Department of Veterans Affairs
Washington, DC 20420

Transmittal Sheet
June 06, 2024

STAFFING

1. **REASON FOR ISSUE**: To revise Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) qualification standard for Audiologist, GS-0665, 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 Audiologist 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). Changes includes adding one accrediting body for the educational program in the basic requirements and updates to the assignment descriptions for lead and supervisory positions in paragraph 6.

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:** None.

BY DIRECTION OF THE SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS:

DISTRIBUTION: Electronic only

/s/
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Human Resources and Administration/
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FORMER VA HANDBOOK REFERENCE: Part II Appendix G29
EFFECTIVE DATE: March 18, 2024

AUDIOLOGIST
QUALIFICATION STANDARD
GS-0665
VETERANS HEALTH ADMINISTRATION

1. **COVERAGE.** The following are requirements for appointment as an Audiologist in the Veterans Health Administration (VHA). These requirements apply to all VHA Audiologists in the General Schedule (GS)-0665 series. Audiologists provide clinical service to Veterans and other beneficiaries in VHA medical centers, clinics, domiciliaries, nursing care facilities, community care settings, Community-Based Outpatient Clinics, Veterans Outreach Centers, Veterans Integrated Service Network (VISN) offices, and VHA Central Office. In performing these duties, audiologists demonstrate professional knowledge of and skill in applying a wide range of theories, principles, and methodologies of the practice of audiology.

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 §§ 7505 and 7406 appointments.

3. **DEFINITIONS.**

   a. **Appointing Official.** The Human Resources (HR) Officer is delegated appointing authority to process and authenticate notifications of personnel actions and authority to effect management-approved employment actions on behalf of officials, employees and facilities for which service is provided.

   b. **Approving Official.** The VISN Director or Facility Director is the approving official and will determine whether to approve or disapprove the appointment of employees in the hybrid occupations**.**

   c. Creditable Experience.

      (1) **Current Professional Audiology Practice.** Individuals may obtain creditable, audiologic work experience through paid or non-paid employment providing audiologic work or by participating in a supervised

postdoctoral audiology training program (that is, fellowship or residency). Audiologic work experience must occur after all academic requirements are met and the doctoral degree is awarded. “Professional audiology practice” includes but is not limited to the following audiology-oriented job duties: providing professional clinical services, conducting research, carrying out education, training activities, and carrying out the program.

(2) **Quality of Experience.** Experience is only creditable if it is postdoctoral experience performing the duties of a professional audiologist and must be directly related to the duties to be performed. Qualifying experience must also be comparable to or exceed professional audiology experience at the next lower level.

(3) **Part-time Experience.** Part-time experience is creditable according to its relationship to a full-time work week. For example, an audiologist employed 20 hours per week or on a half-time basis, would receive one full-time workweek of credit for each two weeks of service.

(4) **Postdoctoral Degree Fellowships.** Postdoctoral fellowships or residencies are training programs in an advanced area of clinical practice. Training that an individual gained as a fellow or resident after the college or university awarded the doctoral degree is creditable experience.

d. **Journey Level.** The full performance level for this qualification standard is GS-12.

4. BASIC REQUIREMENTS.

a. **Citizenship.** Be a citizen of the United States (U.S.). Non-citizens may be appointed when it is not possible to recruit qualified citizens in accordance with 38 U.S.C. § 7407(a).

b. Education.

(1) Doctor of Audiology (AUD) from an audiology program recognized by the Accreditation Commission for Audiology Education (ACAE) or Council on Academic Accreditation (CAA) of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA). HR office staff and management officials may verify a program’s accreditation from ACAE at acaeaccred.org and CAA at caa.asha.org.

OR

(2) Other doctoral degree in hearing science or a directly related field from an institution accredited by an accrediting institution recognized by the U.S. Department of Education.

