

CORRECTED

STAFFING

1. REASON FOR ISSUE: To revise Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) procedures regarding promotions and advancements in the Veterans Health Administration.

2. SUMMARY OF CONTENTS/MAJOR CHANGES: This handbook contains mandatory procedures on staffing and recruitment. The pages in this handbook replace the corresponding page numbers in VA Handbook 5005. Revised text is contained in [brackets]. 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. Extends the number of days for submitting title 38 promotion reconsideration requests from 14 to 30 days.
- b. Clarifies effective date for title 38 promotions and advancements. This provision, contained in Part III, Chapter 4, paragraph 8a(1), is retroactive to December 1, 2010. Therefore, all advancement/promotion anniversary date reviews occurring on or after December 1, 2010, which resulted in advancement to a higher level in Nurse I, or promotion to a higher grade level, must be reviewed by the Human Resources Management Office and the effective date must be corrected retroactively so that it is effective at the beginning of the first full pay period after the employee's anniversary date of grade at the time of advancement/promotion consideration. Anniversary date reviews occurring prior to December 1, 2010, which resulted in advancement/promotion are not impacted by this provision and are not subject to retroactive adjustment.
- c. Clarifies that changes in grades or levels for employees on time-limited appointments under 38 U.S.C. 7405(a)(1) will be processed as conversions.
- d. Adds coverage of new hybrid title 38 occupations to the interchange agreement and deletes reference to the Veterans Canteen Service.
- e. Deletes physicians and dentists as a category of employee covered by Appendix III-J.
- f. Adds instruction for processing a pay adjustment when a Nurse I employee is advanced to a higher level within the Nurse I grade.
- g. Allows facility directors to approve reconsideration requests for promotion up to the full performance level for employees appointed under 38 U.S.C. 7401(3) or 38 U.S.C. 7405(a)(1)(B).
- h. Eliminates time-in-grade requirements for promotion of title 38 employees.
- i. Allows the facility director to designate the nurse executive as the approving official for Nurse Professional Standards Board actions.

- j. Updates Appendix O to correct and add new full performance levels.
- k. Revises/updates Appendix M with Hybrid Title 38 procedures for processing promotions.

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
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period for the special program. The employee may be promoted to the grade and step for which qualified for appointment, provided the administrative requirements for promotion consideration have been met.

c. **Effective Date.** The effective date of a promotion or an advancement to a higher level within a grade is the 1st day of the pay period following approval by the approving official, but not earlier than the date on which all administrative requirements are met.

d. **Notification of Eligibility.** Human Resources Management Officers are responsible for assuring that appropriate officials are notified approximately 60 days in advance of the date employees meet the administrative requirements for promotion, except that for podiatrists, optometrists, and chiropractors in Associate or Full grade, physician assistants in Associate grade; and expanded-function dental auxiliaries in Junior grade, notification of consideration for promotion will be made approximately 60 days in advance of the anniversary date of grade. The employee shall also be notified. If the employee is not promoted, these notifications shall continue to be made annually approximately 60 days prior to the anniversary date of grade until a change in grade occurs. A longer period between promotion consideration, not to exceed 3 years, may be established by the approving official when a nurse or expanded-function dental auxiliary does not meet the education or experience requirements.

e. **Administrative Requirements for Consideration**

(1) A current proficiency rating of Satisfactory or higher, or Executive Career Field Performance appraisal of Fully Successful or higher.

(2) The experience and education requirements in the appropriate VA Qualification Standards.

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**PART III
CHAPTER 4**

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5. PROMOTION OF PODIATRISTS, OPTOMETRISTS, CHIROPRACTORS, PHYSICIAN ASSISTANTS, AND EXPANDED-FUNCTION DENTAL AUXILIARIES

a. **Requirements for Podiatrists, Optometrists, Chiropractors, Physician Assistants, and Expanded Function Dental Auxiliaries.** Before they can be considered for promotion, employees in the above occupations must have a current proficiency rating of Satisfactory or higher. These employees must meet the same grade requirements, including the specified demonstrated accomplishments, as for appointment. Any deviation or exception to these requirements will be limited to those specified in the appropriate qualification standard. (See part II, appendix G.)

b. **Processing Procedures** (See appendix M, this part.)

(1) **Notification of Eligibility**

(a) Approximately 60 days prior to the date the employee meets the experience requirement for consideration for promotion, the health care facility will receive from the Austin Automation Center (AAC) VA Form 97, Notice of Pending Personnel Action, in duplicate, identifying the employee and stating that the employee meets the time requirements for promotion as of the date specified. In addition, VA Form 97 will indicate if there is a satisfactory or higher proficiency on record and the amount of

(b) If the employee is not promoted, the AAC will continue to send the VA Form 5-97 annually until a change in grade occurs. The VA Form 5-97 will be forwarded to the appropriate supervisory official. An employee at Nurse II and below who is not promoted or advanced to a higher level within the grade will be considered for promotion or advancement to a higher level within the grade on the next anniversary date of grade. [A] longer period between considerations, not to exceed 3 years, may be established by the NPSB when a registered nurse at Nurse II and below does not meet the qualification standard's education or experience requirements. In these cases, the Human Resources Management Office will tab the service control file and will destroy the VA Form 5-97 for the year(s) when the employee is not to receive consideration.

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(6) **Waiver of Experience and /or Degree Requirements.** The appointing official may authorize a waiver of experience and/or the degree requirements for individuals whose professional accomplishments, performance, and qualifications warrant such consideration based on demonstrated ability to meet the requirements for promotion to the next higher grade or advancement to a higher level within the grade. (See the VA Nurse Qualification Standard, appendix G6, Part II, this Handbook.) In considering a registered nurse for promotion to Nurse III or below, the appropriate NPSB will determine whether or not the individual should be recommended for promotion or advancement to a higher level within the grade with a waiver of the experience and/or degree requirements.

