

## STAFFING

1. **REASON FOR ISSUE:** To revise the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) qualification standard for Nursing Assistant GS-0621, 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 qualification standard revises the Nursing Assistant occupation under VA's title 38 hybrid excepted service employment system according to the authority established under P.L. 111-163, Caregivers and Veterans Omnibus Health Services Act of 2010. VA Secretary has authority under 38 U.S.C. § 7402 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 revised standard is effective on the date of this publication. This qualification standard is maintained on the [Office of the Chief Human Capital Officer website](#) and [Office of the Chief Human Capital Officer \(OCHCO\) \(va.gov\)](#).
3. **RESPONSIBLE OFFICE:** Office of Human Resources and Administration/ Operations, Security and Preparedness (HRA/OSP) (006), Office of the Chief Human Capital Officer (OCHCO) (05), Recruitment and Placement Policy Service (059).
4. **RELATED DIRECTIVES:** [VA Directive 5005, Staffing, April 15, 2002.](#)
5. **RELATED HANDBOOK:** VA Handbook 5005, Staffing, Part II, Appendix G17.
6. **RESCISSION:** VA Directive 5005, Part II, Appendix G46 Nursing Assistant dated March 12, 2015.

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

/s/  
Cassandra M. Law  
Assistant Secretary for  
Human Resources and Administration/  
Operations, Security, and Preparedness

**DISTRIBUTION:** Electronic only

**NURSING ASSISTANT  
QUALIFICATION STANDARD  
GS-621  
Veterans Health Administration**

1. **COVERAGE.** The following are requirements for appointment as a Nursing Assistant (NA) in the Veterans Health Administration (VHA). These requirements apply to all VHA NAs in the GS-0621 series.
2. **BASIC REQUIREMENTS.**
  - a. **Citizenship.** Citizen of the United States. (Non-citizens may be appointed when it is not possible to recruit qualified citizens in accordance with chapter 3, section A, paragraph 3g, this part.)
  - b. **[Experience or] Education or Training.**
    - (1) [Six months of general experience. Experience must demonstrate the ability to acquire the knowledge and skills to perform the work of a NA; OR,]
    - (2) One year of education above high school with courses related to the NA occupation; OR,
    - (3) Completion of an intensive, specialized, occupation-related [training] course of study [or program] of less than one year as a NA may also meet in full the experience requirements for GS-3.
  - c. **Physical Requirements.** See [VA Directive and Handbook 5019, Employee Occupational Health Service](#) for requirements.
  - d. **English Language Proficiency.** NAs must be proficient in spoken and written English in accordance with VA Handbook 5005, part II, chapter 3, section A, paragraph 3j.
  - e. **Grandfathering Provisions.** All NAs employed in VHA on the effective date of this qualification standard are considered to have met all qualification requirements for the series and grade held that are part of the basic requirements of the occupation. 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) Employees 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.

- (2) If an employee who was retained (grandfathered) under this provision leaves the occupation, the employee loses protected status of the grandfathering provision and must meet the full VA qualification standard basic requirements in effect at the time of re-entry to the occupation.

### 3. GRADE REQUIREMENTS.

#### a. Creditable Experience.

- (1) **Knowledge of Current Practice.** To be creditable, the experience must have required the use of knowledge, skills, and abilities associated with the current practice.
- (2) **Quality of Experience.** To be creditable, NA experience must be documented on the application or resume and verified in an employment reference, or through other independent means.
- (3) **Part-Time Experience.** Part-time experience as a NA is creditable according to its relationship to the full-time workweek. For example, a NA employed 20 hours a week, or on a 1/2-time basis, would receive 1 full-time workweek of credit for each 2 weeks of service.

#### b. Grade Determinations. In addition to the basic requirements for employment, the following criteria must be met when determining the grade of candidates.

##### (1) **GS-3 NA (Entry Level)**

- (a) **Experience and Education.** None beyond the basic requirements.
- (b) **Assignments.** Individuals assigned as GS-3 NAs are considered to be at the entry level and are closely supervised.

