

## Student Guide

# ***Revised Federal Investigative Standards (FIS) Short***

---

### **Objective**

- Identify the revised Federal Investigative Standards (FIS) new tiered background investigations

**Estimated completion time:** 10 min

### ***Introduction***

Imagine five employees.

Frank works on an Army base and needs physical and logical access to his facility and information system, but he doesn't require access to classified information or occupy a sensitive position.

Jennifer is about to start her job as a government program analyst. This is a non-sensitive position designated as moderate risk public trust and does not require access to classified information.

Tom is about to start a job as a public affairs specialist for the Air Force. This is a designated non-critical sensitive position requiring secret eligibility.

Sydney has been hired by a Federal agency as a financial analyst in a designated non-sensitive high risk public trust position not requiring access to classified information.

And finally, Susan is a systems engineer who was just selected by her company to work on a DoD contract requiring Top Secret eligibility.

In the past, there were several background investigations used for HSPD-12 credentialing for logical or physical access, Suitability and fitness determinations, and National Security eligibility determinations. The new revised Federal Investigative Standards, or FIS, will streamline these investigations across the Federal Government.

Welcome to the Revised Federal Investigative Standards Short. This short will introduce you, at a high level, to the new 5-tiered investigative model, and will discuss why the revised standards are necessary, what investigations are covered by each tier, and how the new standards are currently being implemented in a phased manner.

***WHY are the new standards necessary?***

On June 30, 2008, President George W. Bush signed Executive Order 13467. This executive order calls for an efficient, reciprocal, and aligned system to be used across the government to investigate and determine: eligibility for logical and/or physical access to federally controlled facilities and information systems, also known as Homeland Security Presidential Directive 12, or HSPD-12; suitability for federal employment and fitness to perform work on behalf of the Federal Government as a contractor employee; and eligibility for access to classified information, or to hold a sensitive position.

The new investigative model will align and standardize background investigation requirements for HSPD-12, suitability and fitness, and national security, into 5 tiers. This new 5-tiered model will facilitate reciprocity, use a build upon, but not duplicate investigative principle, and facilitate the use of automation.

These revised Federal Investigative Standards, or FIS, were approved in December 2012 by James Clapper, the Director of National Intelligence, or DNI, and John Berry, the former Director of the Office of Personnel Management, or OPM.

## **WHAT are the new standards?**

As you just saw, the revised FIS will streamline and decrease the types of investigations used across the Federal Government, and will also improve cost, quality, and timeliness of background investigations used for HSPD-12 credentialing, suitability and fitness determinations, and National Security eligibility determinations.

The positions covered and the corresponding investigative forms:

- Tier 1  
*Used for Suitability Adjudications **and** HSPD-12 Credentialing*
  - Non-Sensitive positions
  - Low Risk positions
  - Physical and/or Logical Access (HSPD-12)*Uses the Standard Form (SF) -85*
  
- Tier 2  
*Used for Suitability Adjudications*
  - Non-Sensitive positions
  - Moderate Risk positions*Uses the Standard Form (SF) -85P*
  
- Tier 3  
*Used for National Security Adjudications*
  - Non-Critical Sensitive positions  
and/or
  - Positions requiring Confidential, Secret or “L” (Department of Energy or DOE) Access Eligibility*Uses the Standard Form (SF) -86*
  
- Tier 4  
*Used for Suitability Adjudications*
  - Non-Sensitive positions
  - High Risk Public Trust*Uses the Standard Form (SF) -85P*
  
- Tier 5  
*Used for National Security Adjudications*
  - Critical Sensitive positions  
and/or
  - Positions requiring Secret, Sensitive Compartmented Information (SCI),  
or “Q” (Department of Energy or DOE) Access Eligibility*Uses the Standard Form (SF) -86*

***HOW will the new standards be implemented?***

By now you should understand WHY the new standards are necessary, and WHAT they entail, but HOW will they be implemented?

In order to develop an implementation strategy and timeline for the revised FIS, the Federal Investigative Standards Implementation Working Group, or FISIWG, was established in May 2012. The group is co-chaired by OPM and the Office of the Director of National Intelligence, or ODNI, and includes investigative service provider agencies and other interested partners, including the DoD.

The FISIWG: assessed gaps between current investigative processes and the new tiered investigations; identified community challenges and timelines for resolution; developed the FIS Implementation Plan; and continues to meet regularly to develop and refine FIS implementation.

