

STAFFING

1. **REASON FOR ISSUE:** To establish a Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) qualification standard for Health Technician (Audiology) (HTA), Health Technician (Speech-Language Pathology) (HTSLP) and Health Technician (Audiology & Speech-Language Pathology) (HTASLP), GS-0640, appointed 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.
2. **SUMMARY OF CONTENTS/MAJOR CHANGES:** This handbook contains mandatory procedures on staffing. This revision establishes the HTA, HTSLP and HTASLP occupations under VA's title 38 hybrid excepted service employment system in accordance with the authority established under the P.L. 111-163, Caregivers and Veterans Omnibus Health Services Act of 2010. Authority is given to the Secretary of the VA 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 new standards are effective on the date of this publication. This new qualification standard will be incorporated into the electronic version of VA Handbook 5005 maintained on the [Office of the Chief Human Capital Officer](#) website and the [VA Publications website](#).
3. **RESPONSIBLE OFFICE:** Office of the Chief Human Capital Officer, Recruitment and Placement Policy Service (059).
4. **RELATED DIRECTIVES:** VA Directive 5005, Staffing.
5. **RESCISSIONS:** None.

CERTIFIED BY:

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

/s/
Dat P. Tran
Acting Assistant Secretary
for Enterprise Integration

/s/
Jeffrey R. Mayo
Acting, Assistant Secretary for
Human Resources and Administration/
Operations, Security and Preparedness

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*Use in conjunction with the OPM Standard.

[APPENDIX G70. HEALTH TECHNICIAN (AUDIOLOGY), HEALTH TECHNICIAN (SPEECH-LANGUAGE PATHOLOGY) AND HEALTH TECHNICIAN (AUDIOLOGY & SPEECH-LANGUAGE PATHOLOGY) QUALIFICATION STANDARD

GS-0640

Veterans Health Administration

- 1. COVERAGE.** The following are requirements for appointment as a Health Technician (Audiology) (HTA), Health Technician (Speech-Language Pathology) (HTSLP) and Health Technician (Audiology & Speech-Language Pathology) (HTASLP) in the Veterans Health Administration (VHA). These requirements apply to all VHA HTA, HTSLP and HTASLP in the General Schedule (GS) 0640 series, including those assigned to VA medical centers, Community-Based Outpatient Clinics, Vet Centers, Veterans Integrated Service Network (VISN) offices and VHA Central Office. This work may include the provision of a wide array of clinical rehabilitation services to support Veterans with disabilities reintegration into community, employment and independent living.
- 2. DEFINITIONS.**
 - a. **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.
 - b. **Approving Official.** The VISN Director, Facility Director, or designee, is the approving official and will determine whether to approve or disapprove the appointment of employees in the hybrid occupations.
 - c. **Journey Level.** The full performance level for this qualification standard is GS-06.
 - d. **Creditable Experience.** To be creditable, the experience must have required the use of knowledge, skills and abilities associated with current HTA, HTSLP or HTASLP practice. Experience satisfying this requirement may be paid or non-paid employment as a health technician in the health care field.
 - e. **Quality of Experience.** Qualifying experience must be at a level comparable to HTA, HTSLP or HTASLP experience at the next lower grade level of the position being filled. For all assignments above the full performance level, 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.

- f. **Part-Time Experience.** Part-time experience is creditable according to its relationship to a full-time workweek. For example, an individual 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.

3. BASIC REQUIREMENTS.

- a. **Citizenship.** Be a citizen of the United States (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. **Experience and Education.**
 - (1) **Experience.** Six months of experience comparable to the next lower level which demonstrates the knowledge, skills and abilities related to the duties of the position to be filled.

OR
 - (2) **Education.** Successful completion of two academic years above high school leading to an associate degree or a bachelor's degree with at least 12 semester hours in courses related to the position.

