

**Presidential Management Fellows (PMF) Program
Class of 2010 Orientation**

Questions and Answers (Q&As)

The Class of 2010 Fellows submitted the following questions during their Orientation and Training Program, offered via two sessions: November 2010 and January 2011. For additional information, please consult your Agency PMF Coordinator, the *PMF Guide for Agencies*, or the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs), all found on the new PMF website.

November 2010 Session:

Q1. Our office has a very prohibitive budget and the PMFs at our agency are unable to attend many training sessions. Can you recommend any resources for training opportunities that are low cost?

A1. PMFs who fully participate at a PMF Orientation and Training Program session can count the hours towards the training requirement. For the PMF Class of 2010's Orientation sessions, the number of training hours to record on a PMF's Individual Development Plan (IDP) is 30 hours. In addition, the PMF Program Office sponsors various PMF Forums, free of charge to PMFs, throughout the year. These Forums will be posted on the PMF website when available. In addition, various training vendors are posted at <http://www.pmf.gov/current-pmfs/training-and-development/training.aspx>. Work with your Agency PMF Coordinator to help you identify possible training opportunities with other agencies that may be provided at no charge.

Q2. The office I work at has a rather limited budget for our training. It has been made clear that it is certainly not a priority. Have they agreed to a budget for us to any extent for us to fund training? Can they refuse us training?

A2. By hiring a PMF finalist, Agencies agree to comply with the PMF Program requirements. In accordance with 5 CFR 362.204(b), "Agencies are responsible for ensuring that Fellows receive at least 80 hours of formal classroom training each year of the fellowship. Specifically, 5 CFR 362.204(b)(2)(i) states that for each Fellow, the appointing agency will provide a minimum of 80 hours per year of formal classroom training that addresses the core competencies required of the occupation or functional discipline in which the Fellow will most likely be placed upon completion of the Program and conversion to a full-time, permanent position." Fellows should consult with their Agency PMF Coordinators for additional assistance.

Q3. What is the policy regarding who pays for training? Juanita [Juanita Wheeler, PMF Program Manager] said "agency," but my agency indicated my individual office has to pay. I am one of only two PMFs in my agency and my office only has 15 people thus a small training budget. What is the consequence if I don't get a full 80 hours of training in 12 months? Can I make up the missing hours in my second year?

A3. The PMF's appointing agency (the actual program office the PMF will be working for) is typically responsible for paying for training. Though there are some agencies that centralize training for PMFs. You should consult with your Agency PMF Coordinator for such opportunities. According to the Program requirements, Fellows must obtain 80 hour of formal classroom training for each year of their fellowship, for a total of 160 hours of training. Ultimately the appointing agency's Executive Resources Board (ERB) will determine if the Fellow has met the Program requirements. The PMF Program Office does not track individual training hours for Fellows.

Q4. Can you define “formal classroom training” (as part of the 160 hours of training) or make it clear to the Agency PMF Coordinators that they have discretion on what they accept? Ms. Wheeler said conferences *could* count, but our Agency PMF Coordinator, who is new, said she was concerned about following OPM regulations exactly in terms of classroom training. I imagine she would not include conferences.

A4. The PMF Program regulations state “formal classroom training”. This is interpreted to be interactive training in a classroom-style setting. Fellows should consult with their Agency PMF Coordinator who can obtain a definition that applies to their agency.

Q5. We have been told how wonderful last year’s emotional intelligence session at orientation was. Will it be possible for OPM to offer it to us at a later date such as an 8 hour forum?

A5. For the past few years the PMF Orientation and Training Program included the “emotional intelligence” component. However, based on past survey results and PMF focus group feedback, it was removed from the current orientation and training. The PMF Program Office will consider offering this as a future PMF Forum.

Q6. We feel as if we are not in a leadership program at all. It’s as if we were hired to easily and quickly fill seats, not to be future leaders. We hoped to get answers at Ms. Wheelers talk, but she disheartened us when she made it clear there is no oversight to ensure this is actually a leadership program. If that’s the case why does OPM bother with this program other than to get \$6,000?

