

STAFFING

- 1. REASON FOR ISSUE:** To establish a Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) qualification standard for the appointment of Histopathology Technologist, GS-0601, appointed under the authority of 38 U.S.C. § 7401(3) and 38 U.S.C. § 7405 (a)(1)(B).
- 2. SUMMARY OF CONTENTS/MAJOR CHANGES:** This handbook contains mandatory procedures on staffing. This policy establishes qualification standards for the Histopathology Technologist occupation. The policy is established under VA's title 38 hybrid excepted service employment system, in accordance with the authority of Public Law 111-163, "Caregivers and Veterans Omnibus Health Services Act of 2010." Authority is given to the Secretary of VA under 38 U.S.C. § 7402(b), to prescribe qualifications for occupations identified in, or established under, 38 U.S.C. § 7401(3) and 38 U.S.C. § 7405(a)(1)(B). The new standards are effective on the publication. These changes will be incorporated into the electronic version of VA Handbook 5005 that is maintained on the Office of Human Resources Management Website.
- 3. RESPONSIBLE OFFICE:** Recruitment and Placement Policy Service (059), Office of the Chief Human Capital Officer.
- 4. RELATED DIRECTIVE:** VA Directive 5005, Staffing.
- 5. RESCISSIONS:** None.

CERTIFIED BY:

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

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**[APPENDIX G65. HISTOPATHOLOGY TECHNOLOGIST
QUALIFICATION STANDARD
GS-0601
Veterans Health Administration**

1. **COVERAGE.** The following are requirements for appointment of a histopathology technologist in the Veterans Health Administration (VHA). These requirements apply to all histopathology technologists in the General Schedule (GS) 0601 series. As crucial members of the pathology and laboratory medicine service, histopathology technologists possess broad knowledge of biological sciences and the skills necessary to process anatomic pathology specimens. The work performed by histopathology technologists is vital for pathologists to interpret laboratory results and provide diagnoses and prognoses that allow for planning appropriate and life-saving treatments.
2. **DEFINITIONS.**
 - a. **Journey Level.** The full performance level for this qualification standard is the GS-9 grade level.
 - b. **Creditable Experience.** To be creditable, the experience must have required the use of knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs), and other characteristics, also referred to as core competencies; be associated with the scope of histopathology technologist practice; be directly related to the position being filled; and may be paid or non-paid employment.
 - c. **Part-Time Experience.** Part-time experience is creditable based on its relationship to a full-time work week. For example, a histopathology technologist employed 20 hours per week, or on a part time basis, would receive one full-time workweek of credit for each two weeks of service.
 - d. **Graduate Education.** Graduate education and graduate degrees may be substituted, as specified at each grade level. Education must be from an accredited college or university (which was accredited at the time the candidate completed the program), in a field related to histology, to include, but not limited to clinical biology, microbiology, physiology, pre-medical, medical lab technology, chemistry, immunology, physiology, anatomy, health sciences, or allied sciences.
3. **BASIC REQUIREMENTS.**
 - a. **Citizenship.** Candidates must be a United States citizen. (Non-citizens may be appointed when it is not possible to recruit qualified citizens in accordance with 38 U.S.C. § 7407(a).
 - b. **Education.** Individuals must meet one of the requirements below:
 - (1) Successful completion of a full four-year course of study from an accredited college or university, leading to a bachelor's or higher degree, that included a major study in

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an academic field related to health sciences or allied sciences appropriate to the work of a histopathology technologist, such as, but not limited to clinical biology, microbiology, physiology, pre-medical, medical lab technology, chemistry, immunology, physiology, anatomy;

OR,

- (2) Baccalaureate degree from a regionally accredited college/university with a combination of 30 semester hours (45 quarter hours) of biology and chemistry (must include credit hours in both);

OR,

- (3) Successful completion of two years of progressively higher level graduate education, leading to a master's degree or equivalent graduate degree, with a major study in an academic field related to health sciences or allied sciences appropriate to the position of histopathology technologist, such as clinical biology, microbiology, physiology, pre-medical, medical lab technology, chemistry, immunology, physiology, anatomy.

