

## OFFICE OF ACADEMIC AFFILIATIONS

**1. REASON FOR ISSUE:** This Veterans Health Administration (VHA) directive assigns statutory authority for oversight of health professions education programs, trainees, and academic affiliations to the Office of Academic Affiliations (OAA).

**2. SUMMARY OF MAJOR CHANGES:** This VHA directive delineates the authority for the conduct of health professions clinical training programs within VHA and it:

- a. Describes the responsibilities and functions of OAA.
- b. Identifies OAA as providing oversight of policies pertaining to health professions trainees, training program activities, and relationships with VHA's academic partners.
- c. Summarizes major principles surrounding the conduct of educational programs in VHA.
- d. Provides links to key websites for OAA data, staffing, and policies.

**3. RELATED ISSUES:** VHA Handbook 1400.01 Resident Supervision, dated December 19, 2012; VHA Handbook 1400.03 Educational Relationships, dated February 16, 2016; VHA Handbook 1400.04 Supervision of Associated Health Trainees, dated March 19, 2015; VHA Handbook 1400.05 Disbursement Agreement Procedures for Physician and Dental Residents, dated August 14, 2015; VHA Handbook 1400.07 Education of Advanced Fellows, dated February 26, 2016; VHA Handbook 1400.08 Education of Associated Health Professions, dated February 26, 2016; VHA Directive 1400.09 Education of Physicians and Dentists, dated September 9, 2016; VHA Handbook 1400.10 Health Care Resources Contracting: Educational Cost Contracts, dated November 16, 2011; and VHA Handbook 1400.11 Extended Educational Leave, dated April 1, 2016; and VHA Directive 1052, Appropriate and Effective Use of VHA Employee Mandatory and Required Training, dated June 29, 2018.

**4. RESPONSIBLE OFFICE:** The Office of Academic Affiliations (10A2A) is responsible for the contents of this directive. Questions may be addressed to 202-461-9490 or [VHA 10A2D Action](#).

**5. RESCISSIONS:** VHA Directive 1400, Office of Academic Affiliations, dated September 14, 2009, is rescinded.

**6. RECERTIFICATION:** This VHA directive is scheduled for recertification on or before the last working day of November 2023. This VHA directive will continue to serve as national VHA policy until it is recertified or rescinded.

November 9, 2018

VHA DIRECTIVE 1400

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Executive in Charge

**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 November 14, 2018.

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## OFFICE OF ACADEMIC AFFILIATIONS

### 1. PURPOSE

This Veterans Health Administration (VHA) directive delineates the authority for the conduct of health professions training programs and management of educational affiliations within VHA and describes the responsibilities and functions of the Office of Academic Affiliations (OAA). This VHA directive identifies OAA as providing oversight of policies pertaining to health professions trainees, training programs, and educational relationships with the Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA) academic partners.

**AUTHORITY:** Title 38 United States Code (U.S.C.) 7302(a) and 7302(d).

### 2. BACKGROUND

a. VHA conducts the Nation's largest coordinated education and training effort for health care professionals. The primary and overriding rationale for health professions education and academic affiliations in VA is improved care of the Veteran. In addition, VHA is directed by 38 U.S.C. 7302(a) to "...assist in providing an adequate supply of health personnel to the Nation."

b. Since 1946, academic affiliations have been established to improve the care provided to Veterans and aid in health professional recruitment to VA. Affiliations began with medical schools, and have been expanded to over 40 additional health professional disciplines since that time. VA facilities provide the largest clinical learning environment for trainees in the Nation. As a result, OAA in conjunction with VA field facilities has a substantial impact on the VA and national health care workforce. OAA contributes to continued excellence in VA patient care, to the recruitment and retention of health care personnel, and to the enhancement of the learning environment throughout VHA and the nation. OAA maintains ongoing relationships with colleges, universities, member and professional organizations, and accrediting bodies for health professions education.

c. OAA carries out its oversight, resource allocation, policy, consultation, training and advocacy activities through a defined organizational structure. The staff and organizational structure of OAA is found at this link:

<https://vaww.portal2.va.gov/sites/oaa/public/sitepages/contacts.aspx>. **NOTE:** This is an internal VA Website and cannot be accessed from outside VA.

