1. **SUMMARY OF CONTENT:** This is a new Veterans Health Administration (VHA) directive with specific emphasis on determining Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) employees’ eligibility for a secondary Health Professions Trainee (HPT) appointment at VA medical facilities and administrative requirements related to approving secondary appointments as an HPT, and delineating HPT responsibilities and supervision requirements of VA employees acting as HPTs.


3. **POLICY OWNER:** The Office of Academic Affiliations (OAA) (14AA) is responsible for the content of this directive. Questions may be referred to 202-461-9490 or the OAA Action Group at VHA14AAOAAAction@va.gov.

4. **RECISSIONS:** None.

5. **RECERTIFICATION:** This VHA directive is scheduled for recertification on or before the last working day of May 2028. This VHA directive will continue to serve as national VHA policy until it is recertified or rescinded.

6. **IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE:** This directive is effective 6 months after publication.
BY DIRECTION OF THE OFFICE OF THE UNDER SECRETARY FOR HEALTH:

/s/ Carolyn M. Clancy, M.D.
Assistant Under Secretary for Health for Discovery, Education and Affiliate Networks

NOTE: All references herein to VA and VHA documents incorporate by reference subsequent VA and VHA documents on the same or similar subject matter.

DISTRIBUTION: Emailed to the VHA Publications Distribution List on June 1, 2023.
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VA EMPLOYEES WITH SECONDARY APPOINTMENTS AS HEALTH PROFESSIONS TRAINEES

1. POLICY

It is Veterans Health Administration (VHA) policy that Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) medical facilities may permit VA employees to fulfill academic training requirements (clinical training, research and other non-research scholarly activities) under a secondary Without Compensation (WOC) Health Professions Trainee (HPT) appointment. **NOTE:** This policy does not apply to HPTs who have a secondary VA appointment as a staff provider (“moonlighting”). For information on standard operating procedures to implement this directive, see the VA Employee With Secondary Appointment as Trainee Toolkit at: https://dvagov.sharepoint.com/sites/vhaoahub/SitePages/OAA%20Policy%20Documents%20and%20Supplementary%20Materials.aspx. This is an internal VA website that is not available to the public. **AUTHORITY:** 38 U.S.C. §§ 7302, 7405, 7406.

2. RESPONSIBILITIES

a. **Under Secretary for Health.** The Under Secretary for Health is responsible for ensuring overall VHA compliance with this directive.

b. **Assistant Under Secretary for Health for Discovery, Education and Affiliate Networks.** The Assistant Under Secretary for Health for Discovery, Education and Affiliate Networks is responsible for:

   (1) Supporting the Office of Academic Affiliations (OAA) with implementation and oversight of this directive.

   (2) Ensuring that OAA has sufficient resources to carry out the responsibilities in this directive.

c. **Assistant Under Secretary for Health for Patient Care Services/Chief Nursing Officer.** The Assistant Under Secretary for Health for Patient Care Services/Chief Nursing Officer (CNO) is responsible for supporting the Assistant Under Secretary for Health for Discovery, Education and Affiliate Networks with implementation of this directive for program offices housed within Patient Care Services.

d. **Assistant Under Secretary for Health for Operations.** The Assistant Under Secretary for Health for Operations is responsible for:

   (1) Communicating the contents of this directive to each of the Veterans Integrated Services Networks (VISNs).

   (2) Assisting VISN Directors to resolve implementation and compliance challenges in all VA medical facilities within that VISN.
Providing oversight of VISNs to ensure compliance with this directive and its effectiveness.

e. **VHA Chief Academic Affiliations Officer.** The VHA Chief Academic Affiliations Officer (CAAO) is responsible for:

   1. Providing oversight for the VISN and VA medical facility compliance with this directive and ensuring corrective action is taken when non-compliance is identified.

   2. Defining national policy pertinent to VA employees with a secondary HPT appointment.

f. **Veteran Integrated Services Network Director.** The VISN Director is responsible for:

   1. Ensuring that all VA medical facilities within the VISN comply with this directive and informing leadership when barriers to compliance are identified.

