

STAFFING

1. REASON FOR ISSUE: To revise the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) qualification standard for the appointment of Dietitians, GS-630, in VA.

2. SUMMARY OF CONTENTS/MAJOR CHANGES: This handbook contains mandatory procedures on staffing. The pages in this handbook replace the existing Dietitian Qualification Standard in VA Handbook 5005, Part II, Appendix G20, in its entirety. Since this is a revision of an existing qualification standard, there will NOT be an initial one-time boarding. Supervisors should review the functional statements of all employees in comparison with the changes in the new qualification standard and make revisions as appropriate. Promotions and/or advancements of employees on the rolls on the date of this change may be recommended by the supervisor in accordance with VA Handbook 5005, Part III, Chapter 4. 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, Staffing, that is maintained on the [Office of Human Resources Management Web site](#). Significant changes include:

- a. Clarifies that the Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics, formally known as Commission on Accreditation for Dietetic Education, accreditation is required for a didactic program.
- b. Establishes requirements for validating foreign degrees.
- c. Clarifies the requirements for appointment of non-registered dietitians as graduate dietitians.
- d. Revises assignments at the GS-7 through GS-14 levels.
- e. Eliminates GS-11 assignment of Supervisory Food System Service Manager.
- f. Adds new titles and assignments for a GS-12 Advanced Practice Level, GS-13 Program Coordinator, and GS-14 VISN Program Coordinator.

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

5. RESCISSIONS: VA Handbook 5005/15, Part II, Appendix G20, dated March 17, 2006.

CERTIFIED BY:

/s/
Stephen W. Warren
Executive in Charge and Chief Information Officer
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**BY DIRECTION OF THE SECRETARY
OF VETERANS AFFAIRS**

/s/
Gina S. Farrissee
Assistant Secretary for
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[APPENDIX G20. DIETITIAN QUALIFICATION STANDARD
GS-630

Veterans Health Administration

1. COVERAGE. Following are requirements for appointment as a dietitian in the Veterans Health Administration (VHA). These requirements apply to all VHA dietitians in the GS-630 series.

2. BASIC REQUIREMENTS

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

b. **Education and Supervised Practice**

(1) The individual must have earned a bachelor's degree from a U.S. regionally accredited college or university or foreign equivalent and fulfilled each of the following criteria:

(a) Completed a didactic program in dietetics accredited by the Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics (ACEND), formerly known as the Commission on Accreditation for Dietetic Education (CADE).

(b) Completed an ACEND accredited or approved supervised practice program. Supervised practice programs are post-baccalaureate degree programs that provide supervised practice experiences which meet the eligibility requirements and accreditation standards of ACEND, formally known as CADE. Completion of a coordinated program in dietetics fulfills the requirements of a supervised practice program. Time spent in a dietetic internship or supervised practice program does not qualify as creditable experience.

(2) Individuals who have earned college and/or university degrees outside the United States and its territories also must have their transcripts evaluated by a foreign transcript evaluation service to determine if their degree is equivalent to a degree granted by a regionally accredited college or university in the United States. Validation of a foreign degree does not eliminate the need for verification of completion of didactic program, dietetic internship, or coordinated program requirements. The completion of ACEND didactic program requirements and at least a bachelor's degree from a U.S. regionally accredited college/university or foreign equivalent are necessary for eligibility to enter an ACEND-accredited supervised practice program.

c. **Registration/Certification.** All applicants must be registered with the Commission on Dietetic Registration (CDR) the credentialing branch of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics formerly known as the American Dietetic Association (ADA). Advanced Level Practice Dietitians must possess a minimum of one advanced practice credential relevant to the area of practice, (e.g. Certified Nutrition Support Clinician (CNSC), Board Certified Specialist in Renal Nutrition (CSR), Board Certified Specialist in Gerontological Nutrition (CSG), Certified Diabetes Educator (CDE), or Board Certified Specialist in Oncology Nutrition (CSO)).

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(1) **Exception.** Non-CDR registered applicants who otherwise meet the minimum qualification requirements may be appointed, pending CDR registration, as a temporary full-time graduate dietitian under 38 U.S.C. 7405(a)(1)(B). In accordance with 38 U.S.C. 7405(c)(2), this appointment may not exceed 2 years. Applicants appointed under this exception must provide care under the supervision of a registered dietitian at or above the full performance level. Applicants who fail to obtain CDR registration during this temporary full-time appointment may be terminated. The exception only applies to positions at the GS-7 and GS-9 level. For grade levels at or above the full performance level the candidate must be registered with the CDR.

(2) **Failure to Obtain Registration.** In all cases, dietitians must actively pursue meeting registration requirements starting from the date of their appointment. At the time of appointment, the supervisor will provide the unregistered dietitian with the written requirement to obtain registration, the date by which the registration must be acquired, and the consequences for not becoming registered by the deadline. Failure to become registered within 2 years from date of appointment will result in removal from the GS-0630 Dietitian series and may result in termination of employment.

