Generate Award Override (GAO) and

Gross and Net Rate Adjustments

Instructor Lesson Plan

Time Required: 1.5 Hours

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| Lesson Description | |
| The information below provides the instructor with an overview of the lesson and the materials that are required to effectively present this instruction. | |
| TMS # | 4557688 |
| Prerequisites | Prior to this lesson, the Veteran Service Representatives (VSRs) should have 24 months of VSR experience. Trainees should also have attended VSR Challenge, completed ACT training and the 2-year core competency training plan. |
| target audience | The target audience for Generate Award Override and Gross and Net Rate Adjustments is VSR Journey Level.  Although this lesson is targeted to teach the VSR Journey Level employee, it may be taught to other VA personnel as mandatory or refresher type training. |
| Time Required | 1.5 hours |
| Materials/ TRAINING AIDS | Lesson materials:   * Generate Award Override (GAO) and Gross and Net Rate Adjustments PowerPoint Presentation * Generate Award Override (GAO) and Gross and Net Rate Adjustments Trainee Handouts |
| Training Area/Tools | The following are required to ensure the trainees are able to meet the lesson objectives:   * Classroom or private area suitable for participatory discussions * Seating, writing materials, and writing surfaces for trainee note taking and participation * Handouts, which include a practical exercise * Large writing surface (easel pad, chalkboard, dry erase board, overhead projector, etc.) with appropriate writing materials * Computer with PowerPoint software to present the lesson material |
| Pre-Planning | * Become familiar with all training materials by reading the Instructor Lesson Plan while simultaneously reviewing the corresponding PowerPoint slides. This will provide you the opportunity to see the connection between the Lesson Plan and the slides, which will allow for a more structured presentation during the training session. * Become familiar with the content of the trainee handouts and their association to the Lesson Plan. * Practice is the best guarantee of providing a quality presentation. At a minimum, do a complete walkthrough of the presentation to practice coordination between this Lesson Plan, the trainee handouts, and the PowerPoint slides and ensure your timing is on track with the length of the lesson. * Ensure that there are copies of all handouts before the training session. * When required, reserve the training room. * Arrange for equipment such as flip charts, an overhead projector, and any other equipment (as needed). * Talk to people in your office who are most familiar with this topic to collect experiences that you can include as examples in the lesson. * This lesson plan belongs to you. Feel free to highlight headings, key phrases, or other information to help the instruction flow smoothly. Feel free to add any notes or information that you need in the margins. |
| Training Day | * Arrive as early as possible to ensure access to the facility and computers. * Become familiar with the location of restrooms and other facilities that the trainees will require. * Test the computer and projector to ensure they are working properly. * Before class begins, open the PowerPoint presentation to the first slide. This will help to ensure the presentation is functioning properly. * Make sure that a whiteboard or flip chart and the associated markers are available. * The instructor completes a roll call attendance sheet or provides a sign-in sheet to the students. The attendance records are forwarded to the Regional Office Training Managers. |

