

EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION AND AWARDS

- 1. REASON FOR ISSUE:** To revise procedures concerning special advancements of optometrists in VA.
- 2. SUMMARY OF CONTENTS/MAJOR CHANGES:** This revision covers two changes to procedures covering the special advancement of optometrists in VA. The pages in this change replace corresponding page numbers in part V, appendix B, and part V, appendix D, of VA Handbook 5017, dated April 15, 2002. These changes will be incorporated into the electronic version of VA Handbook 5017, Employee Recognition and Awards, that is maintained on the [Office of Human Resources Management website](#). Significant changes include:
 - a. To revise procedures covering special advancements for achievement and add information requirements concerning submissions to the VA Central Office Optometry Professional Standards Board; and
 - b. To revise procedures covering special advancements for performance and add information requirements concerning submissions to the VA Central Office Optometry Professional Standards Board.
- 3. RESPONSIBLE OFFICE:** The Employee Relations and Performance Management Service (051), Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Human Resources Management.
- 4. RELATED DIRECTIVES:** VA Directive 5017, Employee Recognition and Awards.
- 5. RESCISSIONS:** None.

CERTIFIED BY:

/s/
Robert N. McFarland
Assistant Secretary for
Information and Technology

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

/s/
William H. Campbell
Assistant Secretary for Management
Office of Human Resources and Administration

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APPENDIX B. PROCESSING SPECIAL ADVANCEMENTS FOR ACHIEVEMENT

HOW TO PROCESS A SPECIAL ADVANCEMENT FOR ACHIEVEMENT		
A		B
S T E P S	If an employee meets criteria specified in part V, paragraph 4 and is	then take the following steps
1	a physician, dentist, podiatrist, optometrist[*], chiropractor, registered nurse, nurse anesthetist, physician assistant, expanded-function dental auxiliary, physical therapist, registered respiratory therapist, certified respiratory therapist,	At the time of achievement, the employee may be recommended for advancement. Recommendations will be made to the Standards Board by the chief of service or Chief of Staff as appropriate.
2	licensed practical or vocational nurse, occupational therapist, or pharmacist	The Standards Board will make specific recommendation as to the appropriate number of steps to be granted. The board action with supporting justification will be forwarded to the HRM office.
3		The HRM office will forward the file through channels to the appropriate approving official.
4		Special advancements for achievement will be made effective on the first day of the pay period following administrative approval of the advancement.

*[*NOTE: If an optometrist meets criteria specified in part V, paragraph 4, the employee may be recommended for advancement at the time of achievement. Recommendations will be made to the VA Central Office Optometry Professional Standards Board through the facility HRM office by the chief of service or Chief of Staff as appropriate. The Director of Optometry Service and the VA Central Office Optometry Professional Standards Board may be contacted at and communications should be directed to:*

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

**PART V
APPENDIX B**

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

The Human Resources Management Officer, VA Maryland Healthcare System, or designee, shall serve as the technical representative to the VA Central Office Optometry Professional Standards Board. Additional program information covering optometrists can be obtained through the Director of Optometry Service or the VHA Optometry Service website via the following link: <http://vaww1.va.gov/optometry/>.]

APPENDIX D. PROCESSING SPECIAL ADVANCEMENTS FOR PERFORMANCE

HOW TO PROCESS A SPECIAL ADVANCEMENT FOR PERFORMANCE		
A		B
S T E P S	If employee meets the criteria specified in part V, paragraph 6 and is a	then take the following steps
1	a physician, dentist, podiatrist, [] optometrist[*], or chiropractor	Upon receipt of VA Form 5-97, Notice of Pending Personnel Action, the HRM office will forward the original VA Form 5-97 to the employee's service chief through the Chief of Staff, or to the Chief of Staff, as appropriate. The duplicate copy of the notice will be placed in the pending file in the HRM office.
2		Upon receipt of the advance SF 50-B, for the periodic step increase or rate adjustment, the HRM office will remove the duplicate VA Form 5-97 from the pending file. This will be sent with SF 50-B to the service chief through the Chief of Staff, or to the Chief of Staff as appropriate.
3		If the employee is recommended for advancement, recommendation will be submitted to the Standards Board.
4		The Standards Board will submit its recommendation on VA Form 10-2543, Board Action, to the HRM Office through the Chief of Staff.
5		The HRM office will forward the board action through channels to the appropriate approving authority listed in appendix A of this part.

HOW TO PROCESS A SPECIAL ADVANCEMENT FOR PERFORMANCE (CONTINUED)	
A	B
6	In the absence of recommendation for advancement, or if the recommendation for special advancement for performance is disapproved, the normal procedures for periodic step increases or rate adjustments will be followed. (See VA Handbook 5007, part III, chapter 5, paragraph 1.)
7	If the recommendation is approved, Standard Form 52, Request for Personnel Action, will be initiated by the operating official. The effective date will be the same as the due date for the periodic step increase or rate adjustment.
8	If the employee is recommended for advancement, the recommendation will be submitted to the appropriate Standards Board by the chief of service or Chief of Staff, as appropriate.
9	See steps 4 and 5 above.
10	If the recommendation is approved, Standard Form 52, Request for Personnel Action, will be initiated by the operating official. The effective date will be the first day of the pay period following administrative approval.

*[*NOTE: To process special advancements for performance for optometrists, follow steps 1 & 2 shown above. In step 3, recommendations will be made to the VA Central Office Optometry Professional Standards Board by the chief of service*

or Chief of Staff as appropriate through the facility HRM office. The Director of Optometry Service and the VA Central Office Optometry Professional Standards Board may be contacted at and communications should be directed to:

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

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

The VA Central Office Optometry Professional Standards Board will make specific recommendation as to the appropriate number of steps to be granted. The board action with supporting justification will be returned to the facility HRM office. Thereafter, special advancements for performance of optometrists will be processed in accordance with steps 5 through 10, as appropriate.

*The Human Resources Management Officer, VA Maryland Healthcare System, or designee, shall serve as the technical representative to the VA Central Office Optometry Professional Standards Board. Additional program information covering optometrists can be obtained through the Director of Optometry Service or the VHA Optometry Service Web site via the following link:
[http://vaww1.va.gov/optometry/.](http://vaww1.va.gov/optometry/)]*