(7) **Recommendations of Nurse Professional Standards Boards.** If consideration of a registered nurse promotion or advancement to a higher level within the grade by the Under Secretary for Health or designee is requested, the Human Resources Management Officer will take necessary steps to ensure that the Nurse Executive [is] aware of the case and of the recommendation(s) of the appropriate Nurse Professional Standards Boards.

7. TIER DETERMINATION OR PROMOTION RECONSIDERATION AND REVIEW

a. **Coverage.** This paragraph applies to podiatrists, optometrists, chiropractors, registered nurses, nurse anesthetists, physician assistants, and expanded-function dental auxiliaries appointed under 38 U.S.C. 7401(1) or 7405(a)(1)(A). **NOTE:** VHA physicians and dentists appointed under 38 U.S.C. 7401(1) or 7405(a)(1)(A) can request reconsideration of tier determination. (See VA Handbook 5007, Part IX, paragraph 11.)

b. **Notice of Decision.** Supervisors must advise employees of any decision not to promote them, of the reason(s) for the decision, and of their right to request reconsideration. The right to reconsideration does not extend to promotions to Nurse IV and Nurse V, which are based on complexity of assignment, nor does it extend to temporary promotions.

c. **Informal Discussion.** The employee must discuss his or her dissatisfaction with their immediate supervisor prior to submitting a request for reconsideration under subparagraph 7d.

d. Submission of Reconsideration Request or Request for Central Office Review**(1) Reconsideration Request**

(a) If the employee does not believe the supervisor's explanation is satisfactory, the employee may submit a written request for reconsideration through the supervisor to the appropriate Professional Standards Board for review within [30] calendar days of the non-promotion decision. (See subparagraph 7e.) The approving official or designee may extend the [30]-day period at the written request of the employee if the employee is unable to submit the information for reasons beyond the employee's control. The employee's written request for reconsideration is to indicate when the informal discussion was held with the immediate supervisor and cite the specific reason(s) why the employee believes the decision was not proper. Supervisors are to review and comment on the employee's request in writing, and provide copies of those comments to the employee.

(2) If on reconsideration the approving official disapproves the promotion under paragraph 7f(3), the employee may request Central Office review by submitting a written request through the supervisor to the approving official within [30] calendar days of receiving notice of the reconsideration decision. The approving official or designee may extend the [30]-day period at the written request of an employee if the employee is unable to submit the information timely for reasons beyond the employee's control.

e. Professional Standards Board Review. The appropriate Professional Standards Board at the facility will review the information submitted by the employee and make a recommendation to the approving official. If the employee's request does not include the information specified in paragraph 7d(1)(a), the technical representative to the Professional Standards Board is to return the request to the employee for completion. The additional information is to be returned to the Professional Standards Board within [30] calendar days; however, the appropriate management official may extend the [30]-day period if the employee is unable to submit the information for reasons beyond the employee's control. Upon completing its review, the Board must forward its recommendation to the approving official for action under paragraph f.

f. Action by Approving Authority. Upon review of the reconsideration file, the approving official shall take one of the following actions:

(1) Request any additional information needed to make a decision. This includes, but is not limited to, meeting with representatives of the Professional Standards Board, the employee, or the employee's supervisor prior to making a decision under paragraph f(2) or f(3).

(2) Approve the adjustment of the employee's grade or level in accordance with paragraph 8a.

(3) Disapprove the promotion and notify the employee of the decision in writing. If the employee requests VA Central Office review under paragraph 7d(2), the approving official shall forward the reconsideration file [] and any comments to the appropriate VA Central Office Professional Standards Board for review.

**PART III
CHAPTER 4****g. Request for Central Office Review**

(1) **Review by the Central Office Professional Standards Board.** When a request for Central Office review is submitted to the appropriate VA Central Office Professional Standards Board under paragraph f(3), the Under Secretary for Health or a designee becomes the promotion approving authority. The appropriate Board is to review the information submitted by the facility and make a recommendation to the approving official. If necessary, the Central Office Board may request additional information. Upon completing its review, the Central Office Board is to forward its recommendation to the approving official for action under paragraph h.

(2) Employees may withdraw requests for reconsideration or for Central office review at any time.

h. Action by Under Secretary for Health or Designee. Upon receipt of the recommendation from the appropriate VA Central Office Professional Standards Board, the approving official or designee may:

(1) Authorize the adjustment in the employee's grade or level in accordance with paragraph 8a.

(2) Request any additional information needed.

(3) Disapprove the promotion and advise the employee of the determination in writing. Such determinations are final.

i. Exclusion from Coverage as Employee Grievance. Requests for promotion reconsideration are excluded from the Agency Grievance Procedure. See VA Handbook 5021, Part IV, Chapter 3, paragraph 16. Promotion reconsideration is also excluded from negotiated grievance procedures under the provisions of 38 U.S.C. 7422(b).

8. EFFECTING ADVANCEMENT, AND PROMOTION ACTIONS AND CHANGE IN ASSIGNMENT**a. Effective Date**

(1) [An approved advancement resulting from an anniversary review will always be made effective by the Human Resources Management Officer at the beginning of the first full pay period after the employee's anniversary date of grade. This includes actions approved by a reconsideration request. All other advancement and promotion actions will be made effective at the beginning of the first full pay period commencing after approval.]

(2) If an employee becomes eligible for advancement or promotion while on LWOP for educational or other purposes, no action will be taken until the employee returns to duty. If the employee upon return to duty meets all other requirements for promotion, an appropriate recommendation will be made. However, if advanced or promoted, the advancement or promotion will not be effected retroactively.

NOTE: See chapter 6, this part, for effecting of promotion actions upon return from military service.

