SUITABILITY ADJUDICATOR: BASIC**

Academic and Employability Knowledge and Skills

Describes what a worker needs to know or be able to do to perform the critical work functions of the job

Knowledge/Skill Category		Definition
Criticality	Relevancy	Complexity
Integrity/Honesty (7)		Demonstrate dependability, conscientiousness, integrity and accountability; show commitment to doing the job carefully and correctly; fulfill obligations and be reliable, responsible and trustworthy; perform tasks thoroughly and completely; and, demonstrate honesty and ethical behavior.
Extremely Critical	CWF1 CWF2 CWF3 CWF4	➤ High level of integrity/honesty required; involves demonstration of ethics and ethical behavior to others above and beyond standard code of ethics and behavior ➤ May require determination of "greater good" when fulfilling work and organizational responsibilities
Listening (9)		Attend to, receive and correctly interpret verbal and nonverbal communications and directions through cues such as the content, context and tone of the message, and gestures and facial expressions of the speaker.
Critical	CWF2 CWF4	➤ Subject matter is moderately complex, unfamiliar, or technical ➤ Communication is of moderate length or partially structured, requiring close attention ➤ Subject matter is partially conveyed indirectly through subtleties of language, tone, expressions, or gestures and partially through simple, direct verbal terms ➤ There is some opportunity to interact with the speaker or to ask questions ➤ Distractions are present to some degree
Maintain Professional Demeanor (10)		Demonstrate credibility, consistency and authority in issuing instructions and making requests to individuals and in performing duties. Maintains firm and direct tone of voice, authoritative posture, manner and bearing.
Critical	CWF2 CWF4	➤ Discussing decisions and recommendations with internal and external personnel is probable; maintaining constructive and cooperative working relationships is important ➤ May need to actively look for ways to help others and advance program goals by identifying problems or opportunities and proposing appropriate solutions and/or services

**WORKER-ORIENTED COMPONENT OF SKILL STANDARDS
SUITABILITY ADJUDICATOR: BASIC**

Academic and Employability Knowledge and Skills

Describes what a worker needs to know or be able to do to perform the critical work functions of the job

Knowledge/Skill Category		Definition
Criticality	Relevancy	Complexity
Decision Making (11)		Makes sound, well-informed, and objective decisions; perceives the impact and implications of decisions.
Extremely Critical	CWF1 CWF2 CWF3 CWF4	➤ Precedents or informed input are available to aid or guide some decisions ➤ Integration of information is moderately difficult; moderate amounts of somewhat complex, ambiguous, or contradictory information are drawn from several sources ➤ There are some potential risks and consequences; they vary in the degree to which they are difficult or easy to discern, evaluate or predict ➤ Individual has accountability for own decisions, responsibility, or discretion ➤ Explicit policies, rules, or procedures, or potentially contradictory rules or policies, constrain latitude for some decisions
Organizing and Planning (13)		Organize and structure work for effective performance and goal attainment: set and balance priorities; anticipate obstacles; formulate plans consistent with available human, financial, and physical resources; modify plans or adjust priorities given changing goals or conditions.
Critical	CWF1 CWF2	➤ There are general short- and long-term objectives; some objectives vary in clarity or definition ➤ Some flexibility is required, including general monitoring of progress and occasional readjustment of priorities; a single backup plan is required ➤ Some guidelines, precedents, or standard operating procedures are available ➤ Feedback on performance or progress toward objectives is of varying availability, clarity and usefulness

**WORKER-ORIENTED COMPONENT OF SKILL STANDARDS
SUITABILITY ADJUDICATOR: BASIC**

Academic and Employability Knowledge and Skills

Describes what a worker needs to know or be able to do to perform the critical work functions of the job