NOTE: Effective January 1, 2007, the CAA in Audiology and

Speech- Language Pathology of ASHA accredits only doctoral degree or AUD programs in audiology.

c. **Licensure.** Individuals must hold a full, current, and unrestricted license to practice audiology at the doctoral level in a United States state, territory, commonwealth, or the District of Columbia.

(1) The Under Secretary of Health, or designee, may appoint a candidate without a license who will be assigned to a research, academic, or administrative position with no patient care responsibilities. In such instances, HR office staff can only appoint these candidates in exceptional circumstances where their credentials demonstrate high professional attainment or expertise in the specialty area.

(2) All audiologists who perform compensation and pension examinations perform direct patient care duties and must possess a full, current, and unrestricted license to practice audiology and must meet the experience requirements under Section 2. D. See 38 C.F.R. § 4.85.

(4) **Exception for Non-Licensed Audiologist**.

(a) Non-Licensed applicants who otherwise meet the eligibility requirements for licensure, may be given a temporary appointment as a graduate audiologist at the GS-11 grade under the authority of 38 U.S.C. § 7405(c)(2).

(b) Non-Licensed individuals shall only provide care under the supervision of a fully licensed audiologists at or above the full performance level.

(c) Non-Licensed individuals may only be appointed at the entry level and may not be promoted/converted to the GS-12 grade level until licensure is obtained.

(d) Temporary appointments of non-Licensed audiologists may not be extended beyond two years or be converted to a new temporary appointment.

(5) **Failure to Obtain Licensure.** In all cases, the graduate audiologists must actively pursue obtaining the required licensure from the date of their appointment. HR office staff will provide unlicensed audiologists with written requirements to obtain licensure, the date by which the license must be acquired and the consequences for not becoming licensed by the deadline. Written notices must be provided prior to the entrance on duty date. Failure to obtain the required credentials by the prescribed date will result in termination of employment.

(6) **Loss of Credential.** Management officials, in collaboration with HR Office staff must immediately relieve employees who fail to maintain the required

licensure of the duties and responsibilities associated with this occupation which may also result in separation from employment.

(7) HR Office staff must appoint audiologists according to the provisions in VA Handbook, Part II, Chapter 3, Section B, paragraph 16, who have, or have ever had, their licensure revoked, suspended, denied, restricted, limited or issued/placed in a probationary status.

d. **Grandfathering Provision.** Employees in VHA in this occupation, under a permanent, appropriate, and legal placement on the effective date of the qualification standard, are considered to have met all qualification requirements for the grade and/or assignment held, including positive education and licensure, where applicable. For employees who do not meet all the basic or assignment specific requirements in this standard, but who met the qualifications applicable to the position at the time they were appointed, the following provisions apply:

(1) Employees may be reassigned, promoted up to and including the full performance (journey) level, or be changed to a lower grade within the occupation, but may not be promoted beyond the journey level or be newly placed in supervisory or managerial positions.

(2) 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.

(3) Employees retained in this occupation under this provision who subsequently leave the occupation lose protected status and must meet the full VA qualification standard requirements in effect at the time of re-entry to the occupation.

(4) Employees initially grandfathered into this occupation, who subsequently obtain additional licensure that meets all the basic or assignment specific qualification requirements of this standard must maintain the required credential as a condition of employment in the occupation.

(5) **NOTE:** This grandfathering provision is not intended to regularize appointments/ placements.

e. **Foreign Education.** To be creditable, education completed outside the U.S. must have been submitted to a private organization specializing in the interpretation of foreign educational credentials. Such education must have been deemed at least equivalent to that gained in conventional U.S. programs.

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

g. **English Language Proficiency.** Audiologist candidates must be proficient in spoken and written English as required by 38 U.S.C. § 7403(f).