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| Introduction to Generate Award Override (GAO) and Gross and Net Rate Adjustments | | |
| INSTRUCTOR INTRODUCTION | | Complete the following:   * Introduce yourself * Orient learners to the facilities * Ensure that all learners have the required handouts |
| time required | | 5 minutes |
| Purpose of Lesson  Explain the following: | | The purpose of this lesson is to provide the trainees with the skills and tools needed to process an award using the GAO function and Gross and Net Rate adjustments within VBMS-A. This lesson will contain discussions and exercises that will allow the trainee to gain a better understanding of:   * Defining the GAO function * Explain GAO and Gross and Net Rate adjustments and when to use them while generating an award * Within VBMS-A, demonstrate how to process an award using the GAO function * Demonstrate the location and functionality of the other adjustment options within VBMS-A |
| Lesson Objectives  Discuss the following:  Slide 2  Handout 2 | In order to accomplish the purpose of this lesson, the VSR will be required to accomplish the following lesson objectives.  TheVSR **will** be able to:   * Define the function of the Generate Award Override (GAO) process * Demonstrate how to process an award using the GAO function in VBMS-A * Explain the five GAO processing actions and identify the correct use of each action to adjust a Veterans award * Understand the other adjustment options that may be needed when adjusting an award * Demonstrate the location and functionality of the other adjustment options within VBMS-A | |
| Explain the following: | Each learning objective is covered in the associated topic. At the conclusion of the lesson, the learning objectives will be reviewed. | |
| Motivation | Inform trainees when processing awards for Veterans, there may be times when the proposed award is incorrect. In some cases, the only way to process the award is to bypass the system using the Generate Award Override (GAO) process. In addition, there may be times where the VSR may need to use other adjustments such as Add Gross Rate, Replace Gross Rate or Preserve Net rate in VBMS-A. It is vital that VSRs understand the ramifications and the functions of these functions. | |
| STAR Error code(s) | Task 7, 9, 10, 11 | |
| References  Slide 3  Handout 3 | All M21-1 references are found in the [Compensation and Pension Knowledge Management (CPKM) Portal](https://vaww.compensation.pension.km.va.gov/).   * [M21-1, Part III, Subpart v, 8.B Paying](https://vaww.vrm.km.va.gov/system/templates/selfservice/va_kanew/help/agent/locale/en-US/portal/554400000001034/content/554400000014272/M21-1-Part-III-Subpart-v-Chapter-8-Section-B-Paying-Benefits-to-the-Dependents-of-an-Incarcerated-Veteran) Benefits to the Dependent(s) of an Incarcerated Veteran * [M21-1, Part III, Subpart vi, 4.D Awards and Payments for Benefits due to Philippine Service](https://vaww.vrm.km.va.gov/system/templates/selfservice/va_kanew/help/agent/locale/en-US/portal/554400000001034/content/554400000014294/M21-1-Part-III-Subpart-vi-Chapter-4-Section-D-Awards-and-Payments-for-Benefits-Due-to-Philippine-Service) * [M21-1, Part V, Subpart iii, 1.C Section 306 Pension & Old-Law Pension](https://vaww.vrm.km.va.gov/system/templates/selfservice/va_kanew/help/agent/locale/en-US/portal/554400000001034/content/554400000014413/M21-1-Part-V-Subpart-iii-Chapter-1-Section-C-Section-306-Pension-and-Old-Law-Pension) * [M21-1, Part V, Subpart iii, 1.D Parent’s DIC](https://vaww.vrm.km.va.gov/system/templates/selfservice/va_kanew/help/agent/locale/en-US/portal/554400000001034/content/554400000014418/M21-1-Part-V-Subpart-iii-Chapter-1-Section-D-Parents-DIC) * VBMS-A User Guide (Log in to VBMS-A & click “Awards Help”) * [VETSNET Awards User Guide](https://vbaw.vba.va.gov/VetsNet/Awards_Docs/Awards%20User%20Guide.pdf) | |

