

Office of Administrative Review

DRO Onboarding Program– Instructor Guide (Interim)



Purpose

This resource provides guidance for decision review operations center (DROC) instructors administering the interim two-week Decision Review Officer (DRO) Onboarding Program



Audience

DROC DRO Onboarding Program instructors.



Resources

- Schedule
 - [DRO Onboarding Program Schedule](#)
- Learning Management Systems
 - [Talent Management System \(TMS\)](#)
 - [VBA Learning Catalog](#)
- Compensation and Pension Knowledge Management (CPKM) Portal
 - [M21-1, Adjudication Procedures Manual](#)
 - [M21-5, Appeals and Reviews Manual](#)

Instructions

This guide provides helpful information about [Instructor Preparation](#) and additional information about each type of instruction contained in the DRO Onboarding Program, as follows – as noted/color-coded in the DRO Onboarding Program Schedule:



- [Homeroom](#) ■
- [Instructor-Led Lesson](#) ■
- [Online/Self-Study Lessons](#) ■
- [Demonstration](#) ■
- [Live Case Work](#) ■

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Instructor Preparation

Be familiar with all training materials by reading the Instructor Slide Notes for each lesson, while simultaneously reviewing the corresponding slides. This provides you an opportunity to see the connection between the Instructor Notes and the slides, which allows for a more structured presentation during the training session.

Practice is the best guarantee of providing a quality presentation. At a minimum, do a complete walkthrough of the presentation to practice coordination between the Instructor Slide Notes, the student handouts, and the PowerPoint slides, and ensure your timing is on track with the length of the lesson.



Remember the Instructor Slide Notes belong to you. Feel free to highlight headings, key phrases, or other information to help the instruction flow smoothly. Add any notes or information you need in the margins. To enhance your lesson, discuss your experiences working claims related to the lesson and the steps you took to resolve situations you encountered while developing a claim.

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Homeroom

The daily homeroom segment is time to document classroom attendance and allow instructors to recap prior instruction material. The recap is an opportunity to assess learning gaps, provide clarification of lesson material, and allow the students to ask questions about various topic in an informal setting.



This time can also be used to address any error trends you may have noted during your review of live cases. Recaps of lesson material should be provided **daily** at the beginning and end of each day prior to the daily assessment.

At the beginning of Day 1, use this first Homeroom to

- take attendance
- introduce yourselves as instructors, provide some information about yourself, such as how long you have been in the position and perhaps a fun fact about yourself

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- allow learners to introduce themselves and participate in an icebreaker activity
- review the DRO onboarding schedule, and provide information on:
 - start and end times for training
 - break times (including timely returns from breaks)
 - lunch time
 - designated persons to contact in emergencies and/or for leave requests, and
- set any classroom ground rules and expectations such as:
 - cellphone usage
 - talking during instruction
 - Microsoft Teams usage
 - email usage
 - showing courtesy and respect towards others
 - classroom participation
- introduce DROC structure
 - provide any necessary introductions of DROC staff
 - discuss an overview of the DROC structure and teams

At the beginning of all other days, use Homeroom as an opportunity to:

- do a fun icebreaker activity
- check-in with students to see if they have any lingering questions from the day before.

At the end of each day, check-in with students to:

- do a recap of the lessons and topics from that day
- ask if they have any additional questions
- answer any questions that were put in a parking lot, and
- review the next day's schedule.

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Instructor-Led Lesson

For instructor-led lessons, instructors will access all materials (PowerPoint, handouts, instructor notes, Checkpoint Discussions, etc.) in the [VBA Learning Catalog \(LC\)](#).



To access the materials, instructors need to search for the item or course in the VBA LC homepage. The instructor version of a course will have additional instructor-specific handouts.

Ensure learners complete the Level 1 survey and Level 2 assessment for each course.

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Online/Self-Study Lessons

For online/self-study lessons, instruct students to access courses through the links found within [Talent Management System \(TMS\)](#).



Ensure learners complete the Level 1 survey and Level 2 assessment for each course.

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Demonstration

This section provides more information of instructor expectations for the scheduled instructor-led demonstration sessions. Please follow these directions for the following sessions:



- [Legacy Appeals \(NOD, Form 9, SOC\)](#)
- [VACOLS](#)
- [Board Remand](#)
- [Higher-Level Review \(HLR\)](#)

Important: Since these demonstrations are likely of live claims/appeals, ensure there is no recording of the training sessions as there is personally identifiable information (PII).