### 3. POLICY

It is VHA policy that the Office of Academic Affiliations (OAA) conduct an education and training program for health professions trainees to enhance both the quality of and access to care for Veteran patients within the VA health care system, and to assist in providing an adequate supply of health care personnel to the Nation.

### 4. RESPONSIBILITIES

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

b. **Deputy Under Secretary for Health for Operations and Management.** The Deputy Under Secretary for Health for Operations and Management is responsible for:

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

(2) Ensuring that each VISN Director has sufficient resources to fulfill the terms of this directive in all VHA health facilities within that VISN.

(3) Providing oversight of VISNs to assure compliance with applicable regulations, this directive, and other relevant standards.

c. **Deputy Under Secretary for Health for Discovery, Education and Affiliated Networks.** The Deputy Under Secretary for Health for Discovery, Education and Affiliated Networks is responsible for:

(1) Overseeing and advancing the health professions education mission for VA.

(2) Enhancing knowledge of VA's education mission through communication with internal and external stakeholders.

(3) Ensuring that the Office of Academic Affiliations has sufficient resources to carry out the statutory mission and the responsibilities in this directive.

(4) Providing senior executive leadership guidance to OAA.

d. **Chief Officer, Academic Affiliations.** The Chief Officer of OAA is responsible for:

(1) Oversight and enhancement of VA's health professional training programs and academic partnerships through five major activities:

(a) Enhancing knowledge of VA's education mission through communication with internal VA and external stakeholders;

(b) Developing external strategic alliances that benefit VA's educational, clinical and research programs;

(c) Increasing the number and creating the optimal mix of clinical trainees that care for Veterans and are recruited to enter the VA employee pool;

(d) Fostering excellence and innovation in learning and clinical practice; and

(e) Ensuring that VA's health professional training programs enhance the care of Veterans through improving both quality and access.

(2) Developing policies, guidance documents, frequently asked questions (FAQ), and other advisory documents concerning clinical trainees and academic affiliations. Core principles include:

(a) Educational relationships are foundational to VA care and access. **NOTE:** *The decision to affiliate is based on an assessment conducted at the local facility and a conclusion that the benefit of affiliation is greater than the cost or administrative burden.* See VHA Handbook 1400.03 Educational Relationships, dated February 16, 2016.

(b) Programmatic accreditation by a profession's national accrediting body recognized by either the Department of Education or the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) is required for affiliation. Facilities hoping to affiliate with non-nationally accredited programs must submit written justification to seek approval from the OAA Chief Officer.

(c) Trainees finishing their terminal training programs must meet the Qualification Standard for the profession to be eligible for employment within VA. Affiliations must not be executed with a program whose graduates cannot meet the VA qualification standards for the profession.

(d) Affiliations may be executed for all Title 38 and Title 38 hybrid health professions, **NOTE:** *Affiliations with programs involving preparation for Title 5 occupations are also covered by affiliation authorities if the trainees' activities involve collecting, analyzing, or reporting on healthcare processes or data for purposes of improvement in healthcare quality, patient safety, or system efficiencies.*

(3) Providing field funding for all health professions trainee salaries and benefits.

(4) Managing all OAA databases to provide primary source trainee data to stakeholders concerning the health professions education mission of VA.

e. **Veterans Integrated Service Network Directors.** VISN Directors are responsible for ensuring adequate staffing and resources are available for the health professions education function at VA medical facilities within the VISN, to include:

(1) Payments of accreditation and match service fees for programs accredited in the name of VA.

(2) Payments required for educational cost contracts with affiliates.

f. **VA Medical Facility Directors.** VA medical facility Directors are responsible for:

(1) Allocating adequate resources for the health professions education function at Medical Center and VISN levels.

(2) Allocating payments for accreditation and match service fees for programs accredited in the name of VA.

(3) Allocating payments required by educational cost contracts with affiliates.

(4) Ensuring proper accreditation is maintained and verified for all programs, including both those accredited in the name of VA and those affiliated training programs

or consortiums through which trainees rotate to the VA.