PART III
CHAPTER 4

12. DETAILS, TEMPORARY REASSIGNMENTS, AND TEMPORARY PROMOTIONS FOR [TITLE 38 EMPLOYEES APPOINTED UNDER 38 U.S.C. 7401(1), 38 U.S.C. 7401(3), AND 38 U.S.C. 7405

a. Appointments under 38 U.S.C. 7401(1), 38 U.S.C. 7401(3), and 38 U.S.C. 7405 other than Registered Nurses and Nurse Anesthetists.

(1) **Details.** When [a title 38 or hybrid title 38 position] is vacant, the facility Director may detail [another title 38 or hybrid title 38 employee to the] position. Generally, details will not exceed 90 days, and may be terminated prior to the expiration date. The facility Director may approve extensions of the detail [] when circumstances warrant.

[NOTE: *In accordance with VA Handbook 5005, Part III, Appendix N, the utilization of title 38 employees in competitive civil service positions is prohibited.*]

b. Registered Nurses and Nurse Anesthetists

(1) **Details.** When the position of Nurse Executive or a Nurse Anesthetist position at Nurse IV or Nurse V is vacant, the facility Director may detail [another title 38 employee to the] position. Generally, details will not exceed 90 days, and may be terminated prior to the expiration date. The facility Director may approve extensions of the detail [] when circumstances warrant.

(2) **Temporary Reassignments.** When a position at Nurse IV or V is vacant, the facility Director may approve the temporary reassignment of an individual into the position. Generally, temporary reassignments will be for a period not to exceed 1 year, and may be terminated prior to the expiration date. The facility Director may approve the extension of a temporary reassignment not to exceed 1 additional year when circumstances warrant. Normally, such temporary reassignments will be approved only after a registered nurse or nurse anesthetist has acted in the position for at least 90 days. When circumstances warrant, the approving official may approve a temporary reassignment when an employee has served less than 90 days in an acting capacity (e.g., when the position is expected to vacant for an extended period). On approval of the temporary reassignment, the following statement will be placed in the “Remarks” section of the SF 50-B: “Employee informed of conditions of temporary assignment.”

(3) **Temporary Promotions.** If a registered nurse is temporarily reassigned to a higher grade assignment under subparagraph 8b, the facility Director may temporarily promote the individual. Such action will be taken only after the facility Director considers the recommendation of the appropriate NPSB. The facility Director may similarly temporarily promote a nurse anesthetist to Nurse IV or V after considering the recommendation of the facility PSB for nurse anesthetists. On expiration or termination of the temporary promotion, the grade and salary of the employee will be adjusted in accordance with the provisions of VA Handbook 5007, Pay Administration. The employee will be advised in writing of the conditions of the temporary promotion or assignment. In applying the provisions of this handbook, the salary will be adjusted to the salary held previously, unless a higher step is warranted by reason of a periodic step increase, special advancement, or under the highest previous rate rule.

13. OTHER GRADE CHANGES OR CHANGE IN ASSIGNMENT

a. Change to Lower Grade or Changes in Assignment

(1) **General.** As provided by 38 U.S.C. 7403, where an employee's grade or tier level and salary are based on both the nature of the assignment and the employee's personal qualifications, and the assignment is subsequently changed, the grade and salary may be adjusted as appropriate.

(2) **Key Nursing Personnel (Registered Nurses Other Than Nurse Executives) and Nurse Anesthetists in Nurse IV and Above Whose Grade is Based on Both Their Personal Qualifications and Responsibilities of Their Assignment.**

(a) **Placement in a Lower Grade for the Good of VA.** Employees placed in a lower grade for reasons other than cause or at the employee's request will have their pay set at the lowest step of the lower grade which equals or exceeds their existing rate of basic pay. If there is no such step, employees are entitled to pay retention.

SECTION B. PROMOTION AND INTERNAL PLACEMENT OF HYBRID TITLE 38 EMPLOYEES

1. GENERAL

a. This section contains instructions and procedures governing the promotion of employees in hybrid title 38 occupations who are appointed under sections 7401(3) and 7405 (a)(1)(B) of title 38, United States Code. Promotion is advancement to a higher grade level and recognizes that an employee is providing a higher level of service to VA.

b. The promotion system shall provide advancement opportunities for employees, predicated upon the recognition of the quality of service rendered, additional experience and professional attainment as determined by an examination of the employee's individual record.

c. To meet the criteria for promotion, the individual must meet the criteria for the next higher grade level in the applicable VA qualification standard. Examination of the individual's total record must reveal evidence that the contribution to VA medical service is of sufficient value to warrant promotion. Potential for continuously greater contribution is also a prerequisite. Reviews and recommendations of supervisors and professional standards boards will be sufficient to ensure that promotion is fully merited and not recommended based on meeting administrative requirements alone.

d. Promotion actions will be taken without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, age, sexual orientation, or status as a parent, or any other non-merit factor, and shall be based solely on job-related criteria.

e. Promotion actions will conform to the restrictions governing the employment of relatives. (See VA Handbook 5025, Legal.)

f. Employees may also be advanced in steps within a grade. (For Special Advancements for Achievement and Special Advancements for Performance see Handbook 5017, Employee Recognition and Awards.)

2. PERSONS AUTHORIZED TO ACT ON RECOMMENDATIONS OF BOARDS FOR PROMOTIONS

(See appendix III-K, this part.)

3. PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS BOARDS

See part II, chapter 3, section C, this handbook, for VA policy covering Professional Standards Boards. See Appendix II-O, part II, this handbook, Organizational [Structure] of Hybrid Title 38 Professional Standards Boards. See Appendix II-P, part II, this handbook, Procedures for Selecting Hybrid Title 38 Professional Standards Boards Members. See Appendix III-P, this part, Procedures for Reporting Questionable Behavior and Judgment Exhibited by Hybrid Title 38 Professional Standards Boards Members.

