

STAFFING

- 1. REASON FOR ISSUE:** To establish the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) qualification standard for the occupation of Recreation Assistant (Yoga Instructor), GS-0189, appointed under the authority of 38 U.S.C. § 7401(3), Appointments in Veterans Health Administration and 38 U.S.C. § 7405 (a)(1)(B), Temporary full-time appointments, part-time appointments and without-compensation appointments.
- 2. SUMMARY OF CONTENTS/MAJOR CHANGES:** This handbook contains mandatory procedures on staffing. The pages in this handbook establish the Yoga Instructor Qualification Standard in VA Handbook 5005, Part II, Appendix G78 under VA's title 38 hybrid excepted service employment system in accordance with the authority established under P.L. 111-163, Caregivers and Veterans Omnibus Health Services Act of 2010. The Secretary of Veterans Affairs has authority under 38 U.S.C. § 7402, Qualifications of appointees, to prescribe qualifications for occupations identified in or established under 38 U.S.C. § 7401(3), Appointments in Veterans Health Administration and 38 U.S.C. § 7405(a)(1)(B), Temporary full-time appointments, part-time appointments and without-compensation appointments. The newly established standard is effective on the date of this publication. The Office of the Chief Human Capital Officer, Recruitment and Placement Policy Service will incorporate the changes into the electronic version of VA Handbook 5005, Staffing, maintained on the [Office of the Chief Human Capital Officer website](#) and [VA Publications website](#).
- 3. RESPONSIBLE OFFICE:** Office of Human Resources and Administration/ Operations, Security and Preparedness (HRA/OSP) (006), Office of the Chief Human Capital Officer (OCHCO) (05), Recruitment and Placement Policy Service (059).
- 4. RELATED DIRECTIVE:** VA Directive 5005, Staffing.
- 5. RESCISSIONS:** Not applicable.

CERTIFIED BY:

/s/
Guy T. Kiyokawa
Assistant Secretary for
Enterprise Integration

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

/s/
Cassandra M. Law
Assistant Secretary for
Human Resources and Administration/
Operations, Security and Preparedness

DISTRIBUTION: Electronic only

NOTE: This transmittal page accompanied the former VA Handbook 5005, Staffing publication. It is provided for reference to the establishment of this qualification standard.

RECREATION ASSISTANT (YOGA INSTRUCTOR)
QUALIFICATION STANDARD
GS-0189
VETERANS HEALTH ADMINISTRATION

1. **COVERAGE.** The following are requirements for appointment or placement as a Recreation Assistant (Yoga Instructor) in the Veterans Health Administration (VHA). In VHA the occupation will be referred to as Yoga Instructor. These requirements apply to all VHA Recreation Assistant (Yoga Instructors) in the General Schedule (GS)-0189 series. Yoga is a mind and body practice with origins in ancient Indian philosophy. The various styles of yoga typically combine physical postures, breathing techniques, meditation, or relaxation and lifestyle mindfulness education. Yoga Instructors are responsible for conducting yoga and well-being classes, either group or individual, in-person or virtually for the purpose of promoting, preserving or restoring health and well-being. A Yoga Instructor does not treat mental or physical health conditions, injuries, or illnesses.
2. **AUTHORITIES.**
 - a. [P.L. 111-163, Caregivers and Veterans Omnibus Health Services Act of 2010;](#)
 - b. [38 U.S.C. § 7401, Appointments in Veterans Health Administration;](#)
 - c. [38 U.S.C. § 7402, Qualifications of appointees;](#)
 - d. [38 U.S.C. § 7403, Period of appointments; promotions;](#)
 - e. [38 U.S.C. § 7405, Temporary full-time appointments, part-time appointments and without-compensation appointments;](#)
 - f. [38 U.S.C. § 7407, Administrative provisions for section 7405 and 7406 appointments.](#)
3. **DEFINITIONS.**
 - a. **Approving Official.** VHA Office of Patient Centered Care and Cultural Transformation Director, Veterans Integrated Service Network (VISN) Director, or facility Director or designee is the approving official and will determine whether to approve or disapprove the appointment of employees in hybrid occupations.
 - b. **Appointing Official.** The Human Resources (HR) Officer is delegated appointing authority to process and authenticate notifications of personnel

actions and authority to effect management-approved employment actions on behalf of officials, employees and facilities for which service is provided.

