

## STAFFING

**1. REASON FOR ISSUE:** To revise the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) qualification standard for the appointment of Medical Records Technician, GS-675, in VA.

**2. SUMMARY OF CONTENTS/MAJOR CHANGES:** This handbook contains mandatory procedures on staffing. The pages in this handbook replace the existing Medical Records Technician (MRT) Qualification Standard in VA Handbook 5005, Appendix G35, in its entirety. Since this is a revision of an existing qualification standard, there will NOT be an initial one-time boarding, except for MRT Release of Information (ROI). The ROI is a new assignment which will require a one-time boarding. Supervisors should review the functional statements of all employees in comparison with the new qualification standard and revise functional statements as appropriate. Promotions and/or advancements of employees on the rolls on the date of this qualification standard may be recommended by the supervisor in accordance with VA Handbook 5005, Part III, Chapter 4. The new standards are effective on the date of issuance of this handbook. These changes will be incorporated into the electronic version of VA Handbook 5005, Staffing, that is maintained on the [Office of Human Resources Management Web site](#). Significant changes include:

- a. Changes education and experience requirements, as well as education and/or experience combinations.
- b. Adds definitions of titles and mandates parenthetical titles for employees assigned to this occupation.
- c. Adds definitions, grade requirements, titles, and assignments for the specialty areas of this occupation.

**3. RESPONSIBLE OFFICE:** The Recruitment and Placement Policy Service (059), Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Human Resources Management.

**4. RELATED DIRECTIVE:** VA Directive 5005

**5. RESCISSIONS:** VA Handbook 5005/15, Part II, Appendix G35, dated March 16, 2006.

**CERTIFIED BY:**

/s/  
Stephen W. Warren  
Executive in Charge and Chief Information Officer  
Office of Information and Technology

**BY DIRECTION OF THE SECRETARY  
OF VETERANS AFFAIRS**

/s/  
Gina S. Farrissee  
Assistant Secretary for  
Human Resources and Administration

ELECTRONIC DISTRIBUTION ONLY



[APPENDIX G35. MEDICAL RECORD TECHNICIAN QUALIFICATION STANDARD  
GS-675

Veterans Health Administration

**1. COVERAGE.** The following are the requirements for appointment as a Medical Record Technician (MRT) in the Veterans Health Administration (VHA). These requirements apply to all VHA MRTs in the GS-675 series. MRTs work under the guidance of the Medical Record Administrator. In the health care community, MRTs are known by a number of titles depending on job function. Positions in this series include release of information technician, health information technician, coder, or cancer registrar. Coverage under this standard and assignment of individuals to this occupation is restricted to the specific positions identified above.

**2. BASIC REQUIREMENTS**

a. **Citizenship.** Citizen of the United States. (Non-citizens may be appointed when it is not possible to recruit qualified citizens in accordance with chapter 3, section A, paragraph 3g, this part.)

b. **Experience and Education**

(1) **Experience.** One year of experience that indicates knowledge of medical terminology and general understanding of the health record. Six months of the required one year of experience must have provided the knowledge, skills and abilities (KSAs) needed to perform MRT work.

**OR,**

(2) **Education.** Two years above high school with a minimum of 12 semester hours directly related to MRT work (e.g., courses in medical terminology, anatomy & physiology, and introduction to health records).

**OR,**

(3) **Experience/Education Combination.** Equivalent combinations of experience and education are qualifying. The following educational/training substitutions are appropriate for combining education and experience:

(a) Six months of experience that indicates knowledge of medical terminology and general understanding of the health record and one year above high school with a minimum of 6 semester hours of health information technology courses.

(b) Successful completion of a course for medical technicians, hospital corpsmen, medical service specialists, or hospital training obtained in a training program given by the Armed Forces or the U.S. Maritime Service under close medical and professional supervision may be substituted on a month-for-month basis for up to six months of experience provided the training program included courses in anatomy, physiology, and medical record techniques and procedures. Also requires six additional

## PART II

## APPENDIX G35

months of experience that indicates knowledge of medical terminology and general understanding of the health record.

c. **Grandfathering Provision.** All persons employed in VHA as a MRT on the effective date of this qualification standard are considered to have met all qualification requirements for the title, series and grade held, including positive education that is part of the basic requirements of the occupation. For employees who do not meet all the basic requirements in this standard, but who met the qualifications applicable to the position at the time they were appointed to it, the following provisions apply:

(1) Such employees may be reassigned, promoted up to and including the full performance (journeyman) level, or changed to lower grade within the occupation, but may not be promoted beyond the journeyman level or placed in supervisory or managerial positions.

(2) MRTs who are appointed on a temporary basis prior to the effective date of the qualification standard may not have their temporary appointment extended or be reappointed, on a temporary or permanent basis, until they fully meet the basic requirements of the standard.

(3) MRTs initially grandfathered into this occupation, who subsequently obtain additional education that meets all the basic requirements of this qualification standard must maintain the required credentials as a condition of employment in the occupation.

(4) Employees who are retained as a MRT under this provision and subsequently leave the occupation lose protected status and must meet the full VA qualification standard requirements in effect at the time of reentry as a MRT.

d. **Physical Requirements.** See VA Directive and Handbook 5019.

e. **English Language Proficiency.** MRTs must be proficient in spoken and written English as required by 38 U.S.C. 7402(d), and 7407(d).

### 3. GRADE REQUIREMENTS

#### a. Creditable Experience

(1) **Knowledge of Current Medical Record Technology.** To be creditable, the candidate's experience must have demonstrated the use of knowledge, skills, and abilities associated with current health information or health record technology and/or cancer registry practice and may be paid or non-paid employment.

