



## PENSION AND FIDUCIARY SERVICE

PMC VSR Advanced Core Course  
Phase 5: Stages of a Claim  
Part 5: Award Adjustments

# Phase 5, Part 5a Knowledge Check Preparation

Lesson Plan

May 18, 2017

Version 1.0

**Phase 5 Part 5a Knowledge Check Preparation  
Lesson Plan**

**Phase 5, Part 5a Knowledge Check Preparation**

**Lesson Overview**

Topic	Description
Time Estimate:	1.5 hours
Purpose of the Knowledge Check Preparation:	This knowledge check preparation is part of the entry-level course for PMC VSRs. The purpose of this knowledge-check preparation is to provide PMC VSRs with an opportunity to review, practice, and ask questions regarding what they have learned during Phase 5, Part 5a, so that they are better prepared for the knowledge check.
Prerequisite Training Requirements:	Prior to taking the Phase 5, Part 5a Knowledge Check Preparation, trainees must complete PMC VSR Core Course Phases 1–4 and Phase 5, Parts 1–4, and Part 5 lessons 1-3. Refer to the <b>Master Course Map</b> learning aid for a list of lessons.
Target Audience:	This knowledge check preparation is for entry-level PMC VSRs.
References	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Master Course Map</b> learning aid</li> <li>• Compensation and Pension Knowledge Management (CPKM)</li> <li>• See <i>Appendix A</i> for references introduced in earlier lessons</li> </ul>
Technical Competencies:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Program Benefits and Eligibility (PMC VSR)</li> <li>• Processing Claims (PMC VSR)</li> <li>• Special Monthly Pension (SMP) Processing</li> <li>• VBA Applications (PMC VSR)</li> <li>• Income Counting and Net Worth</li> </ul>
Knowledge Check:	Phase 5, Part 5a: Award Adjustments Knowledge Check

**Phase 5 Part 5a Knowledge Check Preparation  
Lesson Plan**

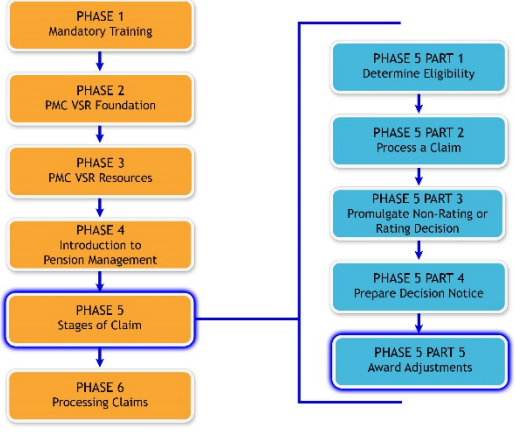

Topic	Description
What You Need:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lesson Plan</li> <li>• <b>Master Course Map</b> learning aid</li> <li>• Access to CPKM</li> <li>• Access to VSR Assistant for job aids</li> <li>• Appendix A: Knowledge Check Preparation References</li> <li>• Appendix B: Example Claim</li> <li>• Appendix C: Phase 5, Part 5 Worksheet</li> <li>• Appendix D: Question and Answer Worksheet</li> <li>• Slides</li> <li>• Projector</li> <li>• Calculator</li> </ul>

**Instructor Notes**

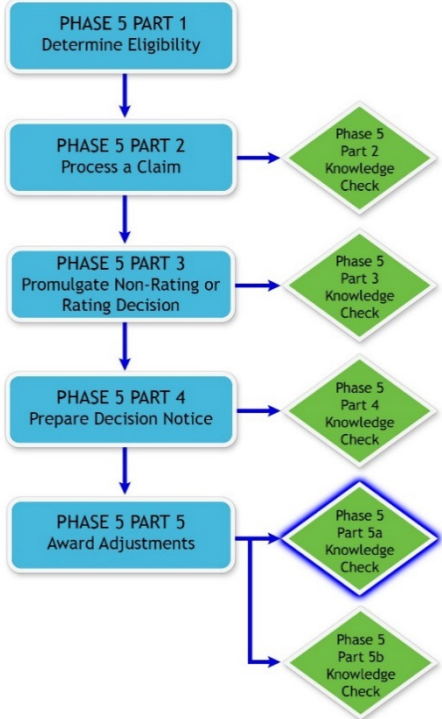
This knowledge check preparation will provide trainees with a refresher of the topics covered in Phase 5, Part 5a: Award Adjustments. This will include a review of all lesson objectives, key teaching points covered in the lessons, partner activities to reinforce understanding, and a question and answer forum to provide additional clarification about the information presented.