c. **Experience.**

- (1) **Creditable Experience/Quality of Experience.** To be creditable, experience must have been gained following completion of a minimum 200 hour yoga teacher training program that required the use of knowledge, skills, abilities (KSAs) and other characteristics, also referred to as core competencies; be associated with the scope of yoga instructor practice equivalent to at least the next lower grade level of the position being filled; be directly related to the position being filled and may be paid or non-paid employment. For all assignments above the full performance level (FPL), the higher-level duties must consist of significant scope, administrative independence, complexity and range of variety as described in this standard at the specified grade level and be performed by the incumbent at least 25% of the time.
- (2) **Part-Time Experience.** Part-time experience as a Yoga Instructor is credited according to its relationship to the full-time work week. For example, a Yoga Instructor employed 20 hours per week, or on a half-time basis, would receive one full-time work week of credit for each two weeks of service.

d. **Journey Level.** The FPL for this qualification standard is the GS-06 grade level.

e. **Occupational Definitions.**

- (1) **International Association of Yoga Therapists.** The International Association of Yoga Therapists (IAYT®) is the accrediting body of training schools and certification for Yoga Therapists. Certification granted by IAYT® is referred to as C-IAYT®. [International Association of Yoga Therapists \(IAYT\)](#)
- (2) **Registered Yoga Teacher.** A Registered Yoga Teacher (RYT®) is a distinction given to yoga teachers whose training and teaching experience meet Yoga Alliance requirements. A RYT® must complete training from a Registered Yoga School (RYS®), be confirmed by Yoga Alliance and current with annual fees and continuing education. [Many Paths, One Yoga Alliance | Yoga Alliance](#)
- (3) **Yoga Alliance and Registration.** Yoga Alliance is a non-profit organization that holds the largest registry for yoga instructors and schools in the United States (U.S.). Yoga Alliance provides varying levels of registration such as:

- (a) RYT® 200. Foundational credentials for teachers who have successfully graduated from an RYS® 200-hour training program.
 - (b) Experienced Registered Yoga Teacher (E-RYT®) 200. For teachers who have successfully graduated from an RYS® 200-hour training and taught at least 1,000 hours over a minimum of 2 years.
 - (c) RYT® 500. Professional level credentials for teachers who successfully graduated from RYS® 200 and RYS® 300-hour training and/or RYS® 500-hour training.
 - (d) E-RYT® 500. For teachers who have successfully graduated from RYS® 200 and RYS® 300 and/or RYS® 500-hour training and taught at least 2,000 hours over a minimum of 4 years (with 500 of the 2,000 hours earned since graduation of their professional-level program).
- (4) **Yoga Therapy.** While all yoga is potentially therapeutic, yoga therapy applies yogic tools such as posture, breathwork, meditation, lifestyle and mindfulness education to address an individual's unique physical, mental, emotional and spiritual needs. Yoga therapy can include both individual and group classes. In addition, yoga therapy includes assessment of the individual's well-being through specific evaluations of physical, psycho-emotional, social and/or spiritual status. This assessment can also include evaluation of posture, movement, balance, mood challenges, resilience to stress, sleep quality, participation in social and daily activities and connection to meaning, purpose and values. In either a group or individual setting, the Yoga Therapist will help to create a plan of care to work toward goals that are co-created by the participant and Yoga Therapist.