- c. **Foreign Education.** To be creditable, education completed outside the U.S. must have been submitted to a private organization approved by the American Society for Clinical Pathology (ASCP) that specializes in the interpretation of foreign educational credentials, and such education must have been deemed at least equivalent to that gained in conventional U.S. programs.

d. **Certification.**

- (1) Candidates must currently possess the histotechnologist (HTL) certification given by the ASCP Board of Certification. The ASCP requires completion of one of the following for a candidate to be considered "board eligible" to take the certification exam:

- (a) Successful completion of a histotechnician or histotechnology program accredited by the National Accrediting Agency for Clinical Laboratory Science (NAACLS);

OR,

- (b) One year of full time experience in all of the following: fixation, embedding, microtomy, processing, and staining in a histopathology (clinical, veterinary, industry, or research) laboratory.

- (2) **Exception for Non-Board Certified.** Non-board-certified candidates designated by ASCP as "board eligible," who otherwise meet the eligibility requirements, may be given a temporary appointment under the authority of 38 U.S.C. § 7405(c)(2)(B). The appointing official may waive the requirement of certification for a period not to exceed two years for a histopathology technologist working under the direct

oversight of a supervisor, lab manager, or qualified individual who can verify technical experience. This exception only applies at the entry level. For grade levels at or above the full performance level, the candidate must have HTL certification. Temporary appointments of non-board-certified histopathology technologists may not be extended beyond 2 years or be converted to a new temporary appointment.

- (3) **Failure to Obtain Certification.** In all cases, non-board-certified histopathology technologists must meet one of the ASCP histotechnologist eligibility routes at the date of their appointment and must actively pursue certification from the date of their appointment. At the time of appointment, the supervisor will provide the histopathology technologist with the written requirement to obtain certification, the date by which the certification must be acquired, and the consequences for not becoming certified by the deadline. Failure to obtain board certification by the prescribed date will result in removal from the histopathology technologist, GS-0601 occupational series and may result in termination of employment.
 - (4) **Loss of Certification.** Employees who fail to maintain the required certification must be removed from the histopathology technologist, GS-0601 occupation, which may result in termination of employment.
- e. **Grandfathering Provision.** All histopathology technologists employed in VHA in this occupational series or in another occupational series, who perform the duties as described in the qualification standard on the effective date of this qualification standard, are considered to have met all qualification requirements for the grade held, including positive education and certification that are part of the basic requirements of the occupation. 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 the position, the following provisions apply:
- (1) Histopathology technologists who do not meet the basic requirements for education and certification may be reassigned, promoted up to and including the full performance level, or demoted within the occupation, but may not be promoted beyond the full performance level or placed in a supervisory or managerial position.
 - (2) Histopathology technologists who are appointed on a temporary basis prior to the effective date of the qualification standard may not have their temporary appointment extended or receive a new appointment on a temporary or permanent basis, until they fully meet the basic requirements of the standard.
 - (3) Histopathology technologists initially grandfathered into this occupation, who subsequently obtain education and/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) If histopathology technologists, who are grandfathered under this provision, leave the occupation then those employees lose grandfathered protected status and must meet the full VA qualification standard requirements in effect at the time of reentry to

the histopathology technologist occupation in this series.

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

g. **English Language Proficiency.** Histopathology Technologists must be proficient in spoken and written English as required by 38 U.S.C. § 7403(f).

4. **GRADE REQUIREMENTS.** In addition to the basic requirements for employment listed above, the following experience criteria must be met when determining the grade of candidates.

a. **Histopathology Technologist, GS-7**

(1) **Experience.** None beyond the basic requirements.

(2) **Assignment.** At this level, histopathology technologists serve in developmental positions practicing under close supervision of a supervisor, lab manager, or qualified individual who can verify technical experience.

b. **Histopathology Technologist, GS-9**

(1) **Experience.** Must have one year of creditable experience equivalent to the GS-7 grade level, which is directly related to the position to be filled.