PowerPoint Slides	Instructor Activities
<b>Phase 5, Part 5a Knowledge Check Preparation</b>	<p><b>DISPLAY</b> slide</p> <p>1. "Phase 5, Part 5a Knowledge Check Preparation"</p> <p><b>INTRODUCE</b> yourself as the instructor.</p> <p><b>INTRODUCE</b> the knowledge check preparation.</p>

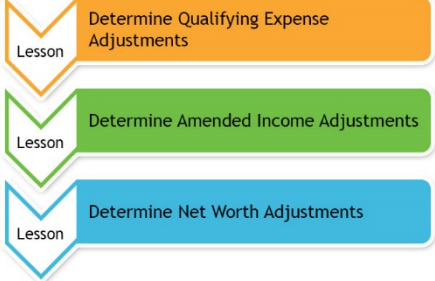
**Phase 5 Part 5a Knowledge Check Preparation  
Lesson Plan**

PowerPoint Slides	Instructor Activities
<p><b>You Are Here</b></p> 	<p><b>DISPLAY</b> slide 2. "You Are Here"</p>  <p><b>REFER</b> to the PMC VSR <b>Master Course Map</b> learning aid.</p> <p><b>DESCRIBE</b> the diagram.</p> <p><b>INFORM</b> trainees that Knowledge Check preparation will assist them in successfully completing the Phase 5, Part 5a: Award Adjustments Knowledge Check.</p>
<p><b>Why It Matters!</b></p> <p>Preparing an award adjustment involves reviewing any additional information provided by the claimant or third party, and deciding the reason for adjustment.</p>	<p><b>DISPLAY</b> slide 3. "Why It Matters!"</p> <p><b>REMINDE</b> trainees that preparing an award adjustment involves reviewing any additional information provided by the claimant or third party, and deciding the reason for adjustment.</p> <p><b>REFER</b> trainees to Appendix A and have them briefly review all the references that are applicable to the award adjustment lessons.</p>



**Phase 5 Part 5a Knowledge Check Preparation  
Lesson Plan**

PowerPoint Slides	Instructor Activities
<p><b>Knowledge Check</b></p>  <pre> graph TD     P1[PHASE 5 PART 1 Determine Eligibility] --&gt; P2[PHASE 5 PART 2 Process a Claim]     P2 --&gt; KC2{Phase 5 Part 2 Knowledge Check}     P2 --&gt; P3[PHASE 5 PART 3 Promulgate Non-Rating or Rating Decision]     P3 --&gt; KC3{Phase 5 Part 3 Knowledge Check}     P3 --&gt; P4[PHASE 5 PART 4 Prepare Decision Notice]     P4 --&gt; KC4{Phase 5 Part 4 Knowledge Check}     P4 --&gt; P5[PHASE 5 PART 5 Award Adjustments]     P5 --&gt; KC5a{Phase 5 Part 5a Knowledge Check}     P5 --&gt; KC5b{Phase 5 Part 5b Knowledge Check}     </pre>	<p><b>DISPLAY</b> slide 4. "Knowledge Check"</p> <p><b>INFORM</b> trainees that they will be assessed on this content in the Phase 5, Part 5a Knowledge Check.</p> <p><b>REMINDE</b> trainees that all the lessons included on the knowledge check are also listed on the POI.</p>
<p><b>Knowledge Check Preparation Overview</b></p> <p>This preparation will consist of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lesson objectives review</li> <li>• Partner activities</li> <li>• Question/answer forum</li> </ul>	<p><b>DISPLAY</b> slide 5. "Knowledge Check Preparation Overview"</p> <p><b>EXPLAIN</b> that this preparation will consist of a review of the learning objectives for each lesson in Phase 5, Part 5a. This is followed by an activity to help reinforce their understanding of those objectives.</p> <p><b>INFORM</b> trainees that in order to save time for the activities, there will be time at the end of this preparation to ask questions.</p>