##### (2) **GS-4 NA**

- (a) **Experience.** One year of specialized experience as a NA or experience in another medical field (licensed practical nurse, health technician, hospital corpsman, etc.), performing technical and nursing skills requiring knowledge of the human physical and emotional states, therapeutic communication, and technical skills required for basic and intermediate treatments; **OR,**
- (b) **Education.** Successful completion of 2 years above high school in an accredited institution with courses related to nursing care, health care or in a field of study appropriate to the specialization of the position, such as education in a program for psychology, psychiatric, or operating room technicians; **AND**

- (c) **Demonstrated Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities (KSAs).** In addition, the candidate must demonstrate the following KSAs:
- i Ability to provide a range of patient/resident care and contribute to the completion of the nurse care plan and recovery of patients/residents.
  - ii Ability to observe patients/residents' or resident's physical or emotional status and refer deviations and/or problems to supervisor in a timely manner.
  - iii Ability to properly use equipment, materials and supplies in simple diagnostic and treatment procedures such as bladder scan, continuous passive motion device, blood glucose monitoring machine, specimen collection, etc.
  - iv Ability to communicate effectively with patients/residents, their families and other health professionals.

(d) **Assignment.**

- i Individuals assigned as GS-4 NAs are considered to be at the intermediate or developmental level and are closely supervised. NAs at this grade level function as a member of the nursing care team and assist higher graded NAs, licensed nursing staff, and other members of the care team in the care of patients/residents receiving outpatient care, home or community living care or other patients/residents who are in acute, sub-acute, or chronic states of illness. The significant factor is that they provide care under close supervision and refer issues/questions to supervisors, higher graded NAs or other health care professionals.
- ii In this role, the NA functions as a member of the nursing care team and assists higher graded NAs, licensed nursing staff, and other members of the care team in the care of patients/residents receiving outpatient care, home or community living care, or other patients who are in acute, sub-acute, or chronic states of illness. The NA in this role provides care under close supervision and refers issues/questions to supervisors, higher graded NAs, or other health care professionals.

(3) **GS-5 NA (Full Performance Level).**

- (a) **Experience.** One year of progressively responsible assignments and experience equivalent to the GS-4 level which demonstrates knowledge, skills, and abilities that are directly related to the specific assignment. In addition, the candidate must demonstrate the professional KSAs in subparagraph (c) below; OR,

- (b) **Education.** Successful completion of a 4-year course of study above high school leading to a bachelor's degree that included 24 semester hours of courses related to health care or possession of a bachelor's degree; AND
- (c) **Demonstrated KSAs.**
  - i Ability to assist in the full range of nursing care to patients/residents with physical and/or behavioral problems in a hospital, long-term care or outpatient setting under the direction of a Registered Nurse and/or Licensed Vocational Nurse/Licensed Practical Nurse.
  - ii Ability to communicate orally with patients/residents, families, interdisciplinary team and other personnel. This includes serving as a preceptor to new NAs by assisting with the coordination of their orientation and overseeing/assessing their practical experience while in a clinical setting.
  - iii Ability to recognize and react to emergent patient/resident care situations and intervene while waiting for assistance. For example, recognizing need for basic life support, controlling bleeding and assisting with behavior crisis, etc.
- (d) **Assignment.** This is the full performance level for NAs. NAs at this grade level function as a member of the nursing care team and assist licensed nursing staff in the care of patients/residents receiving outpatient care, home or community living care or other patients/residents who are in acute, sub acute or chronic states of illness. The distinguishing factor is that patient/resident assignments typically involve more complex nursing needs which can vary within a range of predictable to unpredictable requirements. NAs at this level also assume more of a peer education/mentorship role.

**NOTE:** *Students/trainees may be appointed in accordance with 38 U.S.C. § 7405(a)(1)(D). See Part II, Chapter 3, paragraph 5 of VA Handbook 5005.*

#### **4. DEVIATIONS.**

- a. The appointing official may, under unusual circumstances, approve reasonable deviations to the grade determination requirements for NAs in VHA whose composite record of accomplishments, performance, and qualifications, as well as current assignments, warrant such action based on demonstrated competence to meet the requirements of the proposed grade.

- b. 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.

**Authority: 38 U.S.C. §§ 7402, 7403**