

General Information

This document provides the recommendations within each of the career models for each of the identified HR functions. This includes training, education, and certification recommendations; VA-specific experience recommendations; and other VA-specific recommendations (e.g., conferences, job aids) needed to attain the stated level of proficiency within that function. The core, technical, and strategic competencies associated with each function are also provided in this document. The career model will be used to guide the professional development of VA HR professionals in aligning their skill set with the VA HR competencies.

Function Summary

Individuals in the Position Classification function work to ensure the accuracy of position descriptions, determine the appropriate title, series, and grade of positions within the VA, and advise management on organization and position management issues to ensure equity.

What is a Competency?

A competency is a standardized job requirement for an individual to properly perform a specific job or role. It is observable and measurable. Competencies are a combination of knowledge, skills, abilities (KSAs), attitudes, and behaviors used to improve performance.

Competencies serve as the foundation for all Human Capital practices. They are becoming increasingly important to the Federal government as a way to show accountability.

What are the differences between core, strategic and technical competencies?

- **Core:** Foundational competencies that apply to all functions regardless of job specialty.
- **Technical:** Competencies specific to job specialties.
- **Strategic:** Planning competencies recommended of HR Specialists at any level.

Required Competencies (See competencies defined in Appendix)

Core Competencies	Technical Competencies	Strategic Competencies
1. Analysis and Problem Solving*	17. Employee Benefits*	21. Change Management*
2. Attention to Detail	18. Labor Relations*	22. Guiding/Influencing*
3. Coaching/Mentoring*	19. Position Classification & Management*	23. Project & Program Management
4. Consulting*	20. Recruitment & Staffing*	24. Strategic Thinking*
5. Creative Thinking*		
6. Customer Service*		
7. Flexibility*		
8. Integrity/Honesty		
9. Interpersonal Skills		
10. IT Application*		
11. Leveraging Diversity*		
12. Oral Communication*		
13. Planning/Time Management*		
14. Reasoning		
15. Teamwork*		
16. Written Communication*		

**Note: Indicates competencies represented by courses in the career map.*

How to Acquire Competencies

During an exercise at the VA HR Academy Curriculum and Career Mapping workshop in September 2010, the subject matter experts chose the preferred “acquisition method” that would allow an individual to obtain the desired proficiency standard and level for each competency. The acquisition method options selected were:

- **Training:** VA or vendor provided courses that have learning objectives (i.e., Time Management Fundamentals).
- **Experience:** Activities the incumbent can engage in to enhance their recommended competencies (i.e., complete a time sensitive assignment with limited notice).
- **Other:** Another method of obtaining the necessary competencies without completing an action with a defined end result (i.e., referencing a job aid or shadowing an experienced professional).

The information contained within the Training, Education, and Certification table lists out the educational information that was identified during the September VA HR Academy Curriculum and Career Mapping workshop. The “✓” in each table indicates that the training, education, or certification is needed to demonstrate proficiency at the functional proficiency level (i.e., Novice (N), Learner (L), Solid Practitioner (SP), Role Model/Coach (RM/C), Expert (E)). Similarly, a “✓” in the Experience or Other Requirements tables indicates that the element is also needed to demonstrate proficiency at the functional proficiency level. All of the information taken together provides the overarching framework of what is recommended in order to demonstrate the desired proficiency level within each function across the identified competencies. Activities in the following sections marked with an asterisk (*) indicate those which may be effectively delivered or supported through social learning.

Function Proficiency Levels

Each VA HR function has proficiency levels associated with it to denote the types of activities performed and level of supervision required. Not every function proficiency level is applicable to every function. The function proficiency levels are:

- **Novice (N)**

A Human Resources Specialist at the Novice Practitioner Level is expected to:

- Possess the basic competence to perform HR functions; and
- Perform standard duties under direct supervision

- **Learner (L)**

A Human Resources Specialist at the Learner Practitioner Level is expected to:

- Possess the basic competence to perform VA HR functions; and
- Perform standard duties with supervision

- **Solid Practitioner (SP)**

A Human Resources Specialist at the Solid Practitioner Level is expected to:

- Possess a solid understanding of the subject area; and
- Perform standard duties with limited supervision

