

STAFFING

1. REASON FOR ISSUE: To revise the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) qualification standard for the appointment of Physical Therapists, GS-633, in VA.

2. SUMMARY OF CONTENTS/MAJOR CHANGES: This handbook contains mandatory procedures on staffing. The pages in this handbook replace the existing Physical Therapist Qualification Standard in VA Handbook 5005, Appendix II-G12 in its entirety. The new standards are effective on the date of issuance of this handbook. These changes will be incorporated into the electronic version of VA Handbook 5005 that is maintained on the [Office of Human Resources Management](#) Web site. Significant changes include:

- a. Recognizes the Doctor of Physical Therapy Degree.
- b. Deletes the intervening grade level of GS-10 from the qualification standard.
- c. Changes the full performance grade level from the GS-9 grade level to GS-11.

d. Acknowledges that effective January 1, 2002, the Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education (CAPTE) changed its scope of accrediting activities of physical therapist education programs to include only those programs that culminate in post-baccalaureate degrees. To effect this change, CAPTE withdrew accreditation, effective January 1, 2002, from any physical therapist education program that culminates in a Baccalaureate degree.

e. Adds clarifying language regarding exceptions to the qualification standard for graduate physical therapists. The exceptions clause clarifies that graduate physical therapists may be employed under the authority of 38 U.S.C. § 7405(c)(2) for a period of no more than two years while meeting licensure requirements.

f. Adds a clarifying statement regarding a physical therapist that loses credentials while employed in VA.

g. Adds a grandfather provision for physical therapists who were employed prior to the approval of this new standard. Describes specific assignments for physical therapists at the GS-12, GS-13 and GS-14, with knowledge, skills, ability, and other factors (KSAOs) specifically addressed at each grade level.

3. RESPONSIBLE OFFICE: The Recruitment and Placement Policy Service (059), Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Human Resources Management.

4. RELATED DIRECTIVES: VA Directive 5005, Staffing.

5. RESCISSIONS: VA Handbook 5005, Part II, Appendix G12, "Physical Therapist Qualification Standard," dated April 15, 2002.

CERTIFIED BY:

**BY DIRECTION OF THE SECRETARY
OF VETERANS AFFAIRS:**

/s/
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Information and Technology

/s/
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APPENDIX G12. PHYSICAL THERAPIST QUALIFICATION STANDARD
GS-633
Veterans Health Administration

1. COVERAGE. The following standard lists the requirements for appointment as a Physical Therapist (PT) in the Veterans Health Administration (VHA). The requirements will apply to all VHA PTs that are employed in the GS-633 series and provide their clinical services to address a vast array of problems that impact the health and function of a wide range of diverse patients at multiple VHA locations.

2. BASIC REQUIREMENTS

a. **Citizenship.** Citizen of the United States. (Non-citizens may be appointed when it is not possible to recruit qualified citizens in accordance with chapter 3, section A, paragraph 3g, this part.)

b. **Education**

(1) **Degree.** Graduate from a degree program in physical therapy from an approved college or university approved by the Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education (CAPTE). The CAPTE is the only accreditation agency recognized by the United States Department of Education (USDE) and the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) to accredit entry-level physical therapy programs. Verification of accredited programs may be obtained from the [American Physical Therapy Association \(APTA\) Web site](#), or at their office address: American Physical Therapy Association, 1111 North Fairfax Street, Alexandria, VA 22314-1488, 703-684-2782, or 800-999-2782.

NOTE: *Effective, January 1, 2002, CAPTE changed its scope of accrediting activities of PT education programs to include only those programs that culminate in post-baccalaureate degrees.*

(2) **Foreign Graduates.** Graduates of foreign physical therapy programs meet the requirements in subparagraph 2b if they have a full unrestricted and current license to practice physical therapy in a State, Territory or Commonwealth (i.e., Puerto Rico) of the United States, or in the District of Columbia. Any PT who has, or has ever had, any license(s) revoked, suspended, denied, restricted, limited, or issued/placed in a probational status may be appointed only in accordance with regulations issued by the Under Secretary for Health or designee.

c. **Licensure.** Current, full, active, and unrestricted license to practice physical therapy in a State, Territory or Commonwealth (i.e., Puerto Rico) of the United States, or in the District of Columbia.

