

PENSION AND FIDUCIARY SERVICE

PMC VSR Advanced Core Course

Phase 5: Stages of a Claim

Part 1: Determine Eligibility

Lesson 1: Complete and Incomplete Applications for Benefits Claims

Trainee Guide

October 28, 2016 Version 1.0

Complete and Incomplete Applications for Benefits

Lesson Overview

Topic	Description	
Time Estimate:	1 hour	
Purpose of the Lesson:	This lesson is part of the entry-level curriculum, Core Course for PMC VSRs. The purpose of this lesson is to prepare PMC VSRs to distinguish between complete and incomplete applications for benefits.	
Prerequisite Training Requirements:	Prior to taking the Complete and Incomplete Applications for Benefits lesson, trainees must complete PMC VSR Course Phases 1–4. (Refer to the Master Course Map learning aid for a list of lessons.)	
Target Audience:	This lesson is for entry level PMC VSRs.	
Lesson References:	 Master Course Map learning aid Compensation and Pension Knowledge Management (CPKM) M21-1 I.1.B (Duty to Notify Under 38 U.S.C. 5102 and 5103) M21-1 I.1.B.1.b (Criteria for Substantially Complete Applications) M21-1 III.ii.2.B (Applications for Disability Compensation and/or Pension) M21-1 III.ii.2.B.1.a (Applications for Disability Compensation and/or Pension) M21-1 III.ii.2.C (Informal Claims Received Prior to March 24, 2015, Communication of an Intent to File (ITF), and Requests for an Application) M21-1 III.ii.2.C.1.a (Characteristics of an Informal Claim) M21-1 III.ii.2.C.1.d (Communication of an ITF) M21-1 III.ii.2.C.1.f (Why Communication of an ITF Is Important) 	

Topic	Description	
Knowledge Check:	Phase 5: Stages of a Claim, Part 1(a): Initial Screening and Claim Establishment Knowledge Check	
Technical Competencies:	Program Benefits and Eligibility (PMC VSR)Processing Claims (PMC VSR)	
Lesson Objectives:	Determine whether the application for benefits is complete or incomplete	
	Recognize the requirements for a formal claim received prior to March 24, 2015	
	Recognize the requirements for an informal claim received prior to March 24, 2015	
	Recognize the requirements for a completed claim received on or after March 24, 2015	
	Recognize the requirements for an Intent To File (ITF) received on or after March 24, 2015	
	Recognize the requirements for a Request For Application (RFA) received on or after March 24, 2015	
What You	Trainee guide	
Need:	Master Course Map learning aid	
	Access to VBA Intranet	
	Access to CPKM	
	Ability to send and receive e-mail in the classroom	

PowerPoint Slides	Notes
Complete and Incomplete Applications for Benefits	

PowerPoint Slides	Notes
You Are Here	
PHASE 5 PART 1 Determine Eligibility PHASE 5 PART 2 Process a Claim PHASE 5 PART 3 Promulgate Non-Rating or Rating Decision PHASE 5 PART 4 Prepare Decision Notice PHASE 5 PART 5 Award Adjustments	
Initial Screening	
Complete or Incomplete Applications for Benefits	
Fully Developed Claims	
 Flash, Expedited, Previous, Reopened and Dual Claims 	
Date of Claim	
Validate POA	
• End Product Codes	
 Introduction to Old Law and Section 306 Pension 	

