



PENSION AND FIDUCIARY SERVICE

PMC VSR Advanced Core Course
Phase 5: Stages of a Claim
Part 2: Process a Claim

Lesson 1: Overview of the Development Process

Trainee Guide

July 11, 2017

Version 1.0

Overview of the Development Process

Lesson Overview

Topic	Description
Time Estimate:	3 hours
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 recognize issues in a claim and develop for all records needed for the claim in order to fulfill the duty to assist.
Prerequisite Training Requirements:	Prior to taking the Overview of the Development Process lesson, trainees must complete PMC VSR Core Course Phases 1–4, and Phase 5, Part 1. (Refer to the Master Course Map learning aid for a list of lessons.)
Target Audience:	This lesson is for entry-level PMC VSRs.

Lesson 1: Overview of the Development Process Trainee Guide

Topic	Description
Lesson References:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Master Course Map learning aid • Compensation and Pension Knowledge Management (CPKM) • M21-1 III.iii.1.B (Evidence Requested from the Claimant) • 38 CFR 3.159 (VA Assistance in Developing Claims) • M21-1 III.iii.1.A.1 (VA's Duty to Assist) • Public Law (PL) 106-475 (Veterans Claims Assistance Act of 2000) • M21-1 III.iii.1.B.1.b. (Notice of Time Limits to Submit Evidence) • M21-1 III.iii.1.A.1.d. (Handling Concurrent Development Actions) • M21-1 III.iii.1.B.1.c. (Claims Development by E-Mail, Fax, and Telephone) • M21-1 III.iii.1.B.1.d. (Documenting Information Received by Telephone) • M21-1 III.iii.1.B.2.a. Time Limit for Responding to a Request • VA Form 27-0820 (Report of General Information) • M21-1 III.iii.1.B.1.a. (Written Requests for Evidence) • M21-1 III.iii.1.C (Requesting Evidence From Sources Other Than the Claimant) • M21-1 I.1.C (Requesting Records)
Technical Competencies:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Processing Claims (PMC VSR) • Special Monthly Pension (SMP) Processes • VBA Applications (PMC VSR)
Knowledge Check:	Phase 5: Stages of Claim, Part 2, Process a Claim Knowledge Check

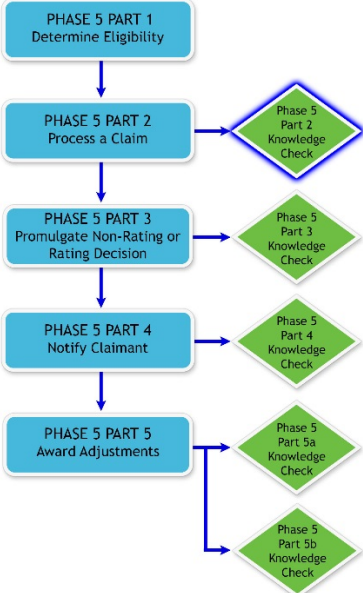
Lesson 1: Overview of the Development Process Trainee Guide

Topic	Description
Lesson Objectives:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate how to develop for information/evidence needed to fulfill duty to assist. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Define key terms used by PMC VSR in development of a claim. ○ Describe the common steps in development.
What You Need:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trainee Guide • Master Course Map learning aid • Appendix A: Worksheet • Appendix B: Sample Development Letter with 5103 Notice • Access to VSR Assistant for job aid: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Develop for Missing Information/Evidence job aid • Access to CPKM

PowerPoint Slides	Notes
<p>Lesson 1: Overview of the Development Process</p>	
<p>You Are Here</p> <pre> graph TD subgraph LeftColumn [] direction TB P1[PHASE 1 Mandatory Training] --> P2[PHASE 2 PMC VSR Foundation] P2 --> P3[PHASE 3 PMC VSR Resources] P3 --> P4[PHASE 4 Introduction to Pension Management] P4 --> P5[PHASE 5 Stages of Claim] P5 --> P6[PHASE 6 Processing Claims] end subgraph RightColumn [] direction TB P5P1[PHASE 5 PART 1 Determine Eligibility] --> P5P2[PHASE 5 PART 2 Process a Claim] P5P2 --> P5P3[PHASE 5 PART 3 Promulgate Non-Rating or Rating Decision] P5P3 --> P5P4[PHASE 5 PART 4 Notify Claimant] P5P4 --> P5P5[PHASE 5 PART 5 Award Adjustments] end P5 --- P5P1 P5P5 --- P5 </pre>	