(2) **Quality of Experience.** Experience is only creditable if it is either directly related to the position to be filled or in a related field. Qualifying experience must also be equivalent to the next lower grade level. Experience satisfying this requirement must be active practice, which is paid/non-paid employment as a MRT in the parenthetical title as described in subparagraph 3b(2) below.

(3) **Part-Time Experience.** Part-time experience as a professional MRT is creditable according to its relationship to the full-time workweek. For example, a MRT would receive 1 week of full-time credit for each 2 weeks of half-time work.

**b. Titles and Specialties**

(1) **Titles.** All individuals assigned to this occupation must have an approved parenthetical title, as described in subparagraph (2) below.

(a) The approved title for MRTs will be Medical Record Technician with the appropriate parenthetical title for the specialty area (e.g., Medical Record Technician (Coder); Medical Record Technician (ROI); etc). MRTs whose assignments involve two or more specialty areas will be assigned the parenthetical title for the predominant specialty area.

(b) The approved title for MRTs performing lead duties over a single specialty will be Lead Medical Record Technician with the appropriate parenthetical title. Lead MRTs whose assignments involve two or more specialty areas will be assigned the parenthetical title for the predominant specialty area.

(c) The approved title for MRTs performing supervisory duties over a single specialty will be Supervisory Medical Record Technician with the appropriate parenthetical title. Supervisory MRTs whose assignments involve two or more specialty areas will be assigned the parenthetical title for the predominant specialty area.

(2) **Specialized Areas for Medical Record Technicians.** For purposes of this qualification standard the specialty areas for MRTs have been grouped into four functional areas with parenthetical titles.

(a) **Medical Record Technician (Coder).** MRT coders analyze and abstract medical record data and assign codes using clinical classification systems. MRT coders may also provide education related to coding and documentation. Titles may include:

1. MRT (Coder) Entry Level
2. MRT (Coder) Developmental Level 1, 2, and 3;
3. MRT (Coder) Full Performance Level;
4. MRT (Coder) Clinical Documentation Improvement Specialist (CDIS); or
5. MRT (Coder) Auditor.

(b) **Release of Information (ROI).** ROI technicians disclose health information in accordance with all laws and regulations governing authorization and disclosure of health information. Titles may include:

1. MRT (ROI) Entry Level

## PART II

## APPENDIX G35

2. MRT (ROI) Developmental Level;
3. MRT (ROI) Full Performance Level; or
4. MRT (ROI - Legal).

(c) **Health Information Technician (HIT).** HITs review, analyze, abstract, compile, maintain, and extract information from the health record. They also check for completeness and accuracy of the health record, and monitor and report for regulatory compliance. Titles may include:

1. MRT (HIT) Entry Level
2. MRT (HIT) Developmental Level 1 and 2; or
3. MRT (HIT) Full Performance Level.

(d) **Cancer Registrar.** Cancer registrars maintain clinical registries and work to meet the standards of regulatory and accrediting agencies related to approved cancer and/or other programs requiring registries. Titles may include:

1. MRT (Cancer Registrar) Entry Level
2. MRT (Cancer Registrar) Developmental Level 1, 2, and 3;
3. MRT (Cancer Registrar) Full Performance Level;
4. MRT (Cancer Registrar) Coordinator; or
5. MRT (Cancer Registrar) VISN Coordinator.

#### 4. GRADE DETERMINATIONS

a. **MRT (Coder)**

(1) **GS-4 MRT (Coder) - Entry Level**

(a) **Experience or Education.** None beyond basic requirements.

(b) **Assignment.** Employees at this level serve as entry level MRT coders and receive close supervision from more experienced MRT Coders.

(2) **GS-5 MRT (Coder) Developmental Level 1**

(a) **Experience.** One year of experience equivalent to the next lower grade level or successful completion of four years of education above high school from an accredited college or university with a minimum of 24 semester hours in health information technology.

(b) **Demonstrated KSAs.** In addition to the experience above, the candidate must demonstrate the following KSAs:

1. Ability to utilize health information technology and various office software products utilized in MRT coder positions (e.g., the electronic health record, coding and abstracting software, etc.);
2. Knowledge of the Joint Commission requirements, Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), and/or health record documentation guidelines; and
3. Ability to manage priorities and coordinate work in order to complete duties within required timeframes and ability to follow-up on pending issues.

(c) **Assignment.** Employees at this grade level serve as developmental MRT coders and receive guidance from more experienced staff members for more complex coding procedures.

**(3) GS-6 MRT (Coder) Developmental Level 2**

(a) **Experience.** One year of experience equivalent to the next lower level.

(b) **Demonstrated KSAs.** In addition to the experience above, the candidate must demonstrate the following KSAs:

1. Ability to navigate through health records to find needed information;
2. Skill in interpreting and adapting health information guidelines that are not completely applicable to the work or have gaps in specificity, and ability to use judgment in completing assignments with incomplete or inadequate guidelines;
3. Ability to apply laws and regulations on the confidentiality of health information (e.g., Privacy Act, Freedom of Information Act, and Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA)); and
4. Comprehensive knowledge of classification systems, such as current versions of International Classification of Diseases (ICD), Current Procedural Technology (CPT) and Healthcare Common Procedure Coding System (HCPCS), and skill in applying said classifications based on health record documentation.

(c) **Assignment.** Employees at this grade level serve in developmental positions as MRT coders and receive intermittent monitoring. Coders may perform either inpatient or outpatient coding duties or may perform a combination of inpatient and outpatient coding.