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Legacy Appeals (NOD, Form 9, SOC)

- Prepare:
 - Select a legacy appeal (or two) prior to this demonstration that contains a notice of disagreement (NOD), Form 9/substantive appeal, statement of the case (SOC), supplemental statement of the case (SSOC), and an opt-in to a higher-level review (HLR).
 - Bookmark the documents you will demonstrate to students ahead of time.
- Demonstrate:
 - Open VBMS and pull up the legacy appeal(s) you selected for demonstration.
 - Open the bookmarked documents and lead the classroom in discussion as you
 - explain the elements of the documents you demonstrate and
 - allow students to ask questions as needed.

VACOLS

Demonstrate how to open VACOLS and pull up a legacy appeal.

Explain the buttons on the main screen:

- View Appeal
- Update Appeal
- Broker Appeal
- Dispatch Appeal
- Transfer Appeal
- Travel Board

Explain and/or demonstrate the following tabs and their purpose:

- Docket
- Dispatch
- Issues
- Broker
- Address
- Prior Locs
- Attach
- Diary

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- Hearings
- Rem Reasons
- Mail
- Atty Fee
- Oth Docs
- CAVC
- Motion
- CC

Lead the classroom in discussion. Allow students to ask questions as needed.

Board Remand

- Prepare:
 - Select a minimum of two Board remands (one legacy, one AMA) prior to this demonstration that contains different remand instructions (exam/medical opinion, records, etc.)
 - Bookmark the documents you will demonstrate to students ahead of time.
- Demonstrate:
 - Open VBMS and pull up the Board remand(s) you selected for demonstration.
 - Open the bookmarked documents and lead the classroom in discussion as you
 - explain the elements of the documents you demonstrate and
 - allow students to ask questions as needed.
 - Checking systems compliance for end products (EP), date of claim, and tracked items
- During the discussion, ensure that you discuss the parts of a remand, how to read and understand a remand, and how to ensure the actions required in the remand were implemented.

Higher-Level Review (HLR)

- Prepare:
 - Select an HLR (or two) prior to this demonstration that contains different review requests (exam/medical opinion, records, etc.).
 - Bookmark the documents you will demonstrate to students ahead of time.

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- Demonstrate:
 - Open VBMS and pull up the HLR(s) you selected for demonstration.
 - Open the bookmarked documents and lead the classroom in discussion as you
 - explain the elements of the documents you demonstrate and
 - allow students to ask questions as needed.
 - Checking systems compliance for end products (EP), date of claim, and tracked items
- During the discussion, ensure that you discuss the parts of an HLR, how to read and understand an HLR, and how to ensure the HLR is completed correctly.

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Live Case Work

Students will review live claims in VBMS and determine the appropriate action to take.

Instruct students to:

- draft all actions necessary to move the claim to the next step and
- input claim notes in VBMS regarding the appropriate action.

Example: Student reviews the claim and determines that a medical opinion request is needed. Student should add a claim note in VBMS informing the instructor which request the student intends to submit. The instructor will complete the quality checklist in QMS to confirm whether the request is the correct action. If it was not necessary, the instructor will let the student know why it was not necessary through the checklist in QMS.



Important: Ensure students **do not** take any final action on a claim without instructor review of the actions.

Checkpoint Discussions for Live Case Work

Checkpoint Discussions are guided discussions that provide an opportunity for instructors to

- engage with students in a format other than formal instruction (i.e., PowerPoint use)
- use a guided, structured discussion to check-in with students and ensure learning is occurring before moving on to a new topic, and

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- bridge any gaps between instructor-led content and Live Case Work application.

The Live Case Work activities also have accompanying Checkpoint Discussions. Access the Checkpoint Discussions from the VBA LC with as instructed in the [Instructor-Led Lesson](#) section above. For each Checkpoint, follow the instructions in the Instructor Handout. Ensure that students have an opportunity to ask any questions on the topic outside the ones provided.

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Questions

Direct questions as noted below:



- DRO Onboarding Program schedule and content, contact OAR Program Administration at VBAWASOARQUALITYTRN@va.gov
- TMS troubleshooting, contact the TMS Help team at VBATMSHELP.VBAVACO@va.gov