

STAFFING

- 1. REASON FOR ISSUE:** To establish Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) procedures for the development of qualification standards for VA positions filled under 38 U.S.C. § 7401(1).
- 2. SUMMARY OF CONTENTS/MAJOR CHANGES:** Authority is given to the Secretary of the VA under 38 U.S.C. § 7402 to prescribe qualifications for occupations identified in 38 U.S.C. § 7401(1). The 8-step process used for the development and revision of Hybrid Title 38 occupations (VA Handbook, 5005, Part II, Appendix G17) has proven to be an effective means of developing VA qualification standards consistent with merit system principles. This Appendix extends and requires use of the 8-step process for the development or revision of VA qualification standards for occupations covered by 38 U.S.C. § 7401(1). The pages in this revision are to be inserted in part II of VA Handbook 5005. 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](#).
- 3. RESPONSIBLE OFFICE:** The Recruitment and Placement Policy Service (059), Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Human Resources Management.
- 4. RELATED DIRECTIVE:** VA Directive 5005, Staffing.
- 5. RESCISSIONS:** None.

CERTIFIED BY:

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

/s/
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**[APPENDIX G40. DEVELOPMENT OF QUALIFICATION STANDARDS
FOR VETERANS HEALTH ADMINISTRATION (VHA) POSITIONS
FILLED UNDER 38 U.S.C. § 7401(1)]**

1. SCOPE. This appendix provides VA procedures for the development of qualification standards by VHA Central Office program officials and occupation-specific subject matter experts, working with representatives of the Recruitment & Placement Policy Service (R&PPS) (059), for VHA positions under 38 U.S.C. § 7401(1). Authority is given to the Secretary under 38 U.S.C. § 7421 to prescribe qualifications for occupations identified in § 7401(1).

2. BACKGROUND

a. Qualification Standards are critically important documents for the identification of candidates with the needed knowledge, skills, and abilities to perform VA's work. Qualification standards establish minimum requirements that are predictive of successful performance.

b. A qualification standard is a statement of the minimum requirements that an individual must meet to be qualified for appointment or assignment to a position.

c. Minimum requirements include such considerations as experience, education, training, personal characteristics, physical ability, minimum age, citizenship, and licensure or certification.

d. In a broad sense, a qualification standard includes the examining guides, rating schedules, rating scales and other standardized measuring devices and techniques through which the qualifications of candidates are evaluated.

e. A qualification standard does not include the more general eligibility requirements such as restrictions on employment of relatives, security/suitability determinations, etc. of successful performance. The application of qualification standards in VHA is an integral part of ensuring a fully qualified workforce is available to care for Veteran patients.

3. INTERPRETING QUALIFICATION STANDARDS. The following information is pertinent to the interpretation of VA qualification standards:

a. VHA appointing officials and Professional Standards Boards act for the Under Secretary for Health in applying the qualification standards in a fair and consistent manner. Such decisions are made through an analysis of personal data and/or experience records.

b. When there is disagreement on the interpretation of a qualification standard, the appropriate HRM Officer may request an interpretation or decision from the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Human Resources Management (05). A courtesy copy of such request will be sent to the appropriate VHA Program Official in VA Central Office.

4. RESPONSIBILITIES. The following is an explanation of responsibilities associated with the development of VA qualification standards:

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- a. Qualification standards are developed by teams with representatives from R&PPS (059) and subject matter experts from VHA.
- b. VHA Field facilities may be requested to review and comment on drafts of VA qualification standards.
- c. Professional Standards Boards may recommend changes to qualification standards electronically to R&PPS (059) to improve the quality and clarity of the standards. R&PPS (059) will consult with the appropriate VHA program officials before final proposed changes are submitted for consideration.

5. GENERAL GUIDELINES. These procedures describe a step-by-step process for assembling, analyzing, and verifying occupational information that can then be used to convert a qualification standard from Title 5 to Title 38 format or to revise an existing or develop a new Title 38 qualification standard.

- a. For each step, an expected product is described. When the product for each step is completed, it should be forwarded to the R&PPS email box (Staffing.Policy.059/VACO@va.gov). Work on the next steps(s) should proceed while R&PPS (059) representatives are reviewing each completed product.
- b. For the development of a Title 38 qualification standard for which there is little to no current occupational information or no current and usable job analysis, all eight steps will usually need to be completed.
- c. For the development of a Title 38 qualification standard for which there is current occupational information and/or a current and usable job analysis, but some significant changes to the basic requirements for the profession are anticipated, some steps may not need to be completed.
- d. Subject-matter experts should review these procedures and identify which steps to complete in consultation with R&PPS (059) in the Office of Human Resources Management.

6. EIGHT STEPS TO DEVELOPING A TITLE 38 QUALIFICATION STANDARD

a. **Step 1.** Gather functional statements. Functional statements should represent the full range of assignments at different types and sizes of facilities, including outpatient clinics, small and large medical centers, etc. Identify representative assignments, duties, tasks, etc. for each grade level, and identify and describe special assignments at appropriate grade levels.

Product: Representative critical duties/task statements for all grade levels and special assignments.

b. **Step 2.** Compare representative critical duties/task statements to statutory requirements for each grade level.

Product: Analysis demonstrating how the grade levels assigned to representative critical duties/task statements meet the statutory requirements for each grade level.

c. **Step 3.** Conduct analysis to identify knowledge, skills, abilities and other characteristics required to perform the work of the position.

Product: A job analysis worksheet for each functional statement that identifies the duties performed and the KSAOs required to perform each duty, and a list of the most important KSAOs required for each grade level.

d. **Step 4.** Identify the source or means by which each KSAO is obtained, for example, through specific education or training.

Product: Itemized list of KSAOs and means by which they are obtained.

e. **Step 5.** Gather information on private sector and other Federal healthcare organization's practices regarding licensure, certification, registration, and positive educational/training requirements, and comparable pay rates.

Product: Summary of findings with supporting documents attached.

f. **Step 6.** Compare findings of Step 5 with results of Step 4.

Product: List of duties with respective required KSAOs, and required licensure, certification, registration, and positive education/training requirements identified.

g. **Step 7.** Review product of Step 6 with statutory requirements for grade levels.

Product: Analysis discussing results of comparison.

h. **Step 8.** Write qualification standard in Title 38 format.

Product: Qualification standard with all supporting documents from Steps 1 through 8.

