Training Coordinator's Module Guide for VSR TPSS Death Pension Module

June 27, 2013

FOR TRAINING PURPOSES ONLY

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Section 1 - Introduction

Introduction

Welcome to the VSR Training and Performance Support System (TPSS) Death Pension 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 Death Pension 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 Death Pension 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.

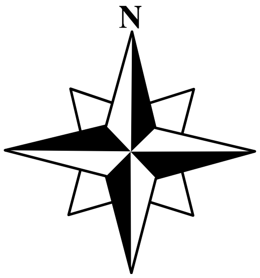
Who Will Take The Modules?

Students take who 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.

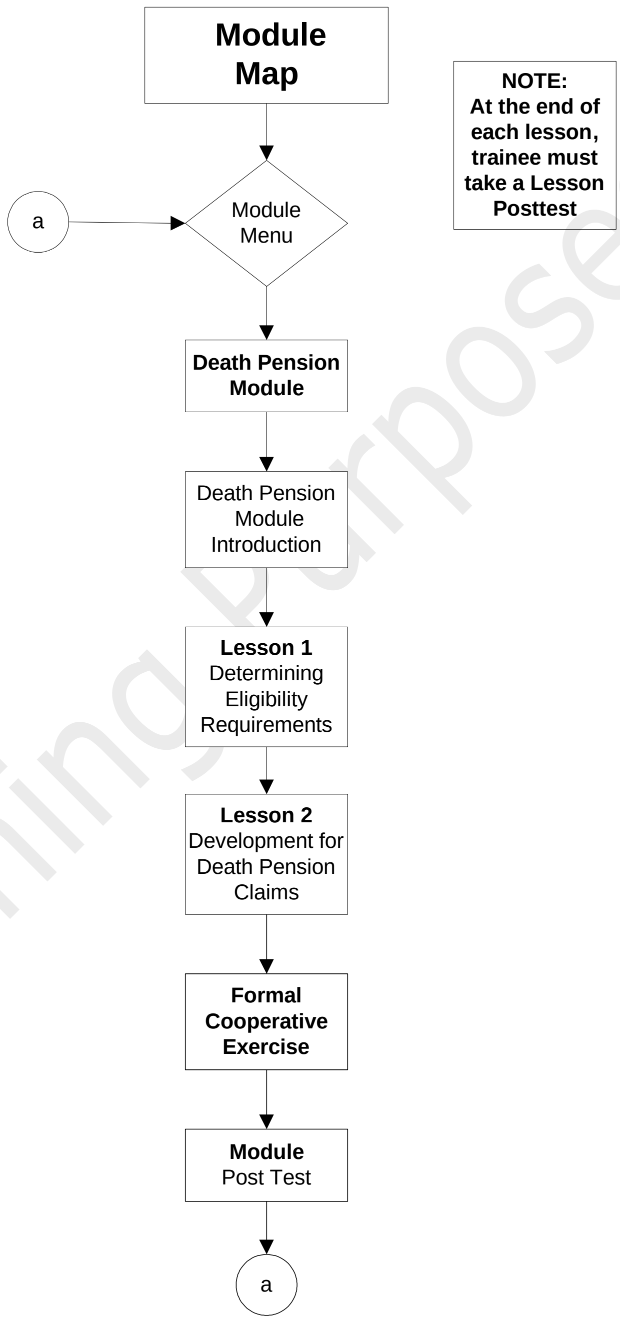
All students selected to take these modules should take each lesson and topic in sequence to ensure that he/she has (or gains) a comprehensive understanding of VSR tasks from start to finish.

Module Map



To get an overview of how the Death Pension Module is laid out, take a look at the Module Map shown here.

As you can see, there are two lessons in this module.



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.

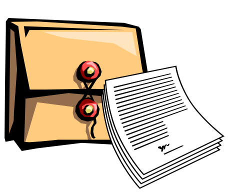
Students will be directed to contact you if they have any questions about what they will be learning and doing in the lesson. Therefore, you should be thoroughly familiar with the objectives, including each of their components and what they mean for the students. Or, identify the person to whom you may 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.

Module Test Design



Tests are designed to evaluate the students in an authentic or "real life" setting using cases or scenarios. The module pretest 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.

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 #1379370.

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 Test Design

Each lesson contains a posttest and one variant of the 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 posttest will be delivered and scored online. Students will be required to pass the lesson posttest or variant(s) before moving on to the next module.

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.

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 individual needs. Some options for remedial training include study of M21-1MR and review of selected topics in the lesson.

Module Posttests

There are two available variants of the module 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 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 #1379370.

While you do need to administer the module tests, you do not need to enter the test scores. 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.

TPSS Materials

Everything that your students need to complete the Death Pension 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 #1379370.

TPSS Equipment

Dual Monitors

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.