(2) **Assignment.** At the full performance level, the histopathology technologist independently performs a full range of routine and specialized tests. Utilize information technology systems to apply histopathology techniques and broad scientific principles from the fields of biology, chemistry, anatomy and physiology. The histopathology technologist acts as a technical resource, troubleshooting a variety of specialized lab tests, identifying suboptimal issues, and uses independent judgment and resources to resolve concerns. The histopathology technologist ensures goals are met by prioritizing work, as necessary, in times of short staffing, or heavy workload, and by performing simultaneous tasks. The histopathology technologist uses professional skills in applying anatomic pathology principles, practices, concepts, and theories to perform new or difficult specialized testing methods, such as immunohistochemical, histochemical, and frozen section techniques.

(3) **Demonstrated Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities.** In addition to the experience or education above, the candidate must demonstrate all of the following KSAs:

(a) Knowledge of laboratory information technology systems and inter-connectivity.

(b) Knowledge of histopathology techniques, chemistry, anatomy and physiology principles, theories, concepts, and methodologies sufficient to process specimens, and the ability to perform a full range of routine specialized tests.

(c) Ability to identify and test suboptimal specimens and take corrective action to

minimize or eliminate impact on a patient's sample.

- (d) Ability to organize, coordinate, and prioritize simultaneous work assignments; both individual and team related.
- (e) Skill in applying professional, anatomic pathology principles, practices, concepts, and theories in performing new or difficult specialized testing methods or techniques.

c. Histopathology Technologist, GS-11

(1) **Education and Experience.** Must meet one of the following:

- (a) One year of creditable experience equivalent to the GS-9 grade level, which is directly related to the position to be filled; or
- (b) Three full years of progressively higher-level graduate education that included a clinical practicum; or
- (c) A Ph.D. or equivalent doctoral degree in histopathology technology or a directly related field that included a clinical practicum.

(2) **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. At the advanced level, the histopathology technologist independently performs a full range of specialized tests, applying histopathology techniques and broad scientific principles from the fields of biology, chemistry, anatomy, and physiology. Must be able to operate, maintain, and troubleshoot instrumentation utilized while preparing specimens for diagnosis; perform advanced procedures and analysis of tissue samples; and guide staff in the preparation of the most difficult specimens. Act as a technical resource, troubleshooting a variety of specialized lab tests, identifying suboptimal issues, and using independent judgment and resources to resolve concerns. Organize, coordinate, and prioritize work assignments. The histopathology technologist uses professional skills in applying complex anatomic pathology principles, practices, concepts, and theories in performing new or difficult specialized testing methods or techniques. At the advanced level, the histopathology technologists introduce new tests, including stain protocol research, test protocol setup, validation testing, and record-keeping and documentation. Utilize information technology to perform tasks related to histotechnology. In addition to histochemical and immunohistochemistry (IHC) testing, the technologist is responsible for advanced testing including, but not limited to, fluorescence in-situ hybridization (FISH), chromogenic in-situ hybridization (CISH), and gross dissection, as dictated by the lab's needs.

NOTE: Advanced duties may include one or more of the tasks identified below. Additionally, when these duties are required, the advanced histopathology technologist must demonstrate the corresponding KSAs as identified in KSAs (g) through (k):