OR
 - (3) **Experience/Education Combination.** Equivalent combinations of experience and education are qualifying. An example of a combination of experience/education is three months of experience comparable to the next lower level which demonstrates the knowledge, skills and abilities related to the duties of the position to be filled and one year above high school with a minimum of 6 semester hours related to the health care industry.
- c. **Certification.** Certification by the Council for Accreditation in Occupational Hearing Conservation (CAOHC) as a Certified Occupational Hearing Conservationist (COHC) is required for the HTA, GS-08 assignment only.
- d. **Loss of Credential.** An employee in this occupation who fails to maintain the required certification identified for the HTA, GS-08 position must be removed from the assignment, which may also result in termination of employment.
- e. **Grandfathering Provision.** All individuals employed in VHA in this occupational series or in another occupational series performing the duties as described in the qualification standard on the effective date of the qualification standard are considered to have met all qualification requirements for the grade held including positive education and licensure/trademark/registration/certification. 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) They 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) If an HTA, HTSLP or HTASLP who was retained under this provision leaves the occupation, the employee will lose protected status and must meet the full VA qualification standard requirements in effect at the time of re-entry to the occupation.
- (3) HTAs, HTSLPs or HTASLPs 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.
- (4) 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.

- f. **Foreign Education.** To be creditable, education completed outside the U.S. must have been submitted to a private organization 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.
- g. **Physical Requirements.** See VA Directive and Handbook 5019.
- h. **English Language Proficiency.** HTA, HTSLP or HTASLP candidates must be proficient in spoken and written English to be appointed as authorized by 38 U.S.C. § 7403 (f).

4. GRADE DETERMINATIONS. In addition to the basic requirements for employment, the following criteria must be met when determining the grade of candidates.

a. **HTA, GS-04**

- (1) **Experience.** None beyond the basic requirements.
- (2) **Assignment.** This is an entry level developmental position. The HTA at this level works independently under the direction of a licensed audiologist. The assignment of this position includes but is not limited to assisting the audiologist with patient assessment and treatment. The health technician must adhere to the audiology clinic policy and standard operating

procedures for infection control and cleaning, sterilization and disposition of reusable medical equipment (RME). The health technician maintains a comprehensive supply and equipment tracking system to include monitoring stock of RME and consumable items; ensuring proper inventory levels to complete the daily tasks; prioritizing the acquisition of all supplies and equipment with regard to date of expiration; maintaining proper levels of mailing/shipping supplies; preparing mailing and shipping requests for items including but not limited to hearing aid and hearing assistive technology repairs, ear mold orders and return for credit items; and maintaining loaner hearing aid inventory.

b. **HTSLP, GS-04**

- (1) **Experience.** None beyond the basic requirements.
- (2) **Assignment.** This is an entry level developmental position. The HTSLP at this level works independently under the direction of a licensed speech-language pathologist (SLP). The assignment of this position includes but is not limited to assisting the SLP with patient assessment and treatment. The health technician adheres to the speech-language pathology clinic policy and standard operating procedures for infection control, cleaning, sterilization and disposition of RME, as well as, radiation safety requirements. The health technician maintains a comprehensive supply and equipment tracking system to include monitoring stock of RME and consumable items; ensuring proper inventory levels to complete the daily tasks; prioritizing the acquisition of all supplies; and monitoring expiration date of equipment.

c. **HTASLP, GS-04**

- (1) **Experience.** None beyond the basic requirements.
- (2) **Assignment.** This is an entry level developmental position. The HTASLP at this level works independently under the direction of a licensed audiologist or SLP. The assignment of this position includes but is not limited to assisting the audiologist or SLP with patient assessment and treatment. The health technician will adhere to audiology and speech-language pathology clinic policy and standard operating procedures for infection control and cleaning, sterilization and disposition of RME and radiation safety. The health technician maintains a comprehensive supply and equipment tracking system to include: monitoring stock of RME and consumable items; ensuring proper inventory levels to complete the daily tasks; prioritizing the acquisition of all supplies and equipment with regard to date of expiration; maintaining proper levels of mailing and shipping supplies; preparing mailing/shipping requests for items including but not limited to: hearing aid and hearing assistive technology repairs, ear mold

orders and return for credit items; and maintaining loaner hearing aid inventory.

d. **HTA, GS-05**

- (1) **Experience.** One year of experience comparable to the next lower level which demonstrates the knowledge, skills and abilities related to the duties of the position to be filled.