CHAPTER 5. CONVERSIONS OR CHANGE IN ASSIGNMENTS (TITLE 38)

1. DEFINITION. Change in assignment for physicians and dentists will be processed by a Compensation Panel. (See VA Handbook 5007, Part IX.) All personnel actions changing an employee from one type of appointment to another under authority of 38 U.S.C., chapter 73 or 74 and not involving a break in service will be processed as conversions except changes from or to fee-basis appointments under authority of 38 U.S.C. 7405(a)(2) and lump-sum fee-basis appointments of consultants and attendings under authority of 38 U.S.C. 7405(a)(2), and without compensation appointments under 38 U.S.C. 7405(a)(1). These actions will be processed as new appointments. [Changes in grades or levels for employees on time limited appointments under 38 U.S.C. 7405(a)(1) will be processed as conversions.]

NOTE: *Conversion or change in assignment to another appointment giving the employee fewer rights and benefits will not be made until the employee has been advised in writing of the conditions of employment under the new appointment, and the employee has submitted a written resignation or other written evidence clearly indicating voluntary separation from the previous employment.*

2. UTILIZATION ON A FEE BASIS

a. Individuals who render service to VA on a fee basis, such as employees paid according to a schedule of fees or consultants or attendings used by letter of appointment (see part II, section G, this handbook) may not be converted to appointments under the provisions of sections 7306, 7401(1), 7401(3), and 7405(a)(1). Fee-basis employees will be terminated prior to appointment under these authorities.

b. Full-time, part-time or intermittent employees appointed under sections 7306, 7401(1), 7401(3), or 7405(a)(1), may not be converted to utilization on a fee basis. An employee must resign or the appointment must be terminated prior to rendering service on a fee basis except for instances in which dual appointment has been approved. (See part II, chapter 3, section A.)

3. ACTION BY PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS BOARD OR COMPENSATION PANEL

a. A PSB will be responsible for making recommendations to the approving authority concerning any conversion action to a probationary appointment under 38 U.S.C. 7401(1) or 7401(3), and on any conversion involving a change in grade and/or step rate within the grade. Any change in assignment for physicians and dentists will be determined by a Compensation Panel. No action by a PSB will be required on conversion from an appointment under 38 U.S.C. 7401(1) or 7401(3) provided the employee has previously acquired permanent status under 38 U.S.C. 7401(1) or 7401(3), as appropriate, and has had continuous service under 38 U.S.C., chapter 73 or 74 since acquiring such status.

b. The Board will determine that the employee's past and expected future performance and physical, mental and emotional ability warrants the change in employment status. VA Form 10-2543, Board Action, will be used to document the Board's recommendation to the approving authority official.

c. The Compensation Panel will document any change in assignment on VA Form 10-0432a, Compensation Panel Action, along with a recommendation to the approving official.

APPENDIX C. INTERCHANGE AGREEMENTS

1. PURPOSE. This appendix outlines changes resulting from [two] interchange agreements between VA and Office of Personnel Management (OPM) negotiated under provisions contained in Executive Orders 9830 and 10577, Civil Service Rule 6.7. The agreements allow for movement of personnel employed under 38 U.S.C. 7401(1) and 7401(3) in Veterans Health Administration (VHA) and the competitive civil service. [] Employees must have at least 1 year of continuous service in order to be covered by the terms of these agreements.

2. INSTRUCTIONS. Following are implementing instructions regarding program areas affected by the agreements:

a. Coverage

(1) Appointments under 38 U.S.C. 7401(1) are limited to physicians, dentists, nurses, nurse anesthetists, podiatrists, optometrists, chiropractors, physician assistants and expanded-function dental auxiliaries employed on a full-time basis. Appointments under 38 U.S.C. 7401(3) are limited to those occupations specifically listed under Section 7401(3) or approved for hybrid status by the Assistant Secretary for Human Resources and Administration in accordance with the provisions of part II, chapter 3, section A, paragraph 2 of this handbook. []

(2) Employees involuntarily separated without cause from qualifying positions (described in subparagraph a(1) above) may be appointed non-competitively within 1 year of the separation period.

b. Consideration for Conversion to a Competitive Service Appointment. [Title 38 and Hybrid Title 38 employees who are eligible for conversion to competitive service positions under VA interchange agreements and are in the area of consideration for posted vacancies shall be allowed to apply.] The following procedures will be used[:]

(1) If the competitive service position does not provide promotion or placement in a position with promotion potential, qualified excepted service employees covered by the interchange agreements may be selected and converted to the competitive service position without competition. If an increase in pay will result, it is considered a promotion and competition under the appropriate merit promotion plan for competitive service positions will take place as described in the next paragraph.

(2) If the competitive service position provides promotion or placement in a position with higher promotion potential, qualified excepted service employees covered by the interchange agreements will be rated and ranked along with competitive service employees. Excepted service and competitive service employees will be referred on separate certificates when a panel is required. The selecting official may select from either certificate. (See chapter 3 of this part.)

NOTE: For VHA policy regarding the utilization of title 38 employees (appointment/assignment to non-clinical duties), see appendix III-N.

**PART III
APPENDIX C****c. Appointment to Positions Under 38 U.S.C. 7401(1) and 7401(3)**

(1) Civil Service Rule 6.7 allows OPM and any Federal agency having an independent merit system (e.g., title 38, United States Code), to enter into an agreement providing for the movement of persons between the competitive civil service and the independent system. Under provisions of the agreements between VA and OPM, personnel employed under 38 U.S.C. 7401(1) and 7401(3) may apply for competitive service positions. However, the "interchange" agreements also include procedures which competitive service employees should follow in applying for positions in the independent merit system (in this case, positions filled under 38 U.S.C. 7401(1) and 7401(3)).