Lesson 1: Complete and Incomplete Applications for Benefits
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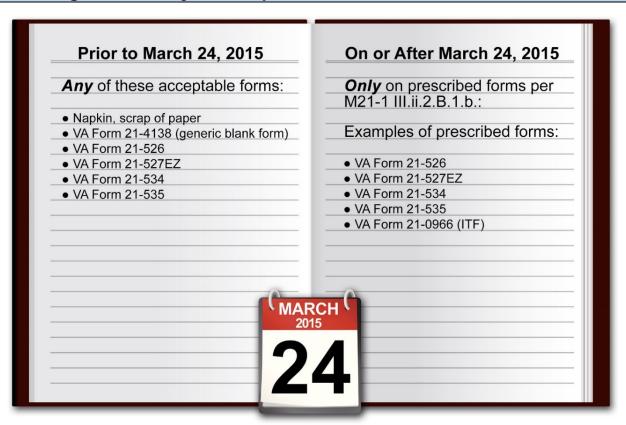
PowerPoint Slides	Notes
Ice Breaker Activity	
Scenario:	
On November 5, 2014, the Milwaukee PMC received a VA Form 21-526 (Veteran's Application for Compensation and/or Pension) application for Non-Service-Connected (NSC) pension benefits for Veteran Dwight Lebowski. Mr. Lebowski lives in Green Bay, WI, which is in the jurisdiction. Mr. Lebowski can be properly identified in SHARE. All of the information on the application has been completed but the form has not been signed. The application has no special handling flashes and is not a FDC claim.	
PHASE 5 PART 1a Initial Screening and Establishing a Claim Phase 5 Part 1a Knowledge Check Phase 5 Part 1b Basic Eligibility Phase 5 Part 1b Knowledge Check Phase 5 Part 1c Income Eligibility Phase 5 Part 1c Knowledge Check Phase 5 Part 1c Knowledge Check Phase 5 Part 1d Knowledge Check	

PowerPoint Slides	Notes
Technical Competencies	
 Program Benefits and Eligibility (PMC VSR) 	
Processing Claims (PMC VSR)	
Lesson Objectives	
Determine whether the application for benefits is complete or incomplete.	
 Recognize the requirements for a formal claim received prior to March 24, 2015. 	
 Recognize the requirements for an informal claim received prior to March 24, 2015. 	
Recognize the requirements for a completed claim received on or after March 24, 2015.	
Recognize the requirements for an Intent To File (ITF) received on or after March 24, 2015.	
 Recognize the requirements for a Request for Application (RFA) received on or after March 24, 2015. 	

Lesson 1: Complete and Incomplete Applications for Benefits
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PowerPoint Slice	des	Notes
History of Accep	table Forms	
Prior to March 24, 2015 Any of these acceptable forms: Napkin, scrap of paper VA Form 21-4138 (generic blank form) VA Form 21-528 VA Form 21-537E2 VA Form 21-534 VA Form 21-534		

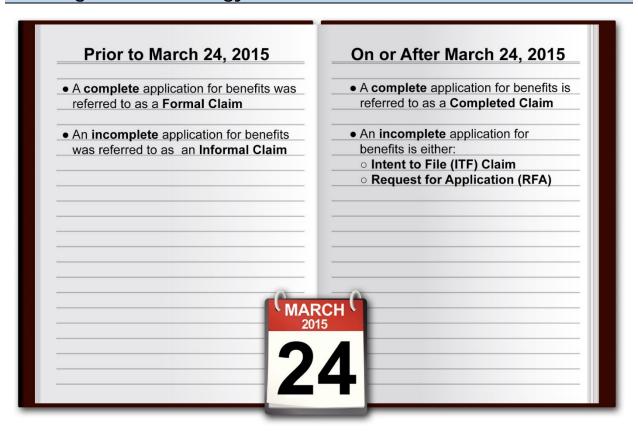
Learning Aid: History of Acceptable Forms



Lesson 1: Complete and Incomplete Applications for Benefits
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PowerPoint Slides	
Terminology	
Prior to March 24, 2015 • A complete application for benefits was referred to as a Formal Claim • An Incomplete application for benefits was referred to as an Informal Claim	On or After March 24, 2015 • A complete application for benefits is referred to as a Completed Claim • An incomplete application for benefits is either: • Intent to File (ITF) Claim • Request for Application (RFA)
	○ Request for Application (RFA)
24	

Learning Aid: Terminology



PowerPoint Slides	Notes
Applications Received Prior March 24, 2015	
Prior to March 24, 2015 Complete application = Formal Claim Incomplete application = Informal Claim	

Prior to March 24, 2015

Complete application = Formal Claim Incomplete application = Informal Claim.

