



Department of Veterans Affairs  
Office of Research and Development

## **PERSONNEL HIRING PROCEDURES FOR RESEARCH LABORATORIES**

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## I. Appointment Types:

A. **Competitive Appointment:** An appointment to a position in the competitive service following open competitive examination or under direct-hire authority. The competitive examination, which is open to all applicants, may consist of a written test, an evaluation of an applicant's education and experience, and/or an evaluation of other attributes necessary for successful performance in the position to be filled.

1. **Temporary Appointment:** A competitive appointment made for a limited period of time not to exceed one year and with a specific not-to-exceed (NTE) date.
2. **Term Appointment:** A competitive appointment made to a position that will last longer than 1 year but not more than 4 years and that is of a project nature where the job will terminate upon completion of the project. A new appointment must be established once the 4th year is completed.

B. **Noncompetitive Appointment:** An appointment to or placement in a position in the competitive service that is not made by selection from an open competitive examination, and that is usually based on current or prior Federal service. A noncompetitive action includes (1) all of the types of actions described under inservice placement, above; (2) appointments of non-Federal employees whose public or private enterprise positions are brought into the competitive service under title 5 CFR 316.701; and (3) appointments and conversions to career and career-conditional employment made under special authorities covered in 5 CFR 315, Subpart F.

1. **Schedule B (Principal Investigator / Professor) Appointment:** An authority for professional and technical positions at grades 11 and above in VA Medical Research programs. Appointments are project specific and are usually established based on the duration of the project. They may be extended if funds are available to support the salary.
2. **Schedule B (Student) Appointment:** Allows the hiring of students enrolled in degree-seeking programs. Appointments are up to 1 year at the appropriate grade level.
3. **VRA (Veterans Readjustment Authority) Appointment:** Allows agencies to make non-competitive appointments, at their discretion, to federal jobs for Vietnam-Era and post-Vietnam-Era Veterans. Such appointments lead to conversion to career or career-conditional employment upon satisfactory completion of two years of service.

II. **DEU (Delegated Examining Unit):** A unit that is granted authority by the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM), to examine resumes for positions indicated, establish competitor inventories (registers), and issue certificates of eligibles.

III. **HR LINKS:** <http://152.125.89.3/> Offers VA Employees a simple, secure and private way to make personal, personnel, and benefits changes from work or home. Employees can access HR LINKS in one of three ways:

- ♦ Through a personal work computer that is on the VA Intranet
- ♦ Through a computer at one of the HR LINKS Access Points located at each VA facility
- ♦ Through a touch tone telephone by calling 1-800-414-5272 and connecting with the Interactive Voice Response System

**IV. IPA (Intergovernmental Personnel Agreement):** <http://www.opm.gov/programs/ipa/> The temporary exchange of expertise between the Federal Government and State, or local governments, as well as institutions of higher education and authorized non-profit organizations for work of mutual concern and benefit. These appointments are usually set for 2 years and are renewable for 2 additional years. The employee must serve on the roles of the institution for 90 days prior to implementation of IPA. Post Docs and students may not serve on an IPA. If using a reversed IPA, the VA employee must be on a career appointment.

**V. KSAO's (Knowledge, Skill, Ability and Other Characteristics):** An acronym standing for the words, "knowledge, skill, ability and other characteristic."

- ♦ Knowledge. A body of learned information used directly on the job.
- ♦ Skill. A present competence to perform a learned psychomotor act. A skill, unlike ability, typically involves observable, quantifiable, and measurable performance parameters, (e.g., typing, lab procedures, etc.)
- ♦ Ability. The competence to perform an activity at the present time. **Note:** Ability should not be confused with aptitude, which implies a likelihood of being able to learn to perform an activity.
- ♦ Other Characteristic. Other competencies required of individuals doing the job. Remember that for content validity purposes, personality traits or aptitudes must be directly observable and measurable.

**Note:** While knowledge, skills, abilities and other characteristics are separately defined, they often overlap and can be combined into one evaluation factor. Many of these factors may contain elements of all four.

**VI. PD (Position Description):** A statement of duties and responsibilities comprising the work assigned to an employee.

**VII. Selective Factor:** A KSAO or group of KSAO's identified in the job analysis as being critical to the job. Selective factors are used in addition to the appropriate qualification standard requirements to determine the basic qualifications of applicants. The minimum level of proficiency required to do the job must be described for each selective factor and applied in basic qualification determinations.

**VIII. SSC (Shared Service Center):** located in Topeka, Kansas, they provide centralized HR/Payroll transaction processing and respond to employee and manager questions about HR LINKS - the Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA's) human resources and payroll system for the 21st century.