OR

- (2) **Education.** Successful completion of four academic years above high school leading to a bachelor's degree with at least 24 semester hours in courses related to the position or a bachelor's degree in a major field of study appropriate to the functions of the occupation.
- (3) **Demonstrated Knowledge, Skills, Abilities.** In addition to meeting the experience or educational requirements for this grade level, the candidate must fully demonstrate the following KSAs:
- (a) Knowledge of anatomy of the head and neck.
 - (b) Ability to communicate clearly orally and in writing.
 - (c) Knowledge of basic hearing assistive technologies.
 - (d) Knowledge of basic infection control procedures and guidelines.
 - (e) Ability to maintain stock and supply level inventories.
 - (f) Skill in using basic computer software such as email, spreadsheet and word processing.
- (4) **Assignment.** This is a developmental position. The HTA at this level works independently under the direction of a licensed audiologist. Assignments associated with this position include, but are not limited to answering and screening calls from patients regarding audiology needs; assisting the audiologist with patient assessment and treatment; assisting with walk-in appointments; processing incoming devices from patients with concerns related to their hearing aids or hearing assistive technology; and preparing and charging (if required) hearing aids and assistive devices for delivery. The health technician must adhere to the audiology clinic policy and standard operating procedures for infection control and cleaning, sterilization and disposition of RME. The health technician maintains a comprehensive supply and equipment tracking system to include: monitoring stock of RME and consumable items; ensuring proper inventory levels to complete the daily tasks; prioritizing the acquisition of all supplies

and equipment with regard to date of expiration; maintaining proper levels of mailing/shipping supplies; preparing mailing and shipping requests for items including but not limited to: hearing aid and hearing assistive technology repairs, ear mold orders and return for credit items; and maintaining loaner hearing aid inventory.

e. **HTSLP, GS-05**

- (1) **Experience.** One year of experience comparable to the next lower level which demonstrates the knowledge, skills and abilities related to the duties of the position to be filled.

OR

- (2) **Education.** Successful completion of four academic years above high school leading to a bachelor's degree with at least 24 semester hours in courses related to the position or a bachelor's degree in a major field of study appropriate to the functions of the occupation.
- (3) **Demonstrated Knowledge, Skills, Abilities.** In addition to meeting the experience or educational requirements for this grade level, the candidate must fully demonstrate the following KSAs:
- (a) Knowledge of anatomy of the head and neck.
 - (b) Ability to communicate clearly orally and in writing.
 - (c) Knowledge of basic speech-language pathology needs.
 - (d) Knowledge of basic infection control procedures and guidelines.
 - (e) Ability to maintain stock and supply level inventories.
 - (f) Skill in using basic computer software such as email, spreadsheet and word processing.
- (4) **Assignment.** This is a developmental position. The HTSLP at this level works independently under the direction of a licensed SLP. Assignments of this position include, but are not limited to answering and screening calls from patients regarding speech-language pathology needs; assisting the SLP with patient assessment and treatment; assisting walk-in appointments; and processing incoming devices from patients with concerns related to their communication devices or cognitive prosthetics. The health technician adheres to the speech-language pathology clinic policy and standard operating procedures for infection control, cleaning, sterilization and disposition of RME including endoscopes, as well as, radiation safety requirements. The health technician maintains a

comprehensive supply and equipment tracking system to include monitoring stock of RME and consumable items; ensuring proper inventory levels to complete the daily tasks; prioritizing the acquisition of all supplies; and equipment with regards to date of expiration.

f. **HTASLP, GS-05**

- (1) **Experience.** One year of experience comparable to the next lower level which demonstrates the knowledge, skills and abilities related to the duties of the position to be filled.