**(4) GS-7 MRT (Coder) Developmental Level 3**

(a) **Experience.** One year of experience equivalent to the next lower grade level.

## PART II

## APPENDIX G35

(b) **Demonstrated KSAs.** In addition to the experience above, the candidate must demonstrate the following KSAs:

1. Skill in applying current coding classifications to a variety of specialty care areas to accurately reflect service and care provided based on documentation in the health record;
2. Ability to communicate with clinical staff for specific coding and documentation issues such as recording inpatient and/or outpatient diagnoses and procedures, the correct sequencing of diagnoses and/or procedures, and the relationship between health care documentation and code assignment;
3. Ability to research and solve coding and documentation related issues; and
4. Skill in reviewing and correcting system or processing errors and ensuring all assigned work is complete.

(c) **Assignment.** Employees at this grade level serve as developmental MRT coders and receive minimal monitoring. Coders may perform either inpatient or outpatient coding duties or may perform a combination of inpatient and outpatient coding.

(5) **GS-8 MRT (Coder) Full Performance Level**

(a) **Experience.** One year of experience equivalent to the next lower grade level.

(b) **Demonstrated KSAs.** In addition to the experience above, the candidate must demonstrate the following KSAs:

1. Ability to analyze the medical record to identify all pertinent diagnoses and procedures for coding, and to evaluate the adequacy of the documentation. This includes the ability to read and understand the content of the medical record, the terminology, the significance of the comments, and the disease process/pathophysiology of the patient;
2. Ability to accurately perform the full scope of outpatient coding, including ambulatory surgical cases, diagnostic studies and procedures, and outpatient encounters, and/or inpatient coding, including inpatient discharges, surgical cases, diagnostic studies and procedures, and inpatient professional fees; and
3. Skill in interpreting and adapting health information guidelines and ability to use judgment in completing assignments using incomplete or inadequate guidelines.

(c) **Assignment.** This is considered to be the full performance level for this assignment. Coders at this level perform either inpatient or outpatient coding duties, or a combination of inpatient and outpatient coding duties. Inpatient duties consist of the performance of a comprehensive review of documentation within the health record to assign ICD codes for diagnosis, complications, co-morbid conditions, surgery, and procedures. Outpatient duties consist of the performance of a comprehensive review of documentation within the health record to accurately assign ICD codes for diagnosis and complications, and CPT codes for surgeries, procedures and evaluation, and management services.



Directly consults with the professional staff for clarification of conflicting, incomplete or ambiguous clinical data in the health record. May be required to abstract and sequence codes into encoder software to obtain correct diagnosis-related group (DRG). Enters and corrects information that has been rejected, when necessary. Corrects any identified data errors or inconsistencies.

**(6) GS-9 Lead MRT (Coder)**

(a) **Experience.** One year of experience equivalent to the next lower grade level.

(b) **Demonstrated KSAs.** In addition to the experience above, the candidate must demonstrate the following KSAs:

1. Ability to work with a team to provide technical guidance, plan, organize, and coordinate activities of a medical record function in order to effectively complete job duties of assignment such as distributing workload, monitoring the status and progress of work, monitoring accuracy of work, etc.;

2. Comprehensive knowledge of medical record technology theories, methods, procedures, and techniques for assigned areas; and

3. Ability to communicate tactfully and effectively, both orally and in writing, in order to meet program objectives. This may include preparing reports in various formats and presenting data to various organizational levels.

(c) **Assignment.** For all assignments above the full performance level, the higher-level duties must consist of significant scope, complexity (difficulty), and range of variety, and be performed by the incumbent at least 25% of the time. Lead coders review coding and assist coders in improving coding accuracy; provide coding guidance to various levels of staff to promote consistency in practice and compliance with coding rules and regulations; initiate various reports and analyze data; and may also coordinate, assign, and monitor the workflow.

**(7) GS-9 MRT (Coder) Clinical Documentation Improvement Specialist (CDIS)**

(a) **Experience.** One year of experience equivalent to the next lower grade level.

(b) **Demonstrated KSAs.** In addition to the experience above, the candidate must demonstrate the following KSAs:

1. Knowledge of coding and documentation concepts, guidelines, and clinical terminology;

2. Ability to interpret and analyze all information in a patient's health record, including laboratory and other test results, to identify opportunities for more precise and/or complete documentation in the health record;

3. Knowledge of anatomy and physiology, pathophysiology, and pharmacology;

4. Ability to establish and maintain strong verbal and written communication with providers;

## PART II

## APPENDIX G35

5. Knowledge of regulations that define healthcare documentation requirements, including The Joint Commission, CMS, and VA guidelines;

6. Knowledge of coding rules and requirements to include clinical classification systems (such as current versions of ICD and CPT), complication or comorbidity/major complication or comorbidity (CC/MCC), Medicare Severity Diagnosis Related group (MS-DRG) structure, and Present on Admission (POA) indicators.

7. Knowledge of severity of illness and risk of mortality indicators; and

8. Knowledge of training methods and teaching skills sufficient to conduct continuing education for staff development. The training sessions may be technical in nature or may focus on teaching techniques for the improvement of clinical documentation issues.