**Phase 5 Part 5a Knowledge Check Preparation  
Lesson Plan**

PowerPoint Slides	Instructor Activities
<p><b>Phase 5, Part 5a Lessons</b></p>  <p>The image shows three lesson boxes stacked vertically. Each box has a colored arrow pointing to the right and the word 'Lesson' written vertically on the left side of the arrow. The top box is orange and contains the text 'Determine Qualifying Expense Adjustments'. The middle box is green and contains the text 'Determine Amended Income Adjustments'. The bottom box is blue and contains the text 'Determine Net Worth Adjustments'.</p>	<p><b>DISPLAY</b> slide 6. "Phase 5, Part 5a Lessons"</p> <p><b>REMIN</b>d trainees that Phase 5, Part 5a consists of the following three lessons:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Determine Qualifying Expense Adjustments</li><li>2. Determine Amended Income Adjustments</li><li>3. Determine Net Worth Adjustments</li></ol>

**Phase 5 Part 5a Knowledge Check Preparation  
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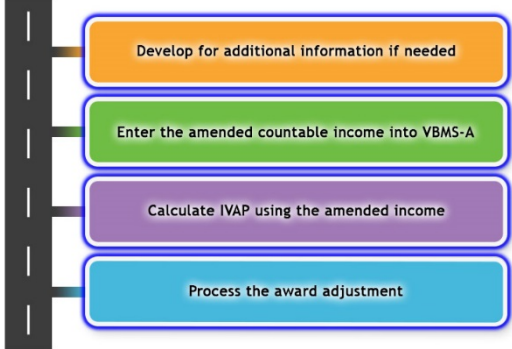

PowerPoint Slides	Instructor Activities
<p><b>Determine Qualifying Expense Adjustments</b></p> 	<p><b>DISPLAY</b> slide 7. "Determine Qualifying Expense Adjustments"</p> <p><b>TRANSITION</b> to the first lesson in Phase 5, Part 5: Determine Qualifying Expense Adjustments.</p> <p><b>REMINDE</b> trainees that the purpose of award adjustments is to ensure that VA is paying the correct rate to the beneficiary by adjusting the benefit properly based on the reported expenses.</p> <p><b>REVIEW</b> the following key points with the trainees:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• If the expense qualifies for an adjustment, then enter the qualifying expense for all applicable periods in VBMS-A.</li><li>• If additional information is needed, then develop for the expense.</li><li>• If the expense does not qualify for an adjustment, then deny the expense.</li></ul>  <p><b>REFER</b> trainees to Appendix A and have them navigate to the "Determine qualifying expense adjustments" section. Have them read the list of the job aids related to qualifying expense adjustments.</p> <p><b>REMINDE</b> trainees that these job aids will assist them when determining qualified expense adjustments.</p>

**Phase 5 Part 5a Knowledge Check Preparation  
Lesson Plan**


PowerPoint Slides	Instructor Activities
<p><b>Determine Qualifying Expense Adjustments Objectives</b></p> <p>Determine qualifying expense adjustments.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Determine whether medical expense qualifies for an award adjustment.</li> <li>• Determine whether final expense qualifies for an award adjustment.</li> <li>• Determine whether educational expense qualifies for an award adjustment.</li> </ul>	<p><b>DISPLAY</b> slide</p> <p><b>8.</b> "Determine Qualifying Expense Adjustments Objectives"</p> <p><b>PRESENT</b> the objectives for this lesson.</p> <p><b>TAKE</b> 5–7 minutes to summarize the content related to these objectives.</p>
<p><b>Qualifying Expense Adjustments Question Writing Opportunity</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Instructions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Use Appendix D: Question and Answer Worksheet to write any questions regarding qualifying expense adjustments.</li> <li>○ Questions will be answered at the end of this preparation.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Time allowed: 5 minutes</li> </ul>	<p><b>DISPLAY</b> slide</p> <p><b>9.</b> "Qualifying Expense Adjustments Question Writing Opportunity"</p> <p><b>INFORM</b> trainees that before transitioning to the next lesson for review, they now have the opportunity to capture any questions they have regarding qualifying expense adjustments.</p> <div style="text-align: center;">  </div> <p><b>REFER</b> trainees to Appendix D: Question and Answer Worksheet.</p> <p><b>DIRECT</b> trainees to write any questions on the worksheet.</p> <p><b>ALLOW</b> 5 minutes to complete this opportunity.</p>