Knowledge/Skill Category		Definition
Criticality	Relevancy	Complexity
Reading (14)		Identify and assess both significant and minor details and correlate them to other relevant information that may be scattered throughout a variety of documents; understand and use written information that may be presented in a variety of formats; select reading strategies appropriate to the purpose, such as skimming for highlights, reading for detail, reading for meaning and critical analysis.
Extremely Critical	CWF1 CWF2 CWF3	➤ Moderately complex or technical materials are read (e.g., letters, memos, email, multi-step directions and instructions, reference materials, books on particular topics, visuals that support meaning such as charts, graphs, figures, diagrams and maps) ➤ Reading skills used are moderately complex, including interpretation of information from multiple sources; integration of information with prior knowledge and experiences; and identification of complexities and discrepancies in the presented information ➤ Reading purpose is moderately complex; text is read to obtain information that is then communicated to others or used to perform a multi-step task
Self and Career Development (15)		Identify own work and career interests, strengths and limitations; pursue education, training, feedback or other opportunities for learning and development; manage, direct and monitor one's own learning and development.
Critical	CWF2 CWF3 CWF4	➤ Continuing education and training will ensure awareness of changes to process and procedures and is critical to advancement ➤ Feedback from peers, senior personnel or supervisors is likely

**WORKER-ORIENTED COMPONENT OF SKILL STANDARDS
SUITABILITY ADJUDICATOR: BASIC**

Academic and Employability Knowledge and Skills

Describes what a worker needs to know or be able to do to perform the critical work functions of the job

Knowledge/Skill Category		Definition
Criticality	Relevancy	Complexity
Speaking (16)		Speak clearly to express ideas, facts and information in a clear, concise and understandable manner; articulate operational related matters to customers, general public, coworkers, and supervisors with tact and diplomacy; keep supervisors and coworkers informed of issues and problem areas; and tailor oral communications to the intended purpose and audience.
Critical	CWF2 CWF3 CWF4	➤ Moderately complex, novel, or technical information is presented or spoken about ➤ Subject matter is moderately sensitive, controversial, or likely to be questioned or challenged, some tact is required ➤ Subject matter is partially conveyed indirectly through subtleties of language, tone, expressions, or gestures, and partially through simple, direct verbal terms ➤ Moderate preparation time or resources are available; some improvisation or adaptation is required ➤ Speaker must contend with or overcome some distractions ➤ Listeners vary in the degree to which they are uninterested, skeptical, or in opposition or disagreement
Stress Tolerance (17)		Demonstrate maturity, poise and restraint to cope with pressure, stress, criticism, setbacks, personal and work-related problems; maintain composure, keeping emotions in check, control anger, and avoid aggressive behavior even in very difficult situations; accept criticism and deal calmly and effectively with high-stress situations.
Critical	CWF1 CWF2 CWF3 CWF4	➤ Requires moderate level of composure and tolerance of stress which can be imposed by other people or circumstances ➤ Individual's amount of composure, anger, frustration, or other behaviors associated with stress moderately affects or influences others in the work environment
Using Information and Communications Technology (18)		Select access and use necessary information, data, and communications-related technologies, such as basic personal computer applications, telecommunications equipment, internet and intranet, calculators, voice mail, email, facsimile machines and copying equipment to accomplish work activities.
Critical	CWF2 CWF4	➤ Equipment or technology is somewhat complex or unusual ➤ Applications are somewhat complex or unusual or require using some advanced features or capabilities ➤ Limited time is available to learn the technology before its application; learning continues as the technology is used ➤ Some new learning is required that builds directly on existing skill or knowledge, because changes are moderately frequent or mostly involve upgrades that enhance existing features; documentation or information on use of the technology varies in completeness or availability

**WORKER-ORIENTED COMPONENT OF SKILL STANDARDS
SUITABILITY ADJUDICATOR: BASIC**

Academic and Employability Knowledge and Skills

Describes what a worker needs to know and/or be able to do to perform the critical work functions of the job

