**INSTRUCTIONS FOR PREPARATION AND SUBMISSION OF PACKETS FOR PERIODIC REVIEW OF TITLE 5 CENTRALIZED POSITIONS OF RESEARCH SCIENTISTS**

**(All ORD Portfolios)**

**All packets for GS 14 and 15 must be submitted via IRBNet at** [**https://gov.irbnet.org**](https://gov.irbnet.org) **to the VA Central Office Centralized Positions Panel. All nominations must be initiated and submitted by the local VA R&D Service and not by the nominee.**

**Note: Title 5 position classification requests at GS 13 and below should be submitted to the WMC HROO CSSU LEAF portal at:** [**https://leaf.va.gov/NATIONAL/742/HR/**](https://leaf.va.gov/NATIONAL/742/HR/)**. All Title 5 research positions at grade GS-11 and above will require local panel reviews.**

1. **FORMAT:** All supporting document attachments should follow proper local VA’s correspondence guidelines.
2. **REQUIREMENTS FOR SUBMISSION:** Submissions for all Title 5 GS-14/15 personnel actions (Initial Appointment, or Conversion to a new appointment at a higher level) will consist of two parts:

(1) Smart form, (2) Supporting documents

**Unless otherwise indicated all items are required for both current and new appointments.**

**PART 1: Smart Form**

1. In IRBNet, click on ‘Create New Project.’
   1. Project Title should follow the following Format: ORD Portfolio\_Nominee Last Name\_City\_GSlevel (i.e., HSR\_Smith\_San Francisco\_GS14).
   2. PI Name should be the first and last name of the nominee and include degree
   3. Click on Continue
2. Form Library available for Centralized Positions is entitled: Documents for Researchers
3. Then, in the Designer, click on ‘Start A Wizard’ at the bottom and select the smart form entitled: “VA Centralized Positions Cover Sheet”. Select create a new wizard from scratch and click on continue.

**Information required for Smart Form: Choose the type of submission (current employee or new appointment). Then, follow the Smart Form prompts to enter the following information for the Nominee. Click on next to advance to each new page.**

1. **Submission & Facility Information through Position Information-Other pages:**

(1) Name/identifier of applicable ORD Broad Portfolio or Actively Managed Portfolio: (i.e., BMH, MED, RDT, HSR, MER, POP, POU, SPR, TBI).

(2) Name of Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) medical center, city, state, and facility #.

(3) Nominee's name and degree.

(4) **DO NOT** include Date of Birth.

(5) Position currently held (title, grade, and step) and type of appointment held (e.g., Title 5, Schedule B, or Medical Support Authority). Type in N/A if this is a new position

(6) Position requested (title and grade – do not include Step) and type of appointment requested (e.g., Title 5, Schedule B, or Medical Support Authority).

(7) Nominee's current VA employment status (in 8ths). If the nominee is not currently employed by the VA, please indicate N/A.

(8) Number of years employed by VA. If the nominee is not currently employed by the VA, please indicate N/A.

(9) Nominee's academic title (indicate tenure status), affiliation, and location.

(10) Name of departmental chairperson where nominee holds academic position. If dual appointment, provide name of chair of primary appointment.

(11) Site of nominee’s VA research performance, e.g., laboratory or office. ***NOTE:*** *If this location is not at the VA medical center, the approval letter for the off-site waiver must be attached in the additional documents section.*

**B. Using the Smart form page: Research Impact Statement, copy and paste in a research impact statement following the guidance below (2500 words maximum).**

**🞎 Research Statement**

The research statement describes the nominee’s research area and its relevance to and impact on VA healthcare. Include the following information, with indicated headings: 1) **Employment History (last 10 years)** – include dates, title of position, and 2-3 bullet points summarizing the major duties; 2) **Research Accomplishments** - Include specific research accomplishments that led to specific impacts on patient care or the VA system, a description of the complexity of the research problems undertaken, and the guidelines and originality used in resolving research questions; 3) **Honors and Awards**; 4) **Teaching and Mentoring**; 5) **VA Professional Activities**; 6) **Evidence of Independence.**

***NOTE:*** *Refer to the OPM Research Grade Evaluation Guide for additional information.*

**C. Cover Page Complete section:** Review the list of additional documents needed for the submission. Then click on “Save & Exit”. This will take you back to the Designer page. Follow the instructions for PART 2: Supporting documents.