(1) Non-licensed PTs, who otherwise meet the basic requirements in this standard, may be given a temporary appointment as a graduate PT not-to-exceed two years under the authority of 38 U.S.C. 7405(c)(2). Non-licensed individuals appointed as a temporary graduate PT may not be appointed as a PT without being fully licensed.

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(2) A PT who fails to maintain the required licensure must be removed from the occupation, which may also result in termination of employment. At the discretion of the appointing official, an employee may be reassigned to another occupation for which he/she qualifies if a placement opportunity exists.

(3) A PT who has, or has ever had, his/her PT license revoked, suspended, denied, restricted, limited, or issued/placed in a probationary status may be appointed only in accordance with the provisions in Chapter 3, section B, paragraph 16 of this part.

d. **Physical Requirements.** See VA Directive and Handbook 5019.

e. **English Language Proficiency.** PTs must be proficient in spoken and written English as required by VA Handbook 5005, Part II, chapter 3, Section A, paragraph 3j.

f. **Grandfathering Provision.** The following is the standard grandfathering policy for all Title 38 hybrid qualification standards. Some of these provisions may not apply to this occupation. Please carefully review the qualification standard to determine the specific education and/or licensure/certification/ registration requirements that apply to this occupation.

(1) All persons employed in VHA in this occupation on the effective date of this qualification standard are considered to have met all qualification requirements for the title, series and grade held, including positive education and licensure/certification/registration that are part of the basic requirements of the occupation. For employees who do not meet all the basic requirements required in this standard, but who met the qualifications applicable to the position at the time they were appointed to it, the following provisions apply:

(a) Such employees in an occupation that does not require a licensure/certification/registration, may be reassigned, promoted, or changed to a lower grade within the occupation.

(b) Such employees in an occupation that requires a licensure/certification/registration, may be reassigned, promoted up to and including the full performance (journey) level, or changed to a lower grade within the occupation, but may not be promoted beyond the journey level or placed in supervisory or managerial positions.

(c) Such employees in an occupation that requires a licensure/certification/registration only at higher grade levels must meet the licensure/certification/registration requirement before they can be promoted to those higher grade levels.

(2) Employees who are appointed on a temporary basis prior to the effective date of the qualification standard may not have their temporary appointment extended or be reappointed, on a temporary or permanent basis, until they fully meet the basic requirements of the standard.

(3) Employees initially grandfathered into this occupation, who subsequently obtain additional education and/or licensure/certification/registration that meet all the basic requirements of this qualification standard must maintain the required credentials as a condition of employment in the occupation.

(4) If an employee who was retained in an occupation listed in 38 U.S.C. § 7401(3) under this provision leaves that occupation, the employee loses protected status and must meet the full VA qualification standard requirements in effect at the time of reentry to the occupation.

3. GRADE REQUIREMENTS

a. Definitions

(1) **Affiliated.** Associated with a college or university for the purpose of allied health care training.

(2) Creditable Experience

(a) **Knowledge of Contemporary Professional Physical Therapy Practice.** To be creditable, experience must have demonstrated possession of the required knowledge, skills, abilities and other characteristics associated with the scope of physical therapy practice as outlined in the current Guide to Physical Therapist Practice, American Physical Therapy Association, and the Normative Model of Physical Therapist Education. The experience may have been evidenced by one or more of the following:

1. Active professional practice. (Active professional practice means paid/non-paid employment as a professional PT as defined by APTA or the appropriate licensing board.) Experience gained after graduation but prior to licensure is creditable provided the candidate was utilized as a graduate PT and subsequently passed the licensure examination.

2. In addition to licensure, applicants must demonstrate completion of a minimum of 15 continuing education units (CEUs) recognized by APTA or the appropriate licensing board.

3. Completion of a post-graduate fellowship or a post-graduate residency program may substitute for creditable experience on a year for year basis.