**Phase 5 Part 5a Knowledge Check Preparation  
Lesson Plan**

PowerPoint Slides	Instructor Activities
<p><b>Determine Amended Income Adjustments</b></p>  <pre>graph TD; A[Develop for additional information if needed] --&gt; B[Enter the amended countable income into VBMS-A]; B --&gt; C[Calculate IVAP using the amended income]; C --&gt; D[Process the award adjustment];</pre>	<p><b>DISPLAY</b> slide <b>10.</b> "Determine Amended Income Adjustments"</p> <p><b>TRANSITION</b> to the second lesson in Phase 5, Part 5a: Determine Amended Income Adjustments.</p> <p><b>REMINDE</b> trainees that when determining the amended income adjustment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Enter the amended countable income into VBMS-A</li><li>• Develop for additional information if needed</li><li>• Calculate IVAP using the amended income</li><li>• Process the award adjustment</li></ul>  <p><b>REFER</b> trainees to Appendix A and have them navigate to the "Determine amended income adjustments" section. Have them read the list of the job aids related to amended income adjustments.</p> <p><b>REMINDE</b> trainees that these job aids will assist them when determining amended income adjustments.</p> <p><b>EXPLAIN</b> to trainees that if the amended income causes the IVAP to exceed the MAPR, then the award has to be terminated.</p>


**Phase 5 Part 5a Knowledge Check Preparation  
Lesson Plan**

PowerPoint Slides	Instructor Activities
<p><b>Determine Amended Income Adjustments Objectives</b></p> <p>Determine award adjustment based on amended income.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Determine whether income type is countable.</li> <li>• Determine whether to develop for amended income information.</li> <li>• Determine whether amended income information is received within the time limit.</li> <li>• Determine whether amended income qualifies for an award adjustment.</li> </ul>	<p><b>DISPLAY</b> slide  <b>11.</b> "Determine Amended Income Adjustments Objectives"</p> <p><b>PRESENT</b> the objectives for this lesson.</p> <p><b>TAKE</b> 7-10 minutes to summarize the content related to these objectives.</p>
<p><b>Amended Income Adjustments Question Writing Opportunity</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Instructions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Use Appendix D: Question and Answer Worksheet to write any questions regarding processing an award action.</li> <li>○ Questions will be answered at the end of this preparation.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Time allowed: 5 minutes</li> </ul>	<p><b>DISPLAY</b> slide  <b>12.</b> "Amended Income Adjustments Question Writing Opportunity"</p> <p><b>REMIN</b>D trainees that at this time, they can capture any questions they have regarding amended income adjustments.</p> <div style="text-align: center;">  </div> <p><b>REFER</b> trainees to Appendix D: Question and Answer Worksheet.</p> <p><b>DIRECT</b> trainees to write any questions on the worksheet.</p> <p><b>ALLOW</b> 5 minutes to complete this opportunity.</p>


**Phase 5 Part 5a Knowledge Check Preparation  
Lesson Plan**

PowerPoint Slides	Instructor Activities
<p><b>Determine Net Worth Adjustments</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Once the amended net worth has been calculated, then the award adjustment for net worth may result in one of the following two outcomes:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Update the VBMS-A with amended net worth amount</li> <li>○ A termination of benefits</li> </ul> </li> <li>• An administrative decision for net worth determines if the net worth is a bar to benefits</li> </ul>	<p><b>DISPLAY</b> slide 13. "Determine Net Worth Adjustments"</p> <p><b>TRANSITION</b> to the third lesson in Phase 5, Part 5a: Determine Net Worth Adjustments.</p> <p><b>REMINDE</b> trainees that once the amended net worth has been calculated for a running award, then the award adjustment for net worth may result in one of the following two outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Update the VBMS-A with amended net worth amount</li> <li>• A termination of benefits</li> </ul> <p></p> <p><b>EMPHASIZE</b> that while no specific dollar amount can be designated as excessive net worth, if the claimant has a net worth of \$80,000 or more, then a formal administrative decision is required. An administrative decision for net worth determines if the net worth is a bar to benefits.</p> <p></p> <p><b>REFER</b> trainees to Appendix A and have them navigate to the "Determine award adjustment based on changes to net worth" section. Have them read the list of the job aids related to net worth adjustments.</p> <p><b>REMINDE</b> trainees that these job aids will assist them when determining net worth adjustments.</p> <p><b>EXPLAIN</b> to trainees that if the net worth is a bar to benefits, then the award is terminated the first of the following calendar year.</p>

