



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

Lesson Plan

October 28, 2016

Version 1.0

Lesson 1: Complete and Incomplete Applications for Benefits
Lesson Plan

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:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 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)

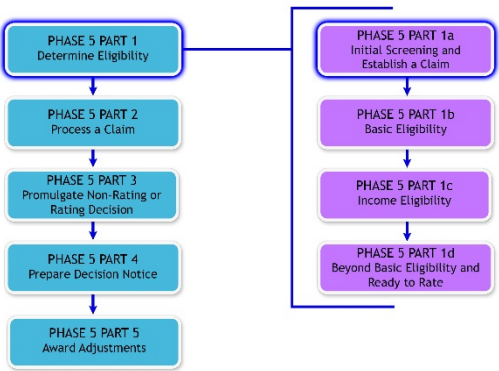


Lesson 1: Complete and Incomplete Applications for Benefits
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Topic	Description
Knowledge Check:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Phase 5: Stages of a Claim, Part 1 (a): Initial Screening and Claim Establishment Knowledge Check
Technical Competencies:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Program Benefits and Eligibility (PMC VSR) Processing Claims (PMC VSR)
Lesson Objectives:	<p>Determine whether the application for benefits is complete or incomplete</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 Need:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lesson plan Master Course Map learning aid Slides Projector Access to VBA Intranet Access to CPKM Ensure trainees have ability to send and receive e-mail in the classroom

Instructor Notes

This lesson provides trainees with the information and references to distinguish between complete and incomplete applications for benefits they will encounter in the role of PMC VSR. The lesson presents opportunities to work in small groups to practice scenarios to determine whether the application is completed or incomplete.

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PowerPoint Slides	Instructor Activities
<p>Complete and Incomplete Applications for Benefits</p>	<p>DISPLAY slide</p> <p>1. "Complete and Incomplete Applications for Benefits"</p> <p>INTRODUCE yourself as the instructor.</p> <p>INTRODUCE the lesson.</p>
<p>You Are Here</p> 	<p>DISPLAY slide</p> <p>2. "You Are Here"</p>  <p>REFER to the Master Course Map learning aid in the Trainee Guide.</p> <p>DESCRIBE the diagram.</p> <p>INFORM trainees that Phase 5, Part 1, Determine Eligibility, contains four subparts. Subpart 1a contains several lessons that focus on the initial screening and establishment of a claim.</p>  <p>EMPHASIZE that each of these lessons relate to each other as part of the initial screening process.</p>


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PowerPoint Slides	Instructor Activities
<p>Initial Screening</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 	<p>DISPLAY slide</p> <p>3. "Initial Screening"</p> <p>EXPLAIN to the trainees that during the initial screening process the PMC VSR verifies whether the Claims Assistant has processed the initial screening correctly as well as evaluates other aspects of the claim.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has the application for benefits been classified correctly as complete or incomplete? • Was the claim submitted with a fully developed claim application? • Does the PMC have jurisdiction? • Has the claim been expedited if appropriate? • Is it a reopened claim? • Is it a dual claim? • Has the correct date of claim been established? • Has the Power of Attorney (POA) been validated? • Was the correct end product code used? • Is the claim related to Old Law or Section 306 Pension? <p>INFORM trainees that the initial screening involves several tasks that may be performed simultaneously. For the purpose of this course, tasks will be taught as a separate lessons, starting with this lesson.</p>

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PowerPoint Slides	Instructor Activities
<p>Ice Breaker Activity</p> <p>Scenario:</p> <p>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.</p>	<p>DISPLAY slide</p> <p>4. "Ice Breaker Activity"</p> <p>READ the scenario.</p> <p>REMIND trainees that they learned the purpose of screening a claim in Phase 4.</p> <p>DISCUSS with the trainees some key points they may noticed while reviewing this scenario. Use these questions to guide your discussion.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the date the application was received? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>November 5, 2014</i> • What form was used for the application? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>VA Form 21-526</i> • Was the Veteran identified in SHARE? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Yes</i> • Was all the information in the application completed? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Yes</i> • Was the form signed? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>No</i> <p>INFORM trainees that recognizing whether the application for benefits is complete or incomplete is important so VA can grant entitlement to benefits in a timely manner.</p>