(b) **Quality of Experience.** Experience is only creditable if it was earned post degree and meets the following:

1. Work as a graduate PT directly related to the position to be filled; and

2. The work to be credited is at a level comparable to physical therapy experience at the same or next lower grade level than the grade level being considered for placement.

3. For all assignments above the full performance level, the higher level duties must consist of significant scope, administrative independence, complexity (difficulty) and range of variety as described in this standard at the specified grade level and be performed by the incumbent at least 25% of the time.

(c) **Part-time Experience.** Part-time experience as a graduate PT is credited according to its relationship to the full-time workweek. For example, a PT employed 20 hours a week, or on a 1/2-time basis, would receive 1 full-time workweek of credit for each 2 weeks of service.

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(d) **Board Certification.** Board certification means having successfully passed a Board Certification examination administered by the American Board of Physical Therapy Specialties (ABPTS).

(e) **Content Specialty.** Specialized content areas of physical therapy include, but are not limited to, geriatrics, neurology, cardiopulmonary, orthopedics, electrophysiology, diabetes, sports medicine, spinal cord injury, amputee, wound care, stroke, brain injury and arthritis.

(f) **Post-graduate Fellowships.** According to the APTA, a post graduate fellowship is “A post-professional, funded, and planned learning experience in a focused area of PT clinical practice, education, or research (not infrequently post-doctoral, post-residency prepared or board-certified physical therapists)”.

(g) **Post-graduate Residency.** According to the APTA, a post-graduate residency is “A planned program of post-professional clinical and didactic education that is designed to advance significantly the physical therapist’s preparation as a provider of patient care services in a defined area of clinical practice”.

b. **Grade Determination.** In addition to the basic requirements for appointment in paragraph 2, the following criteria must be used when determining the appropriate grade assignment of candidates. This criteria is consistent with the two-grade interval structure for professional/scientific professions found in VA Handbook 5005, Part II, Appendix G.

(1) **GS-7 Staff Physical Therapist**

(a) **Experience, Education and Licensure.** None beyond basic requirements. Candidates at this level may have a baccalaureate degree from an approved program prior to the Commission of Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education (CAPTE) January 1, 2002 decision as shown in the note in paragraph 2.

(b) **Assignment.** Employees at this level serve as a Staff PT in a PT career development position practicing under close supervision of a PT at or above the full-performance level.

(2) **GS-9 Staff Physical Therapist**

(a) **Education, Experience and Licensure.** In addition to meeting the basic requirements, candidates must have 1 year of post degree progressively responsible experience equivalent to the next lower grade or a master’s degree in physical therapy or a directly related field. In addition, candidates must fully demonstrate the knowledge, skills, abilities and other characteristics (KSAOs) in subparagraph (b) below.

(b) **Demonstrated Knowledge, Skills, Abilities and Other Characteristics (KSAOs)**

1. Knowledge of anatomy, physiology, physics, kinesiology, psychology, pathophysiology and surgical procedures as they relate to human function.

2. Knowledge of and ability to apply clinically appropriate assessment techniques and treatment interventions to address human pathophysiology and dysfunction.

3. Ability to communicate, both orally and in writing, with patients, families, caregivers, and other healthcare professions.

(c) **Assignments.** Candidates at this grade level serve as staff PTs in a career development position progressively expanding their ability to provide assessment and treatment interventions for a wider range of human function systems. PTs at this level require less direction and guidance, but practice under the direction of a PT at or above the full performance level.

(3) **GS-11 Physical Therapist**

(a) **Education, Experience, and Licensure.** In addition to meeting the basic requirements, completion of 1 year of progressively complex experience and a broader scope of experience equivalent to the next lower grade; or 3 years of progressively higher level graduate education leading to a doctoral degree; or doctoral degree in physical therapy or a directly related field. In addition to meeting the KSAOs described at the GS-9 level, the candidate must fully demonstrate the KSAOs in subparagraph (b) below.

