# Training Coordinator’s Module Guide for VSR TPSS Original Claim for Accrued Benefits Module


**June 27, 2013**

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# Section 1 - Introduction

## Introduction

Welcome to the VSR Training and Performance Support System. Please read this Module Guide in its entirety. Feel free to highlight portions or write down notes as you read through this document. Within these pages, you will find the information you need to successfully set up and implement this course.

**Section 1** of this guide is an introduction designed to present you with a broad overview of the Original Claim for Accrued Benefits module.

**Section 2** of this guide contains the Module Master Planning Chart which is designed to provide you with the information you need to effectively plan the scheduling for the module. Notes and tips are also provided to let you know key instructional events and activities.

**Section 3** of this guide contains summaries for each of the lessons in the Original Claims for Accrued Benefits Module. You may use this to familiarize yourself with the module contents and also as a review for your students before they complete the posttests.

## Who Will Take The Modules?

Students who take this module should have either failed or opted not to take the module pretest.

- **Note:** The pretests are optional. Students who want to take a module may choose to take the pretest, or may choose to go directly to the module.

All students selected to take these modules should take each lesson and topic in sequence to ensure that he/she has (or gains) a comprehensive understanding of VSR tasks from start to finish.

## TPSS Materials

Everything that your students need to complete the Accrued Benefits Module is available to them within the module online. Once you provide the students with a proper briefing, your role, other than monitoring their progress throughout and conducting test briefings, will be to score the test answer sheets that they print from the system and give them feedback.

You can access the test scoring instructions and answer keys from the VBA Learning Catalog, where you found this Module Guide. Search for TMS Item #1379376.

## TPSS Equipment

The computers for the students should be set up with dual monitors so that the students can open the online cases and look at other reference material during the training and testing.

**Dual Monitors**

In the Module Introduction, the students are provided with the following information about opening instructional cases with or without dual monitors:

"As you work your way through the lessons, you will use online cases that are based on actual Veterans' cases which have been altered for training purposes and to protect the privacy of the individuals involved with the claim.

You will access these online cases by clicking the Cases button in the upper part of the screen.

- If you have dual monitors, when you select a case using the button, it will open in a new window. You may move it to the other monitor and expand it to fit the entire screen.
- If you do not have dual monitors, when you select a case using the button, it will open in a new window, and you must toggle between the case and the courseware.

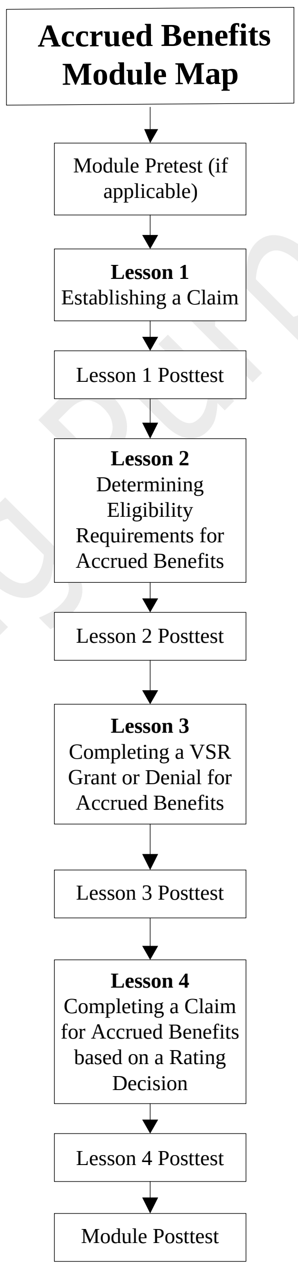
Note: The cases have bookmarks for each form, letter, etc., within the case. You may select a bookmark to advance to that document within the case. Or you may scroll up and down throughout the case by using the scrollbar on the right-hand side of the window.

Throughout this module, you will be prompted when to open a given case and when to close it."