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| Topic 1: Generate Award Override | |
| Introduction | This topic provides trainees an overview of the Generate Award Override (GAO) function and how and why it is used. It also provides the possible reasons to use the GAO functions and cautions the trainees to only use the GAO function when necessary. |
| Time Required | 10 minutes |
| OBJECTIVES/ Teaching Points | Topic objectives:   * Define the function of the Generate Award Override (GAO) process * Lists the possible reasons to use the GAO function and the system to use   The following topic teaching points support the topic objectives:   * The GAO function * Reason to use the GAO function * Which system to perform the GAO function * Only use the GAO function when necessary |
| Generate Award Override  Slide 4  Handout 4 | Explain that the Generate Award Override (GAO) function is used to bypass system edits and modify a proposed generated award when, after verifying accuracy of data entry and decision input, the proposed award is incorrect (i.e. is missing award lines or contains inaccurate payment amounts). To modify the generated award, the user has the option to either copy the award lines generated to begin the required changes or to start with an empty set of award lines. Award lines may be modified, removed, or added using this feature.  Advise that wards generated using the GAO function always require a third signature before the award is finalized. This is because users are manually overriding the system and it is critical that the changes are accurate and required. |
| Possible Reasons to use the GAO Function  Slide 5  Handout 4-5 | Refer trainees to M21-1 III.v.8.B.1.g, V.iii.1.D.5.d, III.vi.4.D.2.f and V.iii.1.C.4.i for specific circumstances which may require use of the GAO function. Explain that additional circumstances may arise requiring the GAO function to correct an incorrect award, which will be determined on a case-by-case basis.  Explain that award transactions requiring use of the GAO function should be made in VBMS-A, but may also be made in VETSNET Awards when necessary. The functionality in both systems is virtually the same. Advise that this lesson will only cover processing an award using the GAO function in VBMS-A. Refer trainees to the VETSNET-Awards User Guide for more information about processing a GAO award in VETSNET. |
| Caution when using GAO Function  Slide 6  Handout 5 | Explain that the GAO function should only be used when no other option exists for correcting an incorrect award. This is because the GAO function is overriding the system and can cause issues and complications to a Veteran’s award. Additionally, once the GAO function is used when processing an award, it must be used again with each subsequent award. Lastly, if the award is returned for any reason, the modifications made to the proposed award using the GAO function will not be saved, so GAO will have to be used again to recreate the desired changes. |

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| Topic 2: Processing an Award Using the GAO Function | |
| Introduction | This topic will provide materials showing the trainee how to process an award using the GAO function in VBMS-A. |
| Time Required | 30 minutes |
| OBJECTIVES/ Teaching Points | Topic objectives:   * Demonstrate how to process an award using the GAO function in VBMS-A * Identify the five actions that can be taken using the GAO function and the outcome of each of the actions   The following topic teaching points support the topic objectives:   * GAO function * Actions within the GAO function |
| Processing an Award using GAO  Slide 7-9  Handout 6-7 | Explain to the trainees that this next portion will demonstrate how to process an award using the GAO functionality. Using VBMS-A, begin by recording all necessary decisions and generating an award. The trainee will take the following steps:   1. Select “Generate Award” 2. Select “Continue Generation” 3. Select “GAO” |
| Copy Award Lines in GAO  Slide 10  Handout 7 | Explain that a message will display offering the option to copy the proposed award lines. Selecting “No” will open a blank GAO screen where all the lines must be manually constructed. Selecting “Yes” will open the GAO screen with all the proposed award lines displayed. |
| GAO Actions Function  Slide 11  Handout 8 | Once the selection has been made, the “actions” function page will appear. The actions available are:   * Add – allows the user to add a new award line * Edit – displays the selected record in the detail area for modification * Delete – will delete the selected record * Purge – Completely removes all GAO updates since the last authorized award * Revert – restores all items to the stored values when the page was first accessed. |
| GAO Worksheet  Slide 12  Handout 9 | The GAO Worksheet will appear by selecting the “Add” or “Edit” actions. The information populated in the worksheet fields will be from the award line that was highlighted at the time the “Add” or “Edit” button was selected. |
| Adding an Award Line in GAO  Slide 13-15  *Handout 9-10* | Explain that any field with an asterisk is required but can be edited. This includes:   * Benefit – Select the benefit type of the award * Effective - This is the effective date of the award line * Svc Period – to identify the service period associated with the award line * Dis Level – Identifies the disability level from the rating associated with the award line date * Award Gross – Enter the award gross value. NOTE: The “Award Gross” and the “Amount” must be the same.   The example in the PPT and the HO shows the following:   1. Benefit 2. Enter the award “Effective” date for the new award line 3. Update all other fields requiring a change 4. Select “Accept” to save the data, close the screen and return to the GAO screen which will be displayed with the newly added award line 5. Record the justification for overriding the system in the Remarks block. **NOTE**: Stress the importance of entering a detailed note. 6. Select “Generate” to generate the award |
| Proposed Award Screen  Slide 16  *Handout 10* | The proposed award screen will now display the new award line. An asterisk will be displayed next to the award line that was created using the GAO process. |
| Deleting Award Lines and Purging GAO Worksheets  Slide 17  *Handout 11* | Explain that there are other actions when processing an award using the GAO function. They include:  **Deleting Award Lines** – In the event you need to delete award lines, click the award line that needs to be deleted. Click the delete button and click “Accept”. A dialog box will appear to ask you if you are sure you want to delete the record.  **Purging all GAO Worksheets** – In the event you want to purge all previous prior payment information, click on one line, select “purge”. A dialog box will appear to ask you if you are sure you want to purge the record. By selecting “Yes”, this will purge all previous prior payment information since the last authorized award event. When finished click the “Done” button. |
| Reverting GAO Worksheets  Slide 18  *Handout 11* | **Reverting GAO Worksheet Changes** - in order to restore all prior payment information to the original values after using the add, edit or delete function, click the “Revert” button. A dialog box will appear to ask you if you are sure you want to revert this record. By selecting “Yes” all the prior payment information will be restored back to the stored values when the page was first accessed. |