OR

- (2) **Education.** Successful completion of four academic years above high school leading to a bachelor's degree with at least 24 semester hours in courses related to the position or a bachelor's degree in a major field of study appropriate to the functions of the occupation.
- (3) **Demonstrated Knowledge, Skills, Abilities (KSAs).** In addition to meeting the experience or educational requirements for this grade level, the candidate must fully demonstrate the following KSAs:
- (a) Knowledge of anatomy of the head and neck.
 - (b) Ability to communicate clearly orally and in writing.
 - (c) Knowledge of basic hearing technologies and speech-language pathology needs.
 - (d) Knowledge of basic infection control procedures and guidelines.
 - (e) Ability to maintain stock and supply level inventories.
 - (f) Skill in using basic computer software such as email, spreadsheet and word processing.
- (4) **Assignment.** This is a developmental position. The HTASLP at this level works independently under the direction of a licensed audiologist or SLP. Assignments associated with this position include, but are not limited to answering and screening calls from patients regarding audiology and/or speech-language pathology needs; assisting the audiologist and/or SLP with patient assessment and treatment; supporting walk-in appointments; processing incoming devices from patients with concerns related to their hearing aids, hearing assistive technology or cognitive-communication devices; and preparing and charging, if required, assistive devices for delivery. The health technician adheres to the audiology and speech-language pathology clinic policy and standard operating procedures for

infection control and cleaning, sterilization and disposition RME including endoscopes and radiation safety. The health technician maintains a comprehensive supply and equipment tracking system to include monitoring stock of RME and consumable items; ensuring proper inventory levels to complete the daily tasks; prioritizing the acquisition of all supplies and equipment with regard to date of expiration; maintaining proper levels of mailing and shipping supplies; preparing mailing/shipping requests for items including but not limited to hearing aid and hearing assistive technology repairs, ear mold orders and return for credit items; and maintaining loaner hearing aid inventory.

g. **HTA, GS-06**

- (1) **Experience.** Completion of one year of progressive experience and/or experience equivalent to the next lower grade level directly related to the position being filled.
- (2) **Demonstrated Knowledge, Skills and Abilities.** In addition to the experience above, the candidate must demonstrate the following KSAs:
 - (a) Knowledge of normal and abnormal ear anatomy.
 - (b) Knowledge of hearing physiology and function to educate patients and families.
 - (c) Knowledge of hearing aids, hearing assistive technology, hearing aid manufacturers and manufacturer software.
 - (d) Ability to solve problems or make decisions regarding hearing aid, hearing assistive technology and patient care, consistent with the documented and co-signed plan of care under the supervision of an audiologist.
 - (e) Ability to prepare patients for testing procedures.
 - (f) Ability to document and code patient procedures.
- (3) **Assignment.** Employees at this grade level serve as a full performance level HTA. The HTA at this level works independently under the direction of a licensed audiologist. Assignments associated with this position include, but are not limited to: completing visual and auditory checks of hearing aids and hearing assistive technology; repairing or returning hearing aids to the factory; restoring hearing aid or hearing assistive technology settings after repair or replacement; and ordering, registering, certifying, issuing and tracking prosthetic devices. The health technician assists in setting up and delivering face to face and telehealth visits by preparing the equipment for

patient evaluation and other audiology procedures. The health technician provides clinical procedures consistent with the documented and co-signed plan of care which may include non-diagnostic otoscopy, cerumen management, foreign body removal and ear mold impressions and without interpretation, immittance screening and hearing screening. The health technician educates patients, family and staff on topics including but not limited to hearing aid and hearing assistive technology care, maintenance, use and operation, hearing conservation and realistic expectations for hearing aid use. The health technician completes documentation for each episode of care and codes procedures as appropriate in the patient record in preparation for co-signature by the audiologist.

h. HTSLP, GS-06

- (1) **Experience:** Completion of one year of progressive experience and/or experience equivalent to the next lower grade level directly related to the position being filled.
- (2) **Demonstrated Knowledge, Skills and Abilities (KSAs).** In addition to the experience above, the candidate must demonstrate the following KSAs:
 - (a) Knowledge of anatomy of the head and neck and oral structures and functions.
 - (b) Knowledge of medical terminology as it relates to speech-language pathology for communication and swallowing impairments.
 - (c) Knowledge of prosthetic items and communication devices often prescribed by speech-language pathology staff and assist with ordering and tracking process.
 - (d) Ability to prepare supplies and equipment for speech, language, voice and/or swallowing evaluation and treatment.
 - (e) Ability to document and code patient procedures.
- (3) **Assignment.** Employees at this grade level serve as a full performance level HTSLP. The HTSLP at this level works independently under the direction of a licensed SLP. Assignments associated with this position include but are not limited to triaging inpatient and outpatient consults in collaboration with the SLP and checking the integrity of instrumentation such as speech science equipment and voice measurement equipment in the clinic. The health technician assists in setting up and delivering face to face and telehealth visits by preparing the equipment for patient evaluation and preparing evaluation rooms for speech-language pathology procedures. The health technician generates therapeutic stimuli and home