   2. Ensuring that VA medical facilities have sufficient staffing and funding to implement this directive.

g. **Veterans Integrated Services Network Academic Affiliations Officer.** The VISN Academic Affiliations Officer is responsible for assisting the VISN Director in overseeing the secondary appointment of VA employees as HPTs.

h. **VA Medical Facility Director.** The VA medical facility Director is responsible for:

   1. Ensuring overall VA medical facility compliance with this directive and that appropriate corrective action is taken if non-compliance is identified.

   2. Establishing local procedures that comply with the requirements of this directive.

i. **VA Medical Facility Chief of Staff.** The VA medical facility Chief of Staff (CoS) is responsible for:

   1. Ensuring that VA employees with secondary appointments as HPTs are supervised according to VHA Directive 1400.01, Supervision of Physician, Dental, Optometry, Chiropractic and Podiatry Residents, dated November 7, 2019, VHA Handbook 1400.04, Supervision of Associated Health Trainees, dated March 19, 2015, and any locally established HPT supervision procedures.

   2. Approving non-nursing VA employees with secondary HPT appointments at the VA medical facility. **NOTE:** A secondary appointment is at the discretion of the VA medical facility leadership and dependent on the needs of the VA medical facility and the workload of the education office.

   3. Working with the VA medical facility Designated Education Officer (DEO) to ensure that there are distinct and appropriately qualified supervisors for the VA
employee’s clinical, research and non-research activities when functioning as an HPT.

j. **VA Medical Facility Associate Director for Patient Care Services.** The VA medical facility Associate Director for Patient Care Services (ADPCoS) is responsible for:

   (1) Collaborating with the VA medical facility DEO to ensure separation of VA nursing employee and VA HPT roles and responsibilities.

   (2) Confirming eligibility of nursing employees for secondary appointments as HPTs.

   (3) Approving nursing employees with secondary HPT appointments at the VA medical facility. **NOTE:** A secondary appointment is at the discretion of the VA medical facility leadership and dependent on the needs of the VA medical facility and the workload of the education office.

k. **VA Medical Facility Chief of Human Resources.** The VA medical facility Chief of Human Resources is responsible for ensuring the VA employee approved by the VA medical facility CoS or ADPCoS for a secondary appointment as an HPT completes all required onboarding documents and is given a WOC appointment.

l. **VA Medical Facility Designated Education Officer or Associate Chief of Staff for Education.** The VA medical facility DEO, also frequently known as the Associate Chief of Staff for Education, is responsible for:

   (1) Overseeing VA employees with a secondary HPT appointment while in their HPT role at the VA medical facility.

   (2) Implementing a process for reviewing the application of VA employees for a secondary HPT appointment and determining their eligibility for the Health Professions Education (HPE) program.

   (3) Collaborating with the VA medical facility ADPCoS, other chiefs of service and the HPT to ensure separation of VA employee and VA HPT roles and responsibilities.

   (4) Prior to recommending approval of a secondary appointment as an HPT, verifying that the VA employee’s HPE program is nationally accredited and that a valid affiliation agreement exists with the employee’s HPE program. **NOTE:** See VHA Handbook 1400.08, Education of Associated Health Professions, dated February 26, 2016, and VHA Directive 1400.09(1), Education of Physicians and Dentists, dated September 9, 2016, for additional information about accreditation and other HPE requirements.

   (5) Determining if the HPE program is at a for-profit institution, and if so, directing the VA employee to the VA Office of General Counsel (OGC) SharePoint at [https://dvagov.sharepoint.com/sites/OGC-Client/law/ethics/SitePages/38USC3683.aspx](https://dvagov.sharepoint.com/sites/OGC-Client/law/ethics/SitePages/38USC3683.aspx) to determine the need for a waiver. **NOTE:** This is an internal VA website that is not available to the public.
(6) Determining, in consultation with the Associate Chief of Staff for Research (ACOS/R) or other VA medical facility personnel, if a given non-clinical activity qualifies as either research or non-research.

(7) Working with the VA medical facility CoS to ensure that there are distinct and appropriately qualified supervisors for the VA employee’s clinical, research and non-research activities when functioning as an HPT.

(8) Confirming eligibility of the VA employee for a secondary appointment as an HPT.

(9) Recommending to the VA medical facility CoS or to the VA medical facility ADPCS that a VA employee be approved for a secondary appointment as an HPT.

