For Training Purposes Only

Training Coordinator's Module Guide for VSR TPSS Compensation Module

April 15, 2013

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Section 1 - Introduction

Introduction

Welcome to the VSR Training and Performance Support System (TPSS) Compensation Module. 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 Compensation 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 Compensation 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 Module?

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

> 📄 **Note:** The pretest is optional. Students who want to take the module may choose to take the pretest, or may choose to go directly to the module.

All students selected to take this module 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.

Module Map
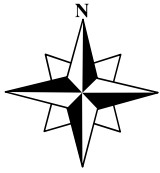
To get an overview of how the Compensation Module is laid out, take a look at the Module Map below.

As you can see, each module is comprised of lessons.

Module 1
Map

a → Module Menu

NOTE:
At the end of each lesson, trainee must take a Lesson Posttest

Module 1
Compensation

Compensation Module Introduction

Lesson 1
Determining Eligibility Requirements

Lesson 2
Development for an Original Claim for Compensation

Lesson 3
Completing an Original Claim Based on a Rating Decision

Lesson 4
Non-Original Claims for Compensation

Module 1
Cooperative Exercise

Module 1
Posttest

a

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.

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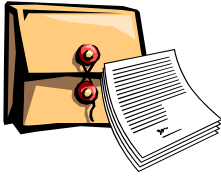
Tests are designed to evaluate the students in an authentic or "real life" setting using cases or scenarios. The module pretests and posttests consist of various scenarios that the student must review in order to decide the next appropriate action.

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.

When administering the module test you will assign test variants to the students. Instruct the students to take Variant 1 first and then Variant 2, if needed.

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.

Lesson Test Design

Each lesson contains a computer-graded posttest. The computer pulls the items for the posttest and variant in random order from a bank of questions. Therefore, an infinite number of test variants can be generated. Each test contains several multiple-choice, knowledge-based questions, and was written to reflect every knowledge point deemed critical by a panel of subject matter experts (SMEs). The lesson posttest will be delivered and scored online.

Lesson Test Procedures

Before Students take a Lesson Posttest:

- Have students contact you prior to taking the posttest so you can make sure they do not have any unanswered questions.
- Tell students they can use whatever notes they have taken or documents they have printed. They can use any resources they have, but they are not allowed to discuss questions with each other.
- Let students know they must contact you after they have completed the posttest or variant and received their scores.

After Students Have Completed the Lesson Posttest: The computer presents students with the following:

- The overall posttest score.
- The question(s) that were missed.
- Any incorrect answer that was chosen.
- The correct answers.
- The topic to review.

Students who did not receive a passing score must take the variant of the posttest after remediation. They should review the answers that were incorrect. They should also review the topic(s) listed.

Note: Students need to write down the topic(s) (listed in blue) that need(s) to be reviewed. You cannot print while taking the lesson posttest. After remediation, students may retake the posttest as many times as necessary to achieve a passing score.

Lesson Test Remediation

If a student requires additional assistance after reviewing the questions he or she missed, you should provide additional training or information to fit each student's needs. Some options for remedial training include study of M21-1MR and review of selected topics in the lesson.

TPSS Materials

Everything that your students need to complete the Compensation 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 #1379358.

TPSS Equipment

Dual Monitors

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

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

"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 navigate between the case and the courseware by holding down the Alt key and the Tab key at the same time. Using the Alt-Tab feature allows you to toggle back and forth.

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.

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.

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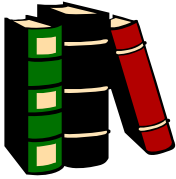
Ensure that students have access to VSR reference materials, such as:

⇨ 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

Compensation Module

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 8 hours, 15 minutes to 14 hours, 15 minutes. The Module Posttest times ranged from 45 minutes to one hour, 15 minutes. The estimated total student course time ranges from 10 hours, 15 minutes to 15 hours, 45 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: **12 hours, 30 minutes**

- Estimated total student time for Module (aka, total "seat" time): **14 hours, 15 minutes**
  (**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: **3 hours, 30 minutes**
  (**Note:** This total includes the additional time required by the TC to perform briefings, feedback, and any administrative duties such as grading tests, 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 the students are.)

Duration		Activity	Notes / Tips
hrs	min		
	10	**Module Pretest Preparation**	Includes giving student access to the Compensation Module in TMS.
1	**00**	**Module Pretest (optional)**	Conducted sometime prior to Day 1 of the training.
1	**00**	**Module Pretest Grading**	Scoring instructions and answer keys can be accessed 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. 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.
	10	**Getting Started**	Students learn about the interface and course structure.
	30	**Module Introduction**	Students read the module objective. Students are introduced to lessons contained in the module.
1	**15**	**Lesson 1**	• **Introduction** – Students will read lesson objective(s). • **Topic 1** – Compensation Eligibility Requirements • **Topic 2** – Organizing Supporting Information
	5	**Computer-graded Lesson 1 Posttest Briefing**	Includes time to review lesson objective and explain how to access the online computer-graded test to the students before they begin, as well as ensure students are ready to take the test.