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Lesson Plan**

PowerPoint Slides	Instructor Activities
<p><b>Determine Net Worth Adjustments Objectives</b></p> <p>Determine award adjustment based on changes to net worth.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Determine whether amended net worth is an inclusion or an exclusion.</li> <li>• Determine whether a net worth determination is required.</li> <li>• Determine whether to develop for additional net worth information.</li> <li>• Determine whether net worth is a bar to benefits.</li> </ul>	<p><b>DISPLAY</b> slide</p> <p><b>14.</b> "Determine Net Worth Adjustments Objectives"</p> <p><b>PRESENT</b> the objectives for this lesson.</p> <p><b>TAKE</b> 7-10 minutes to summarize the content related to these objectives.</p>
<p><b>Net Worth Adjustments Question Writing Opportunity</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Instructions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Use Appendix D: Question and Answer Worksheet to write any questions regarding net worth adjustments.</li> <li>○ Questions will be answered at the end of this preparation.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Time allowed: 5 minutes</li> </ul>	<p><b>DISPLAY</b> slide</p> <p><b>15.</b> "Net Worth Adjustments Question Writing Opportunity"</p> <p><b>REMINDE</b> trainees that at this time, they can capture any questions they have regarding net worth.</p> <div style="text-align: center;">  </div> <p><b>REFER</b> trainees to Appendix D: Question and Answer Worksheet.</p> <p><b>DIRECT</b> trainees to write any questions on the worksheet.</p> <p><b>ALLOW</b> 5 minutes to complete this opportunity.</p>

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Lesson Plan**

PowerPoint Slides	Instructor Activities
<p><b>Partner Activity—Award Adjustment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Instructions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Find a partner.</li> <li>○ Review example claim in Appendix B: Example Claim.</li> <li>○ Answer the questions listed in Appendix C: Phase 5, Part 5a Worksheet.</li> <li>○ Use the job aids listed in Appendix A.</li> <li>○ Be prepared to share your finished activity with the class.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Time allowed: 25-30 minutes</li> </ul>	<p><b>DISPLAY</b> slide <b>16.</b> "Partner Activity—Award Adjustment"</p> <p><b>DIVIDE</b> trainees into groups of two.</p> <p><b>DIRECT</b> trainees to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review example claim in Appendix B: Example Claim</li> <li>• Complete Appendix C: Phase 5, Part 5a Worksheet by answering the questions using the example claim in Appendix B and job aids in listed in Appendix A.</li> </ul> <p><b>ALLOW</b> 25-30 minutes to complete this activity.</p>
<p><b>Partner Activity—Award Adjustment Answers (1 of 3)</b></p> <p><i>1. See medical expenses listed in table.</i></p>	<p><b>DISPLAY</b> slide <b>17.</b> "Partner Activity—Award Adjustment Answers (1 of 3)"</p> <p><b>DISCUSS</b> the answers with the trainees. Focus on the rationales provided by the trainees.</p> <div style="text-align: center;">  </div> <p><b>REFER</b> trainees to Appendix A and have them navigate to the "Determine qualifying expense adjustments" section. Have the trainees review the 38 CFR and M21-1 manual references that relate to qualifying expense adjustments.</p>



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Lesson Plan**

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1. Medical Expenses Answers

<b>Description</b>	<b>Amount Paid</b>	<b>Date Paid</b>	<b>Provider</b>	<b>Paid For</b>	<b>UME or CME?</b>
<i>Medicare (Part B) Premium</i>	<i>\$108.00/month</i>	<i>2017</i>	<i>Social Security</i>	<i>Veteran</i>	<i>CME</i>
<i>In-Home Caregiver</i>	<i>\$600.00/month</i>	<i>2017</i>	<i>Debbie Williams</i>	<i>Veteran</i>	<i>CME</i>