(3) **Loss of Credentials.** An employee who fails to maintain the required registration must be removed from the occupation, which may also result in termination of employment. At the advanced level practice assignment, an employee who fails to maintain the required board certification must be removed from the assignment. At the discretion of the appointing official, an employee may remain at an appropriate assignment in the occupation when the credential is not a requirement and a placement opportunity exists.

d. **Grandfathering Provision.** All persons employed in VHA as a dietitian 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 registration requirements or board certification, if applicable. For employees who do not meet all the basic requirements in this standard, but who met the qualifications applicable to the position at the time they were appointed to it, the following apply:

(1) Such employees may be reassigned, promoted up to and including the full performance (journeyman) level, or changed to lower grade within the occupation, but may not be promoted beyond the journeyman level or placed in supervisory or managerial positions.

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

(4) Employees who are retained as a dietitian under this provision and subsequently leave the occupation lose protected status and must meet the full VA qualification standard requirements in effect at the time of reentry as a dietitian.

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

f. **English Language Proficiency.** Dietitians must be proficient in spoken and written English as required by 38 U.S.C. 7402(d).

3. GRADE REQUIREMENTS

a. Creditable Experience

(1) **Knowledge of Current Professional Dietitian Practices.** To be creditable, the experience must have required the use of knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs) associated with current professional dietetics practice. This may be evidenced by one or more of the following:

(a) The equivalent of 1 year of active professional practice. Active professional practice means paid/non-paid employment as a registered dietitian.

(b) Academic course work leading to an advanced graduate degree in nutrition or a related health care field.

(2) **Quality of Experience.** Experience is only creditable if it is post-registration experience as a registered dietitian directly related to the position to be filled, i.e., the clinical dietitian must have relevant clinical nutrition healthcare experience; the food service system dietitian must have relevant food service system management experience. Qualifying experience must also be at a level comparable to dietetic experience at the next lower level.

(3) **Part-Time Experience.** Part-time experience as a registered dietitian is credited according to its relationship to the full-time workweek. For example, a registered dietitian employed 20 hours per week, or on a half-time basis, would receive 1 full-time work week of credit for each 2 weeks of service.

b. **Grade Determinations.** In addition to the basic requirements for employment, the following criteria must be met when determining the grade of candidates.

(1) GS-7 Dietitian (Entry Level)

(a) **Experience or Education.** None beyond the basic requirements.

(b) **Assignment.** Employees at this grade are closely supervised and competency in progressively complex tasks is monitored by supervisor. Employees at this grade level serve in a developmental position.

(c) **Demonstrated Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities.** In addition to the experience above, the candidate must demonstrate the following KSAs:

1. Basic knowledge of principles and practices of dietetics and Medical Nutrition Therapy (MNT).

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2. Ability to provide nutrition care utilizing the Nutrition Care Process (NCP) to patients, family members and/or caregivers considering psycho-social issues and age-appropriate, evidence-based nutrition practice guidelines.
3. Ability to communicate effectively orally and in writing with patients, family and/or caregiver, and other professional healthcare providers (e.g., tailoring to audience and use of medical terminology).
4. Ability to plan and organize work consisting of multiple tasks and priorities under direct supervision.
5. Basic knowledge of, and ability to use, current information technology operations, software, hardware, terminology, security requirements, and capabilities.
6. Knowledge of basic food production and service for various populations which incorporates principles of sanitation, safety, and menu planning within a healthcare environment.
7. Knowledge of educational concepts, methods, and the ability to execute existing education and training activities for Nutrition and Food Services (NFS) employees.

(2) GS-9 Dietitian (Developmental Level)

(a) **Experience or Education.** At least 1 year of experience equivalent to the next lower grade level or education equivalent to 2 full years of progressively higher level graduate education, or master's degree from an accredited university or college in the field of dietetics or closely related field.

(b) **Assignments.** Employees at this grade level serve in either clinical or food service systems management dietitian positions. It is expected that they receive guidance from higher-level or supervisory staff members. Employees at this grade are under general supervision. Progressively complex tasks are monitored by supervisor. Employees at this grade level serve in a developmental position.

(c) **Demonstrated Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities.** In addition to the experience above, the candidate must demonstrate the following KSAs:

1. Ability to plan and organize work of considerable difficulty and responsibility, under general supervision.
2. Knowledge of various food preparation and delivery systems within a healthcare environment.
3. Knowledge of educational concepts, methods, training materials, and resources and the ability to develop and conduct education and training programs for NFS employees.
4. Ability to participate in research studies and conduct performance improvement studies and document findings to evaluate staff, food, supplies, equipment, and service, in order to improve the efficiency of the operation.

5. Knowledge of the principles and practices of clinical dietetics including NCP and MNT in order to plan, develop, and coordinate nutrition interventions, including enteral and parenteral nutrition, interdisciplinary care plans, and nutrition education activities that promote Veteran health, wellness and lifestyle management.

(3) GS-11 Dietitian (Full Performance Level)

(a) Experience or Education. At least 1 year of experience as a registered dietitian equivalent to the next lower grade level, or education equivalent to 3 full years of progressively higher level graduate education, or a Ph.D. or equivalent doctoral degree from an accredited university or college in the field of dietetics or closely related field.