(b) **Demonstrated KSAOs**

1. Knowledge of contemporary and evidence-based PT practice.

2. Ability to interpret clinician prescriptions and referrals.

3. Skill in communicating, both orally and in writing, with patients, families, caregivers, and other health care professions to facilitate the multidisciplinary treatment process.

4. Skill in utilizing appropriate screening and evaluation techniques required to appropriately provide direct patient care.

5. Knowledge of clinical signs and symptoms to make appropriate referrals for further medical attention/assessment as indicated.

(c) **Assignments.** Candidates must be licensed for assignment at this grade level, and are considered to be at the full performance level. Staff PTs at this level are responsible for providing assessment and treatment intervention. They are assigned to all program areas which are covered by Rehabilitation Services and provide professional, independent physical therapy services in the assigned area. PTs at this level may be given general assignments in any physical therapy program area where the advanced specialized knowledge is not required on a recurring basis due to the patient population served and complexity of the facility and/or treatment area or may serve as the sole PT at a less complex facility. Individuals may perform ancillary assignments, including program management duties on an occasional basis, where the complexity and amount of work is not substantial (less than 25% of the duty time).

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(a) **Education, Experience and Licensure.** In addition to the basic requirements, completion of a minimum of 1 year of progressively complex experience equivalent to the next lower grade level. Generally, assignments at this grade level require the knowledge, skills, and competencies normally acquired through post-graduate residency or fellowship training programs. In addition to fully meeting KSAOs identified at the GS-11 full performance level, the candidate must also demonstrate the KSAOs required for the specific assignment.

(b) **Assignments.** Typical assignments for GS-12 PTs are described below. Other assignments of equal complexity and responsibility may be approved on an individual basis where warranted.

1. GS-12 Lead Physical Therapist. PTs at this level have experience that demonstrates the possession of advanced practice skills and judgment across many areas of physical therapy. Individuals assigned as a Lead PT are responsible for completing complex evaluations and treatments. They are required to apply advanced evaluation methodologies and treatment theories in the provision of care to a vast array of functional impairments and patients, as well as provide clinical practice guidance for other staff PTs. Lead PTs generally would be found in Complexity Level 1 (High Complexity) or Level 2 (Medium Complexity) facilities, or in facilities of lesser complexity levels where large physical therapy departments are found. Individuals may perform ancillary assignments, including program management duties on an occasional basis, where the complexity and amount of work is not substantial. In addition to completion of 1 year of experience comparable to the next lower grade level, PTs assigned to this position must demonstrate the following KSAOs:

a. Advanced knowledge of contemporary physical therapy across multiple areas of practice, and the demonstrated ability to apply this advanced knowledge to provide clinical guidance to Staff PTs within the department.

b. Ability to monitor and evaluate clinically appropriate treatment programs with great autonomy.

c. Skill in coordinating clinical activities within physical therapy section.

d. Ability to assist in physical therapy program development, outcome management, and strategic planning.

e. Skill in acting as liaison between staff therapists and supervisor.

f. Ability to provide professional oversight and consultation for staff therapists.

2. GS-12 Clinical Education Coordinator. An individual in this assignment is responsible for coordinating the administration of clinical training programs for physical therapy students or interns, PT assistant students, and the training of facility staff as clinical educators. Individuals in this assignment establish, negotiate, and maintain affiliation agreements with accredited PT and PT Assistant Programs. These assignments occur at affiliated VA facilities where physical therapy treatment programs are provided. In addition to completion of 1 year of experience comparable to the next lower grade level, PTs assigned to this position must demonstrate the following KSAOs:

- a. Knowledge of the Normative Model of Physical Therapy Education as it applies to the PT and physical therapy students.
- b. Advanced knowledge of contemporary physical therapy across multiple areas of practice, and the demonstrated ability to apply this advanced knowledge to provide clinical guidance to Staff PTs within the department.
- c. Ability to develop and coordinate clinical education programs.
- d. Ability to establish and maintain productive relationships with affiliated colleges and universities.