(c) **Assignment.** For all assignments above the full performance level, the higher-level duties must consist of significant scope, complexity (difficulty), and range of variety, and be performed by the incumbent at least 25% of the time. CDISs are responsible for facilitating improved overall quality, education, and completeness and accuracy of medical record documentation as well as promoting appropriate clinical documentation through extensive interaction with physicians, other patient caregivers, HIM coding staff and other associated staff to ensure clinical documentation and services rendered to patients is complete and accurate for appropriate workload capture and resource allocations. Develop and/or update medical center policy memoranda pertaining to documentation improvement. Serve as technical expert in health record content and documentation requirements. Responsible for performing reviews of the health record documentation; developing criteria, collecting data, graphing and analyzing results, creating reports and communicating in writing and/or in person to appropriate leadership and groups. Obtain appropriate corrective action plans from responsible clinical services directors, when necessary, and recommend improvements or changes in documentation as deemed necessary. Adhere to established documentation requirements as outlined by accrediting agencies guidelines, regulations, policy and medical-legal requirements. Responsible for the development and implementation of active training/education programs (i.e. seminars, workshops, short courses, informational briefings, and conferences) for all providers to ensure the CDIS program objectives are met.

(8) **GS-9 MRT (Coder) Auditor**

(a) **Experience.** One year of experience equivalent to the next lower grade level.

(b) **Demonstrated KSAs.** In addition to the experience above, the candidate must demonstrate the following KSAs:

1. Knowledge of the applicable regulatory guidelines and requirements for current coding conventions;

2. Knowledge of coding classification systems;

3. Ability to review coded data and supporting documentation to identify adherence to applicable standards, coding conventions, and documentation requirements; and

4. Ability to format and present results and provide guidance to improve accuracy.

(c) **Assignment.** For all assignments above the full performance level, the higher-level duties must consist of significant scope, complexity (difficulty), and range of variety, and be performed by the incumbent at least 25% of the time. Auditors serve as experts of current coding conventions and regulations related to professional and facility coding. Auditors perform audits of encounters to identify areas of non-compliance in coding. Provide recommendations on appropriate coding and are responsible for maintaining current knowledge of the various regulatory guidelines and requirements. Auditors work with staff to ensure that regulations are met or areas of weakness are identified and reported to appropriate supervisor for corrective action. Perform prospective coding audits and utilize results to identify processing inadequacies and re-educate coding staff where necessary. Coordinate retrospective reviews to ensure adequate auditing of coding activities. Act independently to plan, organize, direct and control areas with emphasis on data validation, analysis and generation of reports associated with the Medical Center's health information management program. This includes managing the professional health information management functions such as retrieving, reviewing and abstracting health record information. Determine quality control measures needed; initiate and implement them by use of monitors and/or continuous review.

(9) **GS-9 Supervisory MRT (Coder)**

(a) **Experience.** One year of experience equivalent to the next lower grade level.

(b) **Demonstrated KSAs.** In addition to the experience above, the candidate must demonstrate the following KSAs:

1. Ability to perform a full range of supervisory duties, to include assigning, planning and evaluating work, recommending awards, approving leave and resolving staff issues;

2. Ability to provide or coordinate staff development and training;

3. Ability to coordinate work in order to complete duties in an accurate and timely fashion; and

4. Leadership and managerial skills including skill in interpersonal relations and conflict resolution to deal with employees, team leaders, and managers.

(c) **Assignment.** For all assignments above the full performance level, the higher-level duties must consist of significant scope, complexity (difficulty), and range of variety, and be performed by the incumbent at least 25% of the time. Supervisor coders provide oversight of a group of MRTs, with administrative responsibility for planning and directing the work of subordinate staff. Perform a full range of supervisory responsibilities, to include evaluating the performance of subordinate staff, approving sick and annual leave requests, identifying educational or training needs, resolving employee complaints and taking disciplinary actions, when necessary. Inform higher level management of anticipated vacancies or increases in workload. Recommend employees for promotions, reassignments,

## PART II

## APPENDIX G35

recognition of superior performance, retention or release of probationary employees or other changes of assigned personnel. Make decisions on the selection of employees for vacant or new positions.

**b. MRT (ROI)****(1) GS-4 MRT (ROI) Entry Level**

(a) **Experience or Education.** None beyond basic requirements.

(b) **Assignment.** Employees at this level serve in entry level MRT (ROI) positions and receive close supervision from more experienced ROI staff members.

**(2) GS-5 MRT (ROI) Developmental Level**

(a) **Experience.** One year of experience equivalent to the next lower grade level or successful completion of four years of education above high school from an accredited college or university with a minimum of 24 semester hours in health information technology.

(b) **Demonstrated KSAs.** In addition to the experience above, the candidate must demonstrate the following KSAs:

1. Ability to utilize health information technology and various office software products utilized in MRT (ROI) positions (e.g., the electronic health record, release of information systems, etc.);

2. Knowledge of the Joint Commission requirements and/or health record documentation guidelines; and

3. Ability to manage priorities and coordinate work in order to complete duties within required timeframes and ability to follow-up on pending issues.

(c) **Assignment.** Employees at this grade level serve in developmental positions as MRTs (ROI) and receive guidance from more experienced staff members for more complex ROI procedures.

**(3) GS-6 MRT (ROI) Full Performance Level**

(a) **Experience.** One year of experience equivalent to the next lower grade level.

(b) **Demonstrated KSAs.** In addition to the experience above, the candidate must demonstrate the following KSAs:

1. In-depth knowledge of the laws and regulations related to the authorization and disclosure of health information and ability to apply said laws and regulations related to the disclosure of health information (e.g., Privacy Act, Freedom of Information Act, Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) and 38 U.S.C. 7332);

2. Ability to manage priorities and coordinate work in order to complete duties in an accurate and timely fashion;

3. Ability to follow up on pending issues in order to meet required response times; and

4. Ability to research and solve difficult questions related to release of health information in an accurate and timely manner.

