

## STAFFING

**1. REASON FOR ISSUE:** To revise the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) qualification standard for the appointment of Audiologist, GS-665, in VA.

**2. SUMMARY OF CONTENTS/MAJOR CHANGES:** This handbook contains mandatory procedures on staffing. The pages in this handbook replace the existing Audiologist Qualification Standard in VA Handbook 5005, part II, Appendix II-G29 in its entirety. Revised text appears in [brackets]. The new standards are effective on the date of issuance of this handbook. These changes will be incorporated into the electronic version of VA Handbook 5005 that is maintained on the [Office of Human Resources Management](#) Web site. Significant changes include:

- a. Adds a new accreditation organization.
- b. Adds a note to indicate that all audiologists who perform compensation and pension (C&P) examinations are considered to be performing direct patient care duties and must possess a full, current, and unrestricted license to practice audiology.
- c. Modifies general loss of credential language from paragraph 2c(2).
- d. Makes grandfather provision language specific to audiologist position in paragraph 2c(4)d.
- e. Clarifies the staff audiologist assignment at the GS-12 grade level to indicate that individuals may perform ancillary assignments, including program management duties on an occasional basis, where the complexity and amount of work is not substantial (less than 25 percent of the time).
- f. Clarifies full performance level from the advanced practice level and clarifies the assignments at the GS-13 grade level. Also, makes technical revision of the supervisory assignment to allow for those situations where the employee has responsibilities over several disciplines but exercises a lesser degree of authority than a service chief.

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

**4. RELATED DIRECTIVES:** VA Directive 5005, Staffing.

**5. RESCISSIONS:** VA Handbook 5005, Part II, Appendix G29, dated March 17, 2006.

**CERTIFIED BY:**

/s/  
Roger W. Baker  
Assistant Secretary for  
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**BY DIRECTION OF THE SECRETARY  
OF VETERANS AFFAIRS:**

/s/  
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**APPENDIX G29. AUDIOLOGIST QUALIFICATION STANDARD**  
**GS-665**  
**Veterans Health Administration**

**1. COVERAGE.** The following are requirements for appointment as an audiologist in the Veterans Health Administration (VHA). These requirements apply to all VHA audiologists in the General Schedule (GS)-665 series. VHA audiologists provide clinical service to Veterans and other beneficiaries in VHA medical centers, clinics, domiciliaries, nursing care facilities, community care settings, Community-Based Outpatient Clinics, Veterans Outreach Centers, Veterans Integrated Service Network (VISN) offices, and VHA Central Office. In performing these duties, VHA audiologists demonstrate professional knowledge of, and skill in applying, a wide range of theories, principles, and methodologies of the practice of audiology.

**2. BASIC REQUIREMENTS**

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

b. **Education.** Master's degree or its equivalent in audiology or hearing science from an accredited college or university is required. ["Accredited" means a college or university accredited by a regional accreditation organization and an audiology program recognized by the Accreditation Commission for Audiology Education (ACAE) and/or the Council on Academic Accreditation of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA).]

**NOTE:** [Effective] January 1, 2007, the Council on Academic Accreditation (CAA) in Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology of ASHA [accredits] only doctoral degree programs in audiology or hearing science.

c. **Licensure.** For those grades that require licensure (GS-12 and above), [ ] the incumbent must hold a full, current, and unrestricted license in a State, Territory, Commonwealth, or the District of Columbia. [ ]

**NOTE:** [All audiologists who perform compensation and pension (C&P) examinations are considered to be performing direct patient care duties, and must possess a full, current, and unrestricted license to practice audiology (38 CFR 4.85).

(1)] *The audiologist must maintain full, current, and unrestricted licensure/registration.]*

[(2)] Non-licensed audiologists who otherwise meet the eligibility requirements for licensure may be given a temporary appointment as a graduate audiologist under the authority of 38 U.S.C. § 7405(c). Failure to obtain licensure during appointment as a graduate audiologist is justification for termination of the temporary appointment. Individuals appointed as graduate audiologists may not be promoted to the GS-12 level without being fully licensed. This may result in termination of employment.