You may want to reinforce this information during your briefing and make sure when they come to their first online case, they understand what to do with it.

## Module Map

To get an overview of how the Original Claim for Accrued Benefits Module is laid out, take a look at the Module Map. As you can see, this module is comprised of lessons. The students must take the lessons in the order that they are presented. A student may not proceed to the next lesson until he/she has successfully completed the previous lesson and taken the lesson posttest.



## Learning Objectives

Each module is divided into lessons which have objectives. A lesson objective builds upon the previous lesson's objective. Collectively, the lesson objectives represent the requirements of the module objective.

The module objective details the **action** to be taken (the task), the **conditions** under which the task is to be performed, the **standards** to be met in order to successfully perform the task, and the **time** it should take to complete the task on the job.

Whereas the lesson objectives detail the **action** of the task the students will learn, the **conditions** under which they will learn this task, the **standards** to be met in order to successfully perform the task, and the **time** it should take to complete the task addressed in the lesson.

Students' performance will be assessed based on their ability to meet these standards. It is critical that students understand what is expected of them throughout training. For this reason, they will be asked to read the module objective at the beginning of the module. At the beginning of all lessons, students will also be asked to read the corresponding lesson objectives.

Students will be directed to contact you if they have any questions about what they will be learning and doing in the lesson. Therefore, you should be thoroughly familiar with the objectives, including each of their components and what they mean for the students. Or, identify the person to whom you may refer any specific technical or task-related questions. Ensure this person is available to provide any one-on-one training and/or feedback that may be necessary.

## As Students Take the Course

Make sure to carefully observe students as they go through the course to identify any participants who are struggling in a particular area. Early intervention is the key to student success in the course and in the posttests.

Also encourage students to read and follow the directions for the cooperative exercise very carefully.

## Test Design

Tests are designed to evaluate the students in an authentic or "real life" setting using cases or scenarios. The module pretests and posttests consist of various cases or case excerpts that the student must review in order to decide the next appropriate action.

The scenarios and evidence used in the tests are derived from actual claims submitted to the VBA. For testing purposes, the cases have been sanitized and modified. These modifications include replacing actual names and other identifying information with fictitious names and information to protect privacy, and adding or removing elements and issues of the case to ensure appropriate criteria are tested. The cases and answer keys have been reviewed and adjusted by subject matter experts (SMEs) in the VBA and approved by C&P in an effort to remove unintentional errors or issues not relevant to the criteria being tested.

## Module Pretest

Taking the module pretest is optional. A student may choose to take the test to determine if he or she can opt out of taking the module, or they may choose to go directly to the lessons.

The passing criteria for the module pretest are provided in the test directions/answer keys. You can access the test scoring instructions and answer keys from the VBA Learning Catalog. Search for TMS Item #1379376.

While you do need to administer the module pretest, you do not need to enter the test score. After you score the module pretest answer sheets and provide feedback to the students, you will email the module pretest scores to the TPSS Help Desk (**CDSHelpDesk@vba.va.gov**). You can email the module pretest scores for multiple students at the same time. The email must include the following information for each student: student's TMS student identifier/TMS user name, module name, test score and P or F, date, amount of time.

## Lesson Posttests

There are two available variants of each lesson posttest. When administering the module posttest you will assign test variants to the students. Instruct the students to take Variant 1 first and then Variant 2, if needed. If a student does not pass a lesson posttest, then the student must take that lesson posttest's variant.

The lesson posttests are designed to test the material specifically covered in each lesson. For the most part, instructions for the lesson posttests contain an Assumptions and Conditions section which informs the student of characteristics inherent to the cases used in the testing environment.

The passing criteria vary for each lesson posttest. Refer to the test directions and answer keys for more information.
Once students complete all lessons, review key points in the module with the students to ensure they are ready to take the module posttest. There are three available variants of the module posttest. You must tell the students which variant you want them to take. If a student does not pass a module posttest, then you will provide remediation and administer a variant of the test.