(10) Communicating with Human Resources that a VA employee has been approved for a secondary appointment and is ready for their WOC appointment.

m. VA Medical Facility Associate Chief of Staff for Research. NOTE: This role is also known within VHA as the Associate Chief of Staff for Research and Development (ACOS/R&D). The VA medical facility ACOS/R is responsible for:

(1) Ensuring the assignment of a qualified VA medical facility HPT Research Supervisor/Principal Investigator (PI) for supervision of the employee’s research activities when in an HPT role. NOTE: HPT research is research conducted by an HPT as part of academic training at a VA medical facility. The research must be overseen by a supervisor employed by VA. An HPT may not serve as a PI for a research study when in their HPT role, but may serve as a co-investigator or sub-investigator, use VA data or use human biological specimens that have been collected within VA for clinical, administrative or research purposes. The research must be approved by the VA R&D Committee before it is considered VA research and before it can be initiated.

(2) Determining, in consultation with the VA medical facility DEO or other VA medical facility personnel, whether a given non-clinical activity qualifies as either research or non-research.

(3) Consulting with the VA medical facility lead Nurse Scientist (or applicable role) in assignment and approval of nursing employees with secondary appointments as HPTs involved in research activities.

(4) Approving the involvement of a VA employee with a secondary HPT appointment in a research project and ensuring that all research policy requirements are met.

n. VA Medical Facility Employment Supervisor. The VA medical facility employment supervisor is an individual employed by VA who has authority to oversee the employee’s performance during their employee tour of duty in accordance with VA Human Resource policies. The VA medical facility employment supervisor is responsible for:
(1) Verifying a VA employee’s eligibility for a secondary HPT appointment, including attainment of a “fully successful” or higher proficiency rating/performance appraisal during the last rating period.

(2) Collaborating with the VA medical facility supervising practitioner and the HPT to ensure separation between VA employee and HPT tours of duty.

(3) Ensuring that the VA employee’s clinical work location is separate and distinct from their HPT clinical training location.

(4) Verifying a VA employee’s work record of attendance in the employee role at the end of each pay period as documented on the tracking sheet as specified in the VA Employee With Secondary Appointment as Trainee Toolkit at: [https://dvagov.sharepoint.com/sites/vhaoahub/SitePages/OAA%20Policy%20Documents%20and%20Supplementary%20Materials.aspx](https://dvagov.sharepoint.com/sites/vhaoahub/SitePages/OAA%20Policy%20Documents%20and%20Supplementary%20Materials.aspx). **NOTE:** This is an internal VA website that is not available to the public.

**o. VA Medical Facility Supervising Practitioner. **NOTE: The VA medical facility supervising practitioner is the provider of record for patient care activities and is identified as the primary provider in the electronic health record (EHR). The term “supervising practitioner” is synonymous with “clinical training supervisor,” “attending” or “preceptor.” The VA medical facility supervising practitioner is responsible for:

(1) Agreeing to supervise the VA employee’s secondary HPT clinical activities.

(2) Collaborating with the VA medical facility employment supervisor and HPT to ensure adequate separation between VA employee and HPT tours of duty.

(3) Ensuring the VA employee’s clinical work area and the HPT’s clinical work area are separate and distinct.

(4) Ensuring all EHR documentation by the HPT while in their secondary WOC appointment has either a supervising practitioner co-signature, addendum or independent note.

(5) Ensuring the HPT indicates their status as an HPT in the note documenting the patient encounter.

(6) Reviewing and verifying a VA employee’s HPE record of attendance in the HPT role at the end of each pay period as documented on the tracking sheet in the VA Employee With Secondary Appointment as Trainee Toolkit at: [https://dvagov.sharepoint.com/sites/vhaoahub/SitePages/OAA%20Policy%20Documents%20and%20Supplementary%20Materials.aspx](https://dvagov.sharepoint.com/sites/vhaoahub/SitePages/OAA%20Policy%20Documents%20and%20Supplementary%20Materials.aspx). **NOTE:** This is an internal VA website that is not available to the public.

(7) Ensuring delivery of safe patient care and the development of clinical competencies in the HPT.
p. VA Medical Facility Health Professions Trainee Research Supervisor/Principal Investigator. NOTE: The VA medical facility HPT Research Supervisor/PI is a qualified individual who directs a research study or program and has sufficient experience to supervise the HPT’s research and to serve as the PI. The VA medical facility HPT Research Supervisor/PI is responsible for:

(1) Agreeing to supervise the VA employee’s secondary HPT research activities.