[(3)] The requirement for licensure may be waived by the Under Secretary for Health or designee in VHA Central Office for individuals engaged in research or academic assignments involving no direct patient care duties, in accordance with current activities.

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

[d.] **Loss of Credential.** An employee in this occupation who fails to obtain licensure/certification/registration within the required time frame, or who fails to maintain the required licensure/certification/registration must be removed from the occupation, which may also result in termination of employment.

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

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

[ ]

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

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

[(4)] If an [audiologist] who was retained [ ] under this provision leaves [the] occupation, the employee loses protected status and must meet the full VA qualification standard requirements in effect at the time of reentry to the occupation.

[f.] **Physical Requirements.** See VA Directive and Handbook 5019

[g.] **English Language Proficiency.** Audiologists must be proficient in spoken and written English in accordance with chapter 2, section D, paragraph 5a, this part

### 3. GRADE REQUIREMENTS

[a.] **Creditable Experience**

[(1)] **Knowledge of Contemporary Professional Audiology Practice.** To be creditable, the experience must have required the use of knowledge, skills, abilities, and other characteristics associated with contemporary professional audiology practice. This knowledge may be evidenced by one or more of the following:

[(a)] At least 1 year of active professional practice or its equivalent. Active professional practice means paid or non-paid employment as a professional audiologist engaged in the practice of audiology as defined by the appropriate licensing board.

[(b)] Academic course work leading to a doctoral degree in audiology or hearing science.

[(2)] **Quality of Experience.** Experience is only creditable if it is both of the following:

[(a)] Work as a professional audiologist directly related to the position to be filled; and

[(b)] At a level comparable to audiology experience at the next lower grade level.

[(3)] **Part-Time Experience.** Part-time experience as a professional audiologist is credited according to its relationship to the full-time workweek. For example, an audiologist would receive 1 week of full-time credit for each 2 weeks of half-time work.

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

(1) **GS-9**

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

(b) **Assignment.** Employees at this level serve in an audiologist career development position.

(2) **GS-11**

(a) **Education and Experience.** Completion of 1 year of professional experience as an audiologist equivalent to the next lower level; or 3 years of progressively higher level graduate education leading to a doctoral degree; or doctoral degree in audiology, hearing science, or a directly related field. For positions involved in research audiologist assignments involving no direct patient care, no additional education or professional experience is required beyond those identified at the GS-9 level. In addition, the candidate must demonstrate the [knowledge, skills and abilities (KSAs) identified for the assignment.]

(b) **Assignments.** Audiologists at this grade level may be appointed to one of the following assignments:

1. **Staff Audiologist.** Staff audiologists at this grade level perform audiology assessment and treatment intervention. If unlicensed, the individual must function under the supervision of a licensed audiologist. [The following KSAs are required:

a.] Knowledge of contemporary audiology practice;

b.] Ability to communicate orally and in writing;

[c.] Knowledge of anatomy, physiology, acoustics, applied acoustics, communication, psychoacoustics, and auditory/vestibular pathophysiology;

[e.] Knowledge of principles and techniques in the assessment and treatment of auditory and balance disorders;

[e.] Ability to perform functions associated with contemporary audiology scope of practice; and

[f.] Ability to interact with patients, families, and other health care professionals.

**2. Research Audiologist.** Research audiologists at this grade level serve as research assistants. At this grade level, research audiologists conduct research under the direct supervision of principal investigators or co-principal investigators of higher grade level. [ ] In addition to the KSAs required in [subparagraph 1.] above, the following are required:

[a.] Knowledge of, and ability to apply, appropriate basic scientific methods, basic research design and statistics; and

[b.] Project-specific knowledge of clinical and research literature.