Lesson 1: Overview of the Development Process Trainee Guide

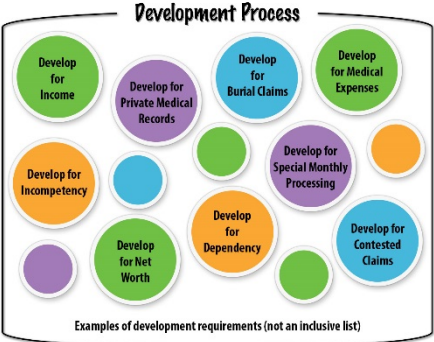
PowerPoint Slides	Notes
<p>Why It Matters!</p> <p>Processing a Claim:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Overview of the Development Process• Request Appointment of Fiduciary for Incompetency Claims	
<p>Technical Competencies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Processing Claims (PMC VSR)• Special Monthly Pension (SMP) Processes• VBA Applications (PMC VSR)	
<p>Lesson Objectives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Demonstrate how to develop for information/evidence needed to fulfill duty to assist.<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Define key terms used by PMC VSRs in development of a claim.○ Describe the common steps in development.	



PowerPoint Slides	Notes
<p>Knowledge Check</p>  <pre> graph TD P1[PHASE 5 PART 1 Determine Eligibility] --> P2[PHASE 5 PART 2 Process a Claim] P2 --> KC2{Phase 5 Part 2 Knowledge Check} P2 --> P3[PHASE 5 PART 3 Promulgate Non-Rating or Rating Decision] P3 --> KC3{Phase 5 Part 3 Knowledge Check} P3 --> P4[PHASE 5 PART 4 Notify Claimant] P4 --> KC4{Phase 5 Part 4 Knowledge Check} P4 --> P5[PHASE 5 PART 5 Award Adjustments] P5 --> KC5a{Phase 5 Part 5a Knowledge Check} P5 --> KC5b{Phase 5 Part 5b Knowledge Check} </pre>	
<p>Key Terms Used in Development</p> <p>The following are key terms used in development:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence • Information • Records • Duty to Assist • Duty to Notify 	
<p>Evidence Categories</p> <p>Evidence is divided into two categories:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Competent medical evidence • Competent lay evidence 	
<p>What Is Information?</p> <p>M21-1 I.1.A.3.h (Definition: Information)</p>	

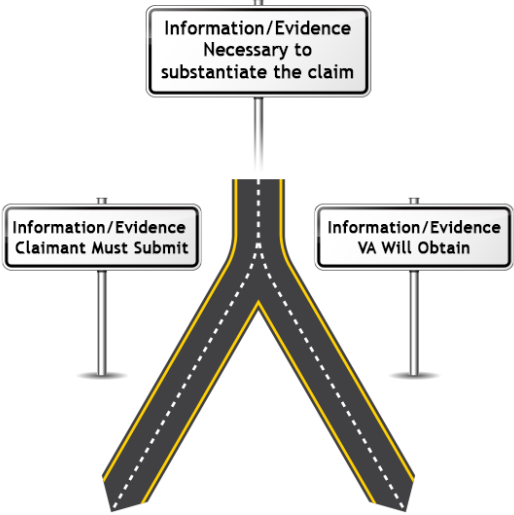
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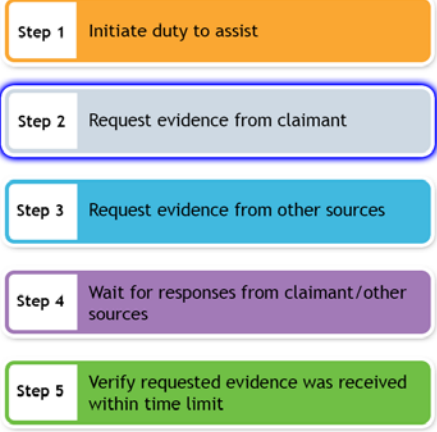
PowerPoint Slides	Notes
<p>What Are Records?</p> <p>Records are divided into two categories:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Federal records• Non-Federal records or private records	
<p>Duty to Assist</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 38 CFR 3.159 (c) (Department of Veterans Affairs assistance in developing claims)• M21-1 I.1.A .1.a (Description of PL 106-475)• M21-1 III.iii.1.A.1.a (VA's Duty to Assist Claimants)	
<p>Duty to Notify</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 38 CFR 3.159 (b) (VA's duty to notify claimants of necessary information or evidence)• M21-1 I.1.B.1.a (VA's Duty to Notify Claimants of Necessary Information or Evidence)	

