

**TRAINING AND CERTIFICATION OF VHA EXAMINERS COMPLETING VA
COMPENSATION AND PENSION (C&P) DISABILITY EXAMINATIONS**

1. REASON FOR ISSUE: This Veterans Health Administration (VHA) directive updates VHA policy for the training and certification program for VHA examiners who complete Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) compensation and pension (C&P) disability examinations.

2. SUMMARY OF MAJOR CHANGES: This VHA directive has been revised by adding additional required courses (also called modules) for training and certification for VHA examiners who complete VA C&P disability examinations, clarifying required specialty training for specified VHA clinicians, and updating and clarifying responsibilities. This VHA directive additionally includes responsibilities for the Deputy Under Secretary for Health for Operations and Management.

3. RELATED ISSUES: VHA Directive 1046, Compensation and Pension Disability Examinations, dated December 6, 2018.

4. RESPONSIBLE OFFICE: The Office of Disability and Medical Assessment (10NC8) is responsible for the contents of this VHA directive. Questions may be referred to the Office of Disability and Medical Assessment at the DMA Corporate Mailbox (CorporateMailbox.DMA@va.gov) or 202-461-6699.

5. RESCISSIONS: VHA Directive 1603, Training and Certification of Clinicians Performing VA Disability Examinations, dated November 15, 2016, is rescinded.

6. RECERTIFICATION: This VHA directive is scheduled for recertification on or before the last working day of March 2024. This VHA directive will continue to serve as national VHA policy until it is recertified or rescinded.

CERTIFIED BY:

**BY THE DIRECTION OF THE UNDER
SECRETARY FOR HEALTH:**

/s/ Renee Oshinski
Deputy Under Secretary for Health
for Operation and Management

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

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TRAINING AND CERTIFICATION OF VHA EXAMINERS COMPLETING VA COMPENSATION AND PENSION (C&P) DISABILITY EXAMINATIONS

1. PURPOSE

This Veterans Health Administration (VHA) directive states policy for the implementation of a training and certification program for VHA examiners who complete VA compensation and pension (C&P) disability examinations. **AUTHORITY:** Title 38 United States Code (U.S.C.) 5103A and 7301(b); Title 38 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 3.159, 3.326.

2. BACKGROUND

VHA examiners complete C&P disability examinations to support Veterans Benefits Administration's adjudication of claims for VA disability benefits. Specialized knowledge and skills are required to complete these examinations. The Office of Disability and Medical Assessment in collaboration with the Employee Education System has developed a series of instructional certification training modules for C&P examiners. Training is critical to ensure VHA examiners completing the C&P disability examinations understand the legal and regulatory aspects for C&P disability examination reports and understand what elements are required for adjudicating VA disability benefit claims. The VHA C&P examiner certification program ensures that VHA examiners complete baseline training on completing VA C&P examinations. It is critical that these training requirements are enforced consistently and applied fairly across all Veteran Integrated Service Networks. Once a C&P examiner has completed the designated training modules for the exam types they are assigned to complete, they are considered certified.

3. POLICY

It is VHA policy that all VHA examiners designated to complete VA C&P disability examinations must undertake and successfully pass the required VA C&P disability examination-related training and post-tests prior to conducting and completing these examinations.

4. RESPONSIBILITIES

a. **Under Secretary for Health.** The Under Secretary for Health, or designee, 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 Veterans Integrated Services Network (VISN).

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

(3) Providing oversight of VISNs to assure compliance with this directive.

c. **Chief Officer, Office of Disability and Medical Assessment (DMA)**. DMA is responsible for the design, development, and update of VHA's C&P examiner training modules and VHA C&P examiner certification, which includes:

(1) Working collaboratively with the Employee Education System (EES) to:

(a) Design, develop, and post VHA's C&P examiner training modules in VA's Talent Management System (TMS) (<https://www.tms.va.gov/SecureAuth35/>) and VHA TRAIN (<https://www.train.org>).