A6. The PMF Program is a centrally managed and decentrally administered program. The PMF Program Office provides recruitment, screening, assessment and selection of finalists for agencies from which to select the PMF. In addition the fee covers administration and operation of the job fair, orientation, training forums, and graduation. If the agency is not providing leadership training and opportunities, the PMF should discuss this with their Agency PMF Coordinator and supervisor.

Q7. We know that everyone’s journey and challenges are different. That said, there’s a culture of complacency we’re finding pervasive throughout the Federal Government, including the PMF Program Office. There’s a lack of oversight and transparency. Does anyone plan to step forward and help us change this?

A7. The PMF Program Office routinely surveys PMFs and conducts various focus groups about the Program. This feedback is analyzed and used to create action plans and make changes to the program such as is seen in the new orientation and training program. However, it is not feasible to make all changes or enhancements due to a variety of reasons. Presently the PMF Program Office is soliciting PMFs to participate in various PMF Power Packs as their developmental assignments. This is great opportunity for PMFs to help shape future changes to the Program and promote the Program at their agencies. Information about these opportunities can be found under Rotational Opportunities on the PMF website.

Q8. How were we chosen to be PMFs? The hiring process was incredibly opaque.

A8. When the PMF Program Office announces finalists, agencies are then authorized to review finalists’ resumes and start the interviewing process for potential appointment as a PMF. Each agency has its own hiring process and must abide by current merit principles and selection criteria. Fellows may want to consult with their agency’s HR Office and Agency PMF Coordinator to learn more about their agency’s selection process.

Q9. How would you recommend I approach my boss about accelerated promotions?

A9. This can be a bit “tricky” and needs to be handled with sensitivity. While the PMF Program regulations allow for accelerated promotions, an agency must establish policies and criteria for the promotions of Fellows. Agencies must develop promotion policies that include how and when promotion decisions will be made, the criteria upon which promotions will be granted, and qualifications for promotion to the next level. Agencies may then non-competitively promote Fellows without regard to time-in-grade based on the terms of the promotion policy. Suggest the Fellow first ensure such policy exists by consulting with their HR Office and Agency PMF Coordinator. If it does, the subject could be broached during a performance review when the PMF has accomplished everything on the IDP at the current grade and the supervisor is praising them for their performance.

Q10. I believe you (a PMF) have to qualify for the position you convert to. Is there a process for evaluating current qualifications for a target position? I would like to know definitively what my gaps are.

A10. Each agency determines the desired skills and competencies for the target position. There are minimum OPM specified qualifications all agencies must take into account. Because this is more agency-specific, Fellows should consult with their HR Office. All Fellows are required to maintain an Individual Development Plan (IDP) which tracks their training and development throughout the 2-year fellowship, as well as the competencies associated. The PMF Program Office has developed an IDP form specifically for Fellows (OPM Form 1302), which is available on the PMF website.

Q11. A lot of PMFs seem to convert into positions at their rotation. I am curious how the process for conversion works if you want to convert to an office other than your regular PMF position. Can they just hire you as long as they have the budget? Does there need to be a position open or advertised?

A11. Agencies hire PMFs with a target position in mind. The intent of the rotation is to provide the PMF with a broader scope and experience than would be available in a single position the entire time. The PMF Program Office does not encourage PMFs to solicit employment from the rotational office. However, the PMF may transfer to the rotational office while in the PMF Program without further competition.

Q12. What is the process for converting to a different agency at the end of the program other than the agency you did your PMF fellowship?

A12. It is expected the Fellow would convert into the target position at his/her agency. If the Fellow wants to convert at a different agency, then he/she would need to “reappoint” to another agency prior to conversion and following the new agency’s Executive Resources Board (ERB) process. The Fellow should consult with the Agency PMF Coordinator at the other agency. If and when such reappointments happen, the Fellow should contact the PMF Program Office to update records.

Q13. Is it possible to take your developmental assignment at a non-profit /state agency?

A13. Yes, but it is up to the PMF’s appointing agency to approve such a rotation. 5 CFR 362.204(b)(4) specifies that the appointing agency is to provide each Fellow with at least one rotational or developmental assignment with full-time management and/or technical responsibilities consistent with the Fellow's IDP. Each Fellow must receive at least one developmental assignment of 4 to 6 months in duration in the occupation or functional discipline in which the Fellow will most likely be placed, with full-time management and/or technical responsibilities consistent with the Fellow's IDP.