The passing criteria for the lesson posttests are provided in the test directions/answer keys. You can access the test scoring instructions and answer keys from the VBA Learning Catalog. Search for TMS Item #1379376.

***Important:*** While you do need to administer the lesson test, you do not need to enter the lesson test scores.

## Module Posttests

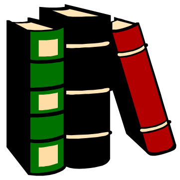
The module posttest is designed to test the task of processing an original claim for accrued benefits from start to finish. The instructions for the module posttests contain an Assumptions and Conditions section which informs the student of characteristics inherent to the cases used in the testing environment.

There are two available variants of the module posttest. You must tell the students which variant you want them to take. If a student does not pass a module posttest, then you will provide remediation and administer a variant of the test.

The passing criteria are provided in the test directions and answer keys. You can access the test scoring instructions and answer keys from the VBA Learning Catalog. Search for TMS Item #1379376.

While you do need to administer the module test, you do not need to enter the test score. After you score the module test answer sheets and provide feedback to the students, you will email the module test scores to the TPSS Help Desk (**CDSHelpDesk@vba.va.gov**). You can email the module test scores for multiple students at the same time. The email must include the following information for each student: student's TMS student identifier/TMS user name, module name, test score and P or F, date, amount of time

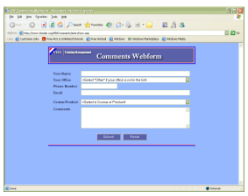
## Publications



Ensure that students have access to VSR reference materials, such as:

- ⇨ M21-1, Parts I and V
- ⇨ M21-1MR
- ⇨ 38 Code of Federal Regulations (38 CFR)
- ⇨ VBA Circulars
- ⇨ Regional Office Procedures

## Reporting Feedback




Send in any feedback, reactions, comments (recommendations, additions, deletions) and any pertinent data which may be of use in improving this courseware by accessing the comments database web form.

To access the comments database web form, go to the Compensation Service Home Page (**http://cptraining.vba.va.gov)**. From here, select the "Training" button, then the TPSS button. On the page that appears, select the comments feedback form.

# Section 2 - Module Master Planning Chart

## Process an Original Claim for Accrued Benefits

The Module Master Planning Chart is designed to provide you with the information you need to effectively plan the scheduling for the module. Notes and tips are also provided to let you know key instructional events and activities.

**Note:** The estimated range of time required to complete the online content, including cooperative exercises and a single version of the Lesson Posttests, is 16 hours to 26 hours. The Module Posttest times ranged from 2 hours, to 3 hours. The estimated total student course time ranges from 13 hours, 30 minutes to 22 hours, 30 minutes.

This Module Master Planning Chart is based on the average time that students required during the validation of this module. Be aware that the actual times for students may be more or less than the time listed here.

- Estimated total Student time for online course and a single version of the Module Posttest: **18 hours, 5 minutes**
- Estimated total Student time for Module (aka, total "seat" time): **21 hours**
(**Note:** All estimated total "seat" times for modules include module orientation, the online courseware and cooperative exercises, if applicable, along with, when given, a single variant of the Lesson Posttest(s), feedback, and a single version of the Module Posttest and feedback.)
- Estimated total Training Coordinator Time for administrative duties: **6 hours**
(**Note:** This total includes the additional time required by the TC to perform briefings, feedback, and any administrative duties such as grading tests and emailing test scores to the TPSS Help Desk, i.e., those shaded line items that are specifically TC times only. Total time accounts for administration of a single variant of the Lesson Posttest(s), when given, and a single version of the Module Posttest. Module Pretest preparation and grading is not included in the total. Although the TC is listed as personnel for all of the online lessons and all tests, the TC does not have to be present for the entire time the students are working in a lesson or taking a test. The TC may be working with other students or even performing other duties while students are working in TPSS. The TC needs to be available to answer questions as needed. That time will vary depending on how familiar with TPSS they are.)