- **Role Model/Coach (RM/C)**

A Human Resources Specialist at the Role Model/Coach Practitioner Level is expected to:

- Possess an advanced understanding of the subject area;
- Perform standard duties with no supervision and complex duties with limited supervision; and
- May be asked to train others on how to complete their standard duties

- **Expert (E)**

A Human Resources Specialist at the Expert Practitioner Level is expected to:

- Possess a superior understanding of the subject area; and
- Perform complex duties with no supervision and is consulted as an expert

Recommended Training, Education, and Certifications

HR Specialist Position Classification Training, Education, and Certifications	Competency	Function Proficiency Level				
		N	L	SP	RM/C	E
1. A New Manager and the Company's Future	Strategic Thinking	✓				
2. Business Grammar: Common Usage Errors	Written Communication	✓				
3. Business Grammar: Parts of Speech	Written Communication	✓				
4. Business Grammar: Punctuation	Written Communication	✓				
5. Business Grammar: Sentence Construction	Written Communication	✓				
6. Business Grammar: The Mechanics of Writing	Written Communication	✓				
7. Business Writing: Editing and Proofreading	Written Communication	✓				
8. Communicating with Professionalism and Etiquette	Oral Communication	✓				
9. Communicating with Professionalism and Etiquette	Written Communication	✓				
10. Customer Service Fundamentals: Building Rapport in Customer Relationships	Customer Service	✓				
11. Interpersonal Communication: Listening Essentials	Customer Service	✓				
12. Interpersonal Communication: Targeting Your Message	Customer Service	✓				

HR Specialist Position Classification Training, Education, and Certifications	Competency	Function Proficiency Level				
		N	L	SP	RM/C	E
13. Managing Internal Dynamics in a Cross-functional Team	Oral Communication	✓				
14. Managing Self Through Change	Flexibility	✓				
15. Position Management	Position Classification & Management	✓				
16. Principles of Classification	Position Classification & Management	✓				
17. Professionalism, Business Etiquette, and Personal Accountability	Planning/Time Management	✓				
18. Time Management Fundamentals	Planning/Time Management	✓				
19. Using E-mail and Instant Messaging Effectively	Written Communication	✓				
20. Analytics Boot Camp	IT Application	✓	✓			
21. Managing and Retrieving Content in SharePoint 2003	IT Application	✓	✓			
22. Business Writing: How to Write Clearly and Concisely	Written Communication		✓			
23. Business Writing: Know Your Readers and Your Purpose	Written Communication		✓			
24. Communicating Effectively	Written Communication		✓			
25. Federal Position Management	Position Classification & Management		✓			
26. FOCUS: Achieving Your Highest Priorities (1-day)	Planning/Time Management		✓			
27. Hybrid Title 38 Staffing	Leveraging Diversity		✓			
28. Leveraging Multicultural and Multigenerational Diversity	Leveraging Diversity		✓			
29. The Impact of Culture on Communication - COMM0021	Leveraging Diversity		✓			
30. Antitrust – Overview	Labor Relations		✓	✓	✓	✓
31. Code of Conduct (Customizable)	Labor Relations		✓	✓	✓	✓
32. Conflict of Interest Simulation	Labor Relations		✓	✓	✓	✓
33. Conflicts of Interest in the Workplace	Labor Relations		✓	✓	✓	✓