(3) **GS-12**

(a) **Licensure.** [T]he incumbent must hold a full, current, and unrestricted license in a State, Territory, Commonwealth, or the District of Columbia. [ ]

(b) **Education and Experience.** In addition to the requirements at the GS-11 level, completion of 1 year of professional experience comparable to the next lower level and possession of a full, current and unrestricted license to practice audiology. For positions involved in research audiology assignments involving no direct patient care, completion of a doctoral degree in audiology, hearing science, or a related field is fully qualifying. In addition, the candidate must demonstrate the [KSAs identified for the assignment.]

(c) **Assignments.** Audiologists at this grade level are independent licensed practitioners and are considered to be at the full performance level. Employees may be appointed to one of the following assignments:

**1. Staff Audiologist.** Staff audiologists at this grade level must demonstrate professional knowledge of, and skill in applying, a wide range of theories, principles, and methodologies of the practice of audiology to a wide range of populations. Individuals may perform ancillary assignments, including program management duties on an occasional basis, where the complexity and amount of work is not substantial [(less than 25% of the time)]. The following KSAs are required:

a.] Ability to develop coherent treatment strategies;

[b.] Knowledge of clinical services, and the ability to perform them independently;

[c.] Ability to conduct assessments and provide treatment interventions;

[d.] Ability to provide consultation to other health care professionals;

[e.] Knowledge of contemporary audiology practice; and

[f.] Ability to perform functions associated with contemporary audiology scope of practice.

**2. Research Audiologist.** Research audiologists at this grade level assist principal investigators or co-principal investigators in peer reviewed VHA, National Institute of Health (NIH), or comparably rigorous intramural or extramurally funded research programs, and may serve as investigators on small or unfunded projects of limited complexity or scope. At this grade level, research audiologists have responsibility for conducting research under the general administrative direction of principal investigators or co-principal investigators of higher grade levels. Research audiologists at this grade level may have authored one or more publications, or presented research findings at a national meeting and may have earned an academic appointment at an affiliated medical school or local university, usually at the rank of instructor, lecturer, or equivalent. [ ] In addition to the KSAs required in [subparagraph 1.] above, the following are required:

[a.] Ability to execute research independently; and

[b.] Knowledge of clinical and research literature.

#### (4) **GS-13**

(a) **Licensure.** [T]he incumbent must hold a full, current, and unrestricted license in a State, Territory, Commonwealth, or the District of Columbia. [ ]

(b) **Education and Experience.** Completion of 1 year of professional experience equivalent to the next lower grade level directly related to the position being filled, and must fully meet the KSAs at that level. In addition, the candidate must demonstrate the [KSAs identified for the assignment] and demonstrate the potential to acquire the assignment specific KSAs as indicated by an asterisk (\*).

(c) **Differentiating Full Performance Level from Advanced Practice Level.** This is done based on the differences between independent practice, which is required for all audiologists at the full performance level, and advanced practice. An audiologist practicing at the independent level has a generalized knowledge of practice, whereas the audiologist practicing at the advanced level has specialized knowledge of practice typically related to a particular diagnosis or patient population. The advanced practice audiologist can be further differentiated from the independent audiologist by his/her ability to expand clinical knowledge in the profession, provide consultation and guidance to colleagues, role model effective audiology practice skills, and teach or mentor less experienced audiologists. An audiologist with advanced practice skills and personal qualifications that meet the standard for the Advanced Practice Audiologist will be assigned to a position that requires use of the advanced practice skills in order to be considered for the advanced practice audiologist grade.

(d) **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. Non-supervisory assignments at this grade level require the knowledge, skills, and competencies normally acquired through a doctoral training program. Audiologists at this grade may be appointed to one of the following assignments:

**1. Staff Audiologist (Advanced Practice Audiologist).** [This assignment is defined as the ability to provide independent and expert audiology services in a specialized area of practice. Examples include but are not limited to Traumatic Brain Injury, Polytrauma, etc.] Audiologists at this grade level are advanced practice independent licensed practitioners and must demonstrate ability to apply advanced knowledge, theories, and techniques to a full range of complex patient populations. [The advanced practice audiologist has an increased depth and breadth of practice skills; has expertise in participating in the professional development of colleagues through mentorship and teaching; demonstrates leadership in defining and attending to professional practice issues; and has the ability to expand the conceptual knowledge of the profession. Work involves audiology services requiring the exercise of mature professional judgment and the flexible use of a wide range of complex audiology practice skills not typically required in routine audiology practice. The advanced practice audiologist has mastered a range of specialized interventions and provides consultation to colleagues, renders professional opinions based on experience and expertise, and incorporates an advanced knowledge of scientific principles and contemporary practice in the differential diagnosis and treatment of auditory and vestibular disorders. The following KSAs are required:

- a.] Advanced knowledge of anatomy, physiology, acoustics, applied acoustics, communication, psychoacoustics, and auditory and vestibular pathophysiology;
- [b.] Advanced skill to perform and interpret diagnostic and electrophysiologic tests to a full range of patient populations;
- [c.] Advanced skill to provide treatment interventions including analysis and fitting of advanced amplification technology and signal processing algorithms to a full range of patient populations;
- [d.] Knowledge of embryology, genetics, pharmacology, ethics, compliance, and biostatistics; and
- [e.] Advanced knowledge of, and ability to perform, functions associated with contemporary audiology scope of practice.

**2. Audiologist Program Manager.** Audiologist program managers are responsible for providing comprehensive clinical services as well as ensuring that the work assignments of the other members of the clinical team are carried out by performing a range of duties such as distributing and balancing workload among employees in accordance with established work flow or job specialization; assuring timely accomplishment of the assigned workload; assessing the status, quality, and progress of work, making day-to-day adjustments in accordance with established priorities; obtaining assistance from supervisors or managers on problems that may arise. In the absence of a supervisory audiologist, audiologist program managers oversee the professional practice of peers. [The following KSAs are required:

- a.] Knowledge of contemporary audiology practice;
- [b.] Ability to articulate and communicate the assignment, project, problem to be solved, actionable events, and objectives; as well as advice on work methods, practices and procedures;
- [c.] Ability to apply appropriate problem solving methods and techniques;



\*[d.] Ability to monitor and report on the status and progress of work, evaluate program quality to ensure that methods, deadlines and quality have been met; and make adjustments to accomplish the workload in accordance with established priorities; and

[e.] Ability to serve as facilitator and/or negotiator in coordinating initiatives and consensus building activities among clinical team members with widely divergent backgrounds, interests, and points of view.

**3. Supervisory Audiologist or Section Chief.** Supervisory audiologists or section chiefs exercise supervision, administrative management and technical direction of the audiology program in an audiology unit or section. They have responsibility for general or technical supervision of key clinical or training programs and overall technical and administrative oversight of audiologists depending on grade level. They may have responsibility for general supervision of key clinical or training programs and overall administrative oversight of speech- language pathologists in an unified audiology and speech-language pathology section-level, service-level, or equivalent department. Supervisory audiologists or section chiefs develop, organize, direct, manage, supervise, control, and implement policies and procedures in focused clinical programs. They plan, assess, and evaluate programs to ensure proper coordination between care delivery within the section and the overall delivery of health care. They make decisions that affect staff and other resources with wide latitude of control and independent judgment. They exercise supervisory and oversight responsibilities such as planning and scheduling work; assigning work to employees; accepting, amending or rejecting completed work; assuring that production and accuracy requirements are met; appraising performance and recommending performance standards and ratings; but exercise less authority than service chiefs. [The following KSAs are required:

a.] Ability to balance responsibilities and to work with great autonomy;

[b.] Ability to set priorities and delegate tasks, meet multiple deadlines, analyze organizational problems and develop and implement effective solutions;

\*[c.] Ability to analyze and use data effectively to manage workload, quality, performance, and productivity within the section;

[d.] Skill in interpersonal relationships in dealing with employees, team leaders, and managers;

[e.] Knowledge of, and ability to utilize, evidence-based practices and clinical practice guidelines in a professional area, and to guide the section staff in applying these tools;

\*[f.] Ability to analyze organizational and operational problems and to develop and implement solutions that result in efficient section operation;

[g.] Skill in problem solving and conflict resolution; and

[h.] Skill in the application and analysis of scientific and clinical literature in a professional area.