(b) Assignment. Employees at this grade level serve as staff dietitians at the full performance level. Registered dietitians are responsible for independently planning, developing and directing all nutrition care activities (e.g., food service and/or clinical nutrition). Registered dietitians serve as important members of the interdisciplinary team of care providers, and focus on offering exceptional nutrition care and guidance to optimize health. Registered dietitians work in a variety of settings, such as hospitals, outpatient centers, residential treatment programs and patient homes. They are responsible for using evidence-based approaches to develop menus, counsel patients and provide nutrition care.

(c) Demonstrated Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities

1. In addition to the experience above, the candidate must demonstrate the following KSAs:

a. Knowledge of best practices in the dietetics profession and in scientific literature, including knowledge of research methods, study design, data collection, interpretation of findings, and translation of results into nutrition practice.

b. Ability to comply with various accrediting, regulatory, and agency authorities.

c. Ability to develop and maintain a system of internal reviews and direct quality control and performance improvement studies.

d. Knowledge of computer software programs relative to food service systems.

2. In addition to the KSAs identified in subparagraph 1 above, candidates for clinical nutrition positions must demonstrate the following KSAs:

a. Knowledge of the principles and practices of nutrition care and the treatment of complex cases in clinical settings in order to develop, implement and coordinate best practices in the dietetics profession (e.g. assessment, diagnosis, intervention, monitoring and evaluation).

b. Knowledge of best practices in areas of clinical nutrition and the ability to apply nutrition interventions to patients with multiple co-morbidities.

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c. Ability to act as a consultant for health care providers including registered dietetic technicians, dietetic interns, nurses, physicians, medical students, and allied health professionals.

3. In addition to the KSAs identified in subparagraph 1 above, candidates for food service systems management positions must demonstrate the following KSAs:

a. Ability to direct food service and production with focus on customer acceptance and budgetary guidelines to include principles of menu planning, food purchasing, delivery schedules, and ability to estimate food quantities.

b. Ability to develop and maintain a system of internal reviews and direct quality control and performance improvement studies.

c. Knowledge of computer software programs relative to food service systems

d. Knowledge of the principles of management required to establish program goals and objectives, to plan and administer a program, coordinate associated activities, evaluate program accomplishments, redefine priorities, solve problems, and modify objectives.

(4) **GS-12 Clinical Nutrition Manager**

(a) **Experience.** Completion of 1 year of experience equivalent to the next lower grade level.

(b) **Assignments.** For all assignments above the full performance level, the higher-level duties must consist of significant scope, complexity (difficulty), and range of variety, and be performed by the incumbent at least 25% of the time. A clinical nutrition manager serves as a supervisory dietitian, clinical nutrition expert, and consultant with primary responsibility for professional management support of clinical nutrition program activities. The clinical nutrition manager integrates clinical functions with other sections of NFS, other services and units within the medical center, hospital and community based clinics, and the local community. The individual assesses, plans, and evaluates the clinical nutrition program to ensure proper coordination between the delivery of clinical nutrition services and the overall delivery of health care. The clinical nutrition manager is responsible for ensuring compliance with internal and external regulatory authorities.

(c) **Demonstrated Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities.** In addition to the experience above, the candidate must demonstrate the following KSAs and demonstrate the potential to acquire the assignment-specific KSAs designated by an asterisk (*):

1. Ability to develop, maintain, and supervise a system of internal reviews and direct quality control and performance improvement studies to assure compliance with various accrediting, regulatory, and agency authorities.

2. Knowledge of the principles of program management and oversight required to develop program goals and objectives, administer and monitor program, evaluate program outcomes/accomplishments, set and redefine priorities, and implement effective solutions in processes and/or systems as needed.

3. Ability to act as a consultant for staff.
4. *Ability to determine the continuing education needs of staff and appropriate resources to meet those needs.
5. *Knowledge of human resource management principles and the ability to manage/supervise, i.e., plan, organize, delegate, direct, control, review activities of groups of subordinates.
6. Knowledge of the principles and practices of nutrition care and the treatment of complex cases in clinical settings in order to develop, implement, and coordinate best practices and supervise clinical nutrition staff.

(5) **GS-12 Food Service Systems Manager**

(a) **Experience.** Completion of 1 year of experience equivalent to the next lower grade level.

(b) **Assignment.** For all assignments above the full performance level, the higher-level duties must consist of significant scope, complexity (difficulty), and range of variety, and be performed by the incumbent at least 25% of the time. A food service systems manager is a supervisory dietitian and consultant with primary responsibility for management support of meal service, which includes food production and food service activities that are either self-operated or contractual agreements. The food service systems manager may interface with a contractual provider when appropriate and interfaces with the clinical nutrition program to ensure that services provided reflect the nutrition needs of the patient. The food service systems manager is responsible for ensuring compliance with internal and external regulatory authorities and assesses, plans, and evaluates the food service systems management program to ensure proper coordination between the delivery of patient meal service and the overall delivery of health care. The individual develops financial goals, manages a budget and organizes and/or maintains a cost accounting system to forecast expenditures based on current spending patterns; provides estimates for planning and adjustments as program and resources change.