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- (a) *Mohs: Performs color mapping, embedding with precise orientation, cryostat sectioning, and staining of all types of Mohs specimens under the direction of the Mohs surgeon. (KSA g)
 - (b) **Electron Microscopy (EM): Utilizes an electron microscope, performs ultrathin-cryomicrotomy, and carries out staining of ultrastructural components. (KSA h)
 - (c) ***Safety Coordination: Oversees safe handling of specimens, chemicals, and equipment by all staff and ensures adherence to safety regulations. (KSA i)
 - (d) ****Laboratory Education: Plans and administers an ongoing continuing education program for laboratory staff to meet accreditation requirements. (KSA j)
 - (e) *****Automated Data Processing Applications Coordinator: Carries out day-to-day operations related to laboratory information systems/computer use and system maintenance. (KSA k)
- (3) **Demonstrated Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities.** In addition to the experience or education above, the candidate must demonstrate KSAs (a)-(f) and additional KSAs based on the specific duties assigned:
- (a) Knowledge of histopathology techniques, chemistry, anatomy and physiology principles, theories, concepts, and methodologies sufficient to process specimens and perform a full range of routine and specialized tests.
 - (b) Knowledge of the operation and maintenance of the instrumentation necessary to prepare specimens for diagnosis.
 - (c) Skill in applying professional, complex anatomic pathology principles, practices, concepts, and theories in performing new or difficult specialized testing methods or techniques.
 - (d) Ability to identify and test suboptimal specimens and take corrective action to minimize or eliminate the impact on patient's sample.
 - (e) Ability to organize, coordinate, and prioritize simultaneous work assignments, both individual and team related.
 - (f) Knowledge of laboratory information technology systems and inter-connectivity.
 - (g) *Skill in performing detailed Mohs procedures.
 - (h) **Ability to perform ultrathin microtomy, and operate an electron microscope. Knowledge of microanatomy sufficient to note ultrastructural and microchemical findings.
 - (i) ***Ability to convey knowledge of safety regulations and guidelines from organizations such as College of American Pathologists (CAP), The Joint

Commission (TJC), and Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), to ensure staff compliance with safety requirements, including continuing education and employee orientation.

- (j) ****Skill in planning and administering an ongoing continuing education program for the laboratory to meet accreditation standards.
- (k) *****Skill in maintaining and troubleshooting computers and laboratory system instrumentation.

d. Lead Histopathology Technologist, GS-11

(1) **Education and Experience.** Must meet one of the following:

- (a) One year of creditable experience equivalent to the GS-9 grade level, which is directly related to the position to be filled; or
- (b) Three full years of progressively higher-level graduate education that included a clinical practicum; or
- (c) A Ph.D. or equivalent doctoral degree in histopathology technology, or a directly related field that included a clinical practicum.

(2) **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 lead histopathology technologist may lead other histopathology technicians and/or histopathology technologists or others in the performance of histopathology work. At this level, the lead histopathology technologist independently performs a full range of specialized tests, applying histopathology techniques and broad scientific principles from the fields of biology, chemistry, anatomy, and physiology. Must be able to operate, maintain, and troubleshoot instrumentation utilized while preparing specimens for diagnosis. Performs advanced procedures and analysis of tissue samples and guides staff in the preparation of the most difficult specimens. The lead histopathology technologist must be skilled in applying professional, complex anatomic pathology principles, practices, concepts, and theories in performing new or difficult specialized testing methods or techniques. Leads in the introduction of new tests including stain protocol research, test protocol setup, validation testing, record keeping, and documentation. Researches, develops, tests, optimizes and validates complex histochemical stains, immunohistochemistry (IHC) and/or in situ hybridization (ISH) protocols, including, but not limited to, new antibodies, probes, detection protocols/kits, new lots and concentrated antibody titrations. Troubleshoots a variety of specialized lab tests as well as equipment by using independent judgment and resources available to resolve issues. The lead histopathology technologist identifies suboptimal testing and takes corrective action to minimize or eliminate impact on patient samples. Monitors and makes work assignments, provides input on performance, resolves daily workplace issues, and maintains efficient workflow. Assignments at this level include, but are not limited to: assuring coverage of all areas of responsibility; conducting ongoing reviews to

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ensure quality of work; providing guidance to staff members, to include changes in policies and procedures; distributing and balancing workload; orienting and providing on-the-job training for new and current employees; and ensuring all training requirements are met in addition to organizing the work structure of his/her assigned areas.

