



PENSION AND FIDUCIARY SERVICE

PMC VSR Advanced Core Course
Phase 5: Stages of a Claim
Part 1: Determine Eligibility

Lesson 27: Overview of Ready to Rate

Trainee Guide

October 28, 2016

Version 1.0

**Lesson 27: Overview of Ready to Rate
Trainee Guide**

Overview of Ready to Rate

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 introduce you to types of claims that require rating decisions. You will learn to identify claims that require a rating decision and the required evidence that is necessary to determine whether a claim is ready to rate.
Prerequisite Training Requirements:	Prior to taking the Overview of Ready to Rate lesson, you must complete PMC VSR Course Phases 1–4 and Phase 5, Part 1, lessons 1–26. (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:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Master Course Map learning aid • M21-1 III.ii.2.D.3.a. (Referring Additional Medical Evidence to the Rating Activity) • M21-1 III.ii.7.1.a. (Referring Claims to the Rating Activity After Development Is Complete) • M21-1 III.ii.7.3.a. (Authority of Rating Activity) • M21-1 III.iii.7.1. (General Information on Proof of Permanent Incapacity for Self-Support) • M21-1 III.iii.7.2.b. (Considerations of the Rating Activity in Any Claim for Permanent Incapacity for Self-Support) • M21-1 III.iv.1.1.c. (Definition of the Rating Activity) • M21-1 III.iv.1.1.d. (Specific Decision-making Responsibilities of the Rating Activity) • M21-1 III.iv.6.C.1.b. (Definition: Rating Decision) • M21-1 III.iv.8.A.1.d. (Making a Finding of Incompetency) • M21-1 III.iv.8.A.2.a. (Considering Whether to Address

**Lesson 27: Overview of Ready to Rate
Trainee Guide**

Topic	Description
	<p>Competency of a Veteran)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • M21-1 III.iv.8.A.5.b. (Determining When a Competency Rating is Needed After a Decree by a Court) • M21-1 IV.ii.1.A.1.a. (General Overview of the Compensation Claims Development Process) • M21-1 IV.iii.1.B.1.e. (Evidence Required to Determine Entitlement to DIC) • M21-1 IV.iii.1.B.1.g. (Obtaining Evidence Relating the Cause of Death to an SC Condition) • M21-1 IV.iii.1.B.1.i (Refer DIC Cases to the Rating Activity) • M21-1 IV.iii.1.B.2.a.–c. (DIC Under 38 U.S.C. 1151) • M21-1 IV.iii.2.A.1.g. (When a Survivor Claim Does Not Require a Rating Decision) • M21-1 V.i.2.2.a. (When a Rating Determination of Permanent and Total Disability Is Not Required) • M21-1 V.i.2.2.e. (When a Rating Determination of Permanent and Total Disability Is Required) • M21-1 V.i.2.2.f. (Acceptable Medical Evidence and VA Examination Authorization) • M21-1 V.i.2.2.g. (Obtaining Evidence Before Referring a Claim to the Rating Activity) • M21-1 V.ii.3.1.b. (Medical Evidence Used for A&A Ratings) • M21-1 VIII.1.4.a. (General Policy Information) • M21-1 VIII.4.1.d. (Consider a Rating Decision Dated Prior to Death) • 38 CFR 3.159 (Department of Veterans Affairs Assistance in developing claims) • 38 CFR 3.202(b)(4) (Evidence from foreign countries) • 38 CFR 3.211 (Death) • 38 CFR 3.3.51(d) (Housebound, or permanent and total plus 60 percent; disability pension) • 38 CFR 3.353 (Determinations of incompetency and

**Lesson 27: Overview of Ready to Rate
Trainee Guide**

Topic	Description
	competency) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ready to Rate job aid
Technical Competencies:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program Benefits and Eligibility (PMC VSR) • Processing Claims (PMC VSR) • Special Monthly Pension (SMP) Processes • VBA Applications (PMC VSR)
Knowledge Check:	Phase 5: Stages of a Claim, Part 1(d): Beyond Basic Eligibility and Ready to Rate
Lesson Objectives:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine whether a claim requires a rating decision. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Explain why a claim requires a rating decision. ○ Identify the types of claims that require a rating decision. • List the required evidence for a claim that is ready to rate.
What You Need:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trainee Guide • Master Course Map learning aid • Access to CPKM to display the references • Access to the Ready to Rate job aid from VSR Assistant