(b) Monitor VA medical facilities to ensure VHA C&P examiners have successfully completed the required training.

(2) Coordinating VHA's C&P examiner certification process with VISNs and VA medical facilities to ensure all active VHA C&P examiners are certified.

(3) As needed, providing instructions and guidance to VISN Directors on VHA's C&P disability exam certification process and required trainings.

(4) Requesting from EES Office VHA examiner C&P certification data and reports as needed.

d. **Chief Officer, Employee Education System (EES) Office**. The Chief Officer, EES Office is responsible for:

(1) Collaboratively working with DMA in the design, development, production and posting of VHA's C&P examiner training modules in VA's TMS (<https://www.tms.va.gov/SecureAuth35/>) and VHA TRAIN (<https://www.train.org>).

(2) Developing, maintaining, and hosting the web-based training and testing sites for VHA's C&P examiner training modules;

(3) Ensuring access for trainees to VHA's C&P examiner training course completion and testing data;

(4) Providing guidance and coaching to local TMS Administrators in VHA regarding handling local assignments for mandatory and required training for VHA C&P examiners and tracking VHA C&P examiners who have completed the certification requirements; and

(5) Providing VHA examiner C&P certification data and reports to DMA upon request.

e. **Veterans Integrated Service Network (VISN) Director**. The VISN Director is responsible for:

(1) Ensuring the completion of a one time required training and certification of all VHA examiners completing VA C&P disability examinations within their areas of responsibility by validating completion through their local TMS Administrator.

(2) Distributing additional instructions from DMA on VHA's C&P disability examination certification process and required training to VISN facilities.

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

(1) Ensuring that, prior to completing VA C&P examinations, VHA examiners complete interactive web-based training modules and successfully complete its post-test detailed in the training requirements section of this directive.

(2) Ensuring VHA examiners completing VA C&P disability examinations complete new training as may be required to enhance the efficacy of the VA C&P disability examination process.

g. **Compensation & Pension (C&P) Examiners.** C&P examiners are responsible for completing all the designated courses for certification and ensuring that they complete only C&P exams they are certified for. After a C&P examiner has completed the designated training modules for the exam types they are assigned to complete, they are considered certified.

5. TRAINING

a. To meet the requirements identified in this directive, VHA's C&P examiner training and certification program courses (also called modules) are identified below, and are available to examiners through VA's TMS at <https://www.tms.va.gov/SecureAuth35/> and VHA TRAIN at <https://www.train.org>. **NOTE:** *To locate the courses, search for the keyword DMA C&P in the TMS search tab.*

b. Certification to perform general Compensation and Pension exams requires completion of five mandatory training courses. The courses: DMA General Certification Overview (VA 5496), DMA Military Sexual Trauma (MST) and the Disability Examination Process (VA 23409), DMA Medical Opinions (VA 24627), DMA Aggravation Opinions (VA 24471) and DMA Gulf War General Medical Exam (VA24549) are all prerequisites prior to conducting general compensation and pension examinations.

c. In addition to the five mandatory courses for General C&P Certification, the following are further requirements for providers conducting the following specialized examinations:

(1) Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder examinations (VA 5497),

(2) Initial Mental Health Disorder examinations (VA 5522),

(3) Musculoskeletal examinations (VA 5516) and

(4) Traumatic Brain Injury examinations (VA 9238).

6. RECORDS MANAGEMENT

All records regardless of format (paper, electronic, electronic systems) created by this directive shall be managed per the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) approved records schedules found in VA Records Control Schedule 10-1. If you have any questions regarding any aspect of records management you should contact your facility Records Manager or your Records Liaison.

7. REFERENCES

- a. 38 U.S.C. 5103A and 7301(b).
- b. 38 CFR 3.159, 3.326, and 4.1.
- c. VHA Directive 1046, Disability Examinations, dated December 6, 2018.
- d. VA's Talent Management System (TMS). Available at <https://www.tms.va.gov/SecureAuth35/>.
- e. VHA TRAIN. Available at <https://www.train.org>.