PowerPoint Slides	Notes
<p>Practice Exercise—Define the Term</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Instructions:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Divide into pairs.○ Complete Appendix A: Part A—Define the Term Worksheet.○ Given the definition, select the correct development term.○ Use the references listed on Appendix A, Part A.○ Be prepared to share your finished activity with other groups.• Time allowed: 5-7 minutes	
<p>Practice Exercise—Match the Term Answers (1 of 2)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Request for documentation from state government, local government and/or privately held entity.2. Provided by a person who is qualified through education, training, or experience to offer medical diagnoses, statements, or opinions.3. Help claimant obtain information or evidence to substantiate the claim.4. Non-evidentiary facts used to substantiate the claim.	


PowerPoint Slides	Notes
<p>Practice Exercise—Match the Term Answers (2 of 2)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Request for documentation from Social Security Administration (SSA), VA medical centers (VAMCs), or National Personnel Records Center (NPRC). Provide a notice of any information or evidence needed to substantiate the claim. Provided by a nonexpert who has knowledge of facts or circumstances and conveys matters that can be observed. 	
<p>Development Process Overview</p>  <p align="center">Examples of development requirements (not an inclusive list)</p>	
<p>Development Process for Traditional and Fully Developed Claims (FDCs)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Traditional and FDCs have different development guidelines FDCs have limitations on development 	


PowerPoint Slides	Notes
<p>Common Steps in Development</p> <p>Common steps used to develop for missing or unclear information/evidence:</p>  <p>Step 1 Initiate duty to assist</p> <p>Step 2 Request evidence from claimant</p> <p>Step 3 Request evidence from other sources</p> <p>Step 4 Wait for responses from claimant/other sources</p> <p>Step 5 Verify requested evidence was received within time limit</p>	
<p>Handling Concurrent Actions</p> <p>Development is done all at once, not piecemeal</p>	
<p>Initiate Duty to Assist</p> <p>Common steps used to develop for missing or unclear information/evidence:</p>  <p>Step 1 Initiate duty to assist</p> <p>Step 2 Request evidence from claimant</p> <p>Step 3 Request evidence from other sources</p> <p>Step 4 Wait for responses from claimant/other sources</p> <p>Step 5 Verify requested evidence was received within time limit</p>	

PowerPoint Slides	Notes
<p>Information Necessary to Substantiate the Claim</p> 	
<p>Information/Evidence Claimant Must Submit Answers</p> <p>Examples of what information or evidence the claimant must submit to substantiate the claim:</p>	
<p>Information/Evidence VA Will Obtain Answers</p> <p>Examples of what information or evidence VA will obtain to substantiate the claim:</p>	

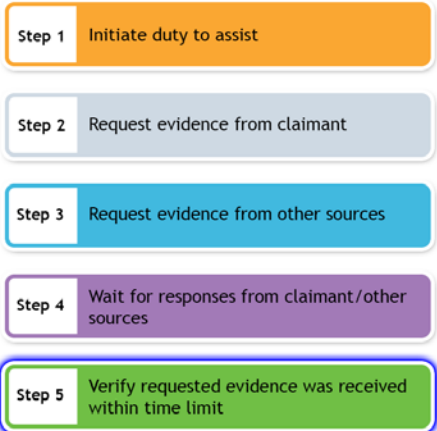
PowerPoint Slides	Notes
<p>Requesting Evidence</p> <p>In the overview process, step 2 and 3:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are listed as separate steps but often done at the same time • May not be performed for every development 	
<p>Request Evidence from Claimant</p> <p>Common steps used to develop for missing or unclear information/evidence:</p> 	
<p>Contact Claimant by Phone</p> <p>Scenario: Daniel Winter submitted an application for pension benefits. While reviewing the application, you notice a dependent child's date of birth is missing. You contact the claimant by phone to get the date of birth of the child. Mr. Winter provides the information.</p>	