Knowledge/Skill Category		Definition
Criticality	Relevancy	Complexity
Using Interpersonal Skills (19)		Interact with others in ways that are friendly, courteous and tactful; demonstrate respect for individual differences and for the attitudes and feelings of others.
Critical	CWF1 CWF2 CWF3 CWF4	➤ Interaction is possible with people of varied backgrounds ➤ Some interactions are casual or informal, requiring no special or formal protocols/ procedures ➤ Interactions could involve personal, sensitive, controversial, or conflict-laden issues, requiring special concerns for tact or diplomacy or particular awareness of or openness to social cues
Working in Teams (20)		Work cooperatively and collaboratively with others to achieve goals by sharing or integrating ideas, knowledge, skills, information, support, resources, responsibility and recognition.
Critical	CWF1 CWF2 CWF3 CWF4	➤ Regular consultation with peers, senior personnel and supervisors is likely ➤ Sharing and gathering new skills, concepts, etc. will occur regularly

**WORKER-ORIENTED COMPONENT OF SKILL STANDARDS
SUITABILITY ADJUDICATOR: BASIC**

Academic and Employability Knowledge and Skills

Describes what a worker needs to know or be able to do to perform the critical work functions of the job

Knowledge/Skill Category		Definition
Criticality	Relevancy	Complexity
Writing (21)		Organize and summarize information in an accurate, concise and easily understood manner; use English language conventions or spelling, punctuation, grammar, and sentence and paragraph structure; and, tailor written communication to the intended purpose and audience.
Extremely Critical	CWF2 CWF3 CWF4	➤ The materials produced are moderately complex (e.g., letters, memos, email, multistep directions and instructions, and visuals that support meaning such as charts, graphs, figures, diagrams) ➤ A moderate degree of organization and focus is used; providing needed facts and information; writer decides on most appropriate format; revisions are based on own review and on feedback from others ➤ Moderate elaboration is used, providing some examples and reasons, to convey meaning ➤ Writing skill used includes interpretation of information from multiple sources and synthesis with prior knowledge and experiences; identification of complexities and discrepancies in the information; application of precise word choice and appropriate tense for clarity in communication and individual style ➤ One or two different strategies (e.g., classification or categorization of information) are applied to inform the reader ➤ Moderately complex logical arguments are used to persuade the reader; some supporting information or evidence is used

**WORKER-ORIENTED COMPONENT OF SKILL STANDARDS
SUITABILITY ADJUDICATOR: BASIC**

Occupational/Technical Knowledge and Skills
*Describes the occupational/technical knowledge and skills needed to perform
the critical work functions of the job*

Criticality	Relevancy	Specific Knowledge and Skills
<i>Need to know</i>	<i>CWF2 CWF4</i>	<i>OTKS_1. Knowledge of and skill in applying types and scope of investigations</i>
<i>Need to know</i>	<i>CWF2</i>	<i>OTKS_2. Knowledge of types of sources</i>
<i>Need to know</i>	<i>CWF2 CWF3 CWF4</i>	<i>OTKS_3. Knowledge of and skill in applying adjudication process using the whole-person concept</i>
<i>Need to know</i>	<i>CWF2 CWF3 CWF4</i>	<i>OTKS_4. Knowledge of and skill in applying procedures for taking an unfavorable suitability action</i>
<i>Need to know</i>	<i>CWF3 CWF4</i>	<i>OTKS_5. Knowledge of writing Proposed Action Letters (PALs) and Final Action Letters (FALs)</i>
<i>Need to know</i>	<i>CWF2 CWF3 CWF4</i>	<i>OTKS_6. Knowledge of pertinent regulations governing suitability adjudication</i>
<i>Need to know</i>	<i>CWF2 CWF3 CWF4</i>	<i>OTKS_7. Knowledge of and skill in applying suitability factors outlined in 5 CFR 731.202 (b) as well as additional considerations outlined in 5 CFR 731.202 (c)</i>
<i>Nice to know</i>	<i>CWF2 CWF3</i>	<i>OTKS_8. Knowledge of and skill in applying designation of position risk</i>

**WORKER-ORIENTED COMPONENT OF SKILL STANDARDS
SUITABILITY ADJUDICATOR: BASIC**

Occupational/Technical Knowledge and Skills
*Describes the occupational/technical knowledge and skills needed to perform
the critical work functions of the job*

