

STAFFING

- 1. REASON FOR ISSUE:** To establish the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) qualification standard for the Medical Records Technician (Health Information Technician (HIT)), General Schedule (GS) 0675 occupation, appointed under 38 U.S.C. § 7401(3) and 38 U.S.C. § 7405(a)(1)(B).
- 2. SUMMARY OF CONTENTS/MAJOR CHANGES:** This handbook contains mandatory procedures on staffing. This policy establishes qualification standards for the Medical Records Technician (HIT) occupation in Appendix II-G59 and removes applicable references and standards from Appendix II-G35. This qualification standard clarifies responsibilities within assignments. This policy is established under VA's title 38 hybrid excepted service employment system, in accordance with the authority established under the "Caregivers and Veterans Omnibus Health Services Act of 2010" (Public Law 111-163). Authority is given to the Secretary of VA under 38 U.S.C. § 7402, to prescribe qualifications for occupations identified in or established under 38 U.S.C. § 7401(3), and 38 U.S.C. § 7405(a)(1)(B). This new qualification standard will be incorporated into the electronic version of VA Handbook 5005 that is maintained on the [Office of the Chief Human Capital Officer Website](#).
- 3. RESPONSIBLE OFFICE:** Recruitment and Placement Policy Service (059), Office of the Chief Human Capital Officer.
- 4. RELATED DIRECTIVE:** VA Directive 5005, Staffing.
- 5. RESCISSIONS:** None.

CERTIFIED BY:

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

/s/
Melissa S. Glynn, Ph.D.
Assistant Secretary for
Enterprise Integration

/s/
Daniel R. Sitterly
Assistant Secretary for
Human Resources and Administration/
Operations, Security, and Preparedness

DISTRIBUTION: Electronic only

NOTE: This transmittal page accompanied the former VA Handbook 5005, Staffing publication. It is provided for reference to the establishment of this qualification standard.

**MEDICAL RECORDS TECHNICIAN (HEALTH INFORMATION TECHNICIAN)
QUALIFICATION STANDARD
GS-0675
Veterans Health Administration**

1. COVERAGE. Health information technology falls under the jurisdiction of Health Information Management (HIM). The following are the requirements for appointment as a Medical Records Technician (MRT) Health Information Technician (HIT) in the Veterans Health Administration (VHA). These requirements apply to all VHA MRTs HIT in the GS-0675 series. MRTs HIT perform incomplete health record analysis. They review, analyze, abstract, maintain, extract, and compile information from the health record. MRTs HIT check for accuracy, completeness, and timeliness of the health record and monitor and report for regulatory compliance.

2. AUTHORITIES.

- a. [P.L. 111-163, Caregivers and Veterans Omnibus Health Services Act of 2010;](#)
- b. [38 U.S.C. § 7401, Appointments in Veterans Health Administration;](#)
- c. [38 U.S.C. § 7402, Qualifications of appointees;](#)
- d. [38 U.S.C. § 7403, Period of appointments; promotions;](#)
- e. [38 U.S.C. § 7405, Temporary full-time appointments, part-time appointments and without-compensation appointments;](#)
- f. [38 U.S.C. § 7407, Administrative provisions for section 7405 and 7406 appointments.](#)

3. DEFINITIONS.

- a. **Journey Level.** The full performance level for the MRT HIT assignment is GS-7.
- b. **Creditable Experience.** Experience is only creditable if it is paid or non-paid employment directly related to the position to be filled, or in a related field, such as medical support assistants, clinic/ward clerks, health record file room/scanning technicians, medical coding, or other positions that include knowledge of the content and uses of health records. To be creditable, the candidate's experience must have demonstrated the use of knowledge, skills, and abilities associated with current MRT HIT practice.

- c. **Quality of Experience.** To be creditable, experience must be documented on the application or resume and verified in an employment reference, or through other independent means.
- d. **Part-Time Experience.** Part-time experience as a MRT HIT is creditable according to its relationship to the full-time workweek. For example, a MRT HIT would receive one week of full-time credit for each two weeks of half-time work.
- e. **Predominant Specialty Area.** Lead and Supervisory MRTs HIT, whose assignments involve two or more MRT specialty areas, will be assigned the parenthetical title for the predominant specialty area being led/supervised.