**Phase 5 Part 5a Knowledge Check Preparation  
Lesson Plan**

PowerPoint Slides	Instructor Activities
<p><b>Partner Activity—Award Adjustment Answers (2 of 3)</b></p> <p>2. <i>The evidence provided to accept the medical expenses are the VA Form 21P-8416, Medical Expense Report, In-Home Attendant Care Expense Statement/Attendant Affidavit, and the verification with Social Security to accept the Medicare Premiums.</i></p> <p>3. <i>The amended income information includes the Veteran's COLA increase to his Social Security income and lottery winning.</i></p> <p>4. <i>IVAP: \$299</i></p> <p>5. <i>Payment date: 2/1/2017 (based on Omnibus)</i></p> <p>6. <i>The IVAP will result in an increase of the pension rate. The Veteran's monthly pension rate on his running award was \$526 and now is \$1050.</i></p>	<p><b>DISPLAY</b> slide</p> <p>18. "Partner Activity—Award Adjustment Answers (2 of 3)"</p> <p><b>DISCUSS</b> the answers with the trainees. Focus on the rationales provided by the trainees.</p>  <p><b>REFER</b> trainees to Appendix A and have them navigate to the "Determine award adjustment based on amended income" section.</p> <p><b>WRITE</b> the calculations for IVAP on the whiteboard.</p> <p><b>WRITE</b> the calculations for pension rate on the whiteboard.</p>
<p><b>Partner Activity—Award Adjustment Answers (3 of 3)</b></p> <p>7. <i>Amended Net Worth: \$37,000</i></p> <p>8. <i>Net worth is not a bar to benefits. The claimant's assets are not sufficiently large enough that the claimant could live off these assets for a reasonable period of time.</i></p>	<p><b>DISPLAY</b> slide</p> <p>19. "Partner Activity—Award Adjustment Answers (3 of 3)"</p> <p><b>DISCUSS</b> the answers with the trainees. Focus on the rationales provided by the trainees.</p>  <p><b>REFER</b> trainees to Appendix A and have them navigate to the Determine award adjustment based on changes to net worth section.</p>

**Phase 5 Part 5a Knowledge Check Preparation  
Lesson Plan**

PowerPoint Slides	Instructor Activities
<p><b>Question and Answer Forum</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Instructions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Divide into groups of three or four.</li> <li>○ Review the Appendix D: Question and Answer Worksheet with your group.</li> <li>○ Mark any questions that need further clarification from the instructor.</li> <li>○ Be prepared to share your answers with the class.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Time allowed: 10–15 minutes</li> </ul>	<p><b>DISPLAY</b> slide <b>20.</b> “Question and Answer Forum”</p> <p><b>DIVIDE</b> trainees into groups of three or four.</p> <p><b>DIRECT</b> trainees to review with their group any questions they have written down on the Appendix D: Question and Answer Worksheet.</p> <p><b>INFORM</b> trainees to mark any questions that need further clarification from the instructor.</p> <p><b>ALLOW</b> 10–15 minutes for this forum.</p> <p><b>REVIEW</b> all questions with the class to confirm all answers are correct.</p>
<p><b>Question and Answer Clarification</b></p> 	<p><b>DISPLAY</b> slide <b>21.</b> “Question and Answer Clarification”</p>  <p><b>ASK</b> if they have any questions or concerns regarding Phase 5, Part 5a. Use this time to clear up any confusion or misconceptions about the information presented.</p> <p><b>ANSWER</b> any questions that need further clarification for the question and answer forum.</p>
<p><b>What’s Next</b></p> <p>Phase 5, Part 5a: Award Adjustments Knowledge Check</p>	<p><b>DISPLAY</b> slide <b>22.</b> “What’s Next”</p> <p><b>DISCUSS</b> the upcoming Phase 5, Part 5a: Award Adjustments Knowledge Check.</p> <p><b>REMINDE</b> trainees to use the job aids and resources provided in the knowledge check to help answer the questions.</p>