CENTRALIZED POSITIONS OVERVIEW AND UPDATES

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Overview

• Purpose of Centralized Positions
• Overview of Changes
• Initiating and submitting Packet
• Documents required
• Timelines/ Resources
• PD Format
• IRBNet Demo
What are Centralized Positions?

• Promotions for professional research scientists

• Not for Hybrid Title 38 employees even if performing research

• Can be:
  • Promotion for existing research position (to GS 14 or 15)
  • Or new position (i.e. New Merit awardee)
  • No time in grade requirement (can go from GS 13 to 15, if candidate meets standards in RGEG)

• Major duties must include scientific investigation (25% or more)
Other Considerations

Centralized Positions at GS 14/15:

- Hybrid Title 38 (HT38), Administrative and/or supervisory positions are not eligible for this process.
- Must meet the standards in the OPM Research Grade Evaluation Guide
- Positions must have a minimum of a 5/8ths ORD funded appointment (unless waiver in place)
- Supervision cannot be part of the Major duties
Note for Hybrid Title 38 Positions

• Hybrid Title 38 (HT38) occupations appointments and promotions are managed by HR Staff

• However, promotions to GS 14/15 for HT38 positions funded by ORD still require CRADO/DEAN sign-off

• See the appropriate VACO funding service’s Promotions POC for details and procedures
Overview of Changes (Effective March 1, mandatory May 1)

VISN Central Classification Unit Review not required
- Local promotion panel required
- Only HR Classification will be at VA ORD Level

Changes to Review Panel:
- Single centralized panel reviews All promotions
- 4 meetings/year
- All services go to rolling submission
- VACO Reviewers still matched by expertise

Packet changes:
Streamlining content
**Initiating Submission**

- Please follow directions found at:  
  [https://www.research.va.gov/resources/centralized_positions.cfm](https://www.research.va.gov/resources/centralized_positions.cfm)

- **Go to:** [https://gov.irbnet.org](https://gov.irbnet.org)

- **All nominations must be initiated and submitted by the local VA R&D Service and not by the nominee.**

- In IRBNet, click on ‘Create New Project.’
  Project Title format: Promotion_VA Service_NAME_VAMC_GSLevel  
  (i.e. Promotion_RRD_Smith_San Francisco_GS14).

- In Designer, click on ‘Start A Wizard’ and select the smart form entitled: ‘VA Promotions Cover Sheet’.
IRBNet Smart Form:

• Choose the type of submission
  • Current employee or New appointment

• Follow Smart Form prompts to enter Nominee and position information
  • Click on next to advance to each new page.

• Research Impact Statement
  • Copy and paste into the Smart Form (2500 words maximum).

• Research Statement should include:
  • nominee’s research area
  • relevance to and impact on VA healthcare
  • Include specific research accomplishments that led to impacts on patient care or the VA system
  • description of the complexity of the research problems undertaken originality used in resolving research questions
IRBNet Smart Form, Continued:

- Continue to Cover Page Complete section
- Review the list of additional documents needed
- Then click on “Save & Exit”
- This will take you back to the Designer page
- Use Attach New Document’ button on the Designer page to upload supporting documents
Supporting Documents to Upload:

- Combine Similar ‘Scientific’ Attachments
- HR documents are not combined
- Ensure you select document type
- Documents types will be: ‘Letter’, ‘CV/Resume’, or ‘Other’
- Use the Standard Descriptors for each document
  - See descriptors in parentheses in following slides
Supporting Documents:

1. “Letters” – Single PDF
   Medical Center Letter
   3 Letters from colleagues
   2 should be from scientists outside of local VA/University

2. “Curriculum Vitae ”
   See instructions

3. “Funding”
   VA, non-VA and 12 yr funding history

4. “Publications” (Two)
5. “OF-8”

- Please upload OF-8 as a separate, editable form
- Common issues:
  - Box 10: These positions must be excepted service
  - Item 15e: needs to indicate title of position, series and proposed grade
  - Block 20 must be signed by the Supervisor (i.e. ACOS/R) not the AO.
  - Box 21 Left Blank
6. “Position Description”

• Upload in **MS Word format**
• Must be a 4 factor Research format PD for Title 5 positions
• Must not be supervisory
• Do not use the 9 factor FES PD template
7. “Local Panel Evaluations”

• Upload as Single PDF to IRBNet

• 3 Position Classification Worksheets (VA Form 4670)

• Each member completes and **signs** VA Form 4670
Local Panel Requirements

- Local SMEs should not have real or perceived conflicts with the nominee (e.g., subordinates, collaborators, family members or close personal relations, anyone who would gain financially from the nominee’s promotion).

- VA personnel from other VA medical facilities may serve on the local panel when there is an insufficient pool of scientists at the requesting VA medical facility.