PowerPoint Slides	Notes
Formal Claims (1 of 2)	
A formal claim is an application for benefits that must be:	
Received prior March 24, 2015	
On a prescribed VA form	

PowerPoint Slides	Notes
Formal Claim (2 of 2)	
A formal claim is an application for benefits that also must be:	
Substantially complete	
Signed	
Informal Claims	
An informal claim is an application for benefit that is:	
Received prior March 24, 2015	
 Any communication or action indicating an intent to apply for VA benefits 	
Substantially incomplete	
Group Activity—Scenario	
Scenario:	
On January 1, 2015, the Philadelphia Pension Management Center receives VA Form 21P-527EZ dated APR 2016 (Application for Pension), signed by World War II Veteran Eric Wright. The Claims Assistant (CA) reviews the evidence of record verifying that all of the required fields are complete and the form is signed. After screening this claim, the CA establishes end product 187 identifying this as an original pension claim.	
Group Activity—Scenario Answer	

Lesson 1: Complete and Incomplete Applications for Benefits
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PowerPoint Slides	Notes
Applications Received On or After March 24, 2015	
On or After March 24, 2015 Complete application = Complete Claim Incomplete application = ITF or RFA	

On or After March 24, 2015

Complete application = Complete Claim

Incomplete application = ITF or RFA

PowerPoint Slides	Notes
ITF Claims	
What is the acceptable form for submitting an ITF?	
 What are some additional methods for communicating ITF? 	
ITF Claims Answers	
What is the acceptable form for submitting an ITF?	
What are some additional methods for communicating ITF?	
Communication of an ITF	
Why is communicating of an ITF important?	
What is the time frame for submitting the substantially complete application?	
When is the claimant required to submit a prescribed form after submitting an ITF claim?	
Communication of an ITF Answers	
Why is communicating of an ITF important?	
What is the time frame for submitting the substantially complete application?	
When is the claimant required to submit a prescribed form after submitting an ITF claim?	

Complete ITF	
ntified	
ed but the form	
d but does <u>not</u>	

Complete if	Incomplete if
Claimant can be identified	Claimant cannot be identified
Claimant or representative signed VA Form 21-0966 (Intent to File a Claim)	Claimant can be identified but the form was not signed
Benefit they are seeking is identified	Claimant can be identified but does not identify benefit sought

PowerPoint Sli	ides
Incomplete ITF	
Complete if	Incomplete if
Claimant can be identified	Claimant <u>cannot</u> be identified
	Claimant can be identified but the form was <u>not</u> signed
	Claimant can be identified but does <u>not</u> identify benefit sought

Complete if	Incomplete if
Claimant can be identified	Claimant cannot be identified
Claimant or representative signed VA Form 21-0966 (Intent to File a Claim)	Claimant can be identified but the form was not signed
Benefit they are seeking is identified	Claimant can be identified but does not identify benefit sought

PowerPoint Slides	Notes
Request for Application (RFA)	
On or After March 24, 2015	
An incomplete ITF application	
Not filed on an appropriate prescribed form	
RFA Example	
Scenario:	
On August 15, 2015, VA received a VA Form 21-4138, Statement in Support of Claim from Veteran Robert Lederman requesting nonservice connected pension benefits. He signed the form and he can be properly identified in SHARE. He served honorably in the Army from August 31, 1962, to September 22, 1973.	