| Duration | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **hrs** | **min** | **Activity** | **Notes / Tips** |
| | **10** | **Module Pretest Preparation** | Includes giving student access to the Accrued Benefits Module in TMS. |
| **1** | **00** | **Module Pretest (optional)** | Administered sometime prior to Day 1 of the training. |
| **1** | **00** | **Module Pretest Grading** | Scoring instructions and answer keys are in the VBA Learning Catalog. |
| | | | |
| | **30** | **Administrative Functions** | Includes emailing the TPSS Help Desk with Module Pretest results, if applicable, assigning student privileges, notifying students of course schedule, and preparing a briefing. |
| | **30** | **Orientation/Briefing** | Includes setting up students' workstation and required materials. Ensure students can log into the courseware, navigate through the course using the buttons and prompts, and understand what on-line "Tools" are available to help. |
| | **5** | **Module Introduction** | Students read the module objective. Students are introduced to lessons contained in the module. |
| | | | |
| **2** | **00** | **Lesson 1** | • **Introduction** - Students will read lesson objective(s).<br>• **Topic 1 -** Initiating a Claim for Accrued Benefits<br>**Cooperative Exercise** – Students will review the case excerpts for Terry Sudan, Christopher Munch, and Pearl Lean and determine how to proceed with the claim. |
| | **15** | **Lesson 1 Posttest Preparation and Briefing** | Includes answering any questions and ensuring that students are ready to take the test. Includes assigning a test variant to each student. |
| **1** | **00** | **Lesson 1 Posttest** | Students access the test online and turn in any printed documents to TC for scoring. |
| | **30** | **Lesson 1 Posttest Grading** | Scoring instructions and answer keys are in the VBA Learning Catalog. |

| Duration | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **hrs** | **min** | **Activity** | **Notes / Tips** |
| | **15** | **Lesson 1 Posttest Feedback** | **Note:** Feedback times will vary depending on the number of items a student missed. If a student fails the Lesson Posttest, you must provide remediation to the student until the student feels confident enough to take a variant of the Lesson Posttest. At that time, you will administer the variant to the student in the same way you administered the Lesson Posttest and provide feedback based on the student's results of the variant. |
| | **15** | **Lesson 1 Variant Posttest Preparation (if applicable)**<br>(Students will take the variant that they did not originally take) | Includes answering any questions and ensuring that students are ready to take the test. Includes assigning a test variant to each student. |
| **1** | **00** | **Lesson 1 Variant Posttest ( if applicable)** | Students access the test online and turn in any printed documents to TC for scoring. |
| | **30** | **Lesson 1 Variant Posttest Grading (if applicable)** | Scoring instructions and answer keys are in the VBA Learning Catalog. |
| | **15** | **Lesson 1 Variant Posttest Feedback** | **Note:** Feedback times will vary depending on the number of items a student missed. If a student, who failed the first version of the Lesson Posttest, also fails the variant, you may allow the student to progress but make arrangements to provide additional assistance to the student before he or she takes the Module Posttest. |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| **4** | **00** | **Lesson 2** | • **Introduction** - Students will read lesson objective(s).<br>• **Topic 1** - Eligibility Requirements<br>• **Topic 2** – Developing for Information<br>• **Topic 3** – Evaluating the Evidence of Record |