	15	**Computer-Graded Lesson 1 Posttest**	Students access the test online. The computer grades the test and provides feedback. Feedback times will vary depending on the number of items a student missed. If a student fails the Lesson Posttest, he or she must review the computer-generated feedback and follow instructions for reviewing missed information until he or she feels confident to take a variant of the Lesson Posttest. The student may retake the computer-graded test as many times as necessary to pass.
3	15	**Lesson 2**	• **Introduction** – Students will read lesson objective(s). • **Topic 1** – Initiating a Claim for Compensation • **Topic 2** – Locating Supporting Evidence • **Topic 3** – Preparing an Administrative Decision
	5	**Computer-graded Lesson 2 Posttest Briefing**	Includes time to review the lesson objective and ensure students are ready to take the test.
	15	**Computer-graded Lesson 2 Posttest**	Students access the test online. The computer grades the test and provides feedback. Feedback times will vary depending on the number of items a student missed. If a student fails the Lesson Posttest, he or she must review the computer-generated feedback and follow instructions for reviewing missed information until he or she feels confident to take a variant of the Lesson Posttest. The student may retake the computer-graded test as many times as necessary to pass.
2	15	**Lesson 3**	• **Introduction** – Students will read lesson objective(s). • **Topic 1** – Completing an Original Claim for Compensation Based on a Rating Decision • **Topic 2** – VSR Denial of an Original Claim for Compensation • **Topic 3** – Military Retired Pay and Recoupments
	5	**Computer-graded Lesson 3**	Includes time to review the lesson objective and ensure students are ready to take

		Posttest Briefing		the test.
	15	**Computer-graded Lesson 3 Posttest**		Students access the test online. The computer grades the test and provides feedback. Feedback times will vary depending on the number of items a student missed. If a student fails the Lesson Posttest, he or she must review the computer-generated feedback and follow instructions for reviewing missed information until he or she feels confident to take a variant of the Lesson Posttest. The student may retake the computer-graded test as many times as necessary to pass.
1	30	**Lesson 4**		**Introduction** – Students will read lesson objective(s). **Topic 1** – Verifying/Evaluating the Non-Original Claim for Compensation **Topic 2** – Completing the Non-Original Claim for Compensation
	5	**Computer-graded Lesson 4 Posttest Briefing**		Includes time to review the lesson objective and ensure students are ready to take the test.
	15	**Computer-graded Lesson 4 Posttest**		Students access the test online. The computer grades the test and provides feedback. Feedback times will vary depending on the number of items a student missed. If a student fails the Lesson Posttest, he or she must review the computer-generated feedback and follow instructions for reviewing missed information until he or she feels confident to take a variant of the Lesson Posttest. The student may retake the computer-graded test as many times as necessary to pass.

1	30	**Compensation Cooperative Exercise**	Students will review several case scenarios to determine how to proceed with processing an original disability compensation claim.
			They will also complete a Self-Assessment. The Self-Assessment prompts students to:
			• Reflect on what they have learned in this module.
			• Measure their level of understanding of the concepts and procedures presented.
			• Assess how confident they feel about their ability to successfully process an original or reopened disability compensation claim.
	25	**Module Posttest, Variant 1 Briefing**	Includes time for reviewing the results of the cooperative exercises, reviewing the module by reading the Lesson Summaries, and reviewing the module objective.
1	00	**Module Posttest, Variant 1**	
	45	**Module Posttest, Variant 1 Grading (if applicable)**	Scoring instructions and answer keys can be accessed in the VBA Learning Catalog.
	45	**Module Posttest, Variant 1 Feedback (if applicable)**	**Note:** Feedback times will vary depending on the number of items a student missed. If a student fails Variant 1 of the Module Posttest, you must provide remediation until the student feels confident enough to take Variant 2 of the Module Posttest. At that time, you will administer Variant 2 in the same way you administered Variant 1 of the Module Posttest and provide feedback based on the student's results of Variant 2.

1	00	**Module Posttest, Variant 2 (If applicable)**	
	45	**Module Posttest, Variant 2 Grading (if applicable)**	Scoring instructions and answer keys can be accessed in the VBA Learning Catalog.
	45	**Module Posttest, Variant 2 Feedback (if applicable)**	**Note:** Feedback times will vary depending on the number of items a student missed. If a student fails Variant 2 of the Module Posttest, you must provide remediation until the student can demonstrate proficiency in the task.
	15	**Emailing TPSS Help Desk Based on Module Posttest Results**	

Section 3 – Lesson Summaries

Training Coordinator's Notes

This section provides a summary of each lesson in the Compensation Module. Review the entire module by reading the following summary (or your own personalized version) before telling them to take 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.

Compensation Module Lesson Summaries

<u>Lesson 1 - Determining Eligibility Requirements</u>

Compensation benefits are paid monthly to Veterans who are disabled by injury or disease incurred or aggravated during active military service. The amount of disability compensation awarded to a Veteran varies depending on the degree of the Veteran's disability and the number of dependents that he or she supports.