5. **OFFICIAL POSITION TITLES.** All official documents relating to a position (for example, functional statements and personnel actions) must use the approved official title and grade level as described below. For recruitment purposes, HR Offices will use the titles shown in paragraphs 5 a-k, in the job opportunity announcement. See VA Handbook 5003, Part I for information on the use of official titles and organizational titles.

   a. Audiologist, GS-11.

   b. Research Audiologist, GS-11.

   c. Audiologist, GS-12.

   d. Research Audiologist, GS-12.

   e. Research Audiologist, GS-13.

   f. Audiologist (Clinical Specialist), GS-13.

   g. Lead Audiologist, GS-13.

   h. Supervisory Audiologist, GS-13.

   i. Supervisory Audiologist, GS-14.

   j. Research Audiologist, GS-14.

   k. Supervisory Audiologist, GS-15.

6. **GRADE DETERMINATIONS.** In addition to the basic requirements for employment, candidates must meet the following grade-determining criteria for appointments at grade levels specified.

   a. Audiologist, GS-11.

      (1) **Education.** None beyond the basic requirements.

      (2) **Demonstrated Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities (KSAs).** In addition to the basic requirements, the candidate must demonstrate all of the following KSAs:

         (a) Knowledge of principles and techniques in the assessment and treatment of auditory and balance disorders.

(b) Ability to perform functions associated with contemporary audiology scope of practice as defined by the American Academy of Audiology or the ASHA.

(c) Ability to interact with patients, families, and other health care professionals.

(3) **Assignment.** Employees at this grade level serve in audiologist entry-level developmental positions. Audiologists perform audiology assessment and treatment intervention, exercise clinical judgment, adapt clinical procedures and techniques, and document in the medical record appropriate information related to patient care.

b. Research Audiologist, GS-11.

(1) **Education.** None beyond the basic requirements.

(2) **Demonstrated Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities (KSAs).** In addition to the basic requirements and the KSAs required in subparagraph 6.a.(2) above, the candidate must demonstrate all of the following KSAs:

(a) Knowledge of project-specific clinical and research literature to assess the current state of the research and identify areas that require additional research.

(b) Ability to apply basic scientific methods, basic research design, and statistics to conduct research.

(3) **Assignment.** Employees at this grade level serve in a research audiologist entry-level developmental position. Research audiologists serve as research assistants. They conduct research under the direct supervision of principal investigators or co-principal investigators of higher-grade levels.

c. Audiologist, GS-12.

(1) **Experience.** In addition to the requirements at the GS-11 level, completion of one year of professional experience comparable to the next lower grade level.

(2) **Demonstrated Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities (KSAs).** In addition to the KSAs required at the full performance level, the following KSAs are required:

(a) Skill in determining nature, type, and severity of hearing/communication/vestibular disorders.

(b) Skill in counseling patients and family members regarding management of hearing/communication/vestibular disorders.

(c) Ability to provide professional advice and consultation in areas related to professional audiology to other health care professionals.

(d) Ability to independently apply professional contemporary audiologic treatments to the full range of patient populations.

(3) **Assignment.** This is the full performance level for staff audiologists. At this level, audiologists are licensed to practice independently in the provision of audiologic services, consulting with peers and supervisors as appropriate. Audiologists serve as consultants to other health care professionals and are recognized subject matter experts (SME) on matters related to hearing, tinnitus, and balance disorders. The supervisor may assign staff audiologists to any VHA program and setting, such as inpatient or outpatient medicine, primary care, surgery, hearing health, neurology, rehabilitation medicine, geriatrics, compensation, and pension. Audiologists diagnose audiologic disorders, conduct audiologic, or neuro-audiologic assessments; treat auditory disorders through various modalities; and provide adjunctive interventions for the treatment of medical disorders. Audiologists consult with medical center staff on various patient care issues. Staff audiologists may be involved in program evaluation, teaching, training, and research activities. Among the modalities provided are individual, family, and group audiologic rehabilitation.

d. Research Audiologist, GS-12.

(1) **Experience.** In addition to the requirements at the GS-11 level, completion of one year of professional experience comparable to the next lower grade level.

(2) **Demonstrated Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities (KSAs).** In addition to the KSAs required in subparagraph 6.c.(2) above, the following are required:

(a) Skill in applying research methods and statistical analysis to document findings.