(c) **Assignment.** This is considered the full performance level for ROI technician positions. ROI technicians at this level apply, interpret and analyze laws and regulations related to the disclosure of health information. Responsible for educating requestors on requirements for submitting requests for health information. Complete all requests for health information in accordance with applicable laws and regulations.

(4) **GS-7 Lead MRT (ROI)**

(a) **Experience.** One year of experience equivalent to the next lower grade level.

(b) **Demonstrated KSAs.** In addition to the experience above, the candidate must demonstrate the following KSAs:

1. Ability to work with a team to provide technical guidance, plan, organize, and coordinate activities of a health record function in order to effectively complete job assignments such as distributing workload, monitoring the status and progress of work, monitoring accuracy of work and ensuring required timelines are met;

2. Comprehensive knowledge of the laws and regulations related to the authorization and disclosure of health information;

3. Ability to communicate tactfully and effectively, both orally and in writing, in order to meet program objectives. This may include preparing reports in various formats and presenting data to various organizational levels; and

4. Ability to provide or coordinate staff development and training.

(c) **Assignment.** For all assignments above the full performance level, the higher-level duties must consist of significant scope, complexity (difficulty), and range of variety, and be performed by the incumbent at least 25% of the time. Lead MRTs (ROI) monitor quality and quantity of work and ensure adherence to all applicable requirements and regulations. Ensure that the work assignments of the team are carried out by successfully performing duties which include distributing and balancing workload, monitoring the status and progress of work, instructing and answering employee questions, checking employee work, and amending or rejecting work not meeting standards.

(5) **GS-7 MRT (ROI – Legal)**

(a) **Experience.** One year of experience equivalent to the next lower grade level.

## PART II

## APPENDIX G35

(b) **Demonstrated KSAs.** In addition to the experience above, the candidate must demonstrate the following KSAs:

1. Advanced knowledge of the laws and regulations related to the authorization and disclosure of health information;
2. Expert ability to apply laws and regulations related to the disclosure of health information (e.g., Privacy Act, Freedom of Information Act, HIPAA, and 38 U.S.C. 7332); and
3. Ability to investigate the contents of paper and electronic health records and systems that contain health information to compile the legal health record based on existing standards and requirements.

(c) **Assignment.** For all assignments above the full performance level, the higher-level duties must consist of significant scope, complexity (difficulty), and range of variety, and be performed by the incumbent at least 25% of the time. MRTs at this grade level will serve as primary points of contact and accurately process and respond timely to complex medical legal requests, including but not limited to subpoenas, depositions, testimony, and court orders for information from attorneys, courts, local law enforcement agencies or public defenders. Serve as liaisons to Regional Counsel and US Attorney's office for trial cases. Compile the legal health record. Extensively research and resolve conflicting or inconsistent information related to complex medical legal requests.

(6) **GS-8 Lead MRT (ROI)**

(a) **Experience.** One year of experience equivalent to the next lower grade level.

(b) **Demonstrated KSAs.** In addition to the experience above, the candidate must demonstrate the following KSAs:

1. Ability to lead individuals, set priorities, and schedule work assignments;
2. Ability to monitor and report on the status and progress of work, and make adjustments to accomplish the workload in accordance with established procedures;
3. Skill in communicating with staff to ensure compliance with established policies, procedures and regulations; and
4. Ability to provide or coordinate staff development and training.

(c) **Assignment.** For all assignments above the full performance level, the higher-level duties must consist of significant scope, complexity (difficulty), and range of variety, and be performed by the incumbent at least 25% of the time. Lead MRTs (ROI) distribute and prioritize workload among employees. Perform lead functions over MRT (ROI – Legal) positions at the GS-7 level or a combination of GS-6 MRT (ROI) and GS-7 MRT (ROI – Legal) positions. Lead technicians assure an even workflow and distribution of the workload, as well as resolve workflow and workplace issues. Revise work assignments to meet anticipated and unanticipated needs, as necessary. Review work in

progress or spot check work to ensure compliance with established procedures, methods, and deadlines. Keep management informed of performance issues, assignment changes and task completion. Provide guidance to employees on work-related activities, policies, procedures and goals.

**(7) GS-8 Supervisory MRT (ROI)**

(a) **Experience.** One year of experience equivalent to the next lower grade level.

(b) **Demonstrated KSAs.** In addition to the experience above, the candidate must demonstrate the following KSAs:

1. Ability to develop policy and provide workload analysis for ROI;
2. Leadership and managerial skills, including skill in interpersonal relations and conflict resolution to deal with employees, team leaders, and managers;
3. Ability to provide or coordinate staff development and training; and
4. Knowledge of, and ability to provide, the full range of supervisory duties to include responsibility for assignment of work to be performed, performance evaluation, selection of staff, and recommendations of awards, advancements, and, when appropriate, disciplinary actions.

(c) **Assignment.** For all assignments above the full performance level, the higher-level duties must consist of significant scope, complexity (difficulty), and range of variety, and be performed by the incumbent at least 25% of the time. The supervisory ROI is responsible for the supervision, administrative management, and direction of ROI staff. Has full supervisory responsibility over a section or equivalent work unit. Typical duties include: preparing work assignments, monitoring performances of ROI staff, evaluating employee performance, selecting staff, recommending awards and advancements, and, when appropriate, taking disciplinary actions. Assure compliance with accrediting agency and regulatory requirements and assure corrective action is initiated as needed. Assure orientation and competency assessment of assigned staff is conducted. Develop policies and procedures, manage document control, develop performance standards, position descriptions and functional statements, and responsible for professional and administrative management of an assigned area. Maintain interdepartmental relations with other services to accomplish medical center goals.