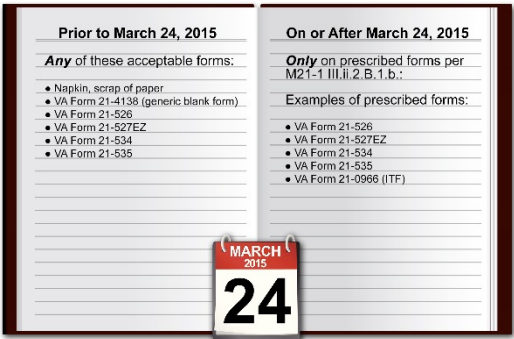

Lesson 1: Complete and Incomplete Applications for Benefits
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PowerPoint Slides	Instructor Activities
<p>Knowledge Check</p> <pre> graph TD A[PHASE 5 PART 1a Initial Screening and Establishing a Claim] --> B{Phase 5 Part 1a Knowledge Check} A --> C[PHASE 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} </pre>	<p>DISPLAY slide</p> <p>5. "Knowledge Check"</p> <p>INFORM the trainees that they will be assessed on this content in the Phase 5: Stages of a Claim, Part 1(a): Initial Screening and Claim Establishment Knowledge Check. The Knowledge Check will be given after Phase 5, Part 1, Lesson 8.</p>  <p>REFER to the Master Course Map learning aid, <i>Lessons by Phase</i> section, to review the lessons included within the Knowledge Check.</p>
<p>Technical Competencies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program Benefits and Eligibility (PMC VSR) • Processing Claims (PMC VSR) 	<p>DISPLAY slide</p> <p>6. "Technical Competencies"</p> <p>EXPLAIN that this lesson prepares them for the program benefits and eligibility and processing claims competencies.</p>

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PowerPoint Slides	Instructor Activities
<p>Lesson Objectives</p> <p>Determine whether the application for benefits is complete or incomplete.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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.	<p>DISPLAY slide 7. "Lesson Objectives "</p> <p>PRESENT the objectives for the lesson.</p>

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PowerPoint Slides	Instructor Activities
<p>History of Acceptable Forms</p> 	<p>DISPLAY slide</p> <p>8. "History of Acceptable Forms"</p>  <p>REFER to the learning aid named History of Acceptable Forms in the Trainee Guide.</p> <p>EXPLAIN the history of acceptable forms prior to March 24, 2015.</p> <p>PROVIDE examples of forms that you received prior to March 24, 2015, based on your own experience processing claims.</p> <p>INFORM trainees that effective March 24, 2015, VA will only recognize compensation, pension, survivors, and related claims if they are submitted on the required standard forms also known as <i>prescribed forms</i>.</p> <p>PROVIDE examples of forms that you received on or after March 24, 2015, based on your own experience processing claims.</p>

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Learning Aid: History of Acceptable Forms

Prior to March 24, 2015

Any of these acceptable forms:

- Napkin, scrap of paper
- VA Form 21-4138 (generic blank form)
- VA Form 21-526
- VA Form 21-527EZ
- VA Form 21-534
- VA Form 21-535

On or After March 24, 2015

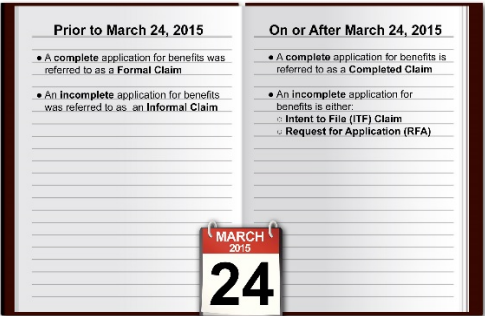


Only on prescribed forms per M21-1 III.ii.2.B.1.b.:

Examples of prescribed forms:

- VA Form 21-526
- VA Form 21-527EZ
- VA Form 21-534
- VA Form 21-535
- VA Form 21-0966 (ITF)



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PowerPoint Slides	Instructor Activities
<p>Terminology</p> 	<p>DISPLAY slide 9. "Terminology"</p>  <p>REFER to the learning aid named Terminology in their Trainee Guide.</p> <p>INFORM trainees that the terminology for complete and incomplete applications has been updated with the implementation of the new requirement that an application for benefits on/after March 24, 2015, must be received on a prescribed form.</p> <p>DISCUSS with trainees that applications for benefits received:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Prior to March 24, 2015, were considered formal or informal claims• On or after March 24, 2015, now considered complete, ITF, and RFA  <p>EMPHASIZE that even though the March 24, 2015, date has passed, it is important for them to understand the terminology used prior March 24, 2015, because they may receive applications that have a date prior to March 24, 2015.</p>