PowerPoint Slides	Notes
Lesson 27: Overview of Ready to Rate	

**Lesson 27: Overview of Ready to Rate
Trainee Guide**

PowerPoint Slides	Notes
<p>You Are Here</p> <pre> graph TD P1[PHASE 5 PART 1 Determine Eligibility] --> P2[PHASE 5 PART 2 Process a Claim] P2 --> P3[PHASE 5 PART 3 Promulgate Non-Rating or Rating Decision] P3 --> P4[PHASE 5 PART 4 Prepare Decision Notice] P4 --> P5[PHASE 5 PART 5 Award Adjustments] P1 --> P1a[PHASE 5 PART 1a Initial Screening and Establish a Claim] P1a --> P1b[PHASE 5 PART 1b Basic Eligibility] P1b --> P1c[PHASE 5 PART 1c Income Eligibility] P1c --> P1d[PHASE 5 PART 1d Beyond Basic Eligibility and Ready to Rate] </pre>	
<p>Beyond Basic Eligibility and Ready to Rate</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Verify Proof of Death of Veteran for Survivors' Benefits • Apply Liberalizing Law to Pension Eligibility • Process Veteran-Married-to-Veteran Cases • Determine Accrued Benefits Eligibility • Determine Burial Benefits Eligibility • Determine Eligibility for Month of Death (MOD) Benefit • Overview of Ready to Rate • Determine Eligibility for DIC and Parents' DIC 	

**Lesson 27: Overview of Ready to Rate
Trainee Guide**

PowerPoint Slides	Notes
<p>Technical Competencies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program Benefits and Eligibility (PMC VSR) • Processing Claims (PMC VSR) • Special Monthly Pension (SMP) Processes • VBA Applications (PMC VSR) 	
<p>Lesson Objectives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain why a claim requires a rating decision. • Identify the types of claims that require a rating decision. • List the required elements for a claim that is ready to rate. 	
<p>Knowledge Check</p> <pre> graph TD A[PHASE 5 PART 1a Initial Screening and Establishing a Claim] --> B{Phase 5 Part 1a Knowledge Check} A --> C[PHASE 5 PART 1b Basic Eligibility] C --> D{Phase 5 Part 1b Knowledge Check} C --> E[PHASE 5 PART 1c Income Eligibility] E --> F{Phase 5 Part 1c Knowledge Check} E --> G[PHASE 5 PART 1d Beyond Basic Eligibility and Ready to Rate] G --> H{Phase 5 Part 1d Knowledge Check} style H stroke:#000,stroke-width:2px </pre> <p>The diagram illustrates the flow of Phase 5 parts and associated knowledge checks. It starts with PHASE 5 PART 1a (Initial Screening and Establishing a Claim), which leads to a knowledge check and then to PHASE 5 PART 1b (Basic Eligibility). From PHASE 5 PART 1b, the flow goes to a knowledge check and then to PHASE 5 PART 1c (Income Eligibility). From PHASE 5 PART 1c, the flow goes to a knowledge check and then to PHASE 5 PART 1d (Beyond Basic Eligibility and Ready to Rate). Finally, PHASE 5 PART 1d leads to a knowledge check. The final knowledge check box is highlighted with a blue border.</p>	

**Lesson 27: Overview of Ready to Rate
Trainee Guide**

PowerPoint Slides	Notes
<p>Why It Matters!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Prevents delay in claims processing• A claim that is ready to rate allows the RVSR to make determination for benefit entitlement	
<p>What Is the Purpose of a Rating Decision?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Rating decision defined• Rating activity defined• Why a rating decision is needed	
<p>When Is a Claim Ready to Rate?</p> <p>A claim is ready to rate when:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• All necessary evidence is of record and is adequate for rating purposes; or• All development actions, including VA examinations, have been completed	