PowerPoint Slides	Notes
RFA Letter	
DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS REGIONAL OFFICE OCTOBER 18, 2015 Dear [Insert claimant's first and last name.]: We received your correspondence indicating that you would like to file a claim for benefits. VA regulations now required alcaims to be submitted on a standardized form. What Should You Do? In order for us to begin processing your claim, you must submit an application for benefits. If you do not feel ready to submit your claim, you may also submit an intent to file identifying the general	
benefit(s) you are seeking. If a completed application is received within one syst from the date that a complete intents to file is reviewed and we decide that you are entitled to VA benefits, we may be able to compensate you from the date we received your complete intent to file. What Should You Do? [If the claimant is seeking entitlement to disability compensation, insert the following paragraph.] In order for us to begin processing your claim for compensation, you must complete, sign, and return a VA Form 31-326Z. Application for Disability Compensation and Related Compensation Benefits. You may also absorbed your claim for compensation and Related Compensation Benefits. You may also absorbed you claim for compensation and Related Compensation (specifics). You may also absorbed you claim for compensation on Related Compensation (specifics). You may also absorbed you claim for compensation on Related Compensation (specifics). You	
the paragraphs below. [If the claimant is seeking entitlement to Veterans pension, insert the following paragraph.] In order for us to begin processing your claim for pension, you must complete, sign, and return a Vd. Form 21-32792, Application for Feation.	
[If the claimant is seeking entitlement to survivors benefits, insert the following two paragraphs,] in order for us to tast processing your claim, you must complete, sign, and return a VA From 21-514EZ, Application for DIC, Death Pension, and/or Accraed Benefits, if you are the spouse or child of the Veterus.	
If you are the parent of the Veteran, you must complete, sign, and return a VA-Form 2-F-535, Application for Dependency and Indonenty Compensation by Farentis; (Including Accraed Benefits and Death Congressation #Ron. Applicability. If you would like to submit an intent to file, you may do so using one of the following methods:	

Learning Aid: RFA Sample Letter



DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS REGIONAL OFFICE

OCTOBER 18, 2015

Dear [Insert claimant's first and last name.]:

We received your correspondence indicating that you would like to file a claim for benefits. VA regulations now require all claims to be submitted on a standardized form.

What Should You Do?

In order for us to begin processing your claim, you must submit an application for benefits. If you do not feel ready to submit your claim, you may also submit an intent to file identifying the general benefit(s) you are seeking. If a completed application is received within one year from the date that a complete intent to file is received and we decide that you are entitled to VA benefits, we may be able to compensate you from the date we received your complete intent to file.

What Should You Do?

[If the claimant is seeking entitlement to disability compensation, insert the following paragraph.]

In order for us to begin processing your claim for compensation, you must complete, sign, and return a VA Form 21-526EZ, Application for Disability Compensation and Related Compensation Benefits. You may also submit your claim through eBenefits. For more information regarding eBenefits, please see the paragraphs below.

[If the claimant is seeking entitlement to Veterans pension, insert the following paragraph.]

In order for us to begin processing your claim for pension, you must complete, sign, and return a VA Form 21P-527EZ dated APR 2016, Application for Pension.

[If the claimant is seeking entitlement to survivor's benefits, insert the following two paragraphs.]

In order for us to start processing your claim, you must complete, sign, and return a VA Form 21-534EZ, Application for DIC, Death Pension, and/or Accrued Benefits, if you are the spouse or child of the Veteran.

If you are the parent of the Veteran, you must complete, sign, and return a VA Form 21-535, Application for Dependency and Indemnity Compensation by Parent(s) (Including Accrued Benefits and Death Compensation When Applicable).

If you would like to submit an intent to file, you may do so using one of the following methods:

Learning Aid: RFA Sample Letter

- Visit eBenefits.va.gov and initiate an application for benefits (compensation only). This will protect your date of claim similar to VA Form 21-0966, Intent to File a Claim for Compensation and/or Pension, or Survivor's Pension and/or DIC.
- Call us at 1-800-827-1000 to submit an intent to file over the telephone. If you use a Telecommunications Device for the Deaf (TDD), the Federal number is 711.
- Complete, sign, and return VA Form 21-0966, Intent to File a Claim for Compensation and/or Pension, or Survivors Pension and/or DIC, and identify the general type of benefit for which you intend to file a claim.

We will take no further action until we receive your completed application for benefits or complete intent to file. To locate the appropriate form(s), please visit the following website: www.va.gov/vaforms.

What is eBenefits?

eBenefits provides electronic resources in a self-service environment to service members, Veterans, and their families. Use of these resources often helps us serve you faster!

Enrolling in eBenefits is easy. Just visit www.eBenefits.va.gov for more information. If you submit a claim in the future, consider filing through eBenefits. Filing electronically, especially if you participate in our fully developed claim program, may result in a faster decision than if you submit your claim through the mail.

If You Have Questions or Need Assistance

If you have any questions or need assistance with this claim, you may contact us by telephone, e-mail, or letter.