(2) Competitive service employees applying for positions filled under 38 U.S.C. 7401(1) or 7401(3) will be appointed in accordance with the provisions of chapter 4 of this part. Employees will be appointed at the grade and step for which they qualify based on the recommendation of a Professional Standards Board for 7401(1) appointees or 7401(3) appointees, and approval by the appropriate authority. Competitive service employees must have completed the 1-year probationary period required in connection with their career-conditional or career appointment before they may be appointed to title 38, United States Code positions under the authority of these interchange agreements. However, the agreements do not preclude the appointment under 38 U.S.C. 7401(1) or 7401(3) of qualified competitive service employees at any time, outside the terms of these agreements, using appropriate procedures specified in part II, chapter 3, this handbook.

[]

d. **PAID Instructions.** SF 52, Request for Personnel Action, for conversions under the interchange agreements, will be prepared in accordance with instructions in VA Manual MP-6, part V, supplement No. 1.5.

APPENDIX J. DOCUMENTATION OF ADVANCEMENTS ON SF 50-B,
NOTIFICATION OF PERSONNEL ACTION

Category of Employee	Appointment Authority	Nature of Action	Legal Authority	VA Required Remarks
[] Podiatrists, Optometrists, Chiropractors, Registered nurses, Physician Assistants, Expanded-Function dental Auxiliaries and nurse anesthetists	38 U.S.C. 7401(1)	"Promotion" "Pay Adjustment" Promotion" or "Change to Lower Grade," as appropriate "Change to Lower Grade" "Pay Adjustment" "[Pay Adjustment]"	38 U.S.C. 7403	"Special Advancement for Performance" "Grade Adjustment. For consistency with (promotion requirements)." Will be shown for promotion grade adjustments. "Grade Adjustment. For consistency with (duty assignment)." Will be shown when employee changed from level of assignment where grade is based on both nature of assignment and personal qualifications. "Special Advancement for Achievement" [Use when a Nurse I is advanced to a higher level within Nurse I grade.]
[] Podiatrists, optometrists, chiropractors, registered nurses, physician assistants expanded-function dental auxiliaries and nurse anesthetists	38 U.S.C. 7405(a)(1) (A)	"Promotion" "Pay Adjustment" "Promotion" or "Change to Lower Grade," as appropriate "Change to Lower Grade" "[Pay Adjustment]" "[Pay Adjustment]"	38 U. S. C. 7405(b)	"Special Advancement for Performance" "Grade Adjustment. For consistency with (promotion requirements)." Will be shown for promotion grade adjustments. "Grade Adjustment. For consistency with (duty assignment)." Will be shown when employee changed from level of assignment where grade is based on both nature of assignment and personal qualifications. "Special Advancement for Achievement" [Use when a Nurse I is advanced to a higher level within Nurse I grade. Applicable to part-time or intermittent appointments without time limitations.]

**DOCUMENTATION OF ADVANCEMENTS ON SF 50-B,
NOTIFICATION OF PERSONNEL ACTION (CONTINUED)**

Category of Employee	Appointment Authority	Nature of Action	Legal Authority	VA Required Remarks
Medical and dental residents	38 U.S.C. 7406	“Promotion”	38 U.S.C. 7406	
Career Residents	38 U.S.C. 7406	“Promotion” “[Pay Adjustment]”	38 U. S. C. 7406	“Special Advancement for Performance” or “Special Advancement for Achievement”
All Hybrid Occupations	38 U.S.C. 7401(3)	“Promotion” “Pay Adjustment” “Promotion” or “Change to Lower Grade,” as appropriate “Change to Lower Grade” “Pay Adjustment”	38 U.S.C. 7403	“Special Advancement for Performance” “Grade Adjustment. For consistency with (promotion requirements).” Will be shown for promotion grade adjustments. “Grade Adjustment. For consistency with (duty assignment).” Will be shown when employee changed from level of assignment where grade is based on both nature of assignment and personal qualifications. “Special Advancement for Achievement”
All Hybrid Occupations	38 U.S.C. 7405(a)(1) (B)	“Promotion” “Pay Adjustment” “Promotion” or “Change to Lower Grade,” as appropriate “Change to Lower Grade” “Pay Adjustment”	38 U. S. C. 7405(b)(2)	“Special Advancement for Performance” “Grade Adjustment. For consistency with (promotion requirements).” Will be shown for promotion grade adjustments. “Grade Adjustment. For consistency with (duty assignment).” Will be shown when employee changed from level of assignment where grade is based on both nature of assignment and personal qualifications. “Special Advancement for Achievement”

APPENDIX K. PROMOTIONS, ADVANCEMENT TO A HIGHER LEVEL WITHIN THE GRADE, OR CHANGE IN ASSIGNMENTS APPROVED BY THE UNDER SECRETARY FOR HEALTH OR A DESIGNEE, NETWORK DIRECTORS AND FACILITY DIRECTORS

NOTE: The term advancement in this appendix refers to advancement to a higher level within the grade for nurses, not special advancements for achievement or performance.

1. Under Secretary for Health or designee

NOTE: All actions affecting Directors of medical and regional office centers requiring approval of the Under Secretary for Health, or designee, will also require the concurrence of the Under Secretary for Benefits.

- a. Promotion [of employees to positions centralized to the Under Secretary for Health as outlined in VA Handbook 5005, Appendix G15] Chiefs of Pharmacy Service to GS-15
- b. Promotion of VHA Central Office employees
- c. Promotion reconsideration requests from [] VHA Central Office employees.
- [d. Promotion reconsideration requests from registered nurses will be processed in accordance with VA Handbook 5005, Part III, Chapter 4, Section A, paragraph 7d.
- e. Promotion reconsideration for VISN employees.]