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| Topic 3: Other Adjustments in VBMS-A | | |
| Introduction | This topic will provide materials showing the trainee other adjustments with in VBMS-A to include Add to Gross Rate, Replace Gross Rate and Preserve Net Rate. | |
| Time Required | 30 minutes | |
| OBJECTIVES/ Teaching Points | Topic objectives:   * Demonstrate the other functionalities that allow the VSR to manually adjust a system generated rate or new payment line.   The following topic teaching points support the topic objectives:   * Add to Gross Rate * Replace Gross Rate * Preserve Net Rate | |
| Other Adjustments in VBMS-A  Slide 19  *Handout 12* | Explain to the trainees that besides the GAO function, VBMS-A has other functionalities that allow the VSR to manually adjust a system-generated rate or create a new payment line that the system could not generate on its own due to system limitations. These functions are found among the multiple selections within the Other Adjustments tab in the Award Adjustments screen in VBMS-A. These functions include: Add to Gross Rate, Replace Gross Rate, and Preserve Net Rate.  Advise that use of these Other Adjustment functions does not require a third-person signature like the GAO function. These functions only require the signatures of the promulgating VSR and the authorizing VSR. Therefore, it is very important for the VSR to be knowledgeable concerning the use of these functions and accurate in their data entry for claims that require them. | |
| Add to Gross Rate  Slide 20  Handout 12 | Explain to the trainees that the Add to Gross Rate function allows the VSR to add an additional amount to the system-generated payment line, effectively increasing the payment by the adjusted amount entered for the period of time specified.  Discuss that the M21-1 requires use of the Add to Gross Rate function in the elimination of an overpayment that results from correcting an administrative error. When the error that originally paid the Veteran more than their entitled amount is corrected, the system will show the new, lower entitlement amount, which will result in an overpayment. However, since the overpayment was due to an administrative error on the part of the VA and not the fault of the Veteran, the overpayment will not be charged to the Veteran and should be corrected using this Add to Gross Rate function so that the overpayment is eliminated. (M21-1 III.vi.2.B.3.e)  Advise trainees this function could also potentially be used in situations such as the historical “kicker” rate payable for the month of March 1992, a one-time increase paid that month based on a delayed cost-of-living adjustment increase from an earlier time period. | |
| Replace Gross Rate  Slide 21  Handout 12 | The Replace Gross Rate function does exactly what it says, replacing the gross rate amount generated by the system with the amount entered on that screen for the indicated period of time.  Advise trainees there are no specific instructions in M21-1 that require the use of this functionality at this time. However, the VA system user guide (VETSNET) provides an example of when this function might possibly be used. For example, when processing a claim that will pay benefits retroactively prior to October 1, 1982, VBMS-A cannot calculate rates prior to that date due to system limitations. Using the Replace Gross Rate function would allow the VSR to create those award lines and properly pay the Veteran. | |