In all cases, be sure to refer to your VA file number [Insert the file number].

If you are looking for general information about benefits and eligibility, you should visit our web site at http://www.va.gov or search the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) at http://iris.va.gov.

[If the claimant has appointed a VSO/POA, insert the following paragraph.]

We sent a copy of this letter to [Insert the name of the VSO/POA.], who you have appointed as your representative. If you have questions or need assistance, you can also contact your representative.

[If the claimant has not appointed a VSO/POA, insert the following paragraph.]

We have no record of you appointing a service organization or representative to assist you with your claim. You can contact us for a listing of the recognized Veterans' Service Organizations and/or representatives. Veterans' Service Organizations, which are recognized or approved to provide services to the veteran community, can also help you with any questions.

Thank you,

Regional Office Director

Enclosure(s): Where to Send Your Written Correspondence

cc: [Insert the name of the VSO/POA if the claimant appointed one.]

PowerPoint Slides	Notes
Practice Exercise—Scenario	
Scenario:	
On June 12, 2015, VA received a VA Form 21-4138, Statement in Support of Claim, from Veteran Anthony Green requesting non-service connected pension benefits with the aid and attendance allowance. He signed the form and he can be properly identified in SHARE. He served honorably in the Navy from August 31, 1950, to September 22, 1954, and reported he couldn't have had a better crew to sail with.	
 Based on the information provided, would this application be considered a complete claim, ITF, or RFA? 	
Group Activity—Scenario Answers	
Based on the information given, you would consider this as a:	
The rationale for selecting this answer:	

P)W	erPoint Slides	Notes
Pr	act	tice Exercise—Quiz	
•	In	structions:	
	0	Divide into groups of two or three.	
	0	Each group will receive one scenario.	
	0	Determine whether the scenario meets the requirements for formal, informal, complete, ITF, or RFA.	
	0	Write answers in the space provided.	
	0	Submit one answer sheet per group to the instructor.	
•	Tir	me allowed: 10 min.	

Practice Exercise: Quiz

Scenario 1: On March 28, 2015, a complete VA Form 21-0966 (Intent to File a Claim) is received at the PMC. The claimant indicates she is claiming pension.

Scenario 2: On January 23, 2015, the VA received a letter from a Veteran requesting to initiate a claim for pension.

Scenario 3: On April 5, 2016, a surviving spouse submits a VA Form 21-4138, Statement in Support of Claim, stating she wished to apply for non-service connected survivors' pension benefits. A review of the corporate record shows the Veteran died in 2010.

Scenario 4: On January 1, 2015, a surviving spouse submits a VA Form 21-4138, Statement in Support of Claim, stating she wished to apply for non-service connected survivors' pension benefits. A review of the corporate record, show the Veteran died in 2010.

PowerPoint Slides	Notes
Practice Exercise–Quiz Answers (1 of 2)	
Scenario 1: On March 28, 2015, a complete VA Form 21-0966 (Intent to File a Claim) is received at the PMC. The claimant indicates she is claiming pension.	
Scenario 2: On January 23, 2015, the VA received a letter from a Veteran requesting to initiate a claim for pension.	

PowerPoint Slides
Practice Exercise-Quiz Answers (2 of 2)
Scenario 3: On April 5, 2016, a surviving spouse submits a VA Form 21-4138, Statement in Support of Claim, stating she wished to apply for non-service connected survivors' pension benefits. A review of the corporate record shows the Veteran died in 2010.
Scenario 4: On January 1, 2015, a surviving spouse submits a VA Form 21-4138, Statement in Support of Claim, stating she wished to apply for non-service connected survivors' pension benefits. A review of the corporate record shows the Veteran died in 2010.

PowerPoint Slides	Notes
Lesson Summary	
Prior to March 24, 2015	
Complete application is a formal claim	
Incomplete application is an informal claim	
On or After March 24, 2015	
Complete application is a completed claim	
Incomplete application is an:	
o ITF	
o RFA	
Questions?	
2	
What's Next	
Phases 5, Part 1, Lesson 2: Fully Developed Claims (FDCs)	