**c. MRT (HIT)**

**(1) GS-4 MRT (HIT) Entry Level**

(a) **Experience or Education.** None beyond basic requirements.

(b) **Assignment.** Employees at this level serve in entry level MRT (HIT) positions and receive close supervision from more experienced HIT staff members.

## PART II

## APPENDIX G35

(2) **GS-5 MRT (HIT) Developmental Level 1**

(a) **Experience.** One year of experience equivalent to the next lower grade level or successful completion of four years of education above high school from an accredited college or university with a minimum of 24 semester hours in health information technology.

(b) **Demonstrated KSAs.** In addition to the experience above, the candidate must demonstrate the following KSAs:

1. Ability to utilize health information technology and various office software products utilized in MRT (HIT) positions (e.g., the electronic health record, coding software, release of information systems, etc.);
2. Knowledge of the Joint Commission requirements, CMS guidance and/or health record documentation guidelines; and
3. Ability to manage priorities and coordinate work in order to complete duties within required timeframes and ability to follow-up on pending issues.

(c) **Assignment.** Employees at this grade level serve in developmental positions as MRT (HIT) and receive guidance from more experienced HIT staff members for more complex medical records.

(3) **GS-6 MRT (HIT) Developmental Level 2**

(a) **Experience.** One year of experience equivalent to the next lower grade level.

(b) **Demonstrated KSAs.** In addition to the experience above, the candidate must demonstrate the following KSAs:

1. Ability to apply knowledge of medical terminology and human anatomy to fully understand the content of a patient record;
2. Ability to navigate efficiently through the paper and/or electronic medical record to locate needed information;
3. Skill in interpreting and adapting health information guidelines and ability to use judgment in completing assignments; and
4. Knowledge of all components of the health record and ability to analyze and abstract pertinent information to meet Joint Commission and/or regulatory health record documentation requirements.

(c) **Assignment.** This is a developmental level for HITs. HITs at this level analyze, abstract, compile, maintain, and extract information from the health record, working under the review of the supervisor. Check for completeness and accuracy of the health record, and monitor and report for regulatory compliance. Receive guidance from more experienced staff members for more complex medical records.



(4) **GS-7 MRT (HIT) Full Performance Level**

(a) **Experience.** One year of experience comparable to the next lower level.

(b) **Demonstrated KSAs.** In addition to the experience above, the candidate must demonstrate the following KSAs:

1. Ability to judge whether medical records contain sufficient information for regulatory requirements; are acceptable as legal documents; are adequate for continuity of patient care; and support education and research needs. This includes the ability to take appropriate actions if medical record contents are not adequate, accurate, timely, and/or reliable;

2. Skill in using appropriate software and data applications in order to analyze and record documentation trends;

3. Skill in communicating with individuals or groups who may be uncooperative, or skeptical, in order to obtain the desired effect, such as gaining compliance with established policies and regulations;

4. Ability to manage priorities and coordinate work in order to complete duties in an accurate and timely fashion. This includes the ability to follow-up on pending issues and an understanding of the impact of incomplete work;

5. Ability to work independently to accomplish a variety of responsibilities including setting priorities, organizing and adjusting workflows, and utilizing problem-solving techniques in the accomplishment of work; and

6. Knowledge of qualitative and/or quantitative methods for assessment and improvement of medical record functions.

(c) **Assignment.** This is considered the full performance level for HITs. HITs review, analyze, abstract, compile, maintain, and extract information from the health record. Check for completeness and accuracy of the health record, and monitor and report for regulatory compliance.

(5) **GS-8 Lead MRT (HIT)**

(a) **Experience.** One year of experience comparable to the next lower level.

(b) **Demonstrated KSAs.** In addition to the experience above, the candidate must demonstrate the following KSAs:

1. Ability to work with a team to provide technical guidance, plan, organize, and coordinate activities of a medical record function in order to effectively complete job assignments such as distributing workload, monitoring the status and progress of work, monitoring accuracy of work and ensuring required timelines are met;

## PART II

## APPENDIX G35

2. Comprehensive knowledge of medical record technology theories, methods, procedures, and techniques for assigned areas;

3. Ability to communicate tactfully and effectively, both orally and in writing, in order to meet program objectives. This may include preparing reports in various formats and presenting data to various organizational levels; and

4. Ability to provide or coordinate staff development and training.

(c) **Assignment.** For all assignments above the full performance level, the higher-level duties must consist of significant scope, complexity (difficulty), and range of variety, and be performed by the incumbent at least 25% of the time. Lead MRTs initiate various reports and analyzes data. May also coordinate, assign, and monitor the workflow. Ensure that the work assignments of the team are carried out by successfully performing duties which include distributing and balancing workload, monitoring the status and progress of work, instructing and answering employee questions, checking employee work, and amending or rejecting work not meeting standards. Work closely with clinical staff to facilitate record timeliness and completion.

(6) **GS 8 Supervisory MRT (HIT)**

(a) **Experience.** One year of experience equivalent to the next lower grade level.

(b) **Demonstrated KSAs.** In addition to the experience above, the candidate must demonstrate the following KSAs:

1. Ability to apply expert technical knowledge and skills in health record documentation, HIPAA, Joint Commission, and/or a related area in a complex work environment;

2. Ability to provide or coordinate staff development and training;

3. Knowledge of, and ability to provide, the full range of supervisory duties to include responsibility for assignment of work to be performed, performance evaluation, selection of staff, and recommendations of awards, advancements, and, when appropriate, disciplinary actions; and

4. Ability to collaborate and coordinate tasks with individuals outside the work area and at higher organizational levels who require persuasion and negotiation.