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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)**



Learning Aid: Terminology

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PowerPoint Slides	Instructor Activities
<p>Applications Received Prior March 24, 2015</p> <p><u>Prior to March 24, 2015</u> Complete application = Formal Claim Incomplete application = Informal Claim</p> 	<p>DISPLAY slide 10. "Applications Request Received Prior March 24, 2015"</p> <p>EXPLAIN that prior March 24, 2015, VA identified complete and incomplete applications for benefits as formal and informal claims.</p>


Prior to March 24, 2015

Complete application = Formal Claim



Incomplete application = Informal Claim





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PowerPoint Slides	Instructor Activities
<p>Formal Claims (1 of 2)</p> <p>A formal claim is an application for benefits that must be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Received prior March 24, 2015• On a prescribed VA form	<p>DISPLAY slide</p> <p>11. "Formal Claims (1 of 2)"</p>  <p>REFER to access the CPKM portal to find M21-1 III.ii.2.B.1.a (Applications for Disability Compensation and/or Pension). Once they have navigated to the page, ask a trainee read aloud the requirements for a formal application received prior to March 24, 2015.</p> <p>REMIND trainees that the prescribed forms are the acceptable VA forms.</p>

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<p>Formal Claim (2 of 2)</p> <p>A formal claim is an application for benefits that <u>also</u> must be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Substantially complete• Signed	<p>DISPLAY slide</p> <p>12. "Formal Claims (2 of 2)"</p>  <p>REFER to CPKM Portal to view M21-1 I.1.B.1.b (Criteria for Substantially Complete Applications). Have trainees navigate to the correct page and request one of the trainees read the reference aloud.</p>  <p>ASK trainees, what makes a formal claim substantially complete?</p> <p><i>A substantially complete application must include the following:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Claimant's name and relationship to the Veteran, if applicable</i>• <i>Sufficient service information for the VA to verify the Veteran's service, if applicable</i>• <i>Benefit claimed</i>• <i>Disability(ies) on which the claim for benefits is based</i>• <i>Signature of the claimant or another legally authorized individual</i>• <i>Statement of income for Veterans pension, Survivors pension, or Parents' Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC)</i>


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PowerPoint Slides	Instructor Activities
<p>Informal Claims</p> <p>An informal claim is an application for benefit that is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Received prior March 24, 2015• Any communication or action indicating an intent to apply for VA benefits• Substantially incomplete	<p>DISPLAY slide</p> <p>13. "Informal Claims"</p>  <p>REFER to CPKM Portal to view M21-1 III.ii.2.C.1.a (Characteristics of an Informal Claim). Have trainees navigate to the correct page and locate the characteristics of an informal claim.</p> <p>DISCUSS with the trainees the characteristics of an informal claim. Use the follow questions to guide your experience:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What kind of communication was acceptable prior March 24, 2015?<ul style="list-style-type: none">◦ <i>Any communication or action (e.g., napkins, e-mail to VA, VA Form 21-4138 [Statement in Support of Claim])</i>• What if the prescribed form was not signed or substantially incomplete?<ul style="list-style-type: none">◦ <i>If the form was not signed or substantially incomplete then it is considered an informal claim</i>• What are the requirements of submitting an informal claim?<ul style="list-style-type: none">◦ <i>A formal claim must be submitted within one year from the date of the notification letter.</i>  <p>EMPHASIZE that informal claims are no longer accepted by the VA as of March 24, 2015.</p>

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<p>Group Activity—Scenario</p> <p>Scenario:</p> <p>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.</p>	<p>DISPLAY slide</p> <p>14. “Group Activity—Scenario”</p> <p>DIRECT trainees to gather in groups of three. Have each group review the scenario and decide whether the claim in the scenario meets the requirements of a formal claim.</p>
<p>Group Activity—Scenario Answer</p> <p>Based on the information given, you can determine that the claim would be a</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Formal claim because:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Prescribed form (VA Form 21P-527EZ (Application for Pension) dated APR 2016; after March 24, 2015)</i> ○ <i>Substantially complete</i> ○ <i>VA Form is signed</i> 	<p>DISPLAY slide</p> <p>15. “Group Activity—Scenario Answer”</p> <p>DISCUSS the answers among the trainees and ask them to provide the rationale for their responses.</p> <p>REVIEW with trainees the requirements of a formal claim. Use the following questions to guide your review:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the date prior to March 24, 2015? • Is the application on a prescribed form? • Is the application substantially complete? • Is the application form signed?