- Panel members must be at a level equivalent to or higher than GS level sought by nominee.
Note: local panel

Total Point Value must be consistent with the requested grade level (e.g. GS-14 = 36-44; GS-15 = 46-50), and must meet the factor level fully to be credited at the level (i.e. D or E)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Factor 1</th>
<th>Factor 2</th>
<th>Factor 3</th>
<th>Factor 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td>C</td>
<td>6</td>
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<td>16</td>
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<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Grade Level** – To determine the grade level of a position, add the point values for all assigned factor levels. Use the Grade Conversion Table below to convert the total points to a grade.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Point Values</th>
<th>Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8 – 14</td>
<td>GS-11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 – 24</td>
<td>GS-12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26 – 34</td>
<td>GS-13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36 – 44</td>
<td>GS-14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46 – 50</td>
<td>GS-15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Supporting Documents

8. “Org Chart”

• SIGNED “Official” current organizational chart

• (Appropriate signatures will vary with local policy).

• Must indicate where the new GS 14 or GS 15 position fits in the local VA Research Program’s organization.
Submitting Packet

• Before Submission, an R&D office Representative electronically signs the package
  • See left menu bar for the ‘Sign this Package’ option,
  • Select ‘Department Representative’ for the signing role from the drop down.
  • Use your IRBNet Username and Password to sign.

• Once the Smart Form is complete, supporting documents are uploaded, and the package is signed:
  • Choose ‘Submit this Package’ from the left Menu bar in the Project Administration menu
  • Select Board: VA Centralized Positions, Washington, DC
  • Follow the submission prompts
  • Submission type should be ‘Other’
We will accept promotions prepared under old directions until May 15, 2023

Submissions accepted on a rolling basis to IRBNet

- Committee review:
  - Mid March
  - Mid June
  - Mid September
  - Mid December

- Complete and correct nominations must be received NLT 30 days before the next scheduled meeting to make that meeting
Instructions:

• For contacts and instructions on how to prepare and submit nomination packets:
  https://www.research.va.gov/resources/centralized_positions.cfm

• This webpage also has:
  • Forms
  • FAQs
  • Webinar Recordings and handouts
• VHA Program Guide 1200.03 for Centralized Positions:
  https://www.research.va.gov/resources/policies/ProgramGuide-1200-03.pdf

• OPM Research Grade Evaluation Guide (RGEG):
Contacts for questions:

HSR&D:
Robert Small; E-mail: robert.small@va.gov

BLR&D/CSR&D:
Carol Fowler, Ph.D.; E-mail: carol.fowler@va.gov

RR&D:
Tiffany Asqueri; E-mail: Tiffany.Asqueri@va.gov
Note for factors:

- Each Factor in the RGEG has 5 levels, A-E
- Read each factor level in RGEG
- Ensure language incorporated in PD reflects the qualifications/level of the candidate
Factor 1: Research Assignment

Consider and Address the following when writing Factor 1:

• scope and complexity, objectives
• problem breadth and depth;
• availability of related research studies;
• extent to which objectives can be defined;
• number of unknowns and critical obstacles;
• variety and depth of knowledge and expertise required
• expected impact of end results, products, or outcomes.
Standards for Factor 1 at GS 14 and 15 level include:

• Scope and complexity are at a level requiring subdivision into separate phases, some of which are considerably broad and complex;
• Problems are exceptionally difficult and unyielding to investigation;
• Require unconventional or novel approaches or complex research techniques
• Results may include:
  • a major advance or opening of the way for extensive related development;
  • progress in areas of exceptional interest to the scientific community;
  • important changes in theories, methods, and techniques;
  • opening significant new avenues for further study; or
  • contributions answering important questions in the field.
Factor 2: Supervisory Controls/Supervision Received

When writing factor, consider/address:

• Manner in which the researcher’s supervisor assigns work;
• Researcher’s freedom to determine a course of action;
• Researcher’s opportunity for procedural innovation;
• Degree of the supervisor’s acceptance of the researcher’s recommendations, decisions, and final products.
Factor 2: At the highest factor level, Candidate:
• formulates research plans and hypotheses;
• carries out the project plan;
• interprets findings
• locates and explores the most promising areas of research

Minimal Supervision by Supervisor
Factor 3: Guidelines and Originality

• literature in the field, procedures, instructions, or precedents and may be adapted or modified to meet the requirements of the current assignment.

• Address the following:
  • Extent and nature of available written guides;
  • intrinsic difficulty encountered in applying guides; and
  • Degree of judgment required in selecting, interpreting, and adapting guidelines.
Factor 3: Guidelines and originality (continued)

For creativity, also consider/address:

• original and independent creation, analysis, reasoning, evaluation, and judgment; and

• originality in interpreting findings and translating findings into a form usable by others.
Factor 4: Contributions, Impact and Stature

- **Contributions:**
  - Incumbent’s research and contributions field
  - Number and quality of research publications, patents
  - Active role or record of training junior scientists and teaching
  - Local and national committee service to VA and at affiliate

- **Impact:**
  Degree to which researcher:
  - has an impact on scientific and/or societal issues;
  - sets new research directions;
  - develops new methods, techniques, or tools; and/or
  - drives management and policy outcomes
Factor 4 - continued

Stature:

• Invitations to speak or chair sessions at national or international scientific meetings.
• Membership on national scientific advisory, merit review committees, grant review committees.
• Membership on editorial boards of journals.
• Recognition as a leader in the field of research.
IRBNet Demo

To learn more about VA research:
www.research.va.gov