4. 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 and Education.**
 - (1) **Experience.** One year of creditable experience that indicates knowledge of medical terminology, anatomy, physiology, and a general understanding of health records. Six months of the required one year of creditable experience must have provided the knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs) needed to perform MRT HIT work.

OR,
 - (2) **Education.** An associate's degree from an accredited college or university recognized by the U.S. Department of Education, with a major field of study in health information technology/health information management, or a related degree with a minimum of 12 semester hours in health information technology/health information management (e.g., courses in medical terminology, anatomy, physiology, legal aspects of health care, and introduction to health records).

OR,
 - (3) **Experience/Education Combination.** Equivalent combinations of creditable experience and education are qualifying towards meeting basic experience requirements. The following educational/training substitutions are appropriate for combining education and creditable experience:
 - (a) Six months of creditable experience that indicates knowledge of medical terminology, privacy and release of information, the health record, and one year above high school with a minimum of six semester hours of health information technology/health information management.

(b) Six months of creditable experience that indicates knowledge of medical terminology, privacy and release of information, the health record, and successful completion of a course for medical technicians, hospital corpsmen, medical service specialists, or hospital training obtained in a training program given by the U.S. Armed Forces or the U.S. Maritime Service, under close medical and professional supervision, may be substituted on a month-for-month basis for up to six months of experience, provided the training program included courses in anatomy, physiology, and health record techniques and procedures.

c. **Grandfathering Provision.** All persons employed in VHA as a MRT HIT, on the effective date of this qualification standard, are considered to have met all qualification requirements for the grade held, including positive education and licensure/certification/registration that are part of the basic requirements of the occupation. For employees who do not meet all the basic requirements 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) Such employees in an occupation that does not require a licensure/certification/registration, may be reassigned, promoted, or demoted within the occupation, but will not be promoted beyond the journey level or placed in supervisory or managerial positions.

(2) Employees 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.

(3) 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.

a. **Physical Requirements.** See VA Directive and Handbook 5019, Employee Occupational Health Service.

b. **English Language Proficiency.** MRTs HIT must be proficient in spoken and written English, as required by 38 U.S.C. § 7403(f).

5. GRADE REQUIREMENTS. All MRT HIT employees assigned to this occupation must have an approved parenthetical title as described below:

a. MRT (HIT);

b. Lead MRT (HIT); or

c. Supervisory MRT (HIT).

6. GRADE DETERMINATIONS AND ASSIGNMENTS.

a. **Medical Records Technician (HIT), GS-4 (Entry Level)**

(1) **Experience or Education.** None beyond basic requirements.

(2) **Assignment.** Employees at this level serve as entry level MRTs HIT, and receive close supervision from the supervisory MRT HIT or designee. MRTs HIT analyze health records for accuracy, completeness, timeliness, consistency, and compliance (e.g., scanned, uploaded, use of correct titles, linked to correct encounters, etc.), with HIM industry standards, policies, procedures, laws, regulations, and accrediting bodies. They perform health record review activities to satisfy external accreditation requirements and medical center performance measures. They monitor, verify, correct, and upload all transcription/medical speech recognition to maintain completeness and accuracy of health records.

b. **Medical Records Technician (HIT), GS-5 (Developmental Level 1)**

(1) **Experience.** One year of experience equivalent to the next lower level.

OR,

(2) **Education.** A bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university recognized by the U.S. Department of Education with a major field of study in health information management, or a related degree with a minimum of 24 semester hours in health information technology/health information management (e.g., courses in medical terminology, anatomy & physiology, legal aspects of health care, and introduction to health records).

(3) **Assignment.** Employees at this grade level serve in developmental positions as MRTs HIT. Employees receive guidance from the supervisory MRT HIT, or designee, for more complex health record reviews. MRTs HIT analyze health records for accuracy, completeness, timeliness, consistency, and compliance (e.g., scanned, uploaded, use of correct titles, linked to correct encounters, etc.) with HIM industry standards, policies, procedures, laws, regulations, and accreditation requirement. They perform health record review activities to satisfy external accreditation requirements and medical center performance measures. They create and monitor reports to ensure that deficiencies are resolved and completed appropriately. They monitor, verify, correct, and/or upload all transcription/medical speech recognition to maintain completeness and accuracy of health records. MRTs HIT notify clinical providers regarding incomplete health records, and assist clinical providers regarding completeness of their health record documentation.