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PowerPoint Slides	Instructor Activities
<p>Applications Received On or After March 24, 2015</p> <p><u>On or After March 24, 2015</u> Complete application = Complete Claim Incomplete application = ITF or RFA</p> 	<p>DISPLAY slide 16. "Applications Received On/After March 24, 2015"</p> <p>EXPLAIN that effective March 24, 2015, VA will only recognize compensation, pension, survivors, and related claims if they are submitted on the required standard forms.</p> <p>INFORM trainees that as of March 24, 2015 that complete applications are referred to as a completed claim. The application is incomplete if an Intent to File (ITF) application is submitted or the application is not filed on a prescribed form.</p>



On or After March 24, 2015

Complete application = Complete Claim


Incomplete application = ITF or RFA




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<p>ITF Claims</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the acceptable form for submitting an ITF? • What are some additional methods for communicating ITF? 	<p>DISPLAY slide 17. "ITF Claims"</p>  <p>REFER to CPKM Portal to view M21-1 III.ii.2.C.1.d (Communication of an ITF). Have one of the trainees read the reference aloud.</p> <p>DISCUSS with the trainees how an ITF can be communicated to VA. Use the following questions to guide your experience:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the acceptable form for submitting an ITF? • What are some additional methods for communicating ITF?
<p>ITF Claims Answers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the acceptable form for submitting an ITF? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ <i>Completed VA Form 21-0966 (Intent to File a Claim)</i> • What are some additional methods for communicating ITF? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ <i>Contacting National Call Center (NCC) or National Pension Call Center (NPCC)</i> ◦ <i>Initiating an application via eBenefits/VDC, Stakeholder Enterprise Portal (SEP), or Digits-to-Digits (D2D)</i> ◦ <i>Contacting a VSC/PMC employee by telephone or in person</i> 	<p>DISPLAY slide 18. "ITF Claims Answers"</p> <p>PROVIDE the answers to the questions.</p>  <p>EMPHASIZE that the initiation of an application for benefits via eBenefits/VDC or SEP constitutes an acceptable communication of an ITF.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When an ITF is submitted in writing, it must be submitted on VA Form 21-0966 (Intent to File a Claim). • VA Form 21-0966 must be signed by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Claimant ◦ Claimant's Veterans service organization (VSO) ◦ VA-recognized power of attorney (POA) <p>NOTE: Trainees will learn more about VSOs and POAs in the Power of Attorney lesson.</p>



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PowerPoint Slides	Instructor Activities
<p>Communication of an ITF</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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?	<p>DISPLAY slide</p> <p>19. "Communication of an ITF"</p>  <p>REFER to CPKM Portal to view M21-1 III.ii.2.C.1.f (Why Communication of an ITF Is Important). Have trainees navigate to the correct page. Have one of the trainees read the reference aloud.</p> <p>SELECT one or more of the trainees to answer the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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?

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PowerPoint Slides	Instructor Activities
<p>Communication of an ITF Answers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why is communicating of an ITF important? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>The communication of an ITF to VA is important because VA may grant entitlement to benefits from as early as the date VA received the communication.</i> • What is the time frame for submitting the substantially complete application? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>The requirement is that VA receives a substantially complete application for benefits from the claimant within one year of receiving the ITF.</i> • When is the claimant required to submit a prescribed form after submitting an ITF claim? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>The requirement is that VA receives a substantially complete application for benefits from the claimant within one year of receiving the ITF</i> 	<p>DISPLAY slide 20. "Communication of an ITF Answers"</p> <p>PROVIDE the answers to the questions.</p> <p>REMINDE trainees that ITF is considered an incomplete application until a substantially complete application is received.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"></p> <p>EMPHASIZE that the communication of a completed ITF to VA is important because VA may grant entitlement to benefits from as early as the date VA received the communication, as long as VA receives a substantially complete application for benefits from the claimant within one year of that date.</p>