(c) **Demonstrated Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities.** In addition to the experience above, the candidate must demonstrate the following KSAs and demonstrate the potential to acquire the assignment-specific KSAs designated by an asterisk (*):

1. Ability to develop, maintain, and supervise a system of internal reviews and direct quality control and performance improvement studies to assure compliance with various accrediting, regulatory, and agency authorities.
2. Knowledge of the principles of program management and oversight required to develop program goals and objectives, administer and monitor program, evaluate program outcomes/accomplishments, set and redefine priorities, and implement effective solutions in processes/systems as needed.
3. Ability to act as a consultant for staff.
4. *Ability to determine the continuing education needs of staff and appropriate resources to meet those needs.

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5. *Knowledge of human resource management principles and the ability to manage/supervise, i.e., plan, organize, delegate, direct, control, review activities of groups of subordinates.

6. *Ability to direct and supervise food service and production with focus on customer acceptance and budgetary guidelines to include principles of menu planning, food purchasing, delivery schedules, and ability to estimate food quantities.

(6) **GS-12 Program Coordinator**

(a) **Experience.** Completion of 1 year of experience equivalent to the next lower grade level.

(b) **Assignment.** For all assignments above the full performance level, the higher-level duties must consist of significant scope, complexity (difficulty), and range of variety, and be performed by the incumbent at least 25% of the time. The dietitian program coordinator may or may not have supervisory responsibilities but is responsible for broad program management. The program coordinator has full responsibility for managing and may supervise all phases of a specialty facility program, such as the MOVE! Weight Management Program for Veterans, which falls under the umbrella of a larger program such as Health Promotion Disease Prevention (HPDP). Coordinators of a more complex facility program, such as HPDP, Home Based Primary Care (HBPC), virtual or Telehealth care, at a Complexity Level 1 or 2 medical center would also be in this category. These individuals are responsible for the overall technical and administrative oversight of the nutritional care program operations within their program area. The program coordinator develops, organizes, directs, manages, controls and may supervise. The individual plans and develops policies, procedures and goals, and implements and educates staff on applicable VHA directives, handbooks, or other policies. The program coordinator has overall responsibility for planning, assessing, and evaluating programs to ensure proper coordination between care delivered by the program and overall delivery of healthcare within the facility.

(c) **Demonstrated Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities.** In addition to the experience above, the candidate must demonstrate the following KSAs and the potential to acquire the KSAs and/or demonstrate the potential to acquire the assignment-specific KSAs designated by an asterisk (*):

1. Ability to develop, maintain, and supervise a system of internal reviews and direct quality control and performance improvement studies to assure compliance with various accrediting, regulatory, and agency authorities.

2. Knowledge of the principles of program management and oversight required to develop program goals and objectives, administer and monitor program, evaluate program outcomes/accomplishments, set and redefine priorities, and implement effective solutions in processes/systems as needed.

3. Ability to act as a consultant for staff.

4. Ability to determine the continuing education needs of program staff and appropriate resources to meet those needs.

5. Ability to manage and establish program goals and objectives, plan and administer a program, coordinate associated activities and resources, evaluate program accomplishments, redefine priorities, problem solve, and modify objectives.

6. *Ability to manage/supervise, i.e., plan, organize, delegate, direct, control, review, activities of the program and groups of subordinates.

(7) **GS-12 Dietetic Internship Director**

(a) **Experience.** At least 1 year of experience equivalent to the next lower grade level.

(b) **Education.** A master's degree or higher from an accredited university or college in the field of dietetics or closely related field.

(c) **Assignment.** For all assignments above the full performance level, the higher-level duties must consist of significant scope, complexity (difficulty), and range of variety, and be performed by the incumbent at least 25% of the time. A dietetic internship director has full responsibility for administering all aspects of a VA-sponsored, accredited dietetic internship program which includes the overall planning, directing, and administering of the accredited post-baccalaureate degree dietetic internship program at a medical center, and ensures eligibility requirements and accreditation standards of ACEND are met. The individual serves as a consultant within NFS and with other facility health care staff regarding current nutrition and food service systems management issues, evaluating health care delivery to patients, and designing nutrition related research initiatives. The dietetic internship director provides professional and administrative guidance to dietetic interns and surveillance of all aspects of the program and is responsible for development of a performance evaluation system, selection or appointment of dietetic interns, identification of education and training needs, and performance issues. The individual coordinates and guides the staff dietitian participating in the clinical and administrative phases of the program.

(d) **Demonstrated Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities.** In addition to the experience above, the candidate must demonstrate the following KSAs and demonstrate the potential to acquire the assignment-specific KSAs designated by an asterisk (*):

1. Ability to develop, maintain, and supervise a system of internal reviews and direct quality control and performance improvement studies to assure compliance with various accrediting, regulatory, and agency authorities.

2. Knowledge of the principles of program management and oversight required to develop program goals and objectives, administer and monitor program, evaluate program outcomes/accomplishments, set and redefine priorities, and implement effective solutions in processes/systems as needed.