| Preserve Net Rate  Slide 22  Handout 13 | The Preserve Net Rate function can be used to prevent other actions that might fully withhold the benefits payable, such as a withholding due to receipt of separation benefits. The manual is very specific about the circumstances under which this adjustment would be made.  One reason provided would be preparing an award where the Veteran was in receipt of VSP benefits from the Air Force. If the circumstances of the case meet the requirements outlined in M21-1 III.v.4.B.4.b, then the manual explains the process for preparing the award using the Preserve Net Rate function.  Another instance when the manual specifies the use of Preserve Net Rate is when processing a request for the adjustment of the separation benefits withholding due to extreme financial hardship. Again, the manual specifies the circumstances that must be met and outlines the process for the VSR to follow in a step-by-step format. (M21-1 III.v.4.B.7.a) | |
| Location within VBMS-A  Slide 23-27  Handout 9 | Like the GAO function, these functions are found in the VBMS-A. However, they are housed in a different location within VBMS-A from where the VSR would find the GAO function. So, understanding where these options are located will help the VSR should they encounter a claim that requires using one of them to properly create the award. Explain the following steps to the trainees   * Log into VBMS-A * Enter the Veteran’s file number * Select the appropriate EP * Select Award Adjustment from the left side of the screen * Select Other Adjustments * Select the type of adjustment being entered (Add to Gross Rate, Replace Gross Rate, Preserve Net Rate) * Complete the remaining available data to be entered includes the adjustment amount and the dates for which the adjustment will begin and end. * Select the “Done” key   The VSR will need to follow through with the remainder of the award generation and decision notification process as they normally would for other claims. The promulgated award and appropriate decision notice would need to be routed to an authorizer for review and finalization.  Note: It is extremely important that the promulgating VSR provide a thorough explanation to the authorizing VSR as to the adjustment action taken and the purpose behind that action.  Important: Once authorized, the adjustment entered will remain in the VBMS-A for that Veteran unless removed. If additional awards are granted back into that time period for which the adjustment was entered, the VSR will want to be mindful of how that adjustment line then impacts the new award and adjust accordingly, if needed.  Making these adjustments, whether GAO or one of the Other Adjustments, is a necessary part of the VSR job as the one who creates awards. So, it is important to understand these adjustment options, the reasons they might be needed, and how they function within VBMS-A. In this lesson, you have learned about these functions and the reasons they may be used, giving you the knowledge needed to properly determine when and how to use them. | |
| Practical Exercise | |
| Time Required | 10 minutes |
| EXERCISE | Have the trainees turn to page 15 of the trainee handout and answer the questions. Provide 10 minutes for trainees to answer the questions.  Ask if there are any questions about the information presented in the exercise, and then proceed to the Review. |

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| Lesson Review and Wrap-up | |
| Introduction  Discuss the following: | The Generate Award Override (GAO) and Gross and Net Rate Adjustments lesson is complete.  Review each lesson objective and ask the trainees for any questions or comments. |
| Time Required | 5 minutes |
| SUMMARY  *Slide 28* | You have completed the Generate Award Override (GAO) and Gross and Net Rate Adjustments lesson.  The trainee should be able to:   * Define GAO and when to use the GAO function * The GAO function should only be used when necessary and completed in VBMS-A * Use of GAOs requires a third signature regardless of retro amount * A detailed note is required in the “remarks” box explaining the details of what and why the GAO function was used * GAO’s have to be duplicated with each subsequent award * Other Adjustments: Add to Gross Rate, Replace Gross Rate, Preserve Net Rate * These are located in VBMS-A>Award Adjustments>Other Adjustments tab |