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PowerPoint Slides	Notes																																																	
<p>Contact Claimant by Letter</p> <p>Scenario: Mr. Winter informs you the child is 19. You ask Mr. Winter if the child is currently attending college. He responds yes, but does not know any of the school information. As part of your duty to assist, you develop for dependency. You send a development letter requesting the claimant complete the school child attendance VA Form 21-674 (Request for Approval of School Attendance). You document the communication on VA Form 27-0820 (Report of General Information) and upload VVA.</p>																																																		
<p>Address Time Limit to Submit Evidence</p>  <p>The image shows a calendar for the month of July. The days of the week are listed at the top: Sun, Mon, Tue, Wed, Thu, Fri, Sat. The dates are arranged in a grid. The date 30 is circled in red.</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Sun</th> <th>Mon</th> <th>Tue</th> <th>Wed</th> <th>Thu</th> <th>Fri</th> <th>Sat</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>1</td> <td>2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3</td> <td>4</td> <td>5</td> <td>6</td> <td>7</td> <td>8</td> <td>9</td> </tr> <tr> <td>10</td> <td>11</td> <td>12</td> <td>13</td> <td>14</td> <td>15</td> <td>16</td> </tr> <tr> <td>17</td> <td>18</td> <td>19</td> <td>20</td> <td>21</td> <td>22</td> <td>23</td> </tr> <tr> <td>24</td> <td>25</td> <td>26</td> <td>27</td> <td>28</td> <td>29</td> <td>30</td> </tr> <tr> <td>31</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat						1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31							
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PowerPoint Slides	Notes
<p>Add 5103 Notice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5103 notice is required per the duty to notify • 5103 notice and Veteran Claims Assistance Act (VCAA) notice are used interchangeably • 5103 notice is automatically added to development letter, but the PMC VSR is responsible for adding any supplemental information to the notice 	
<p>Development Letter</p> 	
<p>Request Evidence from Other Sources</p> <p>Common steps used to develop for missing or unclear information/evidence:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Step 1 Initiate duty to assist Step 2 Request evidence from claimant Step 3 Request evidence from other sources Step 4 Wait for responses from claimant/other sources Step 5 Verify requested evidence was received within time limit 	

PowerPoint Slides	Notes
<p>Request Evidence from a Federal Entity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Request records by following standard procedures• Request records by accessing the following systems:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ CAPRI○ PIES○ DPRIS	
<p>Request Evidence from a Non-Federal Entity</p> <p>PMC VSRs will make reasonable efforts to obtain relevant records not in the custody of a Federal department or agency, to include records from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• State or local governments• Private medical care providers• Current or former employers• Other non-Federal governmental sources	

PowerPoint Slides	Notes
<p>Wait for Response from Claimant/Other Sources</p> <p>Common steps used to develop for missing or unclear information/evidence:</p> 	
<p>Verify Time Limit on Received Evidence</p> <p>Common steps used to develop for missing or unclear information/evidence:</p> 	
<p>Time Limit and Requested Evidence</p> <p>Was requested evidence received within the time limit?</p>	

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PowerPoint Slides	Notes
Requested Evidence 	
Incomplete Evidence <ul style="list-style-type: none">• If the partial evidence has been received prior to the time limit, then follow guidelines in M21-1 III.iii.1.B.2.c (Incomplete Responses That Justify Award Action)• If all the evidence has not been received by the time limit, then follow the guidelines in M21-1 III.iii.1.B.2.b (Next Steps After Sending a Request for Evidence)	

PowerPoint Slides	Notes
<p>Practice Exercise—What Would You Do Next?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instructions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Divide into groups of three. ○ Use the Develop for Missing Information/Evidence job aid. ○ Complete Appendix A: Part B—What Would You Do Next? Worksheet. ○ Read the scenarios and decide what would be the next step in the development process. ○ Be prepared to share your finished activity with other groups. • Time allowed: 20 minutes 	
<p>Practice Exercise—What Would You Do Next? Answers (1 of 2)</p> <p>Scenario 1:</p> <p>Scenario 2:</p>	
<p>Practice Exercise—What Would You Do Next? Answers (2 of 2)</p> <p>Scenario 3:</p> <p>Scenario 4:</p>	
<p>Questions?</p> 	

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PowerPoint Slides	Notes
<p>Lesson Summary</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What are some examples of information or evidence a claimant must submit?• What are some examples of information or evidence VA will obtain?• What are two ways in which you could request evidence from the claimant?• What are some sources that evidence is requested from other than the claimant?	
<p>What's Next</p> <p>Phase 5: Part 2, Lesson 2, Request Appointment of Fiduciary for Incompetency Claims</p>	