3. Ability to act as a consultant for staff.

4. *Knowledge of human resources administration, including such functions as the ability to interview and select qualified applicants, and monitor and evaluate performance.

5. *Ability to manage and establish program goals and objectives, plan and administer a program, coordinate practice experience at affiliated sites, evaluate program accomplishments, redefine priorities, solve problems, modify objectives, and review activities of preceptors and interns.

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6. *Knowledge to design dietetic internship curriculum to meet accreditation requirements established by the accrediting agency (ACEND) and VHA Office of Academic Affiliations.

7. In-depth knowledge of current practice in food service systems management, nutrition therapy, community nutrition practice, and business/entrepreneurial dietetics with the ability to integrate learning experiences in didactic and practice components of the internship.

(8) GS-12 Advanced Level Practice

(a) **Experience.** Completion of 1 year of experience equivalent to the next lower grade level.

(b) **Credentials.** Advanced level practice dietitians must possess a minimum of one advanced practice credential relevant to the area of practice, (e.g. Certified Nutrition Support Clinician (CNSC), Board Certified Specialist in Renal Nutrition (CSR), Board Certified Specialist in Gerontological Nutrition (CSG), Certified Diabetes Educator (CDE) or Board Certified Specialist in Oncology Nutrition (CSO)).

(c) **Assignment.** For all assignments above the full performance level, the higher-level duties must consist of significant scope, complexity (difficulty), and range of variety, and be performed by the incumbent at least 25% of the time. An advanced level practice dietitian in nutrition support, renal, oncology, geriatric, or diabetes nutrition specialties oversees the nutrition therapy of the most complex and/or high risk patients. The dietitian provides consultant services to VHA staff, conducts comprehensive nutrition assessment and diagnosis which may include the nutrition focused physical exam. The individual coordinates education programs for facility staff and serves as an education resource, instructing physicians, nurses, dietitians, pharmacists, interns, residents, and students on the current research and practice in the specialty area; maintains productivity standards, manages clinical resources, and conducts and/or participates in nutrition research studies and communicates findings through reports, abstracts, presentations, and publications.

(d) **Demonstrated Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities.** In addition to the experience above, the candidate must demonstrate the following KSAs and demonstrate the potential to acquire the assignment-specific KSAs designated by an asterisk (*):

1. *Ability to develop, maintain, and supervise a system of internal reviews and direct quality control and performance improvement studies to assure compliance with various accrediting, regulatory, and agency authorities.

2. *Knowledge of the principles of program management and oversight required to develop program goals and objectives, administer and monitor program, evaluate program outcomes/accomplishments, set and redefine priorities, and implement effective solutions in processes/systems as needed.

3. Ability to act as a consultant for staff.

4. Ability to mentor and educate peers and other multidisciplinary team members in complex issues, procedures and practices.

5. Ability to make presentations on topics regarding food, nutrition and health issues.
6. Ability to make high level decisions with a focus on delivering patient care and achieving program outcomes.
7. Ability to contribute to evidence analysis process to affect practice and identify and create new practice opportunities.

(9) GS-13 Clinical Nutrition Manager

(a) **Experience.** Completion of 1 year of experience equivalent to the next lower grade level closely related to the position being filled, and must fully meet the KSAs at that level.

(b) **Assignment.** For all assignments above the full performance level, the higher-level duties must consist of significant scope, complexity (difficulty), and range of variety, and be performed by the incumbent at least 25% of the time. A clinical nutrition manager serves as a supervisory dietitian, clinical nutrition expert and consultant with sole responsibility for the management of clinical nutrition program activities. This position integrates clinical functions with other sections of NFS, other services and units within the medical center, hospital and community based clinics, and the local community. The clinical nutrition manager assesses, plans, and evaluates the clinical nutrition program to ensure proper coordination between the delivery of clinical nutrition services and the overall delivery of health care. The individual is responsible for ensuring compliance with internal and external regulatory authorities. The clinical nutrition manager has the primary responsibility for two or more medical centers/divisions.

(c) **Demonstrated Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities.** In addition to the experience above, the candidate must demonstrate the following KSAs and demonstrate the potential to acquire the assignment-specific KSA designated by an asterisk (*):

1. Knowledge of, and skill in applying, the theories and practices of clinical nutrition and/or food service systems management sufficient to resolve complex, controversial, or precedent-setting matters.
2. Demonstrated skill in making decisions on problems presented by subordinate supervisors, team leaders, or other personnel.
3. Skill and ability to effectively communicate and advise senior management officials.
4. Knowledge required to serve as a recognized expert on the theories and practices of clinical nutrition and/or food service systems management to provide authoritative advice and coordination of nutrition care programs and resolve complex, controversial, or precedent-setting matters.
5. Ability to translate management goals and objectives into well-coordinated and controlled work operations.
6. *Ability to manage/supervise, i.e., plan, organize, delegate, direct, control, review activities of groups of subordinates.

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7. Ability to assess qualifications and continuing education needs of staff and determine appropriate resources to meet those needs.