(2) Overseeing the research projects of HPTs performing their secondary assignments, including scientific, technical and day-to-day advice and management.

(3) Ensuring the research projects of HPTs performing their secondary assignments are reviewed and approved in accordance with the local VA medical facility operation and management practices for research activities.

q. VA Medical Facility Health Professions Trainee Non-Research Supervisor. NOTE: The VA medical facility HPT Non-Research Supervisor is an individual who directs non-research activities and has sufficient relevant expertise to oversee the HPT’s non-research project. The VA medical facility HPT Non-Research Supervisor is responsible for:

(1) Agreeing to supervise the VA employee’s secondary HPT non-research activities.

(2) Overseeing the non-research projects of all HPTs performing their secondary assignments, including scientific, technical and day-to-day advice and management. NOTE: HPTs may conduct a non-research project (e.g., quality improvement, quality assurance) as part of their academic HPE program at a VA medical facility. The non-research project must be overseen by a supervisor employed by VA. It must also be reviewed and approved in accordance with the local VA medical facility operation and management practices for non-research activities before it is considered a VA non-research project and before it can be initiated.

(3) Ensuring the non-research projects of all HPTs performing their secondary assignments are reviewed and approved in accordance with the local VA medical facility operation and management practices for non-research activities.

r. Health Professions Trainee. NOTE: An HPT is a VA or non-VA individual enrolled in an HPE program. HPT is a general term to describe undergraduate, graduate and post-graduate students, interns, residents, chief residents, fellows, advanced fellows and pre- and post-doctoral fellows. When at VA, an HPT is appointed under 38 USC §§ 7405 or 7406 and participates in clinical, research or non-research activities under supervision to satisfy program or degree requirements. Some HPTs may be in non-clinical training fields but train in patient areas or use VA patient records or data in their training. The HPT is responsible for:

(1) Ensuring that there is separation of employee and HPT duties and reporting any conflicts in their dual roles to their VA medical facility employment supervisor and the
VA medical facility DEO.

(2) Collaborating with their supervising practitioner and their employment supervisor to ensure separation between VA employment and HPT tours of duty.

(3) Ensuring their VA employee and HPT clinical work areas are physically separate and distinct. **NOTE:** An HPT may use their employee-assigned equipment and office for their HPE activities.

(4) Indicating their status as an HPT in any note documenting a patient encounter.

(5) For HPE clinical activities, ensuring that HPT clinical notes have documentation by the supervising practitioner.

(6) When participating as an HPT in research and non-research activities, abiding by the relevant VHA Office of Research and Development (ORD) 1200 series policies, VA medical facility R&D practices and procedures and the local VA medical facility operation and management practices for non-research activities, respectively.

s. **VA Employee. NOTE:** For the purposes of this directive, a VA employee is an individual applying for a secondary appointment as an HPT. The VA employee is responsible for:

(1) Confirming their eligibility for a secondary appointment as an HPT. Requirements for eligibility include:

(a) Maintaining a VA permanent employment status for a minimum of 1 year.

(b) Attaining a “fully successful” or higher proficiency rating or performance appraisal during the most recent rating period.

(c) Understanding the separation between employee and HPT tours of duty.

(d) Understanding the need to have separate clinical work areas for VA employee and HPT duties.

(2) Notifying their VA medical facility employment supervisor of intent to apply for a secondary HPT temporary WOC appointment.

(3) Identifying and proposing appropriate supervisors for their clinical, research or non-research HPT activities.

(4) Initiating and tracking the routing of their paperwork for a secondary HPT appointment in conjunction with the VA medical facility DEO office.

(5) Furnishing all information required for the reviewing officials to determine their eligibility for a secondary HPT appointment as outlined in the VA Employee With Secondary Appointment as Trainee Toolkit at:
(6) Requesting and obtaining a separate VA HPT appointment through VA Human Resources.

(7) Prior to starting the VA academic HPE program, receiving approval of the secondary HPT appointment and assignment of supervisors.

(8) When in a VA employee (non-HPT) role, reporting to the VA medical facility employment supervisor.