2. Network Directors

- a. Promotion of VISN employees.
- b. Reconsideration requests for promotion or change in assignment from employees at field facilities within the respective VISNs. This applies to all occupations except registered nurse.
- c. Temporary change in assignments to Chief of Staff or comparable positions in tier 4 for renewable periods not to exceed 1 year

3. Facility Directors

- a. Promotion of [employees to grades GS-13 and below and to GS-14 grade levels as delegated by the Network Director.]
- b. Promotion of Pharmacists. Facility directors may delegate to the Chief of Pharmacy Service the promotion of pharmacists in non-centralized assignments below GS-13, Assistant Chiefs of Pharmacy Service at GS-13.

- c. Promotion of all other hybrids, which may be delegated to the Chief of Staff, the Associate Director, or Nurse Executive, as appropriate.
- d. Promotion of Optometrists.
- e. Promotion of Chiropractors.
- f. Promotion of Podiatrists.
- g. Change in assignment of Dentists (staff dentists, service chiefs and positions comparable to service chief).
- h. Promotion of Expanded-Function Dental Auxiliaries.
- i. Promotion of Physician Assistants.
- j. Change in assignments of Physicians.
- k. Promotion or advancement to a higher level within the grade of Nurse Anesthetists
- l. Promotion of Registered Nurses at Nurse III and below, which may be delegated to the [Associate Director for Patient Care Services or] Nurse Executive.
- m. Promotion of Registered Nurses at Nurse IV and Nurse V, which may not be delegated to the [Associate Director for Patient Care Services or] Nurse Executive.
- [n. Reconsideration requests for promotion up to the full performance level from employees appointed under 38 U.S.C. 7401(3) or 38 U.S.C. 7405(a)(1)(B) at field facilities.

NOTE: *When an employee on a time limited appointment is advanced in grade or level within the grade (Nurse I), those actions must be processed as a conversion action after consideration by the appropriate professional standards board. Refer to VA Handbook 5005, Part III, Chapter 5, paragraph 5.]*

JUNE 14, 2012

**VA HANDBOOK 5005/58
PART III
APPENDIX L**

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**APPENDIX M.
 PROCESSING TITLE 38 PROMOTIONS AND ADVANCEMENTS**

HOW TO PROCESS A PROMOTION FOR PODIATRISTS, CHIROPRACTORS, NURSE ANESTHETISTS, PHYSICIAN ASSISTANTS, EXPANDED-FUNCTION DENTAL AUXILIARIES, [AND TITLE 38 HYBRID OCCUPATIONS]		
A		B
S T E P S	If full-time, part-time or intermittent employee [is in a]	then take these steps [for promotion up to the full performance level]
1	[title 38 hybrid occupation]	Upon receipt of VA Form 5-97, Notice of Pending Personnel Action, the HRM Office will forward the original to employee's service chief []. A duplicate copy will be retained in the HRM office as a suspense copy.
2		[The immediate supervisor will notify employee of eligibility for promotion, and employee will be given 30 days to submit self assessment. The immediate supervisor will make a formal promotion recommendation to the approving official based on an evaluation of employee's self assessment, performance, experience and/or education, as appropriate. Recommendation will meet criteria described in section B, chapter 4, this part. Employees who have demonstrated the capability to successfully perform at the next higher grade level will be recommended for promotion.
3		Upon concurrence of the promotion recommendation by the approving official, the appropriate personnel action will be prepared and submitted along with supporting documentation to the HRM Office. The promotion will be effected no later than the first day of the first full pay period commencing 60 days after employee's anniversary date.
4		If promotion is not recommended, the immediate supervisor will notify the employee in writing that they are not being recommended for promotion. The written notice will state the reason(s) why the employee does not meet the criteria for promotion, the right to reconsideration, and that requests for reconsideration must be preceded by an informal discussion with their supervisor. Reconsideration request procedures will follow criteria described in paragraph 6 of chapter 4, this part.]

[HOW TO PROCESS A PROMOTION FOR PODIATRISTS, CHIROPRACTORS, NURSE ANESTHETISTS, PHYSICIAN ASSISTANTS, EXPANDED-FUNCTION DENTAL AUXILIARIES, AND TITLE 38 HYBRID OCCUPATIONS]

A		B
S T E P S	[If full-time, part-time or intermittent employee is in a	then take these steps for promotion above the full performance level
1	[title 38 hybrid occupation]	Upon receipt of VA Form 5-97, Notice of Pending Personnel Action, the HRM Office will forward the original to employee's service chief. A duplicate copy will be retained in the HRM office as a suspense copy. (Employees who are eligible for promotion consideration to a grade that requires a combination of personal qualifications and assignment characteristics are to be considered for promotion to such grades on the first anniversary date of their last promotion, provided administrative requirements have been met.)
2		The immediate supervisor will notify employee of eligibility for promotion, and employee will be given 30 days to submit self assessment. The immediate supervisor will make a recommendation for promotion to the appropriate management official (e.g. service chief) based on an evaluation of employee's self assessment, performance, experience and/or education and assignment. Recommendation will meet criteria described in section B, chapter 4, this part.
3		<p>If the appropriate management official determines the personal qualifications and assignment does <u>not</u> meet the qualification standard to warrant promotion above the full performance level, the employee will be notified in writing that they are not being recommended for promotion. The written notice will state the reason(s) why the employee does not meet the criteria for promotion, the right to reconsideration, and that requests for reconsideration must be preceded by an informal discussion with their supervisor. Reconsideration request procedures will follow criteria described in paragraph 6, chapter 4, this part.</p> <p>If the appropriate management official determines the personal qualifications and assignment meets the qualification standard to warrant promotion above the full performance level, the appropriate recommendation will be submitted through the Chief of Staff, Associate Director, Associate Director for Patient Services or Nurse Executive and HRM Office to the Professional Standards Board for consideration within 30 days.</p>
4		The Professional Standards Board will examine the personnel folder, supervisory evaluations and all other information furnished. Additional information may be obtained at the direction of the board. Boards will report their findings on VA Form 10-2543, Board Action. All members will sign and date the form. The board action and all related papers will then be forwarded to the appropriate promotion approving authority listed in Appendix III- K. Action by the approving authority is required even when promotion is not recommended by the Board. The approving authority will note the final decision on the Board's recommendation, sign and date VA form 10-2543 and take appropriate action.]