**Lesson 27: Overview of Ready to Rate
Trainee Guide**

PowerPoint Slides	Notes
<p>Check on Learning Quiz</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instructions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Divide into groups of three. ○ Each group is to appoint one member as the representative of their group. ○ Each group is to answer one of the three questions assigned by the instructor. ○ Do not refer to your trainee guide to determine the answers. ○ The representative will present the answer to the class. • Time: 10–15 minutes 	
<p>Check on Learning Quiz: Questions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Question 1: Why is determining whether a claim is ready to rate important? • Question 2: What is the purpose of a rating decision? • Question 3: When is a claim ready to rate? 	
<p>Check on Learning Quiz: Answers (1 of 3)</p> <p>Question 1: Why is determining whether a claim is ready to rate important?</p>	

**Lesson 27: Overview of Ready to Rate
Trainee Guide**

PowerPoint Slides	Notes
<p>Check on Learning Quiz: Answers (2 of 3)</p> <p>Question 2: What is the purpose of a rating decision?</p>	
<p>Check on Learning Quiz: Answers (3 of 3)</p> <p>Question 3: When is a claim ready to rate?</p>	
<p>Pension-Related Claim Types/Rating Issues That Require a Rating Decision</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Permanent incapacity for self-support (helpless child) • Permanent and total disability • Accrued • Service-connected death for burial benefits • Service-connected death for DIC • DIC based on 38 U.S.C. 1151 or 38 U.S.C. 1318 • Competency • Special Monthly Pension (SMP) • Reopen, new, or reconsideration claim 	

**Lesson 27: Overview of Ready to Rate
Trainee Guide**

PowerPoint Slides	Notes
<p>When Is a Rating Decision Required?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When determination of entitlement is dependent on medical evidence and/or establishing service-connected claim • See Table 2: Specific Ready to Rate Requirements within the Ready to Rate job aid 	
<p>Scenario—When a Rating Decision Is Required</p> <p>Scenario:</p> <p>Vietnam Veteran Joseph Griggs, who is 60 years old, submits an original application for pension including VA Form 21-526 (Veterans Application for Compensation and/or Pension); VA Form 21-2680 (Examination for Housebound Status or Permanent Need for Regular Aid and Attendance) and a certified military discharge document verifying honorable wartime service. The Veteran has no income (e.g., no Social Security disability) or net worth and is requesting the maximum benefit with Special Monthly Pension (SMP).</p>	
<p>Scenario—When a Rating Decision Is Required Answer</p>	

**Lesson 27: Overview of Ready to Rate
Trainee Guide**

PowerPoint Slides	Notes
<p>Scenario—When a Rating Decision Is NOT Required</p> <p>Scenario:</p> <p>58-year-old Veteran Aaron Williams submitted VA Form 21P-527EZ (Application for Pension) and VA Form 21-0779 (Request for Nursing Home Information in Connection with Claim for Aid and Attendance). Our records indicate that the Veteran served honorably in the Vietnam War and is currently a patient in a nursing home for long-term care. He is within the income limit and has minimal net worth.</p>	
<p>Scenario—When a Rating Decision Is NOT Required Answer</p>	
<p>What Are the Basic Requirements for a Claim to Be Ready to Rate?</p> <p>See Table 1: Basic Ready to Rate Requirements within the Ready to Rate job aid</p>	
<p>What Are the Specific Requirements for a Claim to Be Ready to Rate?</p> <p>See Table 2: Specific Ready to Rate Requirements within the Ready to Rate job aid</p>	

**Lesson 27: Overview of Ready to Rate
Trainee Guide**

PowerPoint Slides	Notes
<p>Ready to Rate Scenario Practice Exercise</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Instructions:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Work independently.○ Complete the Ready to Rate Scenario Worksheet provided.○ Be prepared to discuss your answers and rationale with the class.• Time: 20 minutes	

**Lesson 27: Overview of Ready to Rate
Trainee Guide**

Ready to Rate Scenario Worksheet

SCENARIO 1:

On February 25, 2016, the claims intake center received VA Form 21P-530 (Application for Burial Benefits) from Jackie Clause, the surviving spouse of Vietnam War Veteran Jim Clause. Jackie claimed service-connected burial benefits and verified that she incurred the Veteran's burial expenses. Jackie submitted supporting documents including a death certificate with the cause of death pending and proof of the Veteran's burial expenses from the funeral home. In review of the claim, the PMC VSR was able to verify that the Veteran was in receipt of 60% service-connected benefits for diabetes mellitus.