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PowerPoint Slides	Instructor Activities								
<p>Complete ITF</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th style="background-color: #FFFF00;">Complete if . . .</th> <th style="background-color: #ADD8E6;">Incomplete if . . .</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Claimant can be identified</td> <td>Claimant <u>cannot</u> be identified</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Claimant or representative signed VA Form 21-0966</td> <td>Claimant can be identified but the form was <u>not</u> signed</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Benefit they are seeking is identified</td> <td>Claimant can be identified but does <u>not</u> identify benefit sought</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Complete if . . .	Incomplete if . . .	Claimant can be identified	Claimant <u>cannot</u> be identified	Claimant or representative signed VA Form 21-0966	Claimant can be identified but the form was <u>not</u> signed	Benefit they are seeking is identified	Claimant can be identified but does <u>not</u> identify benefit sought	<p>DISPLAY slide 21. "Complete ITF"</p> <p>REMIND trainees that although an ITF is considered an incomplete application until a substantially complete application is received, the VA Form 21-0966 (Intent to File a Claim) needs to be complete.</p> <p align="center"></p> <p>ASK trainees, what makes a VA Form 21-0966 (Intent to File a Claim) application complete?</p> <p align="center"></p> <p>REFER to 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). Have trainees navigate to the correct page and ask a trainee to read first portion of the reference aloud. Ask a trainee to summarize what makes an ITF complete.</p>
Complete if . . .	Incomplete if . . .								
Claimant can be identified	Claimant <u>cannot</u> be identified								
Claimant or representative signed VA Form 21-0966	Claimant can be identified but the form was <u>not</u> signed								
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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
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<p>Incomplete ITF</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th style="background-color: #a0c0ff;">Complete if . . .</th> <th style="background-color: #ffff00;">Incomplete if . . .</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Claimant can be identified</td> <td>Claimant cannot be identified</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Claimant or representative signed VA Form 21-0966</td> <td>Claimant can be identified but the form was not signed</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Benefit they are seeking is identified</td> <td>Claimant can be identified but does not identify benefit sought</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Complete if . . .	Incomplete if . . .	Claimant can be identified	Claimant cannot be identified	Claimant or representative signed VA Form 21-0966	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	<p>DISPLAY slide 22. "Incomplete ITF"</p>  <p>REFER to M21-1 III.ii.2.C.1.b (Informal Claims Received Prior to March 24, 2015, Communication of an Intent to File (ITF), and Requests for an Application). Ask a trainee to read the table portion of the reference aloud. Ask a trainee to summarize what makes an ITF incomplete.</p> <p>EXPLAIN that if a VA Form 21-0966 (Intent to File a Claim) is incomplete then a RFA letter should be sent to the claimant. The date of claim would be considered once the prescribed form is received in response to the RFA letter sent by the VA.</p>
Complete if . . .	Incomplete if . . .								
Claimant can be identified	Claimant cannot be identified								
Claimant or representative signed VA Form 21-0966	Claimant can be identified but the form was not signed								
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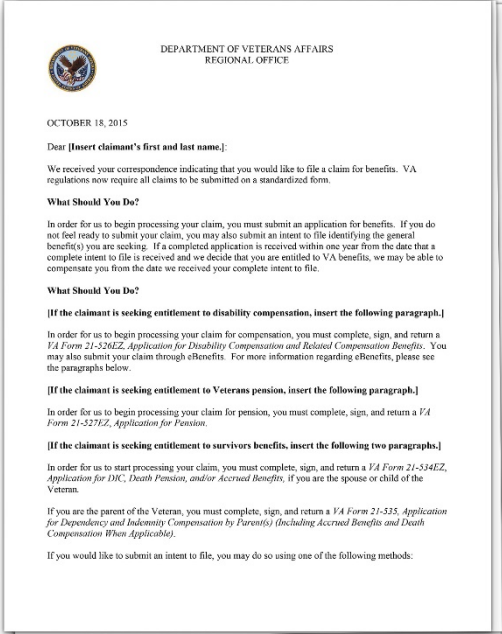