An output of the FISIWG, the FIS Implementation Plan, which was approved by the Security and Suitability executive agents in April 2014, outlines timelines and milestones for phased implementation of the FIS, provides guidance for the phased deployment of tiered investigations, and mandates departments and agencies responsible for meeting FIS deliverables, goals, and milestones.

The FIS Implementation Plan specifies timelines for FIS Implementation, and utilizes a phased implementation approach for each tier to include Initial Operating Capability, or IOC, and Full Operating Capability, or FOC, phases. Tiers 1 and 2 were implemented at IOC on October 1, 2014. The implementation of the remaining tiers will follow in IOC and FOC phases, with full implementation for all tiers planned for 2017.

## Review Activity

Now, check your understanding. See page 3 to review each tier.

**Question 1 of 5:** James is about to start a new job as a DoD Operations Research Analyst. This is a critical-sensitive position requiring Top Secret access eligibility. Under the new FIS, what tier investigation will James need?

- Tier 1
- Tier 2
- Tier 3
- Tier 4
- Tier 5

**Question 2 of 5:** Ali is a DoD contractor who requires physical access to federally controlled facilities and logical access to DoD networks, but not classified information in order to perform her new job. What tier investigation will Ali need?

- Tier 1
- Tier 2
- Tier 3
- Tier 4
- Tier 5

**Question 3 of 5:** Zack is about to start work as an accountant for the Veterans Administration. He is in a non-sensitive, designated High Risk Public Trust position that does not require access to classified information. What tier investigation will Zack need?

- Tier 1
- Tier 2
- Tier 3
- Tier 4
- Tier 5

**Question 4 of 5:** Sally just accepted a job with the Federal Government. It is a non-sensitive position designated as moderate risk public trust. What tier investigation will Sally need?

- Tier 1
- Tier 2
- Tier 3
- Tier 4
- Tier 5

**Question 5 of 5:** Tia is starting work as a Navy contractor and will require eligibility for access to Secret information in order to perform her job as an executive assistant. What tier investigation will Tia need?

- Tier 1
- Tier 2
- Tier 3
- Tier 4
- Tier 5

### **Summary**

After taking this short you should now understand why the revised Federal Investigative Standards are necessary, what they entail, and how they are currently being implemented in a phased manner.

## Answer Key

**Question 1 of 5:** James is about to start a new job as a DoD Operations Research Analyst. This is a critical-sensitive position requiring Top Secret access eligibility. Under the new FIS, what tier investigation will James need?

- Tier 1
- Tier 2
- Tier 3
- Tier 4
- Tier 5**

**Feedback:** *Critical Sensitive positions that require eligibility for access to Top Secret information will require a tier 5 investigation.*

**Question 2 of 5:** Ali is a DoD contractor who requires physical access to federally controlled facilities and logical access to DoD networks, but not classified information in order to perform her new job. What tier investigation will Ali need?

- Tier 1**
- Tier 2
- Tier 3
- Tier 4
- Tier 5

**Feedback:** *Positions that need physical/logical access (HSPD-12 Credentialing) will require a tier 1 investigation.*

**Question 3 of 5:** Zack is about to start work as an accountant for the Veterans Administration. He is in a non-sensitive, designated High Risk Public Trust position that does not require access to classified information. What tier investigation will Zack need?

- Tier 1
- Tier 2
- Tier 3
- Tier 4**
- Tier 5

**Feedback:** *Non-sensitive, High Risk Public Trust positions will require a tier 4 investigation.*

**Question 4 of 5:** Sally just accepted a job with the Federal Government. It is a non-sensitive position designated as moderate risk public trust. What tier investigation will Sally need?

- Tier 1
- Tier 2**
- Tier 3
- Tier 4
- Tier 5

**Feedback:** *Non-sensitive, Moderate Risk Public Trust positions will require a tier 2 investigation.*

**Question 5 of 5:** Tia is starting work as a Navy contractor and will require eligibility for access to Secret information in order to perform her job as an executive assistant. What tier investigation will Tia need?

- Tier 1
- Tier 2
- Tier 3**
- Tier 4
- Tier 5

**Feedback:** *Positions requiring eligibility for access to Secret information will require a tier 3 investigation.*