(c) **Assignment.** For all assignments above the full performance level, the higher-level duties must consist of significant scope, complexity (difficulty), and range of variety, and be performed by the incumbent at least 25% of the time. Provide the full range of supervisory duties which would include responsibility for assignment of work to be performed, performance evaluation, selection of staff, recommendations of awards and advancements, and, when appropriate, disciplinary actions. Initiate various reports, analyze data and work closely with clinical services to facilitate record timeliness and completion of documentation.

d. **MRT (Cancer Registrar)**

(1) **GS-4 MRT (Cancer Registrar) Entry Level**

(a) **Experience or Education.** None beyond basic requirements.

(b) **Assignment.** Employees at this level serve in entry level MRT Cancer Registrar positions and receive close supervision from more experienced Cancer Registrar staff members.

(2) **GS-5 MRT (Cancer Registrar) Developmental Level 1**

(a) **Experience.** One year of experience equivalent to the next lower grade level or successful completion of four years of education above high school from an accredited college or university with a minimum of 24 semester hours in health information technology.

(b) **Demonstrated KSAs.** In addition to the experience above, the candidate must demonstrate the following KSAs:

1. Ability to utilize health information technology and various office software products utilized in MRT Cancer Registrar positions (e.g., the electronic health record, coding and abstracting software, release of information systems, etc.);

2. Knowledge of the Joint Commission requirements, CMS, Commission on Cancer (CoC), and ACoS guidance and/or health record documentation guidelines; and

3. Ability to manage priorities and coordinate work in order to complete duties within required timeframes and ability to follow-up on pending issues.

(c) **Assignment.** Employees at this grade level serve in developmental positions as MRT Cancer Registrar and receive guidance from more experienced Cancer Registrar staff members for more complex issues and/or procedures.

(3) **GS-6 MRT (Cancer Registrar) Developmental Level 2**

(a) **Experience.** One year of experience equivalent to the next lower level.

(b) **Demonstrated KSAs.** In addition to the experience above, the candidate must demonstrate the following KSAs:

1. Basic knowledge of medical terminology to understand the content of the medical record;

2. Basic knowledge of anatomy and physiology to understand the location of the cancer;

3. Skill to operate computerized programs in order to review documentation within the electronic medical record; and

## PART II

## APPENDIX G35

4. Ability to notify appropriate parties and organize all required documentation to ensure complete case presentation at Tumor Board.

(c) **Assignment.** Employees at this grade level search the medical record to identify and abstract/code information. Abstract is conducted by collecting, summarizing and coding detailed demographic and clinical information and assisting with organizing and maintaining the cancer registry data system. Assist with lifetime follow-up on patients including cancer status and vital status. Coordinate and participate on tumor boards to ensure that appropriate documentation is maintained.

**(4) GS-7 MRT (Cancer Registrar) Developmental Level 3**

(a) **Experience.** One year of experience equivalent to the next lower grade level.

(b) **Demonstrated KSAs.** In addition to the experience above, the candidate must demonstrate the following KSAs:

1. Knowledge of pathophysiology in order to understand the spread of the cancer disease process;
2. Ability to analyze the electronic health record and enter appropriate data into the OncoTrax cancer registry software abstract; and
3. Knowledge of ACoS standards regarding tumor board, including clinical staging, prognostic indicators, clinical guidelines, and clinical trials availability.

(c) **Assignment.** Employees at this grade level serve in developmental cancer registrar positions by thoroughly searching the medical record to identify and abstract/code all information. Organize and maintain the cancer registry data system. Review lifetime follow-up on patients including cancer status and vital status. Coordinate and attend multidisciplinary tumor boards to ensure that appropriate documentation is maintained. Abstract by collecting, summarizing and coding detailed demographic and clinical information.

**(5) GS-8 MRT (Cancer Registrar) Full Performance Level**

(a) **Experience.** One year of experience equivalent to the next lower grade level.

(b) **Demonstrated KSAs.** In addition to the experience above, the candidate must demonstrate the following KSAs:

1. In-depth knowledge of professional registry operations;
2. Advanced knowledge of medical terminology, staging of cancer, and requirements of internal and external approving organizations;
3. Knowledge of cancer committee processes and procedures in order to improve patient care and verify compliance with ACoS and/or facility standards;

4. Ability to serve as a subject-matter-expert on cancer programs for the medical center; and
5. Skill in utilizing electronic health records and cancer registry software.

(c) **Assignment.** This is considered to be the full performance level for this assignment. Cancer registrars at this level perform all tasks and duties autonomously. Search the medical record to identify and abstract/code all information. Organize and maintain the cancer registry data system. Review lifetime follow-up on patients including cancer status and vital status. Oversee tumor board documentation, ensuring documentation meets the requirements and standards set forth by ACoS and/or facility standards. Ascertain a random sampling of annual analytic case load for physician review to ensure quality registry data.

(6) **GS-9 Lead MRT (Cancer Registrar)**

(a) **Experience.** One year of experience equivalent to the next lower grade level.