Complete if...	Incomplete if...
Claimant can be identified	Claimant cannot be identified
Claimant or representative signed VA Form 21-0966 (Intent to File a Claim)	Claimant can be identified but the form was not signed
Benefit they are seeking is identified	Claimant can be identified but does not identify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

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PowerPoint Slides	Instructor Activities
<p>Request for Application (RFA)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On or After March 24, 2015 • An incomplete ITF application • Not filed on an appropriate prescribed form 	<p>DISPLAY slide 23. "Request for Application (RFA)"</p> <p>REFER to 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). Have trainees navigate to the correct page and ask a trainee to read first portion of the reference aloud. Ask one of the trainees to summarize what is a RFA.</p> <p>REMIND trainees that an incomplete ITF application is also considered an RFA.</p>
<p>RFA Example</p> <p>Scenario:</p> <p>On August 15, 2015, VA received a VA Form 21-4138, Statement in Support of Claim from Veteran Robert Lederman requesting non-service 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.</p>	<p>DISPLAY slide 24. "RFA Example"</p> <p>DIRECT one of the trainees to read the scenario aloud.</p> <p>DISCUSS with the trainees what stands out in the scenario. Make sure to focus on the August 15, 2015 date and the VA Form.</p> <p>EXPLAIN that a VA Form 21-4138 is the most common form that is non-application form that is received by PMCs.</p> <div style="text-align: center;">  </div> <p>EMPHASIZE VA will not hold the date as effective date for benefits since the request was made on unacceptable form after March 24, 2015.</p>

Lesson 1: Complete and Incomplete Applications for Benefits

Lesson Plan

PowerPoint Slides	Instructor Activities
<p>RFA Letter</p>  <p>DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS REGIONAL OFFICE</p> <p>OCTOBER 18, 2015</p> <p>Dear [Insert claimant's first and last name]:</p> <p>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.</p> <p>What Should You Do?</p> <p>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.</p> <p>What Should You Do?</p> <p>[If the claimant is seeking entitlement to disability compensation, insert the following paragraph.]</p> <p>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.</p> <p>[If the claimant is seeking entitlement to Veterans pension, insert the following paragraph.]</p> <p>In order for us to begin processing your claim for pension, you must complete, sign, and return a VA Form 21-527EZ, Application for Pension.</p> <p>[If the claimant is seeking entitlement to survivors benefits, insert the following two paragraphs.]</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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 Parents (Including Accrued Benefits and Death Compensation When Applicable).</p> <p>If you would like to submit an intent to file, you may do so using one of the following methods:</p>	<p>DISPLAY slide 25. "RFA Letter"</p>  <p>REFER the trainees to the learning aid named RFA Sample Letter in the Trainee Guide.</p> <p>EXPLAIN that an RFA letter is sent to a claimant who has submitted an application not on a prescribed form.</p> <p>DISCUSS the RFA letter with the trainees. Use the following questions to guide your discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What is the purpose of the RFA letter?• Which application form does this letter instruct the claimant to use?• What other options does this letter describe if the claimant is not ready to submit a claim?• What methods does this letter provide for submitting a claim?  <p>EMPHASIZE that the importance of reading through this RFA letter is their duty to assist Veterans.</p>

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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:

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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.]**


Lesson 1: Complete and Incomplete Applications for Benefits
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PowerPoint Slides	Instructor Activities
<p>Practice Exercise—Scenario</p> <p>Scenario:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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? 	<p>DISPLAY slide</p> <p>26. "Practice Exercise—Scenario"</p> <p>DIRECT trainees to review the scenario and record their responses in an e-mail and then send the e-mail to another trainee.</p> <p>GIVE trainees 5 to 7 minutes to compose their responses. Once they have all written down their responses via e-mail, have the trainees trade responses and compare their answers.</p> <p>NOTE: The trainees will have access to their e-mail during the lesson so they will be able to write and receive e-mails.</p>

Lesson 1: Complete and Incomplete Applications for Benefits
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PowerPoint Slides	Instructor Activities
<p>Group Activity—Scenario Answers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Based on the information given, you would consider this as a:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ <i>Request for Application</i>• The rationale for selecting this answer:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ <i>The date of June 12, 2015, is after March 24, 2015.</i>○ <i>The application was not on prescribed form.</i>	<p>DISPLAY slide 27. "Group Activity—Scenario Answers"</p> <p>EXPLAIN that the claim in this scenario would be considered an RFA.</p> <p>DISCUSS the answer with the trainees and ask them to identify any inconsistencies among their responses.</p> <p></p> <p>EMPHASIZE the importance of making the right determination of complete and incomplete applications on/after March 24, 2015.</p> <p></p> <p>ASK trainees if they have any questions prior moving on.</p>