**4. Assistant Chief.** Assistant chiefs serve as full assistants to service chiefs, department heads, or persons of similar organizational rank in large, complex, or multi-division facilities and share a full scope of delegated managerial responsibilities. Assistant chiefs share full responsibility for all

professional areas in a service-level department with the service chief. Assistant chiefs exercise supervision, administrative management, and direction of both professional areas in a unified audiology and speech-language pathology service or equivalent service-level department. Assistant chiefs have responsibility for general or technical supervision of key clinical or training programs within the service, and overall technical and administrative oversight of audiologists. [The following KSAs are required:

\*a.] Ability to supervise, motivate, and manage effectively a diverse clinical staff;

\*b.] Skill in assessing qualifications and abilities of current and prospective employees;

c.] Ability to develop productivity standards applicable to a service or equivalent organizational department;

\*d.] Ability to organize work, set priorities, delegate tasks and responsibilities, and meet multiple deadlines for service; and

e.] Ability to accommodate new and changing work conditions, staffing, and contingencies.

5. Service Chiefs. Service chiefs at this grade level have overall responsibility for a service-level department, or its organizational equivalent in small and mid-sized facilities. These individuals have responsibility for general supervision of clinical and/or training programs, and overall technical and administrative oversight for operations within the service. Service chiefs develop, organize, direct, manage, supervise, control, and implement policies and procedures for complex service-level departments. They have overall responsibility for planning, assessing, and evaluating programs to ensure proper coordination between care delivered by the service and the overall delivery of health care within the facility. Service chiefs make decisions that affect subordinate section or assistant chiefs (if applicable), clinical, and clerical staff, and other resources associated with the department and are made with great autonomy. Their responsibilities may include full responsibility for developing and directing educational and training programs; negotiating affiliation agreements with academic partners; and responsibilities to subordinate section or assistant chiefs (if applicable), planning, and scheduling work; assigning work to employees; accepting, amending or rejecting completed work; assuring that production and accuracy requirements are met; appraising performance and recommending performance standards and ratings; assigning delineated clinical privileges; approving leave; and effecting all levels of disciplinary measures. Service chiefs exercise supervision, administrative management and direction of both professional areas in a unified audiology and speech-language pathology service or equivalent service-level department, or administrative management and program direction of other rehabilitation-related areas. [The following KSAs are required:

\*a.] Ability to supervise, motivate, and manage effectively a diverse clinical staff applicable to service-level departments in small or mid-sized facilities;

\*b.] Skill in assessing qualifications and abilities of current and prospective employees;

c.] Ability to establish and monitor productivity standards and production and performance priorities;

\*d.] Knowledge of, and ability to apply, administrative and human resources policies effectively;

[e.] Ability to organize work, set priorities, delegate tasks, and manage and direct the work of others to accomplish program goals and missions;

[f.] Ability to accommodate to new and changing work conditions and contingencies, and staffing;

[g.] Ability to translate management goals and objectives into well-coordinated and controlled work operations; and

\*[h.] Knowledge of, and ability to manage, budgets for a service-level department in a small or mid-sized facility.

**6. Research Audiologist.** Research audiologists at this grade level are actively involved as principal investigators or co-principal investigators in peer reviewed VA, NIH, or comparably rigorous intramural or extramurally funded research programs. At this grade level, research audiologists have responsibility for formulating or conducting research on problems of considerable scope and complexity. Research audiologists at this grade level work with substantial freedom in identifying, defining, and selecting problems for study. At this grade level, research audiologists are mature, competent, and productive workers. They have typically authored one or more publications of considerable interest in the peer-reviewed literature; demonstrated a consistent record of presentation of findings at national scientific meetings; may have earned an academic appointment at the affiliated medical school or local university, usually at the rank of assistant professor or equivalent; and have responsibility for funded research projects. [The following KSAs are required:

a.] Knowledge of, and ability to apply, advanced scientific methods in the design and execution of creative and innovative research;

[b.] Ability to convey scientific concepts and methodological principles to individuals with diverse levels of technical expertise;

[c.] Ability to apply advanced theories and techniques; and

[d.] Advanced knowledge of contemporary audiology practice and related disciplines.