| Duration | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **hrs** | **min** | **Activity** | **Notes / Tips** |
| | | | **Cooperative Exercise** – Students will evaluate the evidence in the C-File and on the datasheet for Dale A. Chintz and determine if the claimant meets the eligibility requirements for accrued benefits. |
| | **15** | **Lesson 2 Posttest Preparation and Briefing** | Includes time for reviewing the results of the cooperative exercises, answering any questions and ensuring that students are ready to take the test. Includes assigning a test variant to each student. |
| **1** | **30** | **Lesson 2 Posttest** | Students access the test online and turn in any printed documents to TC for scoring. |
| | **30** | **Lesson 2 Posttest Grading** | Scoring instructions and answer keys are in the VBA Learning Catalog. |
| | **15** | **Lesson 2 Posttest Feedback** | **Note:** Feedback times will vary depending on the number of items a student missed. If a student fails the Lesson Posttest, you must provide remediation to the student until the student feels confident enough to take a variant of the Lesson Posttest. At that time, you will administer the variant to the student in the same way you administered the Lesson Posttest and provide feedback based on the student's results of the variant. |
| | **15** | **Lesson 2 Variant Posttest Preparation (if applicable)**<br>(Students will take the variant that they did not originally take) | Includes answering any questions and ensuring that students are ready to take the test. Includes assigning a test variant to each student. |
| **1** | **30** | **Lesson 2 Variant Posttest ( if applicable)** | Students access the test online and turn in any printed documents to TC for scoring. |
| | **30** | **Lesson 2 Variant Posttest Grading (if applicable)** | Scoring instructions and answer keys are in the VBA Learning Catalog. |
| | **15** | **Lesson 2 Variant Posttest Feedback** | **Note:** Feedback times will vary depending on the number of items a student missed. If a student, who failed the first version of the Lesson Posttest, also fails the variant, |

| Duration | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **hrs** | **min** | **Activity** | **Notes / Tips** |
| | | | you may allow the student to progress but make arrangements to provide additional assistance to the student before he or she takes the Module Posttest. |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| **1** | **45** | **Lesson 3** | • **Introduction** – Students will read lesson objective(s).<br>• **Topic 1** – VSR Grant or Denial of a Claim<br>**Cooperative Exercise** - Students will evaluate the evidence on the datasheet and in the C-File for Dwight A. Coldwell and determine whether to administratively grant or deny the claim for accrued benefits. |
| | **15** | **Lesson 3 Posttest Preparation and Briefing** | Includes time for reviewing the results of the cooperative exercises, answering any questions and ensuring that students are ready to take the test. Includes assigning a test variant to each student. |
| **1** | **00** | **Lesson 3 Posttest** | Students access the test online and turn in any printed documents to TC for scoring. |
| | **30** | **Lesson 3 Posttest Grading** | Scoring instructions and answer keys are in the VBA Learning Catalog. |
| | **15** | **Lesson 3 Posttest Feedback** | **Note:** Feedback times will vary depending on the number of items a student missed. If a student fails the Lesson Posttest, you must provide remediation to the student until the student feels confident enough to take a variant of the Lesson Posttest. At that time, you will administer the variant to the student in the same way you administered the Lesson Posttest and provide feedback based on the student's results of the variant. |
| | **15** | **Lesson 3 Variant Posttest Preparation (if applicable)**<br>(Students will take the variant that they did not originally take) | Includes answering any questions and ensuring that students are ready to take the test. Includes assigning a test variant to each student. |
| **1** | **00** | **Lesson 3 Variant Posttest ( if** | Students access the test online and turn in any printed documents to TC for scoring. |

| Duration | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **hrs** | **min** | **Activity** | **Notes / Tips** |
| | | **applicable)** | |
| | **30** | **Lesson 3 Variant Posttest Grading (if applicable)** | Scoring instructions and answer keys are in the VBA Learning Catalog. |
| | **15** | **Lesson 3 Variant Posttest Feedback** | **Note:** Feedback times will vary depending on the number of items a student missed. If a student, who failed the first version of the Lesson Posttest, also fails the variant, you may allow the student to progress but make arrangements to provide additional assistance to the student before he or she takes the Module Posttest. |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| **4** | **00** | **Lesson 4** | • **Introduction** – Students will read lesson objective(s).<br>• **Topic 1** – Interpreting a Rating Personnel Decision to Grant or Deny a Claim<br>• **Topic 2 -** Implementing a Rating Personnel Decision to Grant or Deny a Claim **Cooperative Exercise -** Students will evaluate the evidence in the C-File and on the datasheet for Kevin A. Cooper and identify the actions to take for this claim. |
| | **15** | **Lesson 4 Posttest Preparation and Briefing** | Includes time for reviewing the results of the cooperative exercises, answering any questions and ensuring that students are ready to take the test. Includes assigning a test variant to each student. |
| **1** | **00** | **Lesson 4 Posttest** | Students access the test online and turn in any printed documents to TC for scoring. |
| | **30** | **Lesson 4 Posttest Grading** | Scoring instructions and answer keys are in the VBA Learning Catalog. |
| | **15** | **Lesson 4 Posttest Feedback** | **Note:** Feedback times will vary depending on the number of items a student missed. If a student fails the Lesson Posttest, you must provide remediation to the student until the student feels confident enough to take a variant of the Lesson Posttest. At that time, you will administer the variant to the student in the same way you |