HOW TO PROCESS A PROMOTION FOR PODIATRISTS, CHIROPRACTORS, NURSE ANESTHETISTS, PHYSICIAN ASSISTANTS, EXPANDED-FUNCTION DENTAL AUXILIARIES, [AND TITLE 38 HYBRID OCCUPATIONS]		
A		B
S T E P S	If full-time, part-time or intermittent employee meets the [] requirements specified and is a	then take these steps
1	podiatrist, chiropractor, nurse anesthetist, physician assistant, expanded function dental auxiliary	Upon receipt of VA Form 5-97, Notice of Pending Personnel Action, the HRM Office will forward the original to the employee's service chief []. The duplicate copy will be retained in the HRM office as a suspense copy.
2		The service will make appropriate recommendation to the Professional Standards Board or Standards Board (through the health care facility Director and Chief of Staff, when appropriate, such as for [chiropractors and physician assistants], including a concise evaluation based on the criteria in paragraphs 5 and 6 of chapter 4, this part (as appropriate). The Chief of Staff will make recommendations similarly for service chiefs. Significant changes in recent proficiency/performance ratings or unusually high or low elements will be evaluated in terms of promotion consideration. Each of these officials will indicate concurrence or non-concurrence, including specific reasons for such recommendation.
3		The Professional Standards Board or Standards Board will examine the supervisory evaluations, and all other information furnished. Additional information may be obtained at the direction of the board. Boards will report their findings and recommendations on VA Form 10-2543, Board Action. All members will sign [and date] the form [(verified facsimile or electronic signatures are acceptable)]. The board action and all related papers will then be forwarded to the appropriate promotion approving authority listed in Appendix III-K. Action by the approving authority is required even though promotion is not recommended.
4		[The approving authority] will note the final decision on the Board's recommendation, sign VA Form 10-2543 and take appropriate action.

HOW TO PROCESS A PROMOTION FOR OPTOMETRIST		
	A	B
S T E P S	If full-time, part-time or intermittent employee [] is an	then take these steps
1	optometrist	Upon receipt of VA Form 5-97, Notice of Pending Personnel Action, the HRM Office will forward the original copy to the employee's service chief []. The duplicate copy will be retained in the HRM office as a suspense copy.
2		The service chief will make appropriate recommendation to the VA Central Office Optometry Professional Standards Board through the facility HRM office, including a concise evaluation based on the criteria in paragraph 5 of chapter 4, this part (as appropriate). The Chief of Staff will make recommendations similarly for service chiefs. Significant changes in recent proficiency/performance ratings or unusually high or low [performance in any] elements will be evaluated in terms of promotion consideration. Each of these officials will indicate concurrence or non-concurrence, including specific reasons for such recommendation.
3		The VA Central Office Optometry Professional Standards Board will examine required documentation as specified in Note 2 and the Central Office Optometry Professional Standards Board checklist. Additional information may be obtained at the direction of the board. The Board will report their findings and recommendations on VA Form 10-2543, Board Action. All members will sign the form. The board action and all related papers will then be returned to the facility HRM office which will be responsible for forwarding to the appropriate promotion approving authority listed in appendix III-K. Action by the approving authority is required even though a promotion is not recommended.
4		[The approving authority] will note the final decision on the Board's recommendation, sign [and date] VA Form 10-2543, and return to the facility HRM office which will ensure completion of the promotion or other appropriate action.

NOTE 1: *The Director of Optometry Service and the VA Central Office Optometry Professional Standards Board may be contacted at and communications should be directed to:*

*Director, VA Optometry Service (111E1)
Veterans Health Administration
103 South Gay Street
Room 714
Baltimore, MD 21202-4061
Telephone: 1-410-779-1576
Fax: 1-410-779-1581*

NOTE 2: *Submissions to the VA Central Office Optometry Professional Standards Board for promotions shall include a cover letter with grade or step(s) increase request information; Standard Form 50-B (SF 50-B) showing the employee's anniversary date of grade; updated curriculum vitae; latest SF 50-B; last 3 proficiency reports (or what is available); last 3 board action reports (or what is available) approved by facility Director; recommendation from the rating official; and Human Resources point of contact. A VA Central Office Optometry Professional Standards Board checklist to assist with this process can be accessed at the following Office of Human Resources Management [] Web site link: <http://vaww1.va.gov/ohrm/Staffing/Title38Appts.htm> .*

NOTE 3: *The Human Resources Management Officer, VA Maryland Healthcare System, or designee, shall serve as the technical representative to the VA Central Office Optometry Professional Standards Board.*

NOTE 4: *Additional program information covering optometrists can be obtained through the Director of Optometry Service or the VHA Optometry Service Web site via the following link: <http://vaww1.va.gov/optometry/>.*