4. **BASIC REQUIREMENTS.** To qualify for appointment to this position, all applicants must possess the following:

- a. **Citizenship.** Be a citizen of the U.S. Non-citizens may be appointed when it is not possible to recruit qualified citizens in accordance with 38 U.S.C. § 7407(a).
- b. **Registration/Certification.** The individual must meet either item (1) or (2) below to meet this requirement:
 - (1) Hold, at minimum, an Experienced Registered Yoga Teacher 200 (E-RYT® 200) registration with Yoga Alliance.

OR

- (2) Hold an International Association of Yoga Therapists (IAYT®) certification (C-IAYT®).

- c. **Exception for Yoga Instructors who do not possess an E-RYT® registration or IAYT® certification.**
- (1) Non-registered or non-certified Yoga Instructor applicants who otherwise meet the minimum qualifications and have an RYT® 200 or RYT® 500 registration with Yoga Alliance may be given a full-time temporary appointment not to exceed 2 years under the authority of 38 U.S.C. § 7405(c)(2).
 - (2) Non-registered or non-certified Yoga Instructors may only be appointed at the GS-05 entry level and may not be promoted or converted to a permanent appointment until they obtain E-RYT® registration or IAYT® certification.
 - (3) Non-registered or non-certified Yoga Instructors must practice under the supervision of a qualified individual who is at or above the FPL.
 - (4) Temporary appointments of non-registered or non-certified Yoga Instructors will not be extended beyond 2 years or be converted to a new temporary appointment.
- d. **Failure to Obtain Registration or Certification.** In all cases, Yoga Instructors must actively pursue meeting requirements for registration or certification starting from the date of their appointment. At the time of appointment, servicing HR office staff, in collaboration with the supervisor, will provide non-registered or non-certified Yoga Instructors the written requirement to obtain registration or certification, the date by which they must acquire it and the consequences for not doing so by the deadline. Failure to obtain registration or certification within 2 years from the date of appointment will result in removal from the Yoga Instructor, GS-0189 occupation and may result in termination of employment.
- e. **Loss of Credentials.** Management officials, in collaboration with HR office staff, must immediately relieve employees—who fail to maintain the required registration or certification—of duties and responsibilities associated with the occupation and/or assignment, which may also result in separation from employment.
- f. **Grandfathering Provision.** All individuals employed in VHA as a Yoga Instructor providing yoga instruction under a permanent, appropriate and legal placement on the effective date of this qualification standard are considered to have met all qualification requirements for the title, series and grade held, including registration requirements. The following applies to employees who do not meet all the basic requirements in this standard but met the qualifications applicable to the position at the time they were appointed:
- (1) 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 be newly 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 the occupation who subsequently obtain additional registration or certification that meet all 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 Yoga Instructors 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 re-entry as a Yoga Instructor.

g. **Physical Requirements.** See VA Directive and Handbook 5019, Employee Occupational Health Service for requirements.

h. **English Language Proficiency.** Yoga Instructor candidates must be proficient in spoken and written English in accordance with 38 U.S.C. § 7403(f).

5. **OFFICIAL POSITION TITLES.** All official documents relating to a position (e.g., functional statements and personnel actions) must use the approved official title and grade level as described below. For recruitment purposes, HR Offices will use the titles shown in paragraphs 6a-6e, in the job opportunity announcement. See VA Handbook 5003, Part I for information on the use of official titles and organizational titles.

- a. Recreation Assistant (Yoga Instructor), GS-05.
- b. Recreation Assistant (Yoga Instructor), GS-06.
- c. Recreation Assistant (Advanced Yoga Instructor), GS-07.
- d. Lead Recreation Assistant (Yoga Instructor), GS-07.
- e. Supervisory Recreation Assistant (Yoga Instructor), GS-08.

6. **GRADE DETERMINATIONS.** All individuals assigned to this occupation must meet all the basic qualification requirements above in paragraph 4 and all qualification requirements defined in the specific assignment.

a. **Yoga Instructor, GS-05.**

- (1) **Experience.** 3 months of creditable experience.