(10) **GS-13 Food Service Systems Manager** (over two or more medical centers/divisions)

(a) **Experience.** Completion of 1 year of experience equivalent to the next lower grade level closely related to the position being filled, and must fully meet the KSAs at that level.

(b) **Assignment.** For all assignments above the full performance level, the higher-level duties must consist of significant scope, complexity (difficulty), and range of variety, and be performed by the incumbent at least 25% of the time. A food service systems manager serves as a supervisory dietitian and consultant with primary responsibility for management support of meal service, which includes food production and food service activities that are either self-operated or contractual agreements. The food service systems manager may interface with a contractual provider when appropriate and interfaces with the clinical nutrition program to ensure that services provided reflect the nutrition needs of the patient. The food service systems manager is responsible for ensuring compliance with internal and external regulatory authorities. The individual assesses, plans, and evaluates the food service systems management program to ensure proper coordination between the delivery of patient meal service and the overall delivery of health care. The food service systems manager develops financial goals, manages a budget, organizes and/or maintains a cost accounting system to forecast expenditures based on current spending patterns, and provides estimates for planning and adjustments as program and resources change.

(c) **Demonstrated Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities.** In addition to the experience above, the candidate must demonstrate the following KSAs and demonstrate the potential to acquire the assignment-specific KSAs designated by an asterisk (*):

1. Knowledge of, and skill in applying, the theories and practices of clinical nutrition and/or food service systems management sufficient to resolve complex, controversial, or precedent-setting matters.

2. Demonstrated skill in making decisions on problems presented by subordinate supervisors, team leaders, or other personnel.

3. Skill and ability to effectively communicate and advise senior management officials.

4. Knowledge required to serve as a recognized expert on the theories and practices of clinical nutrition and/or food service systems management to provide authoritative advice and coordination of nutrition care programs and resolve complex, controversial, or precedent-setting matters.

5. Ability to translate management goals and objectives into well-coordinated and controlled work operations.

6. *Ability to manage/supervise programs, staff, and resources at two or more medical centers/divisions, i.e., plan, organize, delegate, direct, control, review activities of groups of subordinates.

7. *Ability to evaluate subordinate supervisors or leaders and serve as the reviewing official on evaluations of non-supervisory employees rated by subordinate supervisors.

(11) **GS-13 Dietetic Internship Director**

(a) **Experience.** Completion of 1 year of experience equivalent to the next lower grade level closely related to the position being filled, and must fully meet the KSAs at that level.

(b) **Education.** Individuals assigned as dietetic internship director must possess a minimum of a Master's Degree (a Doctoral Degree may be required by the coordinating educational institution).

(c) **Assignment.** For all assignments above the full performance level, the higher-level duties must consist of significant scope, complexity (difficulty), and range of variety, and be performed by the incumbent at least 25% of the time. A dietetic internship director has full responsibility for administering all aspects of a VA-sponsored, accredited dietetic internship program which includes the overall planning, directing, and administering of an accredited post-baccalaureate degree dietetic internship program at a medical center affiliated with a university offering graduate credit or a Master's Degree. The dietetic internship director provides professional and administrative guidance to dietetic interns and surveillance of all aspects of the program. The individual is responsible for development of a performance evaluation system, selection or appointment of dietetic interns, and identification of education and training needs, and performance issues. The dietetic internship director coordinates and guides the staff participating in the clinical and administrative phases of the program and serves as a consultant within NFS and with other facility health care staff regarding current NFS systems management issues, evaluating health care delivery to patients, and designing nutrition related research initiatives. The individual teaches and/or coordinates graduate level courses associated with the curriculum.

(d) **Demonstrated Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities.** In addition to the experience above, the candidate must demonstrate the following KSAs and demonstrate the potential to acquire the assignment-specific KSAs designated by an asterisk (*):

1. Knowledge of, and skill in applying, the theories and practices of clinical nutrition and/or food service systems management sufficient to resolve complex, controversial, or precedent-setting matters.
2. Demonstrated skill in making decisions on problems presented by subordinate supervisors, team leaders, or other personnel.
3. Skill and ability to effectively communicate and advise senior management officials.
4. Knowledge required to serve as a recognized expert on the theories and practices of clinical nutrition and/or food service systems management to provide authoritative advice and coordination of nutrition care programs and resolve complex, controversial, or precedent-setting matters.
5. Ability to translate management goals and objectives into well-coordinated and controlled work operations.

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6. *Knowledge of human resources administration, including such functions as the ability to interview and select qualified applicants, and monitor and evaluate performance.

7. *Ability to manage and establish program goals and objectives, to plan and administer a program, coordinate practice experience at affiliated sites, evaluate program accomplishments, redefine priorities, solve problems, modify objectives, and determine activities and education needs of preceptors and interns.

8. *Ability to design dietetic internship curriculum to meet accreditation requirements established by the accrediting agency of ACEND and VHA Office of Academic Affiliations and the ability to provide and coordinate the didactic component of the internship program, including graduate level course instruction.

9. In depth knowledge of current practice in food service systems management, nutrition therapy, community nutrition practice, research methodology, and business/entrepreneurial dietetics with the ability to integrate learning experiences in didactic and practice components of the internship.