programs for routine treatments in collaboration with the SLP; monitors facility compliance with established policies; and verifies radiology orders for swallow procedures. The health technician tracks the progress of prosthetic orders and communicates with the SLP and patient regarding the order status. The health technician completes documentation in the patient record for each episode of care and codes procedures as appropriate in preparation for co-signature by the SLP.

i. **HTASLP, GS-06**

- (1) **Experience.** Completion of one year of progressive experience and/or experience equivalent to the next lower grade level directly related to the position being filled.
- (2) **Demonstrated Knowledge, Skills and Abilities (KSAs).** In addition to the experience above, the candidate must demonstrate the following KSAs:
 - (a) Knowledge of normal and abnormal ear anatomy and structures and functions of the oral mechanism.
 - (b) Knowledge of medical terminology as it relates to speech-language pathology and audiology for communication, swallowing impairments and hearing impairments.
 - (c) Ability to solve problems or make decisions regarding devices such as hearing aids, hearing assistive technologies, and communication devices for patient care.
 - (d) Knowledge of hearing aids, hearing assistive technology, hearing aid manufacturers and manufacturer software.
 - (e) Knowledge of prosthetic items and communication devices and supplies commonly prescribed by the speech-language pathology staff and assist with ordering and tracking process.
 - (f) Ability to prepare supplies and equipment for speech, language, voice and/or swallowing evaluation and treatment.
 - (g) Ability to document and code patient procedures.
- (3) **Assignment.** Employees at this grade level serve as a full performance level HTASLP. The HTASLP at this level works independently under the direction of a licensed audiologist and/or SLP. Assignments associated with this position include, but are not limited to completing visual and auditory checks of hearing aids and hearing assistive technology; repairing or returning hearing aids to the factory; restoring hearing aid or hearing assistive technology settings after repair or replacement; generating

therapeutic stimuli for clinical and home programs in collaboration with the SLP for routine treatments; ordering, registering, certifying, issuing and tracking prosthetic devices; verifying radiology orders; reviewing inpatient and outpatient speech-language pathology consults; and monitoring facility compliance with established policies. The health technician assists in setting up and coordinating face to face and telehealth visits, by preparing the equipment for patient evaluation and preparing evaluation rooms for audiology and speech-language pathology procedures. The health technician provides clinical procedures which may include non-diagnostic otoscopy, cerumen management, foreign body removal and ear mold impressions and without interpretation and performs immittance screening and hearing screening. The health technician educates patients, family and staff on topics including but not limited to hearing aid and hearing assistive technology care, maintenance, use and operation; hearing conservation; realistic expectations for hearing aid use; and aspiration precautions. The health technician completes documentation for each episode of care and codes procedures as appropriate in the patient record in preparation for co-signature by the audiologist or SLP.

j. **HTA, GS-07**

- (1) **Experience.** Completion of one year of progressive experience and/or experience equivalent to the next lower grade level directly related to the position being filled.
- (2) **Demonstrated Knowledge, Skills and Abilities (KSAs).** In addition to the experience above, the candidate must demonstrate the following KSAs:
 - (a) Ability to mentor and train new HTAs.
 - (b) Ability to prepare patients for advanced testing procedures performed by the audiologist, such as evoked potentials.
 - (c) Ability to develop and implement the technician role for a program in a focused area of audiology.
- (3) **Assignment.** For all assignments above the full performance level, 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. The HTA at this level works under supervision and direction of a licensed audiologist. Assignments associated with this position include, but are not limited to: completing adjustments to hearing aid settings as outlined in the audiologist's plan of care, preparing patients for advanced diagnostic procedures such as evoked potentials and

collaborating with audiology team to develop training programs for patients and staff.