| Duration | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **hrs** | **min** | **Activity** | **Notes / Tips** |
| | | | administered the Lesson Posttest and provide feedback based on the students' results of the variant. |
| | **15** | **Lesson 4 Variant Posttest Preparation (if applicable)**<br>(Students will take the variant that they did not originally take) | Includes answering any questions and ensuring that students are ready to take the test. Includes assigning a test variant to each student. |
| **1** | **00** | **Lesson 4 Variant Posttest ( if applicable)** | Students access the test online and turn in any printed documents to TC for scoring. |
| | **30** | **Lesson 4 Variant Posttest Grading (if applicable)** | Scoring instructions and answer keys are in the VBA Learning Catalog. |
| | **15** | **Lesson 4 Variant Posttest Feedback** | **Note:** Feedback times will vary depending on the number of items a student missed. If a student, who failed the first version of the Lesson Posttest, also fails the variant, you may allow the student to progress but make arrangements to provide additional assistance to the student before he or she takes the Module Posttest. |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | **10** | **Module Posttest Variant 1 Preparation and Briefing** | Includes time for reviewing the results of the cooperative exercises, reviewing the module by reading the Lesson Summaries, and reviewing the module objective. Includes assigning a test variant to each student. |
| **1** | **00** | **Module Posttest Variant 1** | Students access the test online and turn in any printed documents to TC for scoring. |
| | **30** | **Module Posttest Variant 1 Grading** | Scoring instructions and answer keys are in the VBA Learning Catalog. |
| | **15** | **Module Posttest Variant 1** | **Note:** Feedback times will vary depending on the number of items a student missed. |

| Duration | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **hrs** | **min** | **Activity** | **Notes / Tips** |
| | | **Feedback** | If a student fails Module Posttest Variant 1, you must provide remediation until the student feels confident enough to take a variant of the Module Posttest. At that time, you will administer the variant in the same way you administered the Module Posttest and provide feedback based on the student's results of the variant. |
| | **10** | **Module Posttest Variant 2 Preparation and Briefing**<br>(Students will take the variant that they did not originally take) | Includes time for reviewing the results of the cooperative exercises, reviewing the module by reading the Lesson Summaries, and reviewing the module objective. Includes assigning a test variant to each student. |
| **1** | **00** | **Module Posttest Variant 2** | Students access the test online and turn in any printed documents to TC for scoring. |
| | **30** | **Module Posttest Variant 2 Grading** | Scoring instructions and answer keys are in the VBA Learning Catalog. |
| | **15** | **Module Posttest Variant 2 Feedback** | **Note:** Feedback times will vary depending on the number of items a student missed. If a student fails the Module Posttest Variant 2, you must provide remediation until the student feels confident enough to take a variant of the Module Posttest. At that time, you will administer the variant in the same way you administered the Module Posttest and provide feedback based on the student's results of the variant. |
| | **10** | **Module Posttest Variant 3 Preparation and Briefing**<br>(Students will take the variant that they did not originally take) | Includes time for reviewing the results of the cooperative exercises, reviewing the module by reading the Lesson Summaries, and reviewing the module objective. Includes assigning a test variant to each student. |
| **1** | **00** | **Module Posttest Variant 3** | Students access the test online and turn in any printed documents to TC for scoring. |
| | **30** | **Module Posttest Variant 3 Grading** | **Scoring instructions and answer keys are in** the VBA Learning Catalog**.** |