**7. Special Clinical Program Responsibilities.** Audiologists with special clinical program responsibilities, e.g. inter-disciplinary teams or highly specialized clinical programs or subunits such as hearing conservation program, tinnitus management, program management of patients with bio-electric or cochlear implants, intraoperative (surgical) monitoring, advanced vestibular assessment and rehabilitation, or advanced analysis of acoustic signal processing algorithms, in combination with professional accomplishments, performance, and qualifications, may be appointed at the GS-13 grade level. Examples of professional accomplishments may include authorship of publications; presentations at national professional meetings; or other scholarly works; or specialty or board certifications. [The following KSAs are required:

a.] Advanced knowledge in a focused area of contemporary audiology practice;

[b.] Ability to articulate and communicate goals, objectives, and focused initiatives to an inter-disciplinary team, specialized clinical program, or subunit; as well as guiding the team members on work methods, practices and procedures;

[c.] Ability to monitor and evaluate the work of an inter-disciplinary team, specialized clinical program, or subunit; and to make adjustments in procedures or practices to accomplish the program goals; and

[d.] Ability to serve as coach and facilitator in coordinating program or team initiatives and consensus building activities among clinical team members with widely divergent backgrounds, interests, and points of view.

(5) **GS-14**

(a) **Licensure.** [T]he incumbent must hold a full, current, and unrestricted license in a State, Territory, Commonwealth, or the District of Columbia. [ ]

(b) **Education and Experience.** Completion of 1 year of professional experience equivalent to the next lower grade level directly related to the position being filled, and must fully meet the KSAs at that level. In addition, the candidate must demonstrate the [KSAs identified for the assignment] and demonstrate the potential to acquire the assignment specific KSAs as indicated by an asterisk (\*):

(c) **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. Audiologists in this grade level demonstrate exceptional achievement, professional competence, and leadership and may be appointed to one of the following assignments:

**1. Service Chief.** Service chiefs have broad and overall responsibility for a service-level department, or its organizational equivalent in large, complex, or multi-division facilities. They manage substantive parts of medical centers that deliver specialized, complex, professional services, and significantly impact the care provided to Veterans. These individuals have responsibility for general supervision of clinical and/or training programs, and overall technical and administrative oversight for operations within the service. Service chiefs develop, organize, direct, manage, supervise, control, and implement policies and procedures for complex service-level departments. They have overall responsibility for planning, assessing, and evaluating programs to ensure proper coordination between care delivered by the service and the overall delivery of health care within the facility. Service chiefs make decisions that affect subordinate section or assistant chiefs (if applicable), clinical, and clerical staff, and other resources associated with the department and are made with great autonomy. Their responsibilities may include full responsibility for developing and directing educational and training programs; negotiating affiliation agreements with academic partners; and setting training objectives; delegating responsibilities to subordinate section or assistant chiefs (if applicable), planning, and scheduling work; assigning work to employees; accepting, amending or rejecting completed work; assuring that production and accuracy requirements are met; appraising performance and recommending performance standards and ratings; assigning delineated clinical privileges; approving leave; and effecting all levels of disciplinary measures. Service chiefs exercise supervision, administrative management and direction of both professional areas in a unified audiology and speech-language pathology service or equivalent service-level department, or administrative management and program direction of other rehabilitation-related areas. [The following KSAs are required:

\*a.] Ability to supervise, motivate, and manage effectively a diverse clinical staff applicable to a service-level department in large, complex, or multi-division facility;

- \*[b.] Skill in assessing qualifications and abilities of current and prospective employees;
- [c.] Ability to establish and monitor productivity standards and production and performance priorities;
- [d.] Ability to organize work, set priorities, delegate tasks and responsibilities;
- [e.] Ability to manage and direct the work of others to accomplish program goals and missions;
- [f.] Ability to accommodate to new and changing work conditions and contingencies, and staffing; and
- [g.] Ability to translate management goals and objectives into well-coordinated and controlled work operations.