- (2) **Knowledge, Skills and Abilities (KSAs).** In addition to the basic requirements, candidates must demonstrate the following KSAs:
- (a) Knowledge of virtual platforms to provide virtual instruction.
 - (b) Skill in adapting yoga practices to meet participant needs (e.g., chair yoga, props).
 - (c) Skill in teaching yoga practices to include poses, breathing and mindfulness.
 - (d) Ability to communicate instructions using verbal and visual cues to guide participants in a group setting.
 - (e) Ability to maintain a safe yoga environment.
 - (f) Ability to communicate participants' needs with appropriate professionals to ensure individual and group safety.
 - (g) Ability to utilize software to document participation in an electronic record.
 - (h) Ability to create a schedule of classes.
- (3) **Assignment.** Employees at this grade level serve in entry level Yoga Instructor developmental positions practicing under close supervision of a Supervisory Yoga Instructor or qualified individual who reviews and ensures the employee meets competency requirements. The entry level Yoga Instructor applies a basic knowledge of adapting yoga practices to individual participants in group classes as appropriate for physical, mental, or behavioural health conditions. They instruct classes demonstrating appropriate adaptation and modification using cues to ensure safety, appropriate alignment and props, as needed. Yoga Instructors utilize technology and equipment to provide virtual instruction. They work with higher level Yoga Instructors or their supervisor to prepare class sequence such as grounding, warm up, cool down, physical postures, breathing techniques and meditation or relaxation appropriate for the type of class and the ability of participants to ensure safe movement. Yoga Instructors use English terminology of postures and trauma sensitive language to provide clear, simple verbal and visual cues and instructions to guide participants with alignment and modifications without singling out any specific participant. They ensure safety protocols are followed for sanitizing, setting up and maintaining yoga space. Yoga Instructors ensure props and reusable medical equipment are in safe working condition, stored in an organized manner and are available to support scheduled events and activities. They recognize and communicate concerns to the supervisor and appropriate health care team to ensure individual and group

safety. Yoga Instructors document participation in the Veteran's electronic medical record (EMR). They maintain their individual yoga class and activity schedule.

b. **Yoga Instructor, GS-06.**

- (1) **Experience.** At least 1 year of experience equivalent to the next lower grade level.
- (2) **Knowledge, Skills and Abilities (KSAs).** In addition to the experience above, the candidate must demonstrate the following KSAs:
 - (a) Skill in adapting yoga practices for a variety of participants and conditions.
 - (b) Skill in conducting group and individual classes that support participant goals.
 - (c) Skill in sequencing classes to ensure the safety of participants.
 - (d) Ability to provide yoga instruction in health care settings.
 - (e) Ability to conduct equipment inspections to initiate work orders.
 - (f) Ability to serve as a mentor to other instructors.
 - (g) Ability to collaborate with members of a health care team to integrate movement into a personal health plan.
 - (h) Ability to use technology to provide virtual instruction.
- (3) **Assignment.** Employees at this grade level serve as FPL Yoga Instructors independently providing yoga for Veterans in a health care setting and may report to a Supervisory Yoga Instructor, clinical provider, a member of the whole health team or qualified individual. In addition to the duties at the entry level, FPL Yoga Instructors adapt practices to individual participants in group classes appropriate for physical and/or behavioural health conditions. They conduct engaging individual and group educational and empowering well-being classes for the purpose of promoting, preserving, or restoring health and well-being and supporting participants in achieving their goals. Yoga Instructors independently prepare a class sequence such as grounding, warm up, cool down, physical postures, breathing techniques and meditation or relaxation appropriate for the type of class and the ability of participants while ensuring safe movement. They conduct regular inspections of equipment and initiate and track work orders. Yoga Instructors use technology and equipment to provide virtual instruction. They may serve as a mentor to lower-level Yoga Instructor

trainees/volunteers as needed. Yoga Instructors collaborate with the health care team in the development and integration of movement into a Veteran's personal health plan. They use standard templates (i.e., Mission Aspiration and Purpose (MAP) and personal health plan) to document progress notes, communication with providers and health factors in the EMR. Yoga Instructors develop information and marketing materials on the benefits of yoga, assist with promotional efforts and encourage participation in yoga classes, special events and community programs.