3. GS-12 Clinical Specialist. The individual is assigned responsibility for serving as the subject matter expert in a content specialty area and as a consultant to physical therapy and other medical center staff in evaluating and treating patients in the specialty area. Special clinical programs include, but are not limited to poly-trauma, orthopedics, geriatrics, neurology, traumatic brain injury, cardiopulmonary, stroke, electrophysiology, diabetes, wound care, arthritis, spinal cord injury, or amputee. Clinical Specialists generally would be found in Complexity Level 1 (High Complexity) or Level 2 (Medium Complexity) facilities, or practice at a facility designated as a Polytrauma Support Clinic Team, Polytrauma Network Site, or Polytrauma Rehabilitation Center. Clinical specialists may also practice in facilities of lesser complexity levels where an applicable specialty area exists (i.e. - a facility where coordinated rehabilitation services are provided on a long term care unit may have the need for a Geriatric Clinical Specialist). In addition to completion of 1 year of progressively difficult experience comparable to the next lower grade level, PTs assigned to this position must fully demonstrate the following KSAOs:

- a. Advanced knowledge and expert skill in a range of specialized interventions and treatment modalities used in a specialized treatment area of physical therapy. Such knowledge typically would be acquired through a minimum 2 years clinical experience in the specialty area, or a Board Certification in the specialty area, completion of a clinical residency or fellowship program, or by obtaining an advanced degree in a related field.
- b. Ability to serve as a consultant for health care providers regarding the delivery of care within a specialized area of physical therapy.
- c. Ability to teach and mentor medical center staff in a specialized area of physical therapy.
- d. Ability to guide and evaluate the work of a multi-disciplinary team in a specialized area of physical therapy.
- e. Advanced skill to perform and interpret specialized evaluative procedures and tests in evaluating the treatment outcomes in the assigned specialty area.

4. GS-12 Physical Therapy Program Coordinator. The individual is assigned administrative responsibility for a major specialty area to include assessing, planning, evaluating and delivering care within a special clinical program or component of a Rehabilitation Service (i.e., Spinal Cord Injury,

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Preservation of Amputation Care Team (P.A.C.T.), Cardiopulmonary Program Manager). This assignment requires administrative direction and decision making skills, but does not necessarily require formal supervisory responsibility for personnel. The Physical Therapy Program Coordinator is responsible for the coordination of clinical assignments for multiple professionals comprising an interdisciplinary team. In addition to completion of 1 year progressively responsible complex experience comparable to the next lower grade level, PTs assigned to this position must fully demonstrate the following KSAOs:

- a. Knowledge of and skill in management/administration, which includes supervision, consultation, negotiation and monitoring.
- b. Advanced knowledge of contemporary physical therapy across multiple areas of practice, and the demonstrated ability to apply this advanced knowledge to provide clinical guidance to Staff PTs within the department.
- c. Ability to serve as a consultant within physical therapy and with other health care providers regarding the delivery of rehabilitation care within the assigned program area.
- d. Demonstrated ability to serve as facilitator and/or negotiator in coordinating initiatives and consensus building activities among clinical team members with widely divergent backgrounds, interests, and points of view.
- e. Ability to monitor and report on the status and progress of work, evaluate program quality to ensure that methods, deadlines, and quality have been met.
- f. Ability to develop and coordinate treatment programs within a concentrated field.

5. GS-12 Chief, Physical Therapy Section. A Section Chief is responsible for the supervision, administrative management, and direction of the physical therapy program in a rehabilitation section or equivalent work group. Individuals in this assignment assume full administrative and professional responsibility for planning and directing the physical therapy activities for the Section or equivalent unit at an independent outpatient clinic. They have full supervisory responsibility over a section or equivalent work unit which would require three or more PTs or at least two PTs and a physical therapy assistant (full-time equivalent) or equivalent multi-disciplinary staff mix.

a. Typically, duties include:

- (1) Assigning and evaluating work of subordinate staff, as well as resolving problems which may interfere with the delivery of physical therapy by staff members,
- (2) Providing physical therapy in more complex cases,
- (3) Developing and initiating new treatment programs which apply current research findings,
- (4) Participating as an instructor in the facility's in-service clinical training findings,

(5) Consulting with staff physicians through patient presentations, attendance at ward rounds, clinics and conferences, and

(6) Interviewing candidates for positions in the section; recommending appointments, advancements, or, when appropriate, disciplinary actions; evaluating performance; identifying continuing education and training needs, etc.

b. PTs assigned to this position must fully demonstrate the following KSAOs:

(1) Knowledge of contemporary physical therapy across multiple areas of practice, and the demonstrated ability to apply this knowledge to provide clinical guidance to Staff PTs within the department.