(5) Establishing and implementing local procedures as directed by OAA national policies (e.g., Monitoring Resident Supervision).

(6) Reporting affiliation and health professions trainee challenges promptly to the VISN Director and OAA staff.

(7) Assisting and facilitating the on- and off- boarding of trainees.

(8) Using the results of the OAA-administered Trainee Satisfaction Survey to assess and improve local training quality.

(9) Directly recruiting health professions trainees, or assisting VISNs and other VA medical facilities in recruiting trainees.

## **5. TRAINING REQUIREMENTS**

OAA provides training on the conduct of health professions training and affiliations management through orientation programs conducted in Washington DC on a quarterly basis. Acting and permanent Designated Education Officers must attend this face to face training.

OAA also provides an annual or biannual Designated Education Officer conference. This training augments the DEO orientation and highlights important financial, compliance and high-risk areas for additional study. Each facility must send its DEO or senior designee to this training conference when held.

OAA is responsible for establishing the training requirements for trainees and has developed and maintains the Mandatory Training for Trainees online course. This training is the single TMS requirement for all trainees. Trainees are exempt from any other additional national training requirements. See VHA Directive 1052, Appropriate and Effective Use of VHA Employee Mandatory and Required Training, dated June 29, 2018 and subsequent issues.

## **6. RECORDS MANAGEMENT**

All records regardless of format (paper, electronic, electronic systems, created by this directive must be managed according to the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) requirements and the NARA-approved rules found in VHA Records Control Schedule (RCS) 10-1. Questions regarding any aspect of records management may be referred to the facility Records Manager or Records Liaison.

Specific Office of Academic Affiliations records are in Section 1140 of VHA RCS 10-1, <http://vaww.va.gov/vhapublications/rcs10/rcs10-1.pdf> and include:

a. Code 1140.1, Clinical Training Onboarding Case File (CTOCF) (Updated), Page II-1-44

b. Code 1140.2, Trainee Qualifications and Credentials Verification Letter (TQCVL) (Updated), Page II-1-44

c. Code 1140.3 Training Certificate of Completion (Updated), Page II-1-44

d. Other Educational Activity Records are contained in Code 1100.40 (Page II-1-38). Records related to the establishment, development, execution and completion of educational projects, programs and activities of pertinent and accepted modalities for clinicians and non-clinicians working within the VHA health care system. Content areas emphasize broad strategic issues of interest nationally or regionally. a. Paper files. Hardcopy version of information manually entered into project/program files. Temporary; destroy 7 years after the education activity is closed. If an accepted digital copy has been made, destroy immediately. (N1-015-11-4, Item 1) b. Electronic files. Electronic and or digital version of information entered into project/program files. Temporary; destroy 7 years after the education activity is closed. (N1-015-11-4, Item 2). Affiliation agreements are considered educational activity records and should be kept for 7 years after program closure and then destroyed.

## **7. REFERENCES**

a. 38 U.S.C. 7302.

b. VHA Directive 1400.09, Education of Physicians and Dentists, dated September 9, 2016.

c. VHA Directive 1052, Appropriate and Effective Use of VHA Employee Mandatory and Required Training, dated June 29, 2018.

d. VHA Handbook 1400.01, Resident Supervision, dated December 19, 2012.

e. VHA Handbook 1400.03, Educational Relationships, dated February 16, 2016.

f. VHA Handbook 1400.04, Supervision of Associated Health Trainees, dated March 19, 2015.

g. VHA Handbook 1400.05, Disbursement Agreement Procedures for Physician and Dental Residents, dated August 14, 2015.

h. VHA Handbook 1400.07, Education of Advanced Fellows, dated February 26, 2016.

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

j. VHA Handbook 1400.10, Health Care Resources Contracting: Educational Cost Contracts, dated November 16, 2011.

k. VHA Handbook 1400.11 Extended Educational Leave, dated April 1, 2016.



I. OAA Statistics Health Professions Trainees datasheet, available from [https://www.va.gov/OAA/docs/OAA\\_Statistics\\_2017.pdf](https://www.va.gov/OAA/docs/OAA_Statistics_2017.pdf).