(4) **Demonstrated Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities.** In addition to the experience above, the candidate must demonstrate all of the following KSAs:

(a) Ability to communicate effectively with internal and external customers.

- (b) Ability to utilize health information technology and various office software products used in health information management positions (e.g., Microsoft Excel, electronic health records, and delinquency tracking software).
- (c) Knowledge of health record documentation guidelines and industry standards.
- (d) Ability to manage priorities and coordinate work to complete duties within required timeframes.
- (e) Ability to apply knowledge of medical terminology and human anatomy to fully understand the content of a health record.

c. Medical Records Technician (HIT), GS-6

- (1) **Experience.** One year of experience equivalent to the next lower grade level.
- (2) **Assignment.** This is a developmental level for MRT HIT. The MRT HIT at this level receives guidance from the supervisory MRT HIT, or designee, for more complex health records. The MRT HIT analyzes, abstracts, maintains, extracts and compiles information from the health record, working under the review of the supervisor. They analyze health records for accuracy, completeness, timeliness, consistency, and compliance (e.g., scanned, uploaded, use of correct titles, linked to correct encounters, etc.) with HIM industry standards, policies, procedures, laws, regulations, and accreditation requirements. They coordinate and/or perform health record review activities to satisfy external accreditation requirements and medical center performance measures. The MRT HIT notifies clinical providers regarding incomplete health records. They assist clinical providers regarding completeness of their health record documentation, and the correction of health records. They conduct reviews of incomplete records for individuals clearing the facility. They create and monitor reports to ensure that deficiencies are resolved and completed appropriately. They monitor, verify, correct, and/or upload all transcription/medical speech recognition to maintain completeness and accuracy of health records. MRTs HIT serve as the technical experts in health record content and documentation requirements.
- (3) **Demonstrated Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities.** In addition to the experience above, the candidate must demonstrate all of the following KSAs:
 - (a) Ability to navigate efficiently through the health record to locate needed information.
 - (b) Ability to analyze health record documentation to ensure compliance with guidelines and industry standards.
 - (c) Skill in investigating potential health record errors and making corrections, when appropriate.
 - (d) Skill in interpreting and applying health information guidelines and using

judgment to complete assignments.

(e) Ability to follow up on incomplete health record documentation.

d. Medical Records Technician (HIT), GS-7 (Full Performance Level)

(1) **Experience.** One year of experience equivalent to the next lower grade level.

(2) **Assignment.** This is considered the journey level for MRTs HIT. MRTs HIT at this level review, analyze, abstract, maintain, extract, and compile information from the health record independently with minimal supervision. They analyze health records for accuracy, completeness, timeliness, consistency, and compliance (e.g., scanned, uploaded, use of correct titles, linked to correct encounters, etc.) with HIM industry standards, policies, procedures, laws, regulations, and accreditation requirements. They also coordinate and/or perform health record review activities to satisfy external accreditation requirements and medical center performance measures. They communicate regularly with staff at various levels of the organization regarding delinquent health records, and notify individual clinical providers regarding incomplete medical records. MRTs HIT prepare complex reports, calculate department statistics, note the status of all incomplete/delinquent records, and submit reports to the appropriate administrative and clinical staff and committees/leadership to ensure deficiencies are resolved and completed appropriately. They serve as the expert resource for clinical staff and assist clinical providers with completion or correction of their health record documentation. They conduct the review of incomplete records for individuals clearing the facility. MRTs HIT coordinate the use of medical speech recognition/transcription and monitor, verify, troubleshoot, correct, and/or upload all transcription/medical speech recognition to maintain completeness and accuracy of health records. They serve as the technical expert in health record content and documentation requirements.

(3) **Demonstrated Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities.** In addition to the experience above, the candidate must demonstrate all of the following KSAs:

(a) Ability to judge whether health records contain sufficient information for regulatory requirements, are acceptable as legal documents, are adequate for continuity of patient care, and support education and research needs.

(b) Ability to take appropriate actions if health record content is not adequate, accurate, timely, and/or reliable.

(c) Ability to communicate both orally and in writing with individuals or groups, to facilitate compliance with established policies and regulations.