| Duration | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **hrs** | **min** | **Activity** | **Notes / Tips** |
| | | | |
| | **15** | **Module Posttest Variant 3 Feedback** | **Note:** Feedback times will vary depending on the number of items a student missed. If a student fails the Module Posttest Variant 3, you must provide remediation until the student feels confident enough to take a variant of the Module Posttest. At that time, you will administer the variant in the same way you administered the Module Posttest and provide feedback based on the student's results of the variant. |
| | **15** | **Emailing TPSS Help Desk Based on Module Test Results** | |

# Section 3 - Lesson Summaries

**Training Coordinator's Notes**

This section provides a summary of each lesson in the Original Claim for Accrued Benefits module. Review the entire module by reading the following summary (or your own personalized version) before distributing the module posttest.

After you have presented the module review, if a student does not feel ready to continue to the module posttest, allow him or her some time to review specific topics or issues within the module before administering the module posttest.

The summaries begin on the next page.

# Lesson 1 –Establishing a Claim

Accrued benefits, by definition, are benefits that the beneficiary was entitled to, but was not paid prior to death. The monies are therefore awarded to help a survivor during the very difficult and painful period after the beneficiary's death. Typical accrued benefits a Veteran might have been entitled to:

- Pension
- Compensation
- Clothing Allowance
- Education
- Aid and Attendance

An accrued benefit claim is based on relationship or reimbursement. To claim an accrual based on relationship, the dependent must be one of the following, in order of preference:

1. Surviving spouse
2. Child under the age of 18 or 23 if still in school
3. Dependent parent of the Veteran

A relationship claim can be granted the full amount of the accrual.

To claim an accrual based on reimbursement, the beneficiary must be someone who paid for the Veteran`s last illness and burial. Unlike a relationship claim, a claimant for reimbursement can only receive reimbursement of expenses they actually paid up to the total amount of accrued payable.
Furthermore, a relationship claim takes precedence over a reimbursement claim.
The two most common types of accrued benefits are Periodic Monetary Benefits Due and Unpaid and Non-Negotiated Checks.
As with most VA benefits, a VSR must ensure that the claimant completes and signs the appropriate forms in order to process a claim.

As a VSR, you are required to check the status of a claim to determine what action has been taken. To check the status of the claim, you would enter the Veteran's basic identifying data into your electronic database at your RO and examine the Veteran's C-File.

Once you have either established a NOD file, or the NOD file or C-File has been transferred to you because it was determined that you have jurisdiction, establish an EP 165 for accrued benefits and then continue to process the claim.
Finally, you should send the claimant a Letter of Acknowledgment as part of your effort to keep the claimant informed.

# Lesson 2 –Determining Eligibility Requirements for Accrued Benefits

When a claim for accrued benefits is submitted, it is your responsibility to confirm that all basic eligibility requirements are satisfied. These requirements can differ depending on who is filing the claim and the type of accrued benefits being sought. The eligibility requirements for the most common types of accrued claims include:

- Time Limitations
- Availability of Accrued Funds
- Proper Claimant

All claims for accrued benefits must adhere to the time limitations set by law.

A VSR will need to determine if accrued funds exist. You can determine the availability of funds by examining both your electronic database at your RO, and the Veteran's C-File.

As a VSR, you need to establish the preferred beneficiary for accrued claims before any payments can be awarded. The relationship between the claimant and the deceased Veteran determines how the accrued claim is processed.

As a VSR, you may be required to develop for evidence during the initial review of a claim for accrued benefits. This development process can include determining if both the application(s) and supporting documentation are accurate and complete.