- (3) **Demonstrated Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities.** In addition to the experience or education above, the candidate must demonstrate all the following KSAs:
- (a) Knowledge of the operation and maintenance of the instrumentation necessary to prepare specimens for diagnosis.
 - (b) Knowledge of histopathology techniques, chemistry, anatomy and physiology principles, theories, concepts, and methodologies sufficient to process specimens and perform a full range of routine and specialized tests.
 - (c) Skill in applying professional, complex anatomic pathology principles, practices, concepts, and theories in performing new or difficult specialized testing methods or techniques.
 - (d) Ability to identify and test suboptimal specimens and take corrective action to minimize or eliminate the impact on patient's sample.
 - (e) Ability to monitor and make work assignments, balance workload, and ensure duties are completed in an accurate and timely manner. This includes the ability to follow-up on pending issues and demonstrate an understanding of the impact of incomplete work.

e. **Histopathology Technologist, GS-11 (Quality Management)**

- (1) **Education and Experience.** Must meet one of the following:
- (a) One year of creditable experience equivalent to the GS-9 grade level, which is directly related to the position to be filled; or
 - (b) Three full years of progressively higher-level graduate education that included a clinical practicum; or
 - (c) A Ph.D. or equivalent doctoral degree in histopathology technology or a directly related field that included a clinical practicum.
- (2) **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. In this assignment the histopathology technologist provides authoritative advice and consultation on quality management laboratory services to all levels of management throughout the organization. The histopathology technologist maintains a laboratory quality management program and ensures monitoring of components and customer feedback. Analyzes, identifies, defines, and resolves issues associated with complex aspects of the collected data. The histopathology technologist monitors

laboratory quality control systems and performance indicators. Interacts with management officials and vendors providing inter-laboratory quality assurance and laboratory proficiency testing. The histopathology technologist is responsible for laboratory continuous readiness for regulating agency inspections and accreditation from agencies, such as The Joint Commission on Accreditation of Hospitals and College of American Pathologists.

(3) **Demonstrated Knowledge, Skills and Abilities.** In addition to the experience or education above, the candidate must demonstrate all of the following KSAs:

- (a) Comprehensive knowledge of laboratory quality control/assurance policies, quality management standards, procedures and principles, as well as safety practices and regulations.
- (b) Knowledge of accrediting agencies and regulatory requirements pertaining to laboratory operations and ensuring continuous readiness for inspections.
- (c) Knowledge of laboratory operations and relationships to the organization.
- (d) Ability to analyze quality assurance data and resolve complex data issues.

f. **Supervisory Histopathology Technologist, GS-11**

(1) **Education and Experience.** Must meet one of the following:

- (a) One year of creditable experience equivalent to the GS-9 grade level, which is directly related to the position to be filled; or
- (b) Three full years of progressively higher-level graduate education that included a clinical practicum; or
- (c) A Ph.D. or equivalent doctoral degree in histopathology technology, or a directly related field that included a clinical practicum.

(2) **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 incumbent has full supervisory responsibility for smaller, less complex laboratories, or laboratories having no GS-11 positions subordinate to the supervisor. Employees in this assignment perform the full range of supervisory duties for one or more sections of the laboratory, including responsibility for assignment of work; performance evaluations; recommendations for appointment, awards, advancement, and disciplinary actions; and identification of continuing education and training needs. The incumbent ensures compliance with the accrediting agency and regulatory requirements, establishes and monitors the quality of the pre-analytical processes as part of the overall laboratory quality management program, and initiates corrective action. This individual will develop policies and procedures, manage document control, develop performance standards, position descriptions, and functional statements. The supervisor is responsible for professional and administrative management of an assigned area, to include budget execution, orientation, and

competency assessment of assigned staff. The supervisor will maintain effective interdepartmental relations with other services in order to accomplish medical center goals.

- (3) **Demonstrated Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities.** In addition to the experience or education above, the candidate must demonstrate all of the following KSAs:
- (a) Knowledge of Federal and state laws, regulations, and accrediting/regulatory requirements, in order to develop plans and procedures for the laboratory.
 - (b) Skill in communicating with individuals to obtain the desired effect, ensuring compliance with established policies, regulations, and procedures.
 - (c) Ability to perform the full range of supervisory duties, which includes responsibility for assignment of work, performance evaluations, selection of staff, recommendation of awards, advancements, and disciplinary actions.
 - (d) Knowledge of laboratory quality management procedures and principles sufficient to establish and monitor a laboratory quality management program, in addition to educating and training the laboratory staff.
 - (e) Demonstrated leadership and managerial skills, including skill in interpersonal relations and conflict resolution, to interact with employees, team leaders, and managers.
 - (f) Ability to plan, organize, set short-term and/or long-term goals, and conduct studies on technical and administrative problems, including personnel shortages, organizational structure, and new technology.