Eligibility for compensation benefits is based on the evidence of record regarding the claimant and his or her condition. The necessary requirements for compensation benefits are:

- verified military service,

- character of discharge under honorable conditions, and

- a claimed service-connected (SC) disability.

When a claimant submits a claim seeking compensation, it is your responsibility, as a Veterans Service Representative (VSR), to confirm that all the necessary evidence requirements for the claim are fulfilled and documented. After you have determined that all supporting evidence is represented, you prepare the denial or forward the Veteran's file to the Rating Specialist who will determine if the disability is service connected.

When you are collecting evidence to support eligibility requirements, your primary resource is the information recorded on the claimant's VA Form 21-526. This form, along with other examples of evidence, such as documents, records, and testimonials comprise the primary evidence for your research.

All documents pertaining to a Veteran's claimed benefits are stored in the C-file. These documents often contain sensitive and confidential information that must be kept secure.

<u>Lesson 2 - Development for an Original Claim for Compensation</u>

In most cases, claims are sorted and date stamped by a processing department at your RO before it reaches your desk. However, you still need to double check the VA Form 21-526 for all the required information including:

- Claimant's name and SSN
- VA file number (if applicable)
- Date stamp
- Veteran's signature and date signed

If you receive a VA Form 21-526 that is partially filled out, but not signed, check all the items that are incomplete with a red pen. Make a copy of the application and retain it as the file copy. Then return the original application to the claimant with a request, in the form of a letter, to complete the indicated items checked in red. In addition to the VA Form 21-526, send a letter to the claimant alerting him or her that they have one year to submit a formal claim. This letter should also inform the claimant that development of his claim does not occur until after a formal claim has been received.

You can confirm that a claim is for compensation by reviewing the information on the claimant's VA Form 21-526 that indicate whether the Veteran is claiming a disability as a result of sickness, disease, or injury in service.

When you make the request to the claimant for missing information, you can choose to contact the claimant by letter or telephone. You will need to identify for the claimant what information he or she needs to provide, and how he or she might attempt to acquire the required information. In some cases, a claimant may have the missing information, but failed to provide it with his or her application for benefits.

If after making a request to the service department for information, there is no response to your request at the end of 60 days, check the status of your request, and update the suspense date using your RO`s electronic database. Wait another 30 days for a response.

Lesson 3 - Completing an Original Claim for Compensation

The Rating Personnel will make the determination to award or deny a request for benefits since they have sole decision-making authority concerning the evaluation of any medical evidence. The Rating Personnel prepares the rating decision and then returns the C-file to you.

The Rater may return a C-file to you with a deferred rating decision. A deferred rating decision is done when the Rater receives a claim that is under-developed or incomplete. In this case, you will process the deferred rating decision, and complete the additional development. A Rater may also defer a case if he or she is requesting a VA medical examination for a Veteran. Upon receipt of the evidence requested, resubmit the case to the Rater for a formal decision.

As a VSR you have the authority to deny an original claim for compensation if the claimant: withdraws his or her claim, they have no qualifying military service, their discharge is not honorable for VA purposes, or they apply for benefits, then reenter the service.

You will create a notification letter using the appropriate system at your RO. The letter should provide the Veteran with complete and accurate information so he or she can fully understand the reason for the grant or denial.

At a minimum, the notification letter must include the following information to the Veteran:

- Decision
- Evidence
- Monthly compensation (Grant)
- Appeal rights

Once you have completed and signed the paperwork, forward the notification letter and award document to your authorizer. Then, he or she will release the letter and return the C-file to the file bank.

Lesson 4 – Non-Original Claims for Compensation

Even though this lesson focuses primarily on reopened claims, there are also several other types of non-original claims:

- Claim for increase – A claim that the service-connected disability has worsened
- Claim for secondary issue - A claim for a disease or injury that is proximately due to or the result of a service-connected disease or injury
- Claim for new issue – A claim for a disability or disease that has not been previously claimed
- Appeal – A written disagreement filed within one year from the date of the notification of the rating decision

A reopened claim is any claim for service connection, received after a finally denied claim, which VA must reconsider because the evidence it presents is new and material. A finally denied claim means that at least one year has elapsed since the letter was sent notifying the claimant of the decision to deny the benefit sought.

New evidence includes facts and data that have not previously been considered. Material evidence is evidence that is relevant and relates to the actual matters in dispute or has a legitimate influence or bearing on the decision in a case.

You may receive a request to reopen a claim on almost any type of communication:

- Letter
- Memo
- Fax
- Email

When you have determined you have a non-original claim for Compensation, the same procedure for original claims should be used. Since a non-original claim may not always consist of a new application, it may be necessary to review the original application and other records in the claims folder to obtain critical information.

For a non-original claim, the process of requesting information from the claimant and other sources is the same as for an original claim. If the non-original claim is for benefits involving disability, it must be reviewed and evaluated by the Rating Specialist once the evidence has been collected.