(b) Ability to execute research independently.

(3) **Assignment.** This is the full performance level for research audiologists. Research audiologists at this grade level assist principal investigators or co-principal investigators in peer reviewed VHA, National Institutes of Health (NIH), or comparably rigorous intramural or extramurally funded research programs may serve as investigators on small or unfunded projects of limited complexity or scope. They conduct research under the general administrative direction of principal investigators or co-principal investigators of higher-grade levels.

e. Research Audiologist, GS-13.

(1) **Experience.** At least two years of experience as a professional audiologist, with at least one year comparable to the next lower grade level.

(2) **Demonstrated Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities (KSAs).** In addition to meeting the experience or educational requirements for this grade level, the candidate must fully demonstrate the following KSAs:

(a) Skill in preparing peer-reviewed publications based on research findings.

(b) Ability to produce funding through a grant as a principal investigator or co-investigator.

(3) **Assignment.** For all assignments above the full performance level, the higher-level duties must consist of significant scope, complexity, and range of variety and be performed by the incumbent at least 25% of the time. Research audiologists at this level are actively involved as principal investigators or co-principal investigators in peer-reviewed VA, NIH or comparably rigorous intramural or extramurally funded research programs. Research audiologists formulate or research problems of considerable scope and complexity. They work with substantial independence in identifying, defining, and selecting problems for study.

f. Audiologist (Clinical Specialist), GS-13.

(1) **Experience.** At least two years of experience as a professional audiologist, with at least one year comparable to the next lower grade level.

(2) **Demonstrated Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities (KSAs).** In addition to the KSAs required at the full performance level, the following KSAs are required:

(a) Advanced knowledge in a focused area of contemporary audiology practice to provide oversight of a specialty program.

(b) Skill to evaluate the specialty program to ensure deadlines and goals are met.

(c) Skill to coordinate initiatives and build consensus among interdisciplinary team members.

(d) Ability to monitor and report on work progress in the specialty program to adjust workload and processes.

(e) Ability to serve as the SME and provide education relating to the specialty program.

(3) **Assignment.** For all assignments above the full performance level, the higher-level duties must consist of significant scope, complexity, and range of variety and be performed by the incumbent at least 25% of the time. Audiologists (Clinical Specialists) provide leadership and direct oversight in the design, development, implementation, planning, and management of the specialty program. They serve as coaches or facilitators for the interdisciplinary team and are responsible for training all support staff and trainees as it relates to the specialty program. These individuals serve as the SME in matters regarding the specialty program.

g. Lead Audiologist, GS-13.

(1) **Experience.** At least two years of experience as a professional audiologist, with at least one year comparable to the next lower grade level.

(2) **Demonstrated Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities (KSAs).** In addition to meeting the experience or educational requirements for this grade level, the candidate must fully demonstrate the following KSAs:

(a) Ability to lead a clinical team on work methods, practices, and procedures.

(b) Ability to coordinate assignments, special projects, and objectives to lead work.

(c) Ability to monitor work, evaluate programs, and adjust to accomplish the workload.

(3) **Assignment.** Lead audiologists spend at least 25% or more of their time performing lead duties. Lead audiologists provide comprehensive clinical services, coordinate special projects, as well as oversee the day-to-day core clinic operations. These individuals ensure the work assignments of the clinical team are completed and make adjustments to accomplish the workload in accordance with established priorities. Audiologist clinic coordinators and lead audiologists collect, analyze, and incorporate data to monitor and evaluate the efficiency, utilization, quality, and effectiveness of clinic services.

h. Supervisory Audiologist, GS-13.

(1) **Experience:** At least two years of experience as a professional audiologist, with at least one year comparable to the next lower grade level.

(2) **Demonstrated Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities (KSAs).** In addition to the KSAs required at the full performance level, the candidate must demonstrate the KSAs identified below.