Criticality	Relevancy	Specific Knowledge and Skills
<i>Need to know</i>	<i>CWF2 CWF3 CWF4</i>	<i>OTKS_9. Knowledge of precedent-cases related to suitability as reflected in MSPB and civil court law</i>
<i>Nice to know</i>	<i>CWF2</i>	<i>OTKS_10. Knowledge of and skill in applying medical/mental health terminology</i>
<i>Need to know</i>	<i>CWF2 CWF3</i>	<i>OTKS_11. Knowledge of and skill in applying Financial Terminology</i>
<i>Need to know</i>	<i>CWF2 CWF3</i>	<i>OTKS_12. Knowledge of and skill in applying Financial Analysis</i>
<i>Need to know</i>	<i>CWF2 CWF3</i>	<i>OTKS_13. Knowledge of and skill in applying Alcohol/Drug terminology</i>
<i>Nice to know</i>	<i>CWF2</i>	<i>OTKS_14. Knowledge of hostile countries and organizations</i>
<i>Need to know</i>	<i>CWF2 CWF3</i>	<i>OTKS_15. Knowledge of and skill in applying criminal behavior/legal terminology</i>
<i>Need to know</i>	<i>CWF2 CWF3</i>	<i>OTKS_16. Knowledge of and skill in applying computer and information systems usage guidelines</i>
<i>Nice to know</i>	<i>CWF2 CWF3</i>	<i>OTKS_17. Knowledge of and skill in applying immigration and naturalization terminology</i>
<i>Need to know</i>	<i>CWF2 CWF3</i>	<i>OTKS_18. Knowledge of and skill in applying FOI/PA</i>

**WORKER-ORIENTED COMPONENT OF SKILL STANDARDS
SUITABILITY ADJUDICATOR: BASIC**

Occupational/Technical Knowledge and Skills
*Describes the occupational/technical knowledge and skills needed to perform
the critical work functions of the job*

Criticality	Relevancy	Specific Knowledge and Skills
Agency specific	CWF1 CWF2 CWF3 CWF4	OTKS_19. Knowledge of and skill in applying case processing procedures
Nice to know	CWF2	OTKS_20. Knowledge of and skill in applying potential counter-intelligence indicators
Agency specific	CWF2 CWF3	OTKS_21. Knowledge of and skill in applying agency-specific policies, instructions and regulations
Agency specific	CWF2 CWF3 CWF4	OTKS_22. Knowledge of and skill in applying agency-specific terminology and structure
Agency specific	CWF2 CWF3 CWF4	OTKS_23. Knowledge of and skill in applying agency correspondence procedures

Suitability Adjudicator: Core Competencies

The Office of Personnel Management considers the following five core competencies crucial to the successful performance of Critical Work Functions (CWFs) within the Suitability Adjudicator position. These competencies support the skill standards (attached) which were cultivated by personnel supporting the Training Subcommittee of the Security and Suitability Performance Accountability Council and follow the skills standards model developed by the Joint Security Training Consortium.

1. Technical Expertise

Uses knowledge that is acquired through formal training and extensive on-the-job experience to perform one's job; works with, understands, and evaluates technical information related to job.

Supports: CWF1-4

2. Information Analysis

Obtains, analyzes and evaluates facts contained in written reports to: interpret and apply criteria contained in policies, regulations and guidelines in a fair and impartial manner; draw sound conclusions considering positive and negative circumstances; and, render consistent, rational, unbiased and objective determinations.

Supports CWF2-4

3. Writing

Organizes and summarizes information in an accurate, concise and easily understood manner; uses English language conventions of spelling, punctuation, grammar, and sentence and paragraph structure; and, tailors written communication to the intended purpose and audience.

Supports CWF2, CWF4

4. Integrity

Demonstrates dependability, conscientiousness, integrity and accountability; shows commitment to doing the job carefully and correctly; fulfills obligations and is reliable, responsible and trustworthy; performs tasks thoroughly and completely; and demonstrates honesty and ethical behavior.

Supports CWF1-4

5. Decision Making

Makes sound, well-informed, and objective decisions; perceives the impact and implications of decisions.

Supports CWF2-4