**2. Program Manager.** Program managers have overall responsibility for management and direction of large, geographically-separated, integrated health care facilities or a Network; planning, coordinating, and evaluating complex interdisciplinary services across the full continuum of care including not only audiology but also other focused rehabilitation, ancillary, or other health care services. In the absence of a supervisory audiologist, this assignment is responsible for oversight of clinical competence and performance of peers. [The following KSAs are required:

- \*[a.] Skill in managing and directing diverse work to include setting priorities and delegating tasks, meeting multiple deadlines, analyzing complex organizational problems in order to develop and implement effective solutions;
- [b.] Ability to balance responsibilities applicable to a large service-level or multi-service, and multi-disciplinary, organizational environment and to work with great autonomy;
- [c.] Skill in interpersonal relationships in dealing with a diverse range of employees, team leaders, and managers;
- [d.] Advanced knowledge of, and ability to utilize, evidence-based practices and clinical practice guidelines in multiple professional areas, and to guide the program staff in applying these tools; and
- [e.] Skill in problem solving and conflict resolution; and
- \*[f.] Knowledge of, and ability to manage, budgets for a large, integrated services including not only audiology, but also other focused rehabilitation, ancillary, or other health care services.

**3. Research Audiologist.** At this grade level, they are actively involved as principal investigators or co-principal investigators in peer reviewed VA, NIH, or comparably rigorous intramural or extramurally funded research programs. They are involved in peer review activities for VHA and non-VHA research, e.g., grant review for VHA or NIH proposals, local research service committees, e.g., Research and Development (R&D), Health Services Research and Development (HSR&D), Institutional Review Board (IRB), etc., or serve as consulting editors for peer-reviewed journals. At this grade level, research audiologists have responsibility for formulating and guiding research on problems that are difficult to define or require unconventional or novel approaches, or sophisticated research methods. Research audiologists at this grade level have achieved significant professional recognition by making scientific

contributions to research with potential for significant impact in audiology, hearing science, or related disciplines. They have typically authored one or more publications of considerable interest and value to the field in the peer-reviewed professional literature; have a consistent record of presentation of findings at national scientific meetings; may have earned an academic appointment at an affiliated medical school or local university, usually at the rank of associate professor or equivalent; and have and responsibility for funded research projects. [The following KSAs are required:

a.] Knowledge of and ability to apply advanced scientific methods in the design and execution of highly creative, innovative, or complex research;

[b.] Ability to lead and motivate a research team with diverse backgrounds, research interests, and points of view;

\*[c.] Ability to manage large research budgets;

[d.] Knowledge of, and ability to evaluate critically, the research of others in peer review or editorial settings;

[e.] Ability to convey scientific concepts and methodological principles to individuals with diverse levels of technical expertise;

[f.] Ability to apply advanced theories and techniques, demonstrating exceptional depth of knowledge of clinical research literature;

[g.] Advanced knowledge of contemporary audiology practice and related disciplines;

[h.] Advanced knowledge of anatomy, physiology, acoustics, applied acoustics, communication, neuroscience, psychoacoustics, and auditory/vestibular pathophysiology; and

[i.] Advanced knowledge of normal and abnormal auditory and balance function.

#### **4. DEVIATIONS**

a. The appointing official may, under unusual circumstances, approve reasonable deviations to the grade determination requirements for audiologists 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 educational [ ] requirements be waived[. Under no circumstances will the licensure requirements be waived], except as provided in paragraph 2c above.

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.**