(9) Tracking VA work and VA HPE hours daily by completing the tracking sheet as specified in the VA Employee With Secondary Appointment as Trainee Toolkit at: https://dvagov.sharepoint.com/sites/vhaoaahub/SitePages/OAA%20Policy%20Documents%20and%20Supplementary%20Materials.aspx. NOTE: This is an internal VA website that is not available to the public.

(10) Providing the time tracking sheet from the VA Employee With Secondary Appointment as Trainee Toolkit to VA employment and VA HPE supervisors for verification and signatures at the end of each pay period.

(11) Providing the time tracking sheet to the academic institution if required to verify academic activities.

3. ADDITIONAL IMPLEMENTATION GUIDANCE

a. If secondary VA appointments are permitted, VA medical facilities must establish, maintain and monitor the appointment and supervision processes in accordance with VHA policies, procedures and standards related to their roles and responsibilities.

b. VA employees with secondary HPT appointments may commence their academic HPE program at the VA medical facility only after obtaining a separate WOC VA HPT appointment and approval of the requested activities from appropriate VA medical facility officials. Permission from the VA medical facility supervising practitioner must be obtained. When in an HPT role, these VA employees must function under the supervision of an appropriately licensed or credentialed VA medical facility supervising practitioner. The VA medical facility supervising practitioner must not be their VA medical facility employment supervisor. When the VA employee is in the role of an HPT, their clinical activities must be supervised in accordance with VHA Directive 1400.01 and VHA Handbook 1400.04. Additionally, their research or non-research activities must be supervised in accordance with VHA ORD and other VA policies.

c. The VA employment clinical work area and the HPE clinical work area must be physically separate and distinct within the VA medical facility, and the VA medical facility employment supervisor must not be the VA medical facility supervising practitioner, VA medical facility HPT Research Supervisor/PI or VA medical facility HPT
Non-Research Supervisor. The VA employee’s official VA duty hours must not overlap with the hours in their HPT program. The combined VA employment and HPT hours must not exceed 12 hours in a 24-hour period or 60 hours in any 7-day period. **NOTE:** An HPT may use their employee-assigned equipment and office for their HPE activities. For additional information about hours of duty and leave, see VA Handbook 5011, Hours of Duty and Leave, dated September 14, 2021.

d. To meet the requirements of this directive, VA medical facilities may use the forms included in the VA Employee With Secondary Appointment as Trainee Toolkit at: [https://dvagov.sharepoint.com/sites/vhaoaahub/SitePages/OAA%20Policy%20Documents%20and%20Supplementary%20Materials.aspx](https://dvagov.sharepoint.com/sites/vhaoaahub/SitePages/OAA%20Policy%20Documents%20and%20Supplementary%20Materials.aspx), or they may use automated solutions to expedite the workflow tracking (e.g., LEAF or SharePoint). **NOTE:** This is an internal VA website that is not available to the public.

e. Any significant adverse impact or conflict with official VA duties during the training period will result in the revocation of the secondary HPT appointment. The secondary HPT appointment may only be revoked by the final approver (VA medical facility CoS or ADPCS).

4. TRAINING

There are no formal training requirements associated with this directive.

5. RECORDS MANAGEMENT

All records regardless of format (e.g., paper, electronic, electronic systems) created by this directive must be managed as required by the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) approved records schedules found in VHA Records Control Schedule 10-1. Questions regarding any aspect of records management should be addressed to the appropriate Records Officer.

6. BACKGROUND

a. In partnership with academic institutions, VHA hosts the Nation’s largest education and training platform for health care professionals to assist in providing an adequate supply of health care personnel for VA and the Nation. OAA provides oversight, policy, resource allocation, consultation and advocacy for education and training programs within the VA health care system to ensure high-quality patient care and HPE.

b. VA promotes and supports its employees’ continuous learning and professional development. VA employees may be enrolled in academic HPE programs outside of their normal VA tours of duty; these programs may require supervised clinical, research or non-research activities to advance in or complete the program. Under certain conditions, VA permits its employees to complete these supervised activities at VA. **NOTE:** This is a privilege that is granted at the discretion of VA medical facility leadership and contingent on VA medical facility needs and workload. These additional activities must be outside the employee’s VA tour of duty and in a WOC status. To avoid
any adverse impact of academic training on employment or vice versa and to ensure patient safety is not compromised, there must be clear separation of the employee and HPT roles.