# Determining Grades Table

When determining the appropriate grade level for the position, review the below criteria from OPM. Once a grade is selected, the position will be matched to an approved PD.

## GS-404 Bio Lab

GS-4	At least two years above high school with courses related to the position.
GS-5	A four year course of study that led to a bachelor's degree.
GS-6	A bachelor's degree with one year experience or at least one year of <u>specialized</u> experience.
GS-7	One full year of graduate level education or a bachelor's degree with one year of <u>specialized</u> experience.
GS-8	Two full years of graduate level education or a master's degree or a bachelor's degree with two years of <u>specialized</u> experience.
GS-9	Ph.D. or master's degree with 1 year <u>specialized</u> experience or bachelor's degree with 3 years <u>specialized</u> experience.

## GS-601 Health Science Specialist

GS-5	A four year course of study that led to a bachelor's degree.
GS-7	One full year of graduate level education or a bachelor's degree with one year of <u>specialized</u> experience.
GS-9	Ph.D. or master's degree with 1 year <u>specialized</u> experience or bachelor's degree with 3 years <u>specialized</u> experience.

# Department of Veterans Affairs

# Memorandum

**Date:** June 13, 2002

**From:** Director of Research Operations

**Subj:** Procedures for Hiring VA Employees

**To:** VA Funded Investigators

1. In an effort to expedite the process for hiring VA staff into Research Service, below are approved guidelines for hiring Temporary, Schedule B Term or Term employees. These guidelines should be adhered to and will be enforced by the Research Office. This process assumes that a position is classified. In the case that there is not a classified PD, **30 days** should be added to the process.
2. **Temporary Employees** (those employees hired for less than one year who will receive no benefits).
  - a. Provide an SF-171 or OF612 and CV with a short job description (one paragraph) or functional statement and a letter requesting what dates that person should be hired at least **four weeks** prior to anticipated start date.
  - b. Submit packet to the Research Admin Office.
  - c. If approved for employment, the selected individual will be notified regarding start date and in processing requirements.
  - d. Newly hired individual must report to in processing on the date assigned. In processing is conducted by the Education Support Service Line. Failure to report for in processing will result in NO PAY.
3. **Schedule B Term Employees** (those employees whose proposed Grade Levels are 11 and above will receive benefits)
  - a. Check with Research Admin Office to see if there is an approved position description on file with Human Resources.
    1. If there is a position description proceed to (b). If there is not,
    2. Provide a 2 to 3 paragraph detailed description of the position's major duties
    3. Research will get position description classified (a 4 week process)
  - b. Provide an SF-171, OF 612 and CV and a letter requesting what dates that person should be hired at least **three weeks (for classified PD or 6 weeks for unclassified PD)** prior to anticipated start date.
  - c. Submit packet to the Research Admin Office.
  - d. If approved, the selected individual will be notified regarding start date and in-processing requirements.
  - e. Selected individual must report for in processing on the date assigned. Failure to report for in processing will result in NO PAY.
4. **Schedule B Student Employees** (those employees whom are currently enrolled in a degree-seeking program)
  - a. Check with Research Admin Office to see if there is an approved position description on file with Human Resources.
    1. If there is a position description proceed to (b). If there is not,
    2. Provide a 2 to 3 paragraph detailed description of the position's major duties
    3. Research will get position description classified (a 4 week process)
  - b. Provide an SF-171, OF 612 and CV and a letter requesting what dates that person should be hired at least **three weeks (for classified PD or 6 weeks for unclassified PD)** prior to anticipated start date.

- c. Submit packet to the Research Admin Office.
  - d. If approved, the selected individual will be notified regarding start date and in-processing requirements.  
Selected individual must report for in processing on the date assigned. Failure to report for in processing will result in NO PAY.
5. **Term Appointments** (those employees whose proposed Grade Levels are GS-4 through GS-10 and will receive benefits)
- a. Check with Research Admin Office to see if there is an approved position description on file with Human Resources.
    - 1. If there is a position description proceed to (b). If there is not,
    - 2. Provide a 2 to 3 paragraph detailed description of the position's major duties
    - 3. Research will get position classified (a 4 week process)
  - b. These positions must be announced to the Delegated Examining Unit, which takes approximately two weeks to post, three weeks for posting, and two weeks to process a certificate with names or potential candidates.
  - c. Once a certificate is received with potential candidates, you can select from a certificate list. Once selection is made, employee is notified of start date.
  - d. Selected individual must report to in processing on the date assigned. Failure to report for in processing will result in NO PAY.
6. Thank you for your support in this process. If you have any questions, you can contact Tony Laracuenta ext: 7740