(2) Knowledge of human resources administration, including such functions as the ability to interview and select qualified applicants, monitor and evaluate performance, and maintain effective labor management relations within scope of responsibility.

(3) Ability to effectively supervise, direct, and manage a diverse physical therapy staff.

(4) Skill in interpersonal relationships and conflict resolution.

(5) Ability to analyze clinically appropriate data effectively to optimize quality, performance, and productivity within the section.

(5) **GS-13 Physical Therapist**

(a) **Education, Experience, and Licensure.** In addition to meeting the basic requirements, completion of 1 year of progressively complex experience equivalent to the next lower grade. Generally, non-supervisory assignments at this grade level require the knowledge, skills, and competencies normally acquired through a post-graduate residency or fellowship training. In addition, candidates must fully meet the KSAOs at the GS-12 level and those for the specific assignment described below. Other assignments of equal complexity and responsibility may be approved on an individual basis as warranted.

(b) **Assignments**

1. GS-13 Supervisor of Physical Therapy Department. A Supervisory PT is responsible for the supervision, administrative management, and direction of the physical therapy program in a rehabilitation service or equivalent service-level department which consists of three or more PTs or other multi-discipline staff. The incumbent provides supervision of key clinical and training programs, including the overall technical oversight of the PTs whom they administratively supervise. Supervising PTs or Section Chiefs are responsible for the development and implementation of policies and procedures to address focused clinical needs and the overall services delivered and provided within the section. They demonstrate a great deal of autonomy in performing supervisory responsibilities that include, but are not limited to, assigning work to employees, monitoring workload and clinical volume, reviewing work of employees to assure accuracy and validity of submissions, assuring adequate clinical

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staffing, imposing disciplinary measures, and monitoring clinical privileges. They are required to provide overall clinical supervision that assures the proper coordination and delivery of care within the section and the facility at large. In addition to completion of 1 year of experience comparable to the next lower grade level, PTs assigned to this position must demonstrate the following KSAOs:

- a. Knowledge of contemporary physical therapy across multiple areas of practice, and the demonstrated ability to apply this knowledge to provide clinical guidance to Staff PTs within the department.
- b. Knowledge of human resources administration, including such functions as the ability to interview and select qualified applicants, monitor and evaluate performance, and maintain effective labor management relations within scope of responsibility.
- c. Ability to effectively supervise, direct, and manage a diverse physical therapy staff.
- d. Skill in interpersonal relationships and conflict resolution.
- e. Ability to analyze clinically appropriate data effectively to optimize quality, performance, and productivity within the section.
- f. Ability to set priorities, delegate tasks, and solve problems in order to meet multiple deadlines and identify/address organizational problems.

2. GS-13 Rehabilitation Planning Specialist. Rehabilitation planning specialists are key program officials in the decentralized Office of the Director, Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation Service (PM&R). Individuals in these positions are responsible for the management of national initiatives having a high degree of visibility and a significant impact on Department health care. Examples include national initiatives in the care and treatment of patients, educational programs, program evaluation, quality assurance, etc. These programs typically include collaboration with other Federal and State agencies, professional organizations, and services within VHA. PTs assigned to this position must demonstrate the following KSAOs:

- a. Knowledge of assigned specialized national clinical programs.
- b. Knowledge of health care organizations and inter-relationships of subgroups within health care and rehabilitation organizations.
- c. Ability to serve as liaison to other Patient Care Services Strategic Health Groups (SHG's) such as Geriatrics and Extended Care, Spinal Cord Injury, Prosthetics and Sensory Aids, Care Coordination, etc.
- d. Ability to manage advocacy roles and planning activities within the Department and the greater rehabilitation community.