(12) **GS-13 Program Coordinator**

(a) **Experience.** Completion of 1 year of experience equivalent to the next lower grade level directly related to the position being filled.

(b) **Assignment.** For all assignments above the full performance level, the higher-level duties must consist of significant scope, complexity (difficulty), and range of variety, and be performed by the incumbent at least 25% of the time. The dietitian program coordinator may or may not have supervisory responsibilities. The dietitian program coordinator has full responsibility for managing and may supervise all phases of the nutritional care of a major specialty facility program, such as HPDP, HBPC, Virtual or Telehealth Care, in a Complexity Level 1 (high complexity) medical center. Program coordinators are responsible for the overall technical and administrative oversight for operations within their program area to include coordination with multidisciplinary team members. The individual plans and develops policies, procedures, and goals, and implements and educates staff on VHA directives. The program coordinator has overall responsibility for planning, assessing, and evaluating programs to ensure proper coordination between care delivered by the nutritional care program and overall delivery of healthcare within the facility.

(c) **Demonstrated Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities.** In addition to the experience above, the candidate must demonstrate the following KSAs and demonstrate the potential to acquire the assignment-specific KSAs designated by an asterisk (*):

1. *Demonstrated skill in making decisions on problems presented by subordinate supervisors, team leaders, or other personnel.

2. Skill and ability to effectively communicate and advise senior management officials.

3. Knowledge required to serve as a recognized expert on the theories and practices of clinical nutrition and/or food service systems management to provide authoritative advice and coordination of nutrition care programs and resolve complex, controversial, or precedent-setting matters.

4. Ability to translate management goals and objectives into well-coordinated and controlled work operations.

5. *Ability to assess qualifications, abilities and continuing education needs of staff and determine appropriate resources to meet those needs.

6. *Ability to manage/supervise, i.e., plan, organize, delegate, direct, control, review activities of the program and coordinate with multidisciplinary team members and subordinates.

(13) **GS-13 Assistant Service Chief**

(a) **Experience.** Completion of 1 year of experience equivalent to the next lower grade level closely related to the position being filled, and must fully meet the KSAs at that level.

(b) **Assignment.** For all assignments above the full performance level, the higher-level duties must consist of significant scope, complexity (difficulty), and range of variety, and be performed by the incumbent at least 25% of the time. Assignment as an assistant chief is restricted to those serving as a full assistant to the NFS chief. Assistant chiefs share with the chief full responsibility for managing and supervising all phases of NFS operations. The assistant service chief will normally be one grade less than the full grade of the chief. This person functions as the chief of the service in the chief's absence.

(c) **Demonstrated Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities.** In addition to the experience above, the candidate must demonstrate the following KSAs and demonstrate the potential to acquire the assignment-specific KSA designated by an asterisk (*):

1. Knowledge of, and skill in applying, the theories and practices of clinical nutrition and/or food service systems management sufficient to resolve complex, controversial, or precedent-setting matters.

2. Demonstrated skill in making decisions on problems presented by subordinate supervisors, team leaders, or other personnel.

3. Skill and ability to effectively communicate and advise senior management officials.

4. Knowledge required to serve as a recognized expert on the theories and practices of clinical nutrition and/or food service systems management to provide authoritative advice and coordination of nutrition care programs and resolve complex, controversial, or precedent-setting matters.

5. Ability to translate management goals and objectives into well-coordinated and controlled work operations.

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6. Knowledge of clinical nutrition and practices of nutrition care sufficient to direct the clinical nutrition section, including community based outpatient clinics, and the ability to coordinate clinical nutrition needs of patients with the food service systems section.

7. Knowledge of the principles of management required to assist in establishing program goals and objectives, develop budgets to plan and manage a program, coordinate associated activities, evaluate program accomplishments, redefine priorities, and modify objectives.

8. *Ability to manage/supervise, i.e., plan, organize, delegate, direct, control, and review the activities of groups of subordinates that have diverse functions.

9. Ability to assess qualifications, abilities and continuing education needs of staff and determine appropriate resources to meet those needs.

(14) **GS-13 Service Chief**

(a) **Experience.** Completion of 1 year of experience equivalent to the next lower grade level directly related to the position being filled, and must fully meet the KSAs at that level.

(b) **Assignment.** For all assignments above the full performance level, the higher-level duties must consist of significant scope, complexity (difficulty), and range of variety, and be performed by the incumbent at least 25% of the time. Service chiefs have full responsibility for managing and supervising all phases of NFS operations. Service chiefs at this level serve at VA Medical Centers that are Complexity Level 2 or 3 facilities. The service chief has the ultimate responsibility for the practice and provision of NFS. Service chiefs plan, develop, organize, direct, manage, supervise, control, implement and evaluate programs for the service. They have overall responsibility to ensure proper coordination between care delivered by NFS and the overall delivery of healthcare within the facility(ies). The chief is a member of the senior leadership team providing advice for integrated care programs for a diverse Veteran population with multiple diagnoses, and other needs. The chief is involved in management planning to achieve medical center, VISN, and national goals.