(b) **Demonstrated KSAs.** In addition to the experience above, the candidate must demonstrate the following KSAs:

1. Ability to organize work, set priorities and delegate tasks/responsibilities in order to meet deadlines;
2. Knowledge of neoplastic disease processes, cancer staging systems, biologic and molecular prognostic indicators to determine derived stage;
3. Knowledge of reportable diseases, Surveillance, Epidemiology and End Results (SEER) program, cancer staging systems, multiple primary and histology rules, International Classification of Diseases for Oncology (ICDO) morphology and topography, cancer treatment modalities and data requirements;
4. Ability to analyze data using comparative statistical methods and present the data in graphic format;
5. Ability to interpret and apply facility bylaws regarding the cancer program;
6. Knowledge of legal and regulatory requirements governing cancer registry operations to plan, organize and maintain special cancer registries; and
7. Ability to communicate orally and in writing to ensure staff compliance with written directives, rules and regulations.

(c) **Assignment.** For all assignments above the full performance level, the higher-level duties must consist of significant scope, complexity (difficulty), and range of variety, and be performed by the incumbent at least 25% of the time. Leads are responsible for developing, organizing, implementing and maintaining an accurate system to identify all reportable diagnoses, assuring that all eligible cases are identified and coded into the registry system. Utilize the electronic health record to identify and abstract/code the required data elements. Conduct lifetime follow-up on patients, documenting the

## PART II

## APPENDIX G35

progression/recurrence of their disease and other required elements. Distribute workload and maintain productivity while assuring accuracy and completeness of registry data. Analyze and submit data to the internal and external entities as required. Prepare routine statistical reports.

(7) **GS-9 MRT (Cancer Registrar) Coordinator**

(a) **Experience.** One year of experience equivalent to the next lower grade level.

(b) **Demonstrated KSAs.** In addition to the experience above, the candidate must demonstrate the following KSAs:

1. Extensive knowledge and understanding of ACoS and/or facility requirements for administering, monitoring and reporting compliance of the cancer program to the governing bodies;

2. Ability to interpret data in order to set, evaluate and adjust cancer program and/or facility goals and objectives;

3. Ability to inform cancer registry staff on the technical components of the cancer database, coordinate workflow and monitor data for accuracy and quality measures;

4. Ability to multitask;

5. Ability to communicate with diverse disciplines regarding the facility requirements of the cancer program;

6. Ability to analyze and interpret data for use in facility strategic planning; and

7. Ability to develop cancer program/cancer registry policies and procedures to ensure patient-centered care for cancer patients in accordance with government-wide, agency, and facility requirements.

(c) **Assignment.** For all assignments above the full performance level, the higher-level duties must consist of significant scope, complexity (difficulty), and range of variety, and be performed by the incumbent at least 25% of the time. Employees function as the coordinator of all activities associated with the cancer registry and cancer program. Provide technical direction to program clerks and technicians who assist with the cancer registry. Perform analysis of work processes to identify reasonable and efficient measurement of the quality of the work and to identify areas of possible improvement. Prepare routine and special statistical reports, narratives and graphic representations requiring use of registry data. Conduct special studies and surveys for identifying opportunities to improve patient care. Are subject-matter-experts on ACoS and/or facility standards pertaining to setting and monitoring goals, presenting statistical and written reports to identify resource needs and process improvement opportunities, and participating in strategic planning. Serve as liaison between the cancer committee and internal and external entities. Serve as core members on cancer committees to ensure that the discussions are consultative, address patient management issues and contain applicable staging schema. Are subject-matter-experts on registry and cancer program issues.

(8) **GS-9 MRT (Cancer Registrar) VISN Coordinator**

(a) **Experience.** One year of experience equivalent to the next lower grade level.

(b) **Demonstrated KSAs.** In addition to the experience above, the candidate must demonstrate the following KSAs:

1. Knowledge and application of program data sources, professional association standards and other data resources;
2. Ability to organize, coordinate and prioritize simultaneous work assignments, both individual and team related;
3. Knowledge of data extraction, data and statistical analysis techniques, operations and research techniques, and methods of problem analysis in order to make appropriate recommendations;
4. Ability to identify and recommend changes in procedures or programs that lead to accreditation and/or a minimum set of standards for cancer care;
5. Knowledge of pertinent laws, regulations, policies and precedents relating to the use of Cancer Registry information;
6. Expert ability to communicate both verbally and in writing with administrative and management personnel, line supervisors, and top-management in order to optimally disseminate information, resolve queries and handle administrative functions; and
7. Ability to develop and implement training mechanisms for registry staff within the VISN.

(c) **Assignment.** For all assignments above the full performance level, the higher-level duties must consist of significant scope, complexity (difficulty), and range of variety, and be performed by the incumbent at least 25% of the time. Employees function as VISN Registry Coordinators mentoring and training new and experienced tumor registrars within the VISN utilizing electronic cancer registry data collection systems. Perform quality assurance on registry data and may initiate studies to assess completeness, appropriateness and consistency in data collection. Encourage team building by means of teleconferencing and face-to-face meetings within the VISN to assure continuity of care, training, education and support. Develop training mechanisms utilizing resources available via the web and other sources. Serve as VISN registry experts to VISN management and staff for all programs requiring access to registry data. Responsible for supporting programs with backlog abstraction and/or follow-up. Provide support in the development of Cancer Registrar programs including establishing a set of minimum standards for cancer care throughout the VISN.

**5. DEVIATIONS**

a. The appointing official may, under unusual circumstances, approve reasonable deviations to the grade determination requirements for MRTs in VHA whose composite record of accomplishments, performance, and qualifications, as well as current assignments, warrants such action based on demonstrated competence to meet the requirements of the proposed grade.

**PART II**

**APPENDIX G35**

b. The placement of individuals in grade levels or assignments not described in this standard must be approved by the Under Secretary for Health, or designee, in VHA Central Office.

**Authority: 38 U.S.C. §§ 7402, 7403]**