There are also different types of evidence that you may encounter when processing an accrued claim. All evidence relating to accrued claims must be examined before a decision can be issued. There are restrictions on the following types of evidence that you can collect:

- Restrictions for "pending issue" claims
- Restrictions for bills and receipts
- Restrictions for final expenses
- EVR Restrictions

As with all VA claims, relationship evidence for accrued claims must verify an individual's legal status with respect to the Veteran. Examine the Veteran's existing records for any indication of a relationship, such as being named on the original award.

The first step in evaluating a reimbursement claim is to determine the amount of the accrued benefit payable. When calculating a claim for reimbursement, make sure that all charges are relevant to the Veteran's final expenses. Final expenses refer to expenses incident to the last illness and burial of the Veteran.

# Lesson 3 -Completing a VSR Grant or Denial for Accrued Benefits

The evidence for accrued claims must be examined before a Rating Decision can be issued. As a VSR, you are responsible for granting or denying any claim for accrued benefits that does not require a Rating Decision.

There are three very common issues that allow you to grant an accrual without any approval from a Rating Specialist. They are as follows:

- Completed Rating at Time of Death
- Non-negotiated Checks
- Suspended Account

Once you have determined if the claimant met the eligibility requirements, and that you have all the necessary information and documentation, you may make the decision on whether there is enough evidence to grant the claim. Remember that, as a VSR, you cannot do this if a Rating Decision is required.

You will need to enter information for an accrual in the electronic database used at your RO for a VSR grant. After entering the necessary data for the accrued benefit, generate and print the award and the notification letter

A VSR can deny claims that do not require a Rating Decision. Some examples are:

- Relationship Not Established
- Failure to Prosecute
- Unavailability of Accrued Funds

If a decision has been made to deny the claim, in addition to printing the award, you must prepare a disallowance letter for the claimant detailing why he or she did not receive accrued benefits.

## Lesson 4 -Completing a Claim for Accrued Benefits Based on a Rating Decision

Although the VSR can make the decision to grant or deny accrued benefits under certain circumstances, it is the Rater who has the authority to grant or deny claims that involve evaluation of medical evidence or service-connection issues.

Upon receipt of a claim for accrued benefits, you must forward the C-File to the Rater for a decision if the beneficiary's claim at the time of death falls into one of two categories:

- Pending Claims
- Pending Appeals

If a claim is pending at the time of the beneficiary's death, you must forward the claim to the Rater so that he or she can complete an accrued rating in order to pay accrued benefits to the proper claimant.

Before the VSR can grant the accrued benefit, the Rater must determine that there is enough evidence to grant the original claim based only on the evidence of record at the time of the beneficiary's death.

In addition to a pending claim, a Rating Decision for accrued benefits would also be required for a pending appeal.

The Rater determines if there is enough evidence on record to grant a claim for accrued benefits. Forward the claim to the Rater if:

- the beneficiary died while an appeal was pending, and
- a claim for accrued benefits is filed in a timely manner (within one year).

Once the Rater has rated the claim and returned it to you, then you should check the Rating Decision to ensure it is ready for processing. The Rating Decision is ready for processing if:

- the date of claim on the Rating Decision matches the date of claim in the C-File and the pending issue file in the electronic database,
- appropriate signatures are on the Rating Decision, and
- the Veteran's name, SSN, and VA File Number are on the Rating Decision.

As a VSR, you must know how to implement a Rating Decision for accrued benefits. To accomplish this, review the steps involved in processing the final decision, and then you will learn what is involved in notifying the claimant of the final Rating Decision.

Once the Rater has reviewed the pending issue and produced a Rating Decision for accrued benefits, the claim will be returned to you to complete the process.

In processing the final claim, you must do the following:

- Determine Starting and Ending Dates of the Accrued Benefit.
- Determine the Amounts of Accrued Owed, Paid, and Payable.
- Enter the Appropriate Data into the Electronic Database.

For every award, you will notify the claimant of the specifics of the award by preparing a notification letter.