(a) Skill in conflict resolution to facilitate positive working relationships between employees, team leaders, and managers.

(b) Skill in applying evidence-based practices in a professional area.

(c) Ability to analyze organizational and operational challenges to develop and implement solutions.

(d) Ability to develop the abilities and strengths of current employees.

(e) Ability to balance responsibilities, set priorities, and delegate tasks to meet multiple deadlines.

(f) Ability to analyze data to manage workload, quality, performance, and productivity within the section.

(3) **Assignment.** Supervisory audiologist assignments spend 25% or more of their time providing technical and administrative supervision. Supervisory audiologists in this assignment serve as section chiefs. Section chiefs have broad program management responsibilities for a specific program or programs that are designed to deliver specialized, complex, highly professional services, which are important program components of the facility and significantly impact the health care provided to Veterans. Programs include but are not limited to hearing health, compensation and pension examination (C&P) programs, inpatient, outpatient and residential audiologic rehabilitation, neuro-audiologic assessments, diagnosis and treatment of tinnitus, externship and postdoctoral fellowship training programs, and management of an off-campus site. Typically, at facilities of lower complexity, section chiefs have audiology program oversight and serve as the audiology executive responsible for coordinating operations throughout the facility and its affiliated clinics. The type of programs managed, and the scope of responsibility are critical aspects of the assignment at this level. Section chiefs manage key clinical, training, research, or administrative programs including the day-to-day activities of these programs. Section chiefs in this assignment supervise and provide input for strategic plans to ensure the provision of high-quality services to meet the needs of the Veterans. They develop and implement short and long-term goals and objectives consistent with the program's strategic plan. They provide oversight of administrative and programmatic resources and deploy those resources to support the program needs. They develop and implement programs, policies, and procedures to meet program goals, VHA policy and external accreditation requirements. They monitor outcomes using data- driven quality assurance processes and implement strategies for improvement based on data analysis.

i. Supervisory Audiologist, GS-13.

(1) **Experience.** At least two years of experience as a professional audiologist, with at least one year comparable to the next lower grade level.

(2) **Demonstrated Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities (KSAs).** In addition to the KSAs required at the full performance level, the following KSAs are required:

(a) Skill in communicating established performance benchmarks to a service or equivalent organizational department.

(b) Skill in implementing continual performance improvement activities to meet performance benchmarks.

(c) Ability to perform a full scope of managerial responsibilities.

(d) Ability to lead audiologists, speech-language pathologists, and/or other professionals within associated disciplines.

(e) Ability to develop contingencies to ensure continual service operations.

(3) **Assignment** Supervisory audiologist spend 25% or more of their time providing technical and administrative supervision. Supervisory audiologists in this assignment serve as assistant chiefs. Assistant chiefs in this assignment serve as full assistants to a service chief, share the full scope of delegated managerial responsibilities, and serve as the acting service chief in the absence of the service chief. They make decisions affecting staff and other resources. They may be delegated full administrative and clinical responsibility for planning and directing the staff assignments in various clinical settings. They encourage professional development, create an environment of learning and serve as a mentor to staff audiologists. Assistant chiefs are responsible for the supervision, administrative management, and direction of the program services assigned to them. Assistant chiefs may ensure compliance with accrediting agency and regulatory requirements, monitor staff performance, and develop and implement programs based on Veterans' needs and current research findings. Duties include but are not limited to: resolving staff conflicts that might interfere with the service delivery; identifying continuing education and training needs; and other clinical and administrative responsibilities to ensure that the mission of the service and the medical center has been satisfied. They may interview candidates for positions, and recommend appointments, advancements, or disciplinary actions when appropriate. They may develop position descriptions and functional statements and are responsible for professional and administrative management of an assigned area. They may make selections, assign personnel, and serve as a mentor to help employees develop their full potential. Assistant chiefs in this assignment maintain interdepartmental

relationships with other services to accomplish medical center goals as well as foster and maintain community contacts. They may develop and initiate new assessment and treatment programs and may develop policies and procedures. Assistant chiefs in this assignment independently provide audiologic services at all levels of complexity and consult with peers and supervisors as appropriate.

j. Supervisory Audiologist, GS-13.