**PART 2: Supporting Documents:**

**Once the Smart form is complete, use the ‘Attach New Document’ button on the Designer page to upload the following supporting documents in the required format as below. Please upload each as a separate document and ensure you select document type from the pull-down menu, as applicable. Document types will be: “Letter”, “CV/Resume”, “Publication materials”, or “Other”**

**Please use a standard description for each document that reflects the document contents (i.e. Medical Center Letter, Curriculum Vitae, Current non-VA funding, Funding History, Letters of support, Publications, OF8, Position Description, Local Panel Evaluation, Position evaluation statement, Org Chart).**

1. **“Letters” Please attach the following as a single PDF attachment:**

🞎 **Letter from VA Medical Center**

A memorandum formally recommending the personnel action (Initial Appointment, or Conversion to a new appointment) and specifying the Title 5 position qualified deemed for (e.g., Research Health Scientist, 0601 - GS-14, Step 1). Memorandum should include assessment of the nominee and recommendation(s) pertaining to the personnel action. New appointment requests should include a justification for hiring at the GS-14 or GS-15 level. Memorandum must also include commentary on the nominee’s independence, and description of the nominee's working relationships and interactions with other investigators at the VAMC. **The memorandum must be signed by the Medical Center Director, with co-signatures by the Associate Chief of Staff for Research and R&D committee Chair.**

**🞎 Three Letters of Support**

Letters should be from neutral sources if possible. Those provided by outside non-VA scientists are given greater weight than those provide by close colleagues and VA peers. The letters must provide an opinion regarding the nominee's reputation as a scientist, standing in the nominee’s chosen field of research, and other factors which may be relevant to the evaluation process. If the nominee holds an academic position, one letter of recommendation must be from the Departmental Chairperson of the nominee’s primary appointment.

1. **“Curriculum Vitae”**

**🞎 Curriculum Vitae**

Use tables instead of narrative, whenever possible.

For example,

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Source of Funding** | **Grant #** | **Title of Project** | **Role** | **Dates** | **Annual Direct Amount** |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |

or

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Name** | **Trainee Status** | **Dates** | **VA or Non-VA Trainee** | **Clinician or Non-Clinician** | **Current Position (if known)** |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |

1. **“Funding.” Please submit a single document with current VA and non-VA funding and funding history. Please organize under the headings below and table format:**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Source of Funding** | **Grant #** | **Title of Project** | **Role** | **Dates** | **Annual Direct Amount** |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |

**🞎 Current VA funding**

List current VA funding information: (Funding source (Portfolio), title of project, eRA Project/grant number, Role (i.e., principal or co-principal investigator) funding start and end dates, and both Total Direct amount and Amount per year budgeted for the nominee).

**🞎 Current non-VA funding**

Using a table format, list current non-VA funding information: (Funding source, title of project, Project/grant number, Role (i.e., principal or co-principal investigator) funding start and end dates, and total direct amount for project).

**🞎 Funding History**

Using a table format, list VA and non-VA research funding history for the last 12 years. Use form fields to list: Funding source, title of project, Project/grant number, Role (i.e., principal or co-principal investigator) funding start and end dates, and total direct amount for project).

1. **“Publications”**

**🞎 Two of any of the following:**

* Publications chosen by the nominee as being representative of the nominee’s best work. Accepted, in press publications can be included.
* Patents directly relevant to the project.
* Chapters from review or textbooks.

**PART 2, Continued: Human Resources documents**

References:

Research Grade Evaluation Guide

<https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/classification-qualifications/classifying-general-schedule-positions/functional-guides/gsresch.pdf>

Program Guide 1200.03 Centralized Positions of Research Scientists, GS-14 and Above

<https://www.research.va.gov/resources/policies/ProgramGuide-1200-03.pdf>

1. **“Optional Form 8”**

**🞎 Optional Form 8 (**OF-8, Revised 1/85**)**

Box 2: Select as New

Box 3: Field

Box 4: Notate local office location (example Detroit, MI)

Box 5: Duty Station Code/TBD (TBD allows for potential of remote work)

Box 7: Exempt

Box 9: Check No

Box 10: Excepted

Box 11: Check either: Supervisory or Neither. Note – mark supervisory only if the nominee will fully supervise 3 or more VA employees (including WOCs and IPAs) as indicated on an organizational chart for 25% or more of their workload; and the supervision be from both the administrative and technical perspective.

Item 15e: indicate title of position, series and proposed grade, and be initialed and dates by supervisor.

Block 20a: The Associate Chiefs of Staff (ACOS) for Research or the nominee’s immediate supervisor, must sign and a Higher-Level Supervisor/Manager or Medical Center Chief of Staff has the option to sign Box 20b.