Q14. How do you recommend finding a mentor?

A14. Through personal interaction and networking with colleagues, Fellows may be able to find a mentor on their own. Fellows should bring it up to their supervisor that they are interested in having a mentor and would he/she recommend someone. Fellows may want to consider a former PMI or PMF. Fellows should look around their agency or check on social networking sites for these groups.

Q15. Do agencies have the discretion to move PMFs between jobs (i.e. between divisions and supervisors) without prior consultation with the PMF?

A15. Yes. Management has the ability to reassign employees usually based on changes to mission requirements. PMFs are appointed in the excepted service (versus the typical competitive service). The excepted service gives agencies a lot of latitude in managing its staffing. Typically a PMF moving between offices/divisions is a result of a reassignment and/or reorganization. Some agencies have collective bargaining agreements (unions) that must be followed in regards to employee reassignments, organizational moves, etc. Since HR rules are different for each agency, PMFs should consult with their appointing agency's HR Office.

Q16. What kind of outreach does OPM do to educate agencies on the PMF Program? People are treating it as an un-paid undergrad internship, not leadership development...

A16. The PMF Program Office sends out monthly newsletters notifying agencies of any changes to the programs and announcing upcoming events. Based on this feedback, we will include an article in the next newsletter to agencies talking to this subject. We also host agency and stakeholder meetings throughout the year. The PMF Program works closely with the Chief Human Capital Officers Council (CHCOC) and initiates correspondence to all agencies.

Q17. Why do you need an official email address to register for orientation?

A17. The PMF Program requires Fellow's official work email address in order to match with our records. Many initial appointments entered into the database system by Agency PMF Coordinators do not have accurate work email addresses since the finalist may not yet be onboard yet. Each agency has a different email naming scheme. Since all Program communications are conducted via email it is critical to have a current and accurate email address on file.

January 2011 Session:

Q18. Can PMFs rotate into a position that demands a higher level of security clearance?

A18. This may be possible, but must be coordinated with the supervisor, Agency security office and any other appropriate offices. Factors that may influence whether this is possible is the level of clearance currently held, cost and length of time to complete any required background check, agency-specific guidelines, etc.

Q19. Can the PMF Program Office post the *Managing Your Fellowship* PowerPoint presentation to the PMF website?

A19. The PowerPoint presentation is available under the "Current PMFs\Resources" webpage at <http://www.pmf.gov/current-pmfs/resources.aspx>, as an Adobe PDF file.

Q20. If a current PMF serves in an acting position at a higher grade, could the PMF be temporarily promoted?

A20 There are occasions when a PMF may be asked to officially act at a higher grade level. In some cases this is limited to a temporary period of time; for example, when a manager/supervisor is on vacation. But for longer periods of time, the PMF's supervisor or higher authority may request a temporary promotion while the PMF is serving in that capacity. A temporary promotion is arranged through the HR Office. An occasion such as this would be a good entry in the PMF's Individual Development Plan (IDP).

Q21. Who would a PMF ask for information and/or opportunities in the Public Health Service Corps? Is it possible to join PHSC while a PMF?

A21. Information about the U.S. Public Health Service Commissioned Corps (PHSCC) can be found at <http://www.usphs.gov/>. Employment with the PHSCC is intended for active duty military personnel. Fellows should contact the PHSCC directly for additional information.

Q22. If a PMF completes more than 80 hours of formal classroom training within the first year of their fellowship, could those additional hours carry over into the second year, to count towards the second year of required 80 hours?

A22. According to the PMF regulations, Fellows must have 80 hours of formal classroom training for each year of their 2-year fellowship and reflected on their Individual Development Plans (IDPs). Ultimately the Fellow's ERB (Executive Resources Board) will certify program requirements during the ERB certification and conversion process. The training hours must address the core competencies required of the occupation or functional discipline in which the Fellow will most likely be placed upon completion of the Program and conversion to a full-time, permanent position.

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