c. **Advanced Yoga Instructor, GS-07.**

- (1) **Experience.** At least 1 year of experience equivalent to the next lower grade level.
- (2) **Knowledge, Skills and Abilities (KSAs).** In addition to the experience above, the candidate must demonstrate the following KSAs:
 - (a) Skill in developing appropriate resources to enhance participant personal practice.
 - (b) Skill in presenting the benefits of yoga for self-care at meetings, promotional events and community partnerships.
 - (c) Ability to maintain supplies and equipment.
 - (d) Ability to develop a schedule of programs and activities.
 - (e) Ability to develop marketing material.
 - (f) Ability to recommend changes to ensure ongoing program effectiveness.
 - (g) Ability to create local yoga standards, protocols and operating procedures that align with national guidance and policy.
 - (h) Ability to serve as a yoga subject matter expert (SME).
- (3) **Assignment.** For all assignments above the FPL, the higher-level duties must consist of significant scope, complexity (difficulty) and variety and be performed by the incumbent at least 25% of the time. In addition to the duties performed at the FPL, the advanced Yoga Instructor serves as the facility Yoga Instructor SME working independently with minimal supervision. Advanced Yoga Instructors may be supervised by a clinical provider or member of the whole health team. They serve as mentors and may serve as informal leads to lower-level Yoga Instructors that may include part time, volunteers, contract, or fee basis staff. Advanced Yoga Instructors develop and maintain the facility schedule of yoga programs

and activities. They review and recommend changes concerning the effectiveness of ongoing facility wellness programs from the standpoint of participant response, resources, unforeseen developments and program objectives. Advanced Yoga Instructors collaborate with clinical providers such as Yoga Therapists, Recreation Therapists, Physical Therapists, Occupational Therapists and whole health team members in the creation of yoga standards, protocols and operating procedures. They develop and present information and marketing materials on the benefits of yoga for wellness in a health care setting, assist with promotional efforts and encourage participation in yoga classes, special events and community programs. Advanced Yoga Instructors identify and provide Veterans with resources that promote continued practice at home and in the community. They ensure all supply and equipment requirements are identified, properly justified and requested in accordance with appropriate procedures.

d. **Lead Yoga Instructor, GS-07.**

- (1) **Experience.** At least 1 year of experience equivalent to the next lower grade level.
- (2) **Knowledge, Skills and Abilities (KSAs).** In addition to the experience above, the candidate must demonstrate the following KSAs:
 - (a) Skill in presenting the benefits of yoga for self-care at meetings, promotional events and community partnerships.
 - (b) Skill in developing appropriate resources to enhance participant personal practice.
 - (c) Ability to lead others in accomplishing day to day operations.
 - (d) Ability to communicate with employees with varying backgrounds at all levels of the organization.
 - (e) Ability to provide staff development and training.
 - (f) Ability to maintain supplies and equipment.
 - (g) Ability to develop a schedule of programs and activities.
 - (h) Ability to develop marketing material.
 - (i) Ability to recommend changes to ensure ongoing program effectiveness.
 - (j) Ability to create local yoga standards, protocols and operating procedures that align with national guidance and policy.

(k) Ability to serve as a yoga SME.