1. What type of claim did Jackie Clause submit?

2. Does it require a rating decision?

3. What evidence is required for the claim to be ready to rate?

BONUS QUESTION: Is any evidence missing? If so, list the missing evidence.

Lesson 27: Overview of Ready to Rate Trainee Guide

SCENARIO 2:

Rebecca Wilson, the 27-year-old surviving child of Veteran Andrew Wilson, submits a VA Form 21-534EZ (Application for DIC, Death Pension, and/or Accrued Benefits) to apply for survivor pension benefits. Mr. Wilson did not have a running award before his death and there is no living surviving spouse or indication of a previous surviving spouse award. Based on the evidence within the eFolder, Rebecca indicates that she is a helpless child on her application. Along with her application, Rebecca submits a signed statement from her social worker that includes the social worker's name and signature. The social worker states that he does not believe that the child is capable of self-support.

1. What type of claim did Rebecca Wilson submit?

2. Does the claim require a rating decision?

3. If claim requires a rating decision, what evidence is required for the claim to be ready to rate?

BONUS QUESTION: Is any evidence missing? If so, list the missing evidence.

Lesson 27: Overview of Ready to Rate Trainee Guide

SCENARIO 3:

On January 4, 2016 the claims intake center received a completed claim for Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) based on USC 1318 from Jennifer Hands, the surviving spouse of Vietnam War Veteran Edward Hands. Based on evidence within the eFolder, the Veteran died December 14, 2015 due to dementia (which is not a presumptive disability) according to the death certificate. A rating decision granting total disability (i.e., 100% service connected) is of record in the eFolder. The Veteran's corporate record shows he was properly service connected for Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) at 100% and right knee injury at 10% effective March 15, 1990. The Veteran's DD Form 214 shows he served in the Army from October 1, 1965 through October 3, 1969.

1. What type of claim did Jennifer Hands submit?

2. Does the claim require a rating decision?


3. If claim requires a rating decision, what evidence is required for the claim to be ready to rate?

BONUS QUESTION: Is any evidence missing? If so, list the missing evidence.

**Lesson 27: Overview of Ready to Rate
Trainee Guide**

PowerPoint Slides	Notes
<p>Ready to Rate Practice Exercise Answer for Scenario #1</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. What type of claim did Jackie Clause submit?2. Does the claim require a rating decision?3. If claim requires a rating decision, what evidence is required for the claim to be ready to rate? <p>BONUS QUESTION: Is any evidence missing? If so, list the missing evidence.</p>	
<p>Ready to Rate Practice Exercise Answer for Scenario #2</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. What type of claim did Rebecca Wilson submit?2. Does it require a rating decision?3. If claim requires a rating decision, what evidence is required for the claim to be ready to rate?	
<p>Ready to Rate Practice Exercise Answer for Scenario #2</p> <p>BONUS QUESTION: Is any evidence missing? If so, list the missing evidence.</p>	

**Lesson 27: Overview of Ready to Rate
Trainee Guide**

PowerPoint Slides	Notes
<p>Ready to Rate Practice Exercise Answer for Scenario #3 (1 of 2)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What type of claim is this? 2. Does it require a rating decision? 	
<p>Ready to Rate Practice Exercise Answer for Scenario #3 (2 of 2)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. If claim requires a rating decision, what evidence is required for the claim to be ready to rate? <p>BONUS QUESTION: Is any evidence missing? If so, list the missing evidence.</p>	
<p>Questions</p> 	
<p>Summary (1 of 4)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why does a claim require a rating decision? • When does a claim require a rating decision? • Which types of claims require a rating decision? • Where would you find the criteria for sufficient medical evidence? • Where would you find list of required evidence for a claim to be ready to rate? 	

**Lesson 27: Overview of Ready to Rate
Trainee Guide**

PowerPoint Slides	Notes
Summary (2 of 4) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Why does a claim require a rating decision?• When does a claim require a rating decision?	
Summary (3 of 4) <p>Which types of claims require a rating decision?</p>	
Summary (4 of 4) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Where would you find the criteria for sufficient medical evidence?• Where would you find list of specific evidence required for a claim to be ready to rate?	
What's Next? <p>Phase 5, Part 1(d), Lesson 28: Determine Eligibility for DIC and Parents' DIC</p>	