g. Supervisory Histopathology Technologist, GS-12

- (1) **Experience.** Must have one year of creditable experience equivalent to the GS-11 grade level, which is directly related to the position to be filled.
- (2) **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 incumbent supervises a large staff of nonsupervisory personnel, including at least one GS-11 subordinate in the performance of complex anatomic pathology testing in multiple specialties, such as Mohs testing, cytology testing, immunohistochemistry, molecular testing, or electron microscopy. The supervisor performs the full range of supervisory duties for one or more sections of the anatomic pathology laboratory, including responsibility for assignment of work performed; performance evaluations; recommendations for appointment, awards, advancement, and disciplinary actions; identification of continuing education and training needs; and resolving interpersonal issues. The supervisor ensures compliance with accrediting agency and regulatory requirements and establishes and monitors the quality of the pre-analytical processes, as part of the overall laboratory quality management program, and

initiates corrective action. The supervisor is responsible for fiscal matters, including budget execution, sets short-term and/or long-term goals, develops policies and procedures, manages document control, and develops performance standards, position descriptions, and functional statements.

- (3) **Demonstrated Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities.** In addition to the experience or education above, the candidate must demonstrate all of the following KSAs:
- (a) Knowledge of Federal and state laws, regulations, and accrediting/regulatory requirements in order to develop plans and procedures for the laboratory.
 - (b) Skill in communicating with individuals, in order to obtain the desired effect, ensuring compliance with established policies, regulations, and procedures.
 - (c) Ability to perform the full range of supervisory duties, which includes responsibility for assignment of work, performance evaluations, selection of staff, recommendation of awards, advancements, and disciplinary actions.
 - (d) Knowledge of laboratory quality management procedures and principles sufficient to establish and monitor a laboratory quality management program, and/or education and training of the laboratory staff.
 - (e) Demonstrated leadership and managerial skills including skill in interpersonal relations and conflict resolution in order to deal with employees, team leaders, and managers.
 - (f) Ability to plan, organize, set short and/or long-term goals, and conduct studies on technical and administrative problems, including fiscal matters, budget execution, personnel shortages, organizational structure, and new technology.

h. Histopathology Technologist, GS-12 (Laboratory Information Manager)

- (1) **Experience.** Must have one year of creditable experience equivalent to the GS-11 grade level, which is directly related to the position to be filled.
- (2) **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 laboratory information manager develops and recommends new policies and procedures regarding the installation of evolving tests or techniques and use of the laboratory information systems (LIS). Ensures compatibility of the (LIS) with the overall hospital information system (HIS), and provides authoritative advice and consultation regarding the functions and capabilities of the LIS to all levels of the organization. The laboratory information manager implements and maintains coding and mapping for laboratory test ordering, reporting, billing and workload recording, and taking into account compliance principles. Analyzes emerging trends, software and technology, and adopts appropriate methods for local programs to meet agency goals. Serves as the local expert representing the lab end users by interacting with software

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developers to test and validate new and emerging software packages. Responsible for compliance with regulatory agency requirements, as related to information systems, and perform audits as needed. The laboratory information manager provides consultation and training of personnel on computer functions, including ordering options, and is responsible for the maintenance of computer security keys.