(d) Skill in using appropriate software and computer applications to analyze and record documentation trends.

(e) Ability to apply qualitative and/or quantitative methods for assessment and

improvement of health records.

- (f) Ability to work independently and utilize problem-solving techniques in the accomplishment of work.

e. Lead Medical Records Technician (HIT), GS-8

(1) **Experience.** One year of experience equivalent to the next lower grade level.

(2) **Assignment.** For all assignments above the full performance level, the higher-level duties must consist of significant scope, complexity (difficulty), range of variety, and be performed by the incumbent at least 25% of the time. Lead MRTs HIT perform quantitative and qualitative reviews of health record documentation, initiate various reports, and analyze data. They coordinate, assign, and monitor the workflow. They ensure that team assignments are carried out by distributing and balancing workload, monitoring the status and progress of work, and adjusting workload in accordance with established priorities, instructing and answering employee questions, checking employee work, and amending or rejecting work that does not meet work standards. They resolve informal complaints of employees and make recommendations to the supervisor, as requested, concerning promotions, reassignments, recognition of performance, and personnel needs. Lead MRTs HIT train and provide expert advice on specific tasks, procedures, and policies. They serve as technical expert in health record content and documentation requirements, and as an expert resource for clinical staff regarding requirements for complete documentation. They create statistical reports for medical center management. Lead MRTs HIT are responsible for assisting staff with completing the health record for patient transfers, legal cases, or other urgent requests. They identify and abstract information from health records for internal and external audits and special studies.

(3) **Demonstrated Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities.** In addition to the experience above, the candidate must demonstrate all of the following KSAs:

- (a) Comprehensive knowledge of health record technology methods, procedures, and techniques.
- (b) Ability to work with a team to provide technical guidance, and to plan, organize, and coordinate activities to effectively complete job assignments (i.e., distributing workload, monitoring the status and progress of work, monitoring accuracy of work, and ensuring required timelines are met.)
- (c) Skill in communicating effectively, both orally and in writing, to meet program objectives.
- (d) Ability to prepare reports in a variety of formats and present data to individuals at various organizational levels.
- (e) Ability to coordinate and provide staff development and training.

f. **Supervisory Medical Records Technician (HIT), GS-8**

- (1) **Experience.** One year of experience equivalent to the next lower grade level.
- (2) **Assignment.** For all assignments above the full performance level, the higher-level duties must consist of significant scope, complexity (difficulty), range of variety, and be performed by the incumbent at least 25% of the time. Supervisory MRTs HIT provide the full range of supervisory duties, which include responsibility for determining staffing needs, assignment of work, performance evaluation, selection of staff, recommendations of awards and advancements, and disciplinary actions. They perform ongoing audits of staff for all areas of responsibility, and assign work to the staff at an appropriate quality and productivity level. They establish goals, train employees in the accomplishment of tasks or projects, and develop written policies, procedures, and guidelines. They serve as subject matter experts in health record content and documentation requirements. Supervisory MRTs HIT initiate various reports, analyze data, and work closely with clinical services to facilitate timeliness, completion, and accuracy of health record documentation. They monitor, maintain, and create statistical data to include incomplete and delinquent records, as well as quantitative and qualitative analysis findings, to produce reports for medical center management.
- (3) **Demonstrated Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities.** In addition to the experience above, the candidate must demonstrate the following KSAs:
 - (a) Knowledge of operational tasks including record completion, discharge analysis, and abstracting health records, in accordance with facility accreditation, procedures, and regulatory policies.
 - (b) Ability to provide expert technical guidance in health record content and documentation requirements.
 - (c) Skill in utilizing various software and computer applications to generate and analyze various reports.
 - (d) Ability to coordinate and provide staff development and training.
 - (e) Ability to coordinate tasks and collaborate with individuals outside the work area and at higher organizational levels.
 - (f) Ability to provide the full range of supervisory duties, to include assignment of work, performance evaluation, selection of staff, and recommendation of awards, advancements, and disciplinary actions, when appropriate.

7. DEVIATIONS.

- a. The appointing official may, under unusual circumstances, approve reasonable

deviations to the grade determination requirements for MRTs HIT in VHA whose composite record of accomplishments, performance, and qualifications, as well as current assignments, warrants 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.

RESPONSIBLE OFFICE: 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)