(1) **Experience.** At least two years of experience as a professional audiologist, with at least one year comparable to the next lower grade level.

(2) **Demonstrated Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities (KSAs).** In addition to the KSAs required at the full performance level, the candidate must demonstrate the KSAs identified below.

(a) Skill to evaluate programs to ensure efficient and appropriate integration of care.

(b) Ability to develop contingencies and align resources to achieve program goals.

(c) Ability to effectively interpret and apply facility, VISN, and national audiology and speech pathology services policies.

(d) Ability to effectively create service-level policies and priorities to align with facility strategic plan.

(e) Ability to supervise professional staff.

(3) **Assignment.** Supervisory audiologist spend 25% or more of their time providing technical and administrative supervision. These positions serve as service chiefs managing stand-alone services, product lines or service lines. They typically have line and staff authority for resource allocations within the area of responsibility and ensure the efficient operation of the organizational unit. They have broad and overall responsibility for the service-level department and full responsibility for clinical practice, program management, education, human resource management, and supervision for the service, as appropriate. They autonomously manage substantive parts of specialized, complex, professional services that significantly impact Veterans' care. They provide leadership with objective, independent assessments and recommendations for policy, operational and administrative issues and initiatives requiring decision and action. Service chiefs are responsible for planning, assessing, and evaluating programs to ensure coordination between care delivered by the program and the overall delivery of health care within the facility. They interpret and process a wide variety of data related to program planning and the specialized needs of the Veteran, the service, and the medical center. They assure compliance

with accrediting agency and regulatory requirements and corrective action is initiated as needed. Service chiefs in this assignment ensure policies or issues have been fully coordinated, vetted, and staffed. They advise leadership on policy implications, key issues, relationships to internal and external interest groups, and recommend courses of action. They maintain interdepartmental relationships with other services to accomplish medical center goals. Service chiefs in this assignment coordinate and negotiate resolutions to complex problems. They may prepare special reports and responses, Congressional responses, briefing papers, issue briefs, and decision papers for the medical center leadership, which may be highly sensitive, confidential and of a complex nature as requested. They are responsible for professional and administrative management of an assigned area, including budget execution. Service chiefs in this assignment develop policies and procedures and may develop performance standards, position descriptions, and functional statements. They conduct performance appraisals and perform other clinical and administrative responsibilities related to the management of staff to ensure that the mission of the service and the medical center has been satisfied. They may set training objectives and delegate responsibilities to subordinate sections.

k. Supervisory Audiologist, GS-14.

(1) **Experience.** At least three years of experience as a professional audiologist, with at least one year comparable to the next lower grade level, must fully meet the KSAs at that level.

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

(a) Skill in promoting collaboration to accomplish goals.

(b) Skill in translating management goals and objectives into efficient service operations.

(c) Skill in balancing operational resources to ensure appropriate delivery of service operations.

(d) Ability to supervise staff.

(e) Ability to effectively interact and collaborate with local, VISN and/or national leadership.

(f) Ability to establish and monitor productivity standards, production and performance priorities to achieve management goals and objectives.

(3) **Assignment.** Supervisory audiologists spend 25% or more of their time providing technical and administrative supervision. Supervisory