k. **HTSLP, GS-07**

- (1) **Experience.** Completion of one year of progressive experience and/or experience equivalent to the next lower grade level directly related to the position being filled.
- (2) **Demonstrated Knowledge, Skills and Abilities (KSAs).** In addition to the experience above, the candidate must demonstrate the following KSAs:
 - (a) Ability to mentor and train new HTSLPs.
 - (b) Ability to identify the diagnosis and dysphagia risk factors in the medical record to assist the SLP.
 - (c) Knowledge of safe feeding and swallowing strategies.
 - (d) Knowledge of linguistic parameters such as semantic, syntactic and phonological categories, to assist in creating materials for therapeutic stimuli and home programs.
 - (e) Ability to develop and implement the technician role for a program in a focused area of speech-language pathology.
- (3) **Assignment.** For all assignments above the full performance level, 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. The HTSLP at this level works under direction of a licensed SLP. Under the direction of the SLP, assignments associated with this position include, but are not limited to completing communication and swallow screenings including review of medical history, imaging reports and diet orders; and generating therapeutic stimuli and home programs for complex treatments such as cognitive and aphasia treatment. This health technician may collaborate with the health care team to develop educational materials for patients and staff and processes for monitoring patient safety initiatives as outlined in established policies.

l. **HTASLP, GS-07**

- (1) **Experience.** Completion of one year of progressive experience and/or experience equivalent to the next lower grade level directly related to the position being filled.

- (2) **Demonstrated Knowledge, Skills and Abilities (KSAs).** In addition to the experience above, the candidate must demonstrate the following KSAs:
 - (a) Ability to mentor and train new HTASLPs.
 - (b) Ability to prepare patients for advanced testing procedures performed by the audiologist, such as evoked potentials.
 - (c) Ability to identify the diagnosis and dysphagia risk factors in the medical record to assist the SLP.
 - (d) Ability to identify the components of dysphagia monitoring.
 - (e) Knowledge of linguistic parameters such as semantic, syntactic and phonological categories, to assist in creating therapeutic stimuli and home programs.
 - (f) Ability to develop and implement the technician role for a program in a focused area of audiology and/or speech-language pathology.
- (3) **Assignment.** For all assignments above the full performance level, 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. The HTASLP works under the direction of a licensed audiologist or SLP. Assignments associated with this position include, but are not limited to completing adjustments to hearing aid settings as outlined in the audiologist's plan of care, preparing patients for advanced diagnostic procedures such as evoked potentials and collaborating with team to develop training programs for patients and staff. Under the direction of the SLP, assignments associated with this position include, but are not limited to: completing communication and swallow screenings including review of medical history, imaging reports and diet orders; and generating therapeutic stimuli and home programs for complex treatments such as cognitive and aphasia treatment. This health technician may collaborate with the health care team to develop educational materials for patients and staff and processes for monitoring patient safety initiatives as outlined in established policies.

m. **HTA, GS-08**

- (1) **Experience.** Completion of one year of progressive experience and/or experience equivalent to the next lower grade level directly related to the position being filled.

- (2) **Certification.** CAOHC certification as a COHC is required for this assignment.
- (3) **Demonstrated Knowledge, Skills and Abilities (KSAs).** In addition to the experience above, the candidate must demonstrate the following KSAs:
 - (a) Ability to conduct employee hearing conservation education and training.
 - (b) Knowledge of the hearing conservation program requirements to manage records and files.
 - (c) Ability to perform pure tone air conduction testing.
 - (d) Ability to provide audiologic technical support to the employee hearing conservation program.
 - (e) Ability to identify a threshold shift and make appropriate referrals for further testing when indicated.
- (4) **Assignment.** For all assignments above the full performance level, 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. The health technician works under the direction of a licensed audiologist. Assignments associated with this position include, but are not limited to completing adjustments to hearing aid settings as outlined in the audiologist's plan of care, preparing patients for advanced diagnostic procedures such as evoked potentials and collaborating with team to develop training programs for patients and staff. The health technician may perform pure tone air conduction threshold testing for established patients and employees, without interpretation. The health technician may provide employee hearing conservation education and training, basic counselling of employees concerning test results and criteria for employee referral. This health technician collaborates with the Hearing Conservation Program Manager and manages records associated with the hearing conservation program.