- (3) **Assignment.** For all assignments above the FPL, the higher-level duties must consist of significant scope, complexity (difficulty) and variety and be performed by the incumbent at least 25% of the time. In addition to the duties of a Yoga Instructor, the Lead Yoga Instructor must spend 25% or more of their time performing lead duties for no less than three Yoga Instructors. Lead Yoga Instructors report to and work with the supervisor to monitor and make work assignments, provide input on performance and address operational needs. They collaborate with clinical providers such as Yoga Therapists, Recreation Therapists, Physical Therapists, Occupational Therapists and whole health team members in the creation of yoga standards, protocols and operating procedures. Lead Yoga Instructors develop and maintain the facility schedule of yoga programs and activities. They are responsible for distributing and balancing workload among employees in accordance with established workflow, ensuring timely accomplishment of the assigned workload, and for assessing the status, quality and progress of the work. Lead Yoga Instructors evaluate participant responses, resources and program objectives to recommend changes concerning the effectiveness of ongoing wellness programs. They identify and provide resources for participants that promote continued practice at home and in the community. Lead Yoga Instructors develop information and marketing materials on the benefits of yoga, assist with promotional efforts and encourage participation in yoga classes, special events and community programs. They serve as the facility Yoga Instructor consultant SME and the liaison between staff and department leadership. Lead Yoga Instructors are responsible for orienting new staff, providing guidance and on the job training and ensuring staff competencies are met. They ensure all supply and equipment requirements are identified, properly justified and requested in accordance with appropriate procedures.

e. **Supervisory Yoga Instructor, GS-08.**

- (1) **Experience.** At least 1 year of experience equivalent to the next lower grade level.
- (2) **Knowledge, Skills and Abilities (KSAs).** In addition to the experience above, the candidate must demonstrate the following KSAs:
- (a) Knowledge of business administration practices such as fiscal, material supply, equipment and clinical and program management.
 - (b) Knowledge of program administration in order to establish and modify program goals and objectives, coordinate activities, evaluate accomplishments and solve problems.
 - (c) Knowledge of accrediting and regulatory requirements.

- (d) Ability to develop local policies and procedures that align with national guidance and policy.
 - (e) Ability to analyze data to implement solutions that result in efficient operations.
 - (f) Ability to provide the full range of supervisory duties, which include, but are not limited to assignment of work, performance evaluations, selection of staff and recommendation of awards and/or advancements.
- (3) **Assignments.** For all assignments above the FPL, the higher-level duties must consist of significant scope, complexity (difficulty) and variety and be performed by the incumbent at least 25% of the time. The incumbent must spend 25% or more of their time providing administrative and technical supervision over Yoga Instructors at the FPL and below and may supervise Lead Yoga Instructor(s). Supervisory Yoga Instructors have full administrative and professional responsibility for planning and directing the activities for the service or equivalent unit. Typical duties include assigning work, monitoring staff performance, conducting performance appraisals and other clinical and administrative responsibilities to meet the mission of the service and the medical center. The Supervisory Yoga Instructor develops policies and procedures for the work unit and contributes to the promotion of complementary and integrative health services. They comply with established internal controls to ensure efficient and effective use of financial resources and attend to budgetary matters when needed. Supervisory Yoga Instructors are responsible for reviewing aggregate patient care data; and compiling, preparing and submitting records, reports, documentation and requests in compliance with policies and regulatory requirements. They ensure compliance with accrediting agency and regulatory requirements, establish and monitor the efficacy and quality of the overall yoga program and assure corrective actions are initiated.

7. DEVIATIONS.

- a. An approving official may, under unusual circumstances, approve reasonable deviations to the grade determination requirements for an employee whose composite record of accomplishments, performance and qualifications, as well as current assignment, warrants such action based on demonstrated competence to meet the requirements of the proposed grade and/or assignment.
- b. The placement of individuals in grade levels or assignments not described in this standard must be approved by the Under Secretary for Health in VHA Central Office prior to placement in the position.
- c. Under no circumstances will the educational or credential requirement be waived for those occupations with a positive education requirement, or when specific

credentials are identified as necessary to meet minimum requirements unless an exception is annotated in the qualification standard.

RESPONSIBLE OFFICE: Human Resources and Administration/Operations, Security and Preparedness (HRA/OSP) (006), Office of the Chief Human Capital Officer (OCHCO) (05), Recruitment and Placement Policy Service (059)