(6) GS-14 Physical Therapist Leadership Assignments

(a) **Education, Experience and Licensure.** In addition to the basic requirements, completion of 1 year of progressively responsible assignments and experience at the GS 13 level which demonstrates knowledge, skills, abilities and other characteristics that are directly related to the specific assignment.

(b) **Assignments.** Assignments for PTs at this grade level include but are not limited to:

1. Service Chief of Rehabilitation Service or Service/Care Line Manager for a Medical Center or for a VISN Service/Care Line. An individual in this assignment manages complex sections within the medical center that provide specialized rehabilitative services, or in a Service/Care Line at a complex facility or at a VISN level. Supervisory responsibilities cover multiple disciplines and/or multiple facilities that may be separated geographically. The individual is responsible for ensuring the coordination of multiple rehabilitation related services provided, as well as an optimal collaboration with other healthcare providers within the facility. This individual oversees the work of subordinate employees and assures the accuracy of reports submitted by therapy supervisors, clinical specialists, clinical education coordinators, or team/program leaders. These positions are typically located at VA medical centers or healthcare systems that are complex in nature and are affiliated with local colleges and universities. In addition to completion of 1 year of experience comparable to the next lower grade level, PTs assigned to this position must demonstrate the following KSAOs:

a. Advanced knowledge of evidence-based practices and clinical practice guidelines in multiple professional areas, and the ability to use these resources to guide the program staff in providing clinically appropriate treatment interventions.

b. Skill in interpersonal relationships and conflict resolution in dealing with a diverse range of employees, team leaders, and administrators.

c. Ability to manage budgets for a large, integrated service including not only physical therapy, but also other focused rehabilitation, ancillary, or other health care services.

d. Ability to communicate effectively orally and in writing with a diverse group of professional staff.

e. Ability to translate extensive rehabilitation knowledge into cogent and useful policy in complex facilities and/or across multiple sites.

f. Demonstrated skill in providing clinical and administrative oversight of multidisciplinary rehabilitation programs in complex facilities and/or across multiple sites.

g. Ability to collaborate with strategic planning committees at local, VISN or national levels for new ventures addressing patient care delivery systems, facilities management, system reorganizations, etc.

2. Physical Therapist Leadership Assignment at the National Level. PTs in leadership positions at the national level are assigned to manage, direct and oversee a majority of specialty treatment programs at the VA Central Office level. Responsibilities would cover staffing, work assignments, budget, provision of clinical services, day-to-day program operation, and all reporting requirements. Additionally, program managers at this grade generally have collateral assignments, determined by the need of the local facility, the VISN, and/or VACO.

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3. Rehabilitation Planning Specialist. Rehabilitation planning specialists are key program officials in the decentralized Office of the Director, Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation Service (PM&R) and the Rehabilitation Strategic Healthcare Group (SHG). The incumbent is responsible for the management of national initiatives having a high degree of visibility and a significant impact on Department health care. Examples include national initiatives in the care and treatment of patients, educational programs, program evaluation, quality assurance, etc. These programs typically include collaboration with other Federal and State agencies, professional organizations, and services within VHA. PTs assigned to this position must demonstrate the following KSAOs:

- a. Knowledge of operations and systems to resolve policy implementation issues with medical center directors/chiefs of staff, VISN management, and various professional service representatives.
- b. Ability to oversee program development of assigned specialized national clinical programs.
- c. Advanced knowledge of health care organizations and inter-relationships of subgroups within health care and rehabilitation organizations.
- d. Advanced skill in managing advocacy roles and planning activities within the Department and the greater rehabilitation community.

4. DEVIATIONS. The placement of individuals in grade levels not described in the qualification standard must be approved by the Under Secretary for Health or designee in VA Central Office, pursuant to delegated authority from the Secretary. Under no circumstances will the educational or credential requirement be waived for those occupations with a positive education requirement, or when specific credentials are identified as necessary to meet minimum requirements.

Authority: 38 U.S.C. 7304; 7402