audiologists in this assignment serve as service chiefs. Audiologist service chiefs at this level typically manage programs in Complexity Level 1 (high complexity) facilities. The service or organizational entity is a major component of the medical center and the services or programs supervised are highly professional, technical, and complex. They are responsible for all professional, management, and administrative aspects of the service or organizational entity. They have broad and overall responsibility for a service-level organizational unit and have full responsibility for clinical practice, program management, education, human resources management and supervision for the service. They autonomously manage substantive parts of specialized, complex, professional services that significantly impact Veterans' care. They provide leadership with objective, independent assessments and recommendations for policy, operational and administrative issues and initiatives requiring decision and action. They monitor work performance to ensure that requirements are satisfied; interpret and process a wide variety of data related to program planning and specialized needs of the Veterans, the service and the medical center; and ensure policies or issues have been fully coordinated, vetted and staffed. Audiologist service chiefs advise executive leadership on implications, key issues, and relationships to interest groups (both internal and external) and recommend courses of action. They coordinate and negotiate resolutions to complex problems. They assure compliance with accrediting agencies and regulatory requirements and corrective action is initiated as needed. They are responsible for professional and administrative management of an assigned area, including budget execution. They maintain interdepartmental relationships with other services to accomplish medical center goals. They may prepare special reports and responses, Congressional responses, briefing papers, issue briefs, and decision papers for the medical center leadership, which may be highly sensitive, confidential and of a complex nature. They develop policies and procedures and may develop performance standards, position descriptions, and functional statements. They monitor the clinical performance of staff, conduct performance appraisals, perform other clinical, and administrative responsibilities to ensure that the mission of the service and the medical center has been satisfied. They may set training objectives for staff and delegate responsibilities to subordinate sections.

I. Research Audiologist, GS-14.

(1) **Experience.** At least three years of experience as a professional audiologist, with at least one year comparable to the next lower grade level and must meet the KSAs at that level.

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

(a) Skill to apply advanced scientific methods in research design and execution, which may include multiple variables and/or multiple sites and/or innovative technologies.

(b) Skill to lead a research team, research interests, and points of view.

(c) Ability to manage large research budgets.

(d) Ability to evaluate critically the research of others in peer review or editorial settings.

(3) **Assignment.** For all assignments above the full performance level, the higher-level duties must consist of significant scope, complexity, and range of variety and be performed by the incumbent at least 25% of the time. Research audiologists at this level are actively involved as principal investigators or co-principal investigators in peer-reviewed VA, NIH, or comparably rigorous intramural or extramurally funded research programs. They are involved in peer review activities for VHA and non-VHA research, for example, grant review for VHA or NIH proposals, local research service committees that is Research and Development, Health Services Research and Development, Institutional Review Board, and so forth or serve as consulting editors for peer-reviewed journals. At this grade level, research audiologists have responsibility for formulating and guiding research on problems that are difficult to define or require unconventional or novel approaches or sophisticated research methods. Research audiologists at this grade level have achieved significant professional recognition by making scientific contributions to research with potential for significant impact in audiology, hearing science or related disciplines. They have typically authored one or more publications of considerable interest and value to the field in the peer-reviewed professional literature; have a consistent record of presentation of findings at national scientific meetings; may have earned an academic appointment at an affiliated medical school or local university, usually at the rank of associate professor or equivalent; and have and responsibility for funded research projects.

m. Supervisory Audiologist, GS-14.

(1) **Experience.** At least three years of experience as a professional audiologist, with at least one year comparable to the next lower grade level, must fully meet the KSAs at that level.

(2) **Demonstrated Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities (KSAs).** In addition to the KSAs required at the full performance level, the candidate must demonstrate the KSAs identified below:

(a) Skill in working with interdisciplinary teams within a specialty program.

(b) Skill to serve as a consultant/liaison to local, regional, or national coordinators and or national program offices as well as other providers regarding the delivery of audiology care within the specialty program area.

(c) Skill in developing and coordinating treatment programs within the specialty field nationally or within the region.

(d) Ability to manage a large, diverse staff.

(e) Ability to serve as facilitator and/or negotiator in coordinating program initiatives among local, regional, or national coordinators and interdisciplinary teams to improve quality of care for patients.