- (3) **Demonstrated Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities.** In addition to the experience or education above, the candidate must demonstrate all of the following KSAs:
- (a) Knowledge and understanding of laboratory operations and compliance and regulatory requirements, and their relationship to the organization, sufficient to provide advice, training, and problem-solving services on specific projects, programs, or functions, and to conduct inspections or audits, as needed.
 - (b) Ability to independently plan, organize, set priorities, work as a team member, and effectively complete assignments.
 - (c) Skill in utilizing the LIS, program techniques, computer language, and program design sufficient to implement various laboratory associated packages, and sustain operation of the laboratory system.
 - (d) Ability to adapt, implement, and integrate the use of software to specific laboratory applications and processes, and the use of office automation software.

i. **Histopathology Technologist, GS-13 (Laboratory Manager)**

- (1) **Experience.** Must have one year of creditable experience equivalent to the GS-12 grade level, which is directly related to the position to be filled.
- (2) **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 laboratory manager reports to the director of the laboratory service, and is responsible for supervising a large staff of nonsupervisory and supervisory personnel, and managing and overseeing laboratory service operations. The incumbent provides guidance and serves as the subject matter expert on laboratory medicine, including research, agency policies, new techniques and procedures, developing guidelines, and assessing laboratory effectiveness. Establishes and maintains quality assurance and quality management programs. The laboratory manager consults with or serves as a consultant for local, network, and national programs and/or officials; manages regulatory affairs and compliance; and develops and manages program budget and resource utilization, inventory, acquisition, and contracting processes.
- (3) **Demonstrated Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities.** In addition to the experience or education above, the candidate must demonstrate all of the following KSAs:
- (a) Knowledge of regulatory, licensing, and accrediting agency requirements and

statutes that govern clinical laboratory operations used in planning, implementing, and monitoring laboratory programs.

- (b) Ability to plan and execute short-range and long-range programs and/or goals through project management and tactical/strategic planning.
 - (c) Ability to work collaboratively with other disciplines, upper management, and executive leadership.
 - (d) Advanced knowledge of concepts, principles, and methodology of a major clinical laboratory program and operations to assess program effectiveness and provide authoritative guidance of operations, personnel, and management.
 - (e) Skill in administrative management (e.g., budgeting, contracting, procurement, and property management), in accordance with regulations.
 - (f) Ability to provide the full range of supervisory duties, which includes responsibility for assignment of work, performance evaluations, selection of staff, and recommendations for awards, advancements, and disciplinary actions, if applicable.
- j. **Histopathology Technologist, GS-13 (Regional Commissioner Technologist)**
- (1) **Experience.** Must have one year of creditable experience equivalent to the GS-12 grade level, which is directly related to the position to be filled.
 - (2) **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 regional commissioner technologist serves as an authority to multiple laboratories in a region, to ensure compliance with inspection and accreditation requirements and regulations. Provides direction and guidance to resolve technical problems and interpretation of existing regulations. Coordinates with VHA Central Office to ensure that each testing site is in compliance with inspection requirements, accreditation requirements, and regulations; and assists laboratories in the correction of any cited inspection deficiencies. The regional commissioner technologist is responsible for coordinating the Clinical Laboratory Improvement Amendment (CLIA) requirements for all laboratories in the region. Serves as a consultant to national program official, and provides professional, technical, and training support. The regional commissioner technologist is required to communicate verbally, in writing, and electronically with accrediting and regulatory bodies. Works under the direction and guidance of the VHA Office of Enforcement in VHA Central Office.
 - (3) **Demonstrated Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities.** In addition to the experience or education above, the candidate must demonstrate all of the following KSAs:
 - (a) Advanced knowledge of laboratory regulations that pertain to quality control, quality management, and proficiency testing to assess and assist with laboratory

compliance of quality programs in each facility assigned to that region.

- (b) Ability to differentiate and interpret accrediting and regulatory requirements to provide guidance to laboratories on regulatory requirements and assess compliance for each laboratory assigned to that region.
- (c) Knowledge of laboratory operations and the laboratory's role within the total organization.
- (d) Ability to create and deliver educational presentations to a variety of individuals on matters that pertain to inspection and accreditation rules, regulations, and standards of all laboratory accrediting agencies.

5. DEVIATIONS.

- a. The approving official may, under unusual circumstances, approve reasonable deviations to the grade determination requirements for histopathology technologists 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 certification or educational requirements as a histopathology technologist 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. § 7401, 7402, 7403, 7405, 7407.]