7. DEFINITIONS

a. **Academic Institution.** For purposes of this directive, an academic institution is an organization with the primary purpose of providing educational programs for HPTs and issuing degrees, certificates or diplomas (e.g., college, university, medical school, dental school, nursing school and residency programs).

b. **Affiliation Agreement.** An affiliation agreement is a legal document approved by the VA OGC that enables an affiliation relationship with an academic institution or program for the purpose of clinical education of HPTs at a VA or non-VA medical facility. A VA medical facility may maintain multiple affiliations in the same profession or specialty. A VA affiliation agreement must conform to the language of the affiliation agreement templates approved by VA OGC and maintained on OAA’s SharePoint located at: [https://dvagov.sharepoint.com/sites/VHAOAA/public/SitePages/Affiliation-Agreements.aspx](https://dvagov.sharepoint.com/sites/VHAOAA/public/SitePages/Affiliation-Agreements.aspx). **NOTE:** This is an internal VA website that is not available to the public. Other activities such as research and clinical care may also be shared, but these relationships are governed by other agreements.

c. **Health Professions Education Program.** An HPE program provides formal clinical education and training in a health care profession or specialty. It includes national accreditation, a standard curriculum, qualified instructors and training supervisors, a system to provide supervision of HPTs, a process for monitoring HPT competency development and a process to provide feedback to HPTs. HPE programs may be sponsored by an affiliate or a VA medical facility. **NOTE:** See VHA Handbook 1400.08 and VHA Directive 1400.09(1) for additional information about accreditation and other HPE requirements.

d. **Health Professions Trainee Supervision.** HPT supervision is the act of a supervisor overseeing HPT performance of patient care, professional development, enhancement of knowledge and competencies while directing the learning of the HPT and role modeling communication and professional skills (see VHA Directive 1400.01 and VHA Handbook 1400.04).

e. **Scholarly Activities.** Scholarly activities are educational experiences that may involve any of the following or similar types of experiences: active participation in journal clubs, local academic conferences, regional or national professional and scientific meetings, activities resulting in presentations to conferences or publications in journals, VA-related quality improvement and quality assurance projects and activities. **NOTE:** Additional or more specific scholarly activities may be delineated in individual academic program requirements set by the accrediting or certifying body.

f. **Secondary Appointment.** A secondary appointment is a mechanism for an individual to simultaneously hold two VA appointments: one as a paid VA employee and
another as a WOC VA HPT. As an HPT, the VA employee completes academic HPE program requirements at a VA medical facility. **NOTE:** The requirements for this program are outlined in the VA Employee With Secondary Appointment as Trainee Toolkit at: https://dvagov.sharepoint.com/sites/vhaoaahub/SitePages/OAA%20Policy%20Documents%20and%20Supplementary%20Materials.aspx. This is an internal VA website that is not available to the public. Dual compensation restrictions and exceptions may be found in VA Handbook 5005, Staffing, Part II, Chapter 3, dated April 6, 2020. Except as provided in this reference, no full-time VA employee appointed under authority of 38 U.S.C. chapter 73 or 74 may dually hold any other type of paid appointment in VA.

8. REFERENCES


d. VHA Directive 1400.01, Supervision of Physician, Dental, Optometry, Chiropractic, and Podiatry Residents, dated November 7, 2019.


g. VHA Handbook 1400.08, Education of Associated Health Professions, dated February 26, 2016.

h. Office of Academic Affiliations, Affiliations Agreement. https://dvagov.sharepoint.com/sites/VHAOAA/public/SitePages/Affiliation-Agreements.aspx. **NOTE:** This is an internal VA website that is not available to the public.

i. Office of Academic Affiliations, VA Employee With Secondary Appointment as Trainee Toolkit: https://dvagov.sharepoint.com/sites/vhaoaahub/SitePages/OAA%20Policy%20Documents%20and%20Supplementary%20Materials.aspx. **NOTE:** This is an internal VA website that is not available to the public.

j. VA Office of General Counsel SharePoint: https://dvagov.sharepoint.com/sites/OGC-Client/law/ethics/SitePages/38USC3683.aspx to determine the need for a waiver. **NOTE:** This is an internal VA website that is not available to the public.