(3) **Assignment.** Supervisory audiologists spend 25% or more of their time providing technical and administrative supervision. Supervisory audiologists in this assignment serve as audiologist program coordinators. Audiologist program coordinators manage all aspects of a distinct audiology program at the VISN or national level and are generally assigned to the national program office in VA Central Office. These assignments may include but not be specifically limited to specialized programs such as tele-audiology, hearing center of excellence, and polytrauma/TBI. Audiologist program coordinators are responsible for developing policies, quality resources, and specialty functions unique to the program to optimize program and patient outcomes. They ensure program compliance using expert knowledge of facility, regional, and national policies. Audiologists in this role are responsible for strategic planning to ensure the provision of high-quality services that meet the needs of Veterans being served. They are also responsible for developing and implementing short and long-term goals and objectives consistent with the programs' strategic plan. Additionally, their responsibilities include operation and management of key clinical, training research, or administrative programs. Audiologist program coordinators develop and implement programs, policies, and procedures to meet program goals, policy, and external accreditation requirements at the regional, VISN, or national level. They monitor outcomes and implement strategies for program improvement.

n. Supervisory Audiologist, GS-15.

(1) **Experience.** At least four years of experience as a professional audiologist, with at least one year comparable to the next lower grade level and must fully meet the KSAs at that level.

(2) **Demonstrated Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities (KSAs).** In addition to the KSAs required at the full performance level, the candidate must demonstrate the KSAs identified below.

(a) Knowledge of military hearing loss and auditory system injuries and disorders, speech-language pathology disorders and of related statistics, population health surveillance, military medicine, and health policy to provide guidance from a national program office.

(b) Skill to effectively communicate existing Federal agency policies and regulations for developing strategies and priorities for a collaborative interagency program.

(c) Skill in senior management policy development, strategic planning, and setting priorities consistent with organizational goals and objectives.

(d) Ability to provide consultation and develop strategies regarding evidence-based practices and clinical practice guidelines in the areas of post-deployment hearing loss and auditory system injuries and disorders.

(3) **Assignment.** Supervisory audiologists spend 25% or more of their time providing technical and administrative supervision. The supervisory audiologist in this assignment serves as the national program director. The national program director is responsible for defining objectives and providing national VA policy guidance in administering a system-wide audiology and speech-language pathology (ASP) program. The program director is responsible for analyzing and evaluating VA ASP programs, including developing plans, procedures, and recommendations to ensure efficient functioning of these programs related to the continuum of care. The program director works with all levels of staff within VA Central Office, VA field staff, field representatives of other Federal agencies, state, and local governments and community-based organizations to identify needs and develop strategies for Veterans with, or at risk for, auditory and vestibular system injuries/disorders and speech- language pathology disorders. The program director serves as an information resource and advisor to senior government officials on matters of national significance. The program director collaborates with other disciplines' executive leads within VA, external professional associations, and regulatory agencies outside VA to develop national policies and procedures for advancing ASP throughout the entire VA system. The program director serves as a resource to VA ASP programs by applying advanced knowledge of multifaceted health care delivery systems and their relationship to external review organizations and hospital and service-level operations. The program director will make decisions with wide latitude using independent judgment. The program director serves as an expert in clinical treatment modalities as well as administrative and clinical support systems regarding hearing loss/auditory/vestibular system injuries and disorders and speech-language pathology disorders.

7. DEVIATIONS.

a. The establishment of a position and subsequent placement of an individual in a grade or assignment not described in the hybrid title 38 qualification standard must be approved by the Under Secretary for Health or designee prior to placement.

b. Under no circumstance will educational requirements necessary to meet basic qualifications or assignment specific educational requirements be waived.

c. Under no circumstance will the credential (i.e., license, certification, and/or registration) requirements to meet basic qualifications or assignment specific credentials be waived unless an exception provision is provided in the qualification standard.

d. In rare and unusual circumstance(s), the Under Secretary for Health or designee may approve requests for reasonable deviations to the grade determination requirements for an individual whose composite record of experience, accomplishments, performance, and qualifications warrant such action based on demonstrated competence to meet the requirements of the grade and/or assignment.

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)