(c) **Demonstrated Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities.** In addition to the experience above, the candidate must demonstrate the following KSAs and demonstrate the potential to acquire the assignment-specific KSAs designated by an asterisk (*):

1. Knowledge of, and skill in applying, the theories and practices of clinical nutrition and/or food service systems management sufficient to resolve complex, controversial, or precedent-setting matters.

2. Demonstrated skill in making decisions on problems presented by subordinate supervisors, team leaders, or other personnel.

3. Skill and ability to effectively communicate and advise senior management officials.

4. Knowledge required to serve as a recognized expert on the theories and practices of clinical nutrition and/or food service systems management to provide authoritative advice and coordination of nutrition care programs and resolve complex, controversial, or precedent-setting matters.

5. Ability to translate management goals and objectives into well-coordinated and controlled work operations.

6. Knowledge of the principles of management required to establish program goals and objectives, set strategic direction, determine and manage budgets to plan and administer a program, coordinate associated activities, evaluate program accomplishments, redefine priorities, and modify objectives.

7. *Ability to supervise/manage, plan, organize, delegate, direct, control, and review the activities of groups of subordinates that have diverse functions and establish and monitor productivity standards and production and performance priorities.

(15) **GS-14 Service Chief**

(a) **Experience.** Completion of 1 year of experience equivalent to the next lower grade level directly related to the position being filled, and must fully meet the KSAs at that level.

(b) **Assignment.** For all assignments above the full performance level, the higher-level duties must consist of significant scope, complexity (difficulty), and range of variety, and be performed by the incumbent at least 25% of the time. Employees at this level serve as the chief of NFS at VA medical centers that are Complexity Level 1 (high complexity) facilities, and which are affiliated, tertiary care health care systems. Service chiefs have full responsibility for managing and supervising all phases of NFS operations. The chief has the ultimate responsibility for the practice and provision of NFS. Service chiefs plan, develop, organize, direct, manage, supervise, control, implement and evaluate programs for the service. They have overall responsibility to ensure proper coordination between care delivered by NFS and the overall delivery of healthcare within the facility(ies). The chief is a member of the senior leadership team providing advice for integrated care programs for a diverse Veteran population with multiple diagnoses, and other needs. The chief is involved in management planning to achieve medical center, VISN, and national goals.

(c) **Demonstrated Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities.** In addition to the experience above, the candidate must demonstrate the following KSAs and demonstrate the potential to acquire the assignment-specific KSA designated by an asterisk (*):

1. Ability to perform, under administrative direction, with wide latitude for the exercise of independent judgment, work of unusual difficulty and responsibility.

2. Ability to plan and coordinate activities covering a broad range of nutrition and other programs.

3. *Ability to serve as a recognized expert to provide authoritative advice and coordination of nutrition care programs that may encompass multiple medical centers, including consolidated facilities or departments.

(16) **GS-14 VISN Program Coordinator**

(a) **Experience.** Completion of 1 year of experience equivalent to the next lower grade level directly related to the position being filled, and must fully meet the KSAs at that level.

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(b) **Assignment.** For all assignments above the full performance level, the higher-level duties must consist of significant scope, complexity (difficulty), and range of variety, and be performed by the incumbent at least 25% of the time. The VISN coordinator has full responsibility for managing all phases of the nutritional care program of a major specialty program such as HPDP, HBPC, Virtual or Telehealth Care for the VISN. Program coordinators are responsible for the overall technical and administrative oversight for nutritional care operations within their program area to include coordination with multidisciplinary team members. The individual plans and develops policies, procedures, and goals, and implements and educates staff on VHA directives. Program coordinators have overall responsibility for planning, assessing, and evaluating programs to ensure proper coordination between nutritional care delivered by the program and overall delivery of healthcare within the facilities and VISN.

(c) **Demonstrated Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities.** In addition to the experience above, the candidate must demonstrate the following KSAs and demonstrate the potential to acquire the assignment-specific KSA designated by an asterisk (*):

1. Ability to perform, under administrative direction, with wide latitude for the exercise of independent judgment, work of unusual difficulty and responsibility.
2. Ability to plan and coordinate activities covering a broad range of nutrition and other programs.
3. *Ability to manage, i.e., plan, organize, delegate, direct, control, and review activities of the program and coordinate with multidisciplinary team members.
4. Ability to assess qualifications, abilities and continuing education needs of staff and determine appropriate resources to meet those needs.

4. DEVIATIONS

a. The appointing official may, under unusual circumstances, approve reasonable deviations to the grade determination requirements for dietitians in VHA whose composite record of accomplishments, performance, and qualifications, as well as current assignments, warrant such action based on demonstrated competence to meet the requirements of the proposed grade.

b. Under no circumstances will the education requirements be waived. Under no circumstances will the registration or board certification requirements (for the Advanced Level Practice assignment only) be waived.

c. The placement of individuals in grade levels not described in this standard must be approved by the Under Secretary for Health, or designee, in VHA Central Office.

Authority: 38 U.S.C. §§ 7402, 7403]