HOW TO PROCESS A PROMOTION FOR REGISTERED NURSES	
A	B
S T E P S	If full-time, part-time or intermittent employee meets the experience [] requirements, and is a Registered Nurse (not a nurse anesthetist)
1	then take these steps Upon receipt of VA Form 5-97, Notice of Pending Personnel Action the HRM Office will [send a copy to the Nurse Executive, or designee. The HRM Office will retain a suspense copy].
2	The Nurse [Manager and/or supervisor as appropriate, will make a recommendation through the Nurse Executive to the Nurse] Professional Standards Board. [The Board] will [review appropriate documentation related to the promotion consideration including the current] Proficiency Report, rendered during the period under consideration, and official transcripts or other documentation of advanced educational credits.
3	If the most recent proficiency report on file was prepared more than 6 months before the date of promotion consideration, narrative performance evaluations will be obtained from at least two professional nurses or appropriate others who have supervised the candidate during the period under consideration. Ordinarily, one of these evaluations will be prepared by the immediate supervisor. Evaluations may be in the form of a supplement to the latest proficiency report. This information specified in step 4, below, should be included in the evaluations for consideration by the board.
4	Evaluations of a registered nurse will clearly indicate specific professional or administrative strengths and weaknesses and will cite substantiating examples of accomplishments or lack thereof. Examples of areas to be emphasized are skill in human relationships; application of knowledge and experience in recognizing nursing needs of patients; technical skills; leadership ability in planning, directing and supervising the actions of others; contributions to the profession and community; acceptance of organizational and personal responsibility. Attention should be given to the requirements specified in the "Nurse VA Qualification Standard" and in chapter 4 of this part.
5	If a supervisor evaluation reflects information concerning performance which has been previously discussed with the employee, an informal conference will be conducted to discuss the evaluation.
6	The Professional Standards Board will analyze the registered nurse's qualifications based on the above data. Additional information may be obtained at the discretion of the board. []

HOW TO PROCESS A PROMOTION FOR REGISTERED NURSES (Continued)	
A	B
7	<p>The board will report its findings and recommendations on VA Form 10-2543, Board Action. If the registered nurse does not fully meet the experience or education requirements, the board will state that the registered nurse is ineligible for promotion consideration and specify the reasons for this finding. If the registered nurse is eligible for promotion consideration, the board will make a recommendation that the registered nurse either be promoted or not promoted and specify reasons for its recommendation. All board members will sign [and date] the board action [(verified facsimile or electronic signatures are acceptable)]. Action by the approving authority is required even if promotion is not recommended.</p>
8	<p>[T]he approving authority [] will note the final decision on the Board's recommendation, sign [and date] VA Form 10-2543 and take appropriate action.</p>
9	<p>When the Under Secretary for Health or designee is the approving authority, the findings and recommendations of the board will be reviewed [by higher level board]. The approving authority may require a professional examination even though one was not recommended by the board. The approving authority may approve or disapprove the promotion without a professional examination even though one was recommended by the board. If no professional examination is to be required, the approving authority will notify the health care facility concerned of the approval of the promotion. If a professional examination is authorized, the approving authority will not take action on the promotion until notified of the results of the examination.</p>
10	<p>The Nurse Executive or designee will notify the registered nurse of the results of promotion consideration. If the employee is not promoted, the appropriate official will discuss with the employee the reasons for non-promotion and what the employee should do to meet the requirements. If an employee who has acquired permanent status or an employee serving on a probationary appointment, believes that the action taken to deny a promotion not requiring a waiver by the Under Secretary for Health or a designee was improper, the provisions of chapter 4 this part, will apply.</p>

[APPENDIX O. FULL PERFORMANCE LEVELS FOR HYBRID TITLE 38 POSITIONS

1. SCOPE. This appendix contains the full performance levels for hybrid title 38 positions listed under section 7401(3) of title 38, United States Code, or approved for hybrid status under part II, chapter 3, section A, paragraph 2 of this handbook and applies to Veteran Health Administration employees appointed under 38 U.S.C. 7401(3) or 7405(a)(1)(B). This appendix is to be used in conjunction with the promotion procedures in section B of Chapter 4, this part.

2. LIST OF POSITIONS AND FULL PERFORMANCE LEVELS

Audiologist/Speech-Pathologist/Audiologist-Speech Pathologist	GS-0665-12
Biomedical Engineer	GS-0858-11
Blind Rehabilitation Specialist	GS-0601-11
VIST Coordinator	GS-0601-12
Blind Rehabilitation Outpatient Specialist	GS-0601-12
Certified Respiratory Therapist	GS-0640-7
Dental Assistant	GS-0681-5
Dental Hygienist	GS-0682-8
Diagnostic Radiologic Technologist	GS-0647-8
Dietitian	GS-0630-11
Kinesiotherapist	GS-0635-10
Licensed Practical or Vocational Nurse	GS-0620-6
Licensed Professional Mental Health Counselor	GS-0101-11
Marriage and Family Therapist	GS-0101-11
Medical Instrument Technician	(see specializations below)
Specializations	
Anesthesia	GS-0649-8
Cardiac Catheterization	GS-0649-8
Electrocardiograph (EKG)	GS-0649-7
Electroencephalograph (EEG)	GS-0649-8
Perfusion	GS-0649-10
Hemodialysis	GS-0649-8
Pulmonary Function	GS-0649-8
Diagnostic Ultrasound	GS-0649-8
Echocardiography	GS-0649-8
Polysomnography	GS-0649-8
Vascular	GS-0649-8
Medical Record Administrator/Specialist	GS-0669-11
Medical Record Technician	GS-0675-7
Medical Record Technician (Tumor Registry)	GS-0675-8
Medical Record Technician (Medical Coder)	GS-0675-8
Medical Technologist	GS-0644-9
Nuclear Medicine Technologist	GS-0601-9
Occupational Therapist	GS-0631-11
Occupational Therapy Assistant	GS-0636-7
Orthotist-Prosthetist	GS-0667-11

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APPENDIX O

Pharmacist	GS-0660-11
Pharmacy Technician	GS-0661-5
Physical Therapist	GS-0633-11
Physical Therapy Assistant	GS-0636-7
Prosthetic Representative	GS-0672-11
Psychologist	GS-0180-13
Registered Respiratory Therapist	GS-0601-8
Social Worker	GS-0185-11
Therapeutic Radiologic Technologist	GS-0648-8]