Lesson 1: Complete and Incomplete Applications for Benefits
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PowerPoint Slides	Instructor Activities
<p>Practice Exercise—Quiz</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instructions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Divide into groups of two or three. ○ Each group will receive one scenario. ○ Determine whether the scenario meets the requirements for formal, informal, complete, ITF, or RFA. ○ Write answers in the space provided. ○ Submit one answer sheet per group to the instructor. • Time allowed: 10 min. 	<p>DISPLAY slides</p> <p>28. "Practice Exercise—Quiz"</p> <p>DIVIDE trainees into groups, two or three per group. Assign groups or ask trainees to form groups.</p>  <p>REFER the trainees to the Practice Exercise Scenario section of the Trainee Guide. Have each group choose a scenario. If there are more than four groups, scenarios can be reused.</p> <p>DIRECT trainees to consult with group members to determine why the application is formal, informal, complete, ITF, or RFA and provide detail explanations. Give groups 10 minutes to discuss and record their answers. Have each group share their answers.</p> <p>DISCUSS each group's answers. For each group's answers, give feedback supported with examples or references.</p>

Lesson 1: Complete and Incomplete Applications for Benefits
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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.

Answer 1: ITF Claim. The date is after March 28, 2015 and on a complete VA Form 21-0966.

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

Answer 2: Informal Claim. The date is prior March 24, 2015 and is on a letter.

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.

Answer 3: RFA. The date is after March 24, 2015 and not on a prescribed form.

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.

Answer 4: Informal claim. The date is prior March 24, 2015 and on a VA Form 21-4138.



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PowerPoint Slides	Instructor Activities
<p>Practice Exercise—Quiz Answers (1 of 2)</p> <p>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.</p> <p><i>ITF Claim. The date is after March 28, 2015 and on a complete VA Form 21-0966 (Intent to File a Claim).</i></p> <p>Scenario 2: On January 23, 2015, the VA received a letter from a Veteran requesting to initiate a claim for pension.</p> <p><i>Informal Claim. The date is prior March 24, 2015 and is on a letter.</i></p>	<p>DISPLAY slide</p> <p>29. "Practice Exercise—Quiz Answers (1 of 2)"</p>

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PowerPoint Slides	Instructor Activities
<p>Practice Exercise—Quiz Answers (2 of 2)</p> <p>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.</p> <p><i>RFA. The date is after March 24, 2015 and not on a prescribed form.</i></p> <p>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.</p> <p><i>Informal claim. The date is prior March 24, 2015 and on a VA Form 21-4138.</i></p>	<p>DISPLAY slide</p> <p>30. "Practice Exercise—Quiz Answers (2 of 2)"</p>

Lesson 1: Complete and Incomplete Applications for Benefits
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PowerPoint Slides	Instructor Activities
<p>Lesson Summary</p> <p>Prior to March 24, 2015</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete application is a formal claim • Incomplete application is an informal claim <p>On or After March 24, 2015</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete application is a completed claim • Incomplete application is an: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ ITF ○ RFA 	<p>DISPLAY slide</p> <p>31. "Lesson Summary"</p> <p>REVIEW the submission requirements for a completed and incomplete application prior to March 24, 2015.</p> <p>REVIEW the submission requirements for a completed and incomplete application on or after March 24, 2015.</p>
<p>Questions?</p> 	<p>DISPLAY slide</p> <p>32. "Questions"</p>  <p>ASK trainees if they have any questions or concerns regarding formal, informal, ITF or RFA claims. Use this time to clear up any confusion or misconceptions about the information presented.</p>
<p>What's Next</p> <p>Phases 5, Part 1, Lesson 2: Fully Developed Claims (FDCs)</p>	<p>DISPLAY slide</p> <p>33. "What's Next"</p> <p>DISCUSS the upcoming Phase 5, Part 1, Lesson 2: Fully Developed Claims with trainees.</p>