n. **Lead HTA, GS-08**

- (1) **Experience.** Completion of one year of progressive experience and/or experience equivalent to the next lower grade level directly related to the position being filled.
- (2) **Demonstrated Knowledge, Skills and Abilities (KSAs).** In addition to the experience above, the candidate must demonstrate the following KSAs:

- (a) Knowledge of organization theory and leadership theory.
 - (b) Ability to apply principles of leadership during interactions with staff.
 - (c) Ability to identify problems in clinic operations, consider possible solutions and implement actions approved by supervisor.
 - (d) Skill in communicating programmatic decisions to staff.
- (3) **Assignment.** For all assignments above the full performance level, 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. The Lead HTA carries additional responsibilities that involve the oversight of specific services within the audiology clinic. The Lead HTA will assist the audiology supervisor and/or staff audiologist with technician oversight duties including making work assignments, monitoring workflow, providing input on performance, resolving daily workplace issues and maintaining efficient flow of patient care. They may provide training to staff, students and/or trainees; and may provide input into special advancements, promotions and disciplinary actions for HTA staff.

o. **Lead HTSLP, GS-08**

- (1) **Experience.** Completion of one year of progressive experience and/or experience equivalent to the next lower grade level directly related to the position being filled.
- (2) **Demonstrated Knowledge, Skills and Abilities (KSAs).** In addition to the experience above, the candidate must demonstrate the following KSAs:
 - (a) Knowledge of organization theory and leadership theory.
 - (b) Ability to apply principles of leadership during interactions with staff.
 - (c) Ability to identify problems in clinic operations, consider possible solutions and implement actions approved by supervisor.
 - (d) Skill in communicating programmatic decisions to staff.
- (3) **Assignment.** For all assignments above the full performance level, 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. The Lead HTSLP carries additional responsibilities that involve the oversight of specific services within the speech-language pathology clinic. The Lead HTSLP will assist the speech-language

pathology supervisor and/or staff SLP with technician oversight duties including making work assignments, monitoring workflow, providing input on performance, resolving daily workplace issues and maintaining efficient flow of patient care. They may provide training to staff, students and/or trainees; and may provide input into special advancements, promotions and disciplinary actions for HTSLP staff.

p. **Lead HTASLP, GS-8**

- (1) **Experience.** Completion of one year of progressive experience and/or experience equivalent to the next lower grade level directly related to the position being filled.
- (2) **Demonstrated Knowledge, Skills and Abilities (KSAs).** In addition to the experience above, the candidate must demonstrate the following KSAs:
 - (a) Knowledge of organization theory and leadership theory.
 - (b) Ability to apply principles of leadership during interactions with staff.
 - (c) Ability to identify problems in clinic operations, consider possible solutions and implement actions approved by supervisor.
 - (d) Skill in communicating programmatic decisions to staff.
- (3) **Assignment.** For all assignments above the full performance level, 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. The Lead HTASLP carries additional responsibilities that involve the oversight of specific services within the audiology and/or speech-language pathology clinic. The Lead HTASLP will assist the audiology and/or speech-language pathology supervisor and/or staff audiologist or SLP with technician oversight duties including making work assignments, monitoring workflow, providing input on performance, resolving daily workplace issues and maintaining efficient flow of patient care. They may provide training to staff, students and/or trainees; and may provide input into special advancements, promotions and disciplinary actions for HTASLP staff.

5. 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

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as current assignment, warrants such action based on demonstrated competence to meet the requirements of the proposed grade.

- b. Under no circumstances will the education or certification requirement be waived.
- c. The placement of individuals in grade levels or assignments not described in this standard must be approved by the Under Secretary for Health, or designee, in VHA Central Office prior to placement in the position.

Authority: P.L. 111-163, Caregivers and Veterans Omnibus Health Services Act of 2010, 38 U.S.C. §§ 7401, Appointments in Veterans Health Administration, 7402, Qualifications of appointees, 7403, Period of appointments; promotions, 7405, Temporary full-time appointments, part-time appointments, and without-compensation appointments, 7407, Administrative provisions for section 7405 and 7406 appointments.