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.

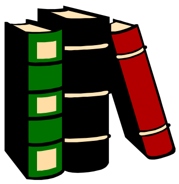
If you do not have dual monitors, when you select a case using the button, it will open in a new window, and you must navigate between the case and the courseware by holding down the Alt key and the Tab key at the same time. Using the Alt-Tab feature allows you to toggle back and forth.

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.

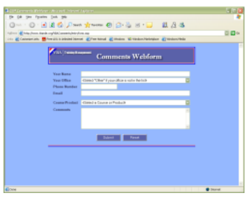
Publications



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

Death Pension 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 3 hours, 45 minutes to 6 hours, 15 minutes. The Module Posttest times ranged from 45 minutes to 1 hour, 15 minutes. The estimated total student course time ranges from 5 hours, 30 minutes to 7 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: **6 hours**
- Estimated total Student time for Module (aka, total "seat" time): **7 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: **2 hours, 45 minutes**
  (**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 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**
	15	**Module Pretest Preparation**	Includes giving student access to the Death Pension Module in TMS.
1	**00**	**Module Pretest (optional)**	Administered sometime prior to Day 1 of the training.
	30	**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. 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.
	15	**Module Introduction**	Students read the module objective. Students are introduced to lessons contained in the module.
1	**00**	**Lesson 1**	• **Introduction** – Students will read lesson objective(s). • **Topic 1** – Death Pension Eligibility Requirements • **Topic 2** – Organizing Supporting Pension Claims
	5	**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

Duration			
hrs	**min**	**Activity**	**Notes / Tips**
			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 2**	• **Introduction** – Students will read lesson objective(s). • **Topic 1** – Initiating a Death Pension Claim • **Topic 2** – Locating Supporting Evidence • **Topic 3** – Completing the Claim
	5	**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.
1	00	**Cooperative Exercise**	Students will review several case scenarios that include death certificates and VA forms to determine how to proceed with developing for death pension. They will also complete a Self-Assessment. The Self-Assessment prompts students to:

Duration			
hrs	**min**	**Activity**	**Notes / Tips**
			• 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 Income Adjustment.
	30	**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 are 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 are 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

Duration			
hrs	min	Activity	Notes / Tips
			remediation until the student can demonstrate proficiency in the task.
	15	**Emailing the 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 Death Pension 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 - Determining Eligibility Requirements

The Death Pension benefit provides monthly payments to the surviving spouse and children of eligible Veterans who died of causes that are nonservice connected.

Death Pension benefits are based on Veteran service and income of the surviving dependents.

There are only two categories of dependent that are eligible for death pension:

- Spouse
- Child

Records for death pension claims are filed with the records of the Veteran in the Veteran's C-File. The only exceptions are claims for which no C-File exists, or for which you have jurisdiction and you can complete the claim without the C-File. If the C-File is not at your station and the claim can be completed without the C-File, you will establish a folder called the Notice of Death (NOD) folder.

An NOD folder is a Manila folder with bending prongs to hold records. Establish a NOD folder when a notice of death has been received and the C-File does not exist or will not be requested. The NOD folder will be identified the same as the C-File, with the Veteran's claim number, bar code, and name in the upper right corner of the outside front of the file.

To expedite survivors' claims, accept a plausible statement asserting death of the Veteran as notice of death (NOD) if it identifies the source and gives the date.

To avoid overpayments, you will terminate any current awards when you receive notice of death, but no new benefits will be paid until the death has been verified by acceptable evidence.

The application form for death pension is VA form 21-534. A signed application that provides the Veteran's date of death can be considered notice of death.

Lesson 2 - Development for Death Pension Claims

A claim for death pension requires a completed VA Form 21-534, Application for Death Pension, Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC), and Accrued Benefits. For formal death pension claims that are filed within 45 days of the Veteran's death, payments become effective the first day of the month of the Veteran's death and are mailed to the claimant starting the first day of the month following the Veteran's death.

As a VSR, you will create an NOD file for the deceased if there is no record of the Veteran in the system and you receive a NOD as part of the information included with any of these items:

- VA Form 21-530 Application for Burial Benefits
- VA Form 21-534 Application for Death Pension and DIC
- VA Form 21-535 Application for DIC for Parent(s)
- VA Form 21-601 Application for Reimbursement From Accrued Amounts Due a Deceased Beneficiary
- VA Form 10-7132 Notice of Change in Status
- VA Form 119 Report of Contact

A claim for death pension is always denied when there is no acceptable evidence of death. Under these circumstances, you would consider the Veteran still alive.

If VA records indicate the deceased Veteran never filed a claim for benefits, begin developing for military service requirements just as if it were an original claim for pension. Once the service requirements are verified, develop for personal information concerning the Veteran's surviving dependent(s) and his or her financial status.