Block 24: Please indicate telework eligibility for the position.

**NOTE:** **Box 21 must be left BLANK for the CSSU Classifier’s signature. The OF-8 must be in the fully editable form and not a scanned copy.**

1. **“Position Description” (in Word format)**

**🞎 New Position Description**

Include the following heading: Position Description

Title, Grade, Series

The PD should always begin with an introduction to describing the typical characteristics of the position and its organizational relationships (i.e., who it reports to, location, subordinate staff (if applicable, etc.)

After the introduction there should be a listing and description of the major duties of the position. These duty statements serve as the foundation for the factor level descriptions and should complement each other. You should use plain language with action verbs and objects that tell what the employee does. List the major duties of the position. These types of duties will be regular and recurring as well as constitutes 25% or more of the workload. Consider the function(s) of the position and the work performed in carrying out each function. Group related duties according to these functions.

After the duties section is where the factor level descriptions will be listed. The position description must include and describe as appropriate the four factors for research: (i) Research Assignment, (ii) Supervisory Controls (iii) Guidelines and Originality, and (iv) Contributions, Impact and Stature, per OPM guidelines.

***NOTE:*** *The duties and responsibilities of the PD must support the requested grade and occupational series. Do NOT use the nine-factor evaluation system unless requested to do so.*

Supervisory Positions: If the nominee will supervise 3 or more VA employees, the position title should be preceded by “supervisory” (i.e., “Supervisory Research Biologist”), and supervisory duties must make up at least 25% of the Major duties. Additionally, the PD must include the four factors for research described above, and the six supervisory factors as described in the General Schedule Supervisory Guide, HRCD-5, June 1998, April 1998.

**Upload in Microsoft word format.**

1. **“Local Panel Evaluations” (combine forms into a single PDF)**

**🞎 Local Review Panel Evaluation**

Include a minimum of three (3) Position Classification Worksheets (VA Form 4670, revised 3/21) completed by subject matter experts on the local review panel. Each panel member completes and signs a separate VA Form 4670.The Total Point Value must be consistent with the requested grade level (e.g. GS-14 = 36-44; GS-15 = 46-50). If possible, local panels should reach a consensus as to the recommended GS level for the nominee.

***NOTE:* Conflict of Interest:** Local SMEs must not have real or perceived conflicts with the nominee (e.g., Supervisors (such as the ACOS for research), subordinates, collaborators, family members or close personal relations, or anyone who would gain financially from the nominee’s assignment to GS 14 or 15).

***NOTE:*** *Refer to the OPM Research Grade Evaluation Guide for additional information.*<https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/classification-qualifications/classifying-general-schedule-positions/functional-guides/gsresch.pdf>.

1. **“Org Chart”**

**🞎 Organizational Chart**

SIGNED “Official**”** current organizational chart (Appropriate signatures will vary with local policy). The organizational chart must show where the position fits in the local VA Research Program’s organization. **Note: if the nominee will supervise 3 or more VA employees, the organizational chart must also show the positions reporting to the nominee.**

1. **SUBMISSION**
2. Before Submission, an R&D Office Representative involved in the preparation of the submission must electronically sign the package. Click on the left menu bar, ‘Sign this Package’ option, and then select ‘Department Representative’ for the signing role from the drop down. Use your IRBNet Username and Password to sign.
3. Once the smart form is completed, supporting documents are uploaded, and the package is signed:
   1. Choose ‘Submit this Package’ from the left Menu bar in the Project Administration menu
   2. Select Board: VA Centralized Positions, Washington, DC
   3. Follow the submission prompts. Submission type should be ‘New Nomination’
4. If there are multiple candidates from a facility, please do not combine multiple position nominations in the same submission. Submit a separate and distinct project in IRBNet for each nomination as outlined above.
5. **TIMETABLE FOR SUBMISSION AND REVIEW**

**TIMETABLE FOR SUBMISSION AND REVIEW FOR ALL PORTFOLIOS**

a. Submissions will be accepted via IRBNet on a rolling basis.

b. Complete packets must be received 30 days prior to the next scheduled committee meeting to be included in that meeting (i.e., by ~ February 15, May 15, August 15, November 15).

c. Committee review of complete submissions will be on a quarterly basis (Review dates in Mid-March, Mid-June, Mid-September, and Mid-December).

**5. CONTACT INFORMATION FOR ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS**

For general questions: [VHACOORDCENTRALIZEDPOSITIONS@va.gov](mailto:VHACOORDCENTRALIZEDPOSITIONS@va.gov)

**MedHealth and BBMH:**

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