HR Specialist Position Classification Training, Education, and Certifications	Competency	Function Proficiency Level				
		N	L	SP	RM/C	E
34. Customer Service in Government	Recruitment & Staffing		✓	✓	✓	✓
35. Doing Business on the Internet	Labor Relations		✓	✓	✓	✓
36. Equal Employment Opportunity and Discriminatory Practices in Hiring	Labor Relations		✓	✓	✓	✓
37. Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA)	Labor Relations		✓	✓	✓	✓
38. Federal Employee Relations	Labor Relations		✓	✓	✓	✓
39. Federal Human Resources Management	Recruitment & Staffing		✓	✓	✓	✓
40. Foreign Corrupt Practices Act	Labor Relations		✓	✓	✓	✓
41. I-9 Compliance: Verifying Employment Eligibility of US and Non-US Citizens	Labor Relations		✓	✓	✓	✓
42. Illegal Insider Trading Simulation	Labor Relations		✓	✓	✓	✓
43. Independent Contractors and Temporary Employees	Labor Relations		✓	✓	✓	✓
44. Integrity in the Workplace	Labor Relations		✓	✓	✓	✓
45. Intellectual Property Overview	Labor Relations		✓	✓	✓	✓
46. Interviewing and Hiring Practices	Labor Relations		✓	✓	✓	✓
47. Interviewing and Hiring Practices Simulation	Labor Relations		✓	✓	✓	✓
48. Military Spouse Employment*	Recruitment and Staffing		✓	✓	✓	✓
49. Preventing Fraud and Abuse	Labor Relations		✓	✓	✓	✓
50. Privacy and Information Security	Labor Relations		✓	✓	✓	✓
51. Problem Performance Prevention	Recruitment & Staffing		✓	✓	✓	✓
52. Procurement Integrity	Labor Relations		✓	✓	✓	✓
53. Promoting a Substance-free Workplace	Labor Relations		✓	✓	✓	✓
54. Record Retention	Labor Relations		✓	✓	✓	✓
55. Rightful Employment Termination	Labor Relations		✓	✓	✓	✓
56. Sarbanes-Oxley: What You Need to Know	Labor Relations		✓	✓	✓	✓
57. Telework 101 for Employees*	Employee Benefits		✓	✓	✓	✓

HR Specialist Position Classification Training, Education, and Certifications	Competency	Function Proficiency Level				
		N	L	SP	RM/C	E
58. Telework 101 for Managers*	Employee Benefits		✓	✓	✓	✓
59. Understanding the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)	Labor Relations		✓	✓	✓	✓
60. Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA)*	Recruitment and Staffing		✓	✓	✓	✓
61. Veteran Employment Training for Federal Human Resource Professionals *	Recruitment and Staffing		✓	✓	✓	✓
62. Veterans Appointing Authorities*	Recruitment and Staffing		✓	✓	✓	✓
63. Veterans' Preference	Recruitment & Staffing		✓	✓	✓	✓
64. Workplace Diversity Awareness	Labor Relations		✓	✓	✓	✓
65. Advanced Position Classification	Position Classification & Management			✓		
66. Advanced Position Classification for HR Practitioners	Position Classification & Management			✓		
67. Communicating Effectively	Oral Communication			✓		
68. Constructive Conflict Resolution	Guiding/Influencing			✓		
69. Consulting Skills for HRM Professionals	Consulting			✓		
70. Creative and Innovative Problem Solving	Creative Thinking			✓		
71. Customer Service Confrontation and Conflict	Customer Service			✓		
72. Customer Service in the Field	Customer Service			✓		
73. Customer Service over the Phone	Customer Service			✓		
74. Dealing with Irrational Customers and Escalating Complaints	Customer Service			✓		
75. Effective Business Writing	Written Communication			✓		
76. Internal Consulting Skills for Federal HR Professionals	Consulting			✓		
77. Internal Customer Service	Customer Service			✓		
78. Interpersonal Communication: Listening Essentials	Oral Communication			✓		
79. Interpersonal Communication: Targeting Your Message	Oral Communication			✓		
80. Interpersonal Communications	Guiding/Influencing			✓		

HR Specialist Position Classification Training, Education, and Certifications	Competency	Function Proficiency Level				
		N	L	SP	RM/C	E
81. Leading Teams and Groups	Teamwork			✓		
82. Managing Change: Building Positive Support for Change	Change Management			✓		
83. Managing Change: Dealing with Resistance to Change	Change Management			✓		
84. Managing Change: Sustaining Organizational Change	Change Management			✓		
85. Managing Change: Understanding Change	Change Management			✓		
86. Microsoft Office Excel 2007 Level 2	IT Application			✓		
87. Microsoft Office Access 2007 Level 2	IT Application			✓		
88. Negotiation Essentials: Communicating	Oral Communication			✓		
89. PMP 4: Project Time Management	Planning/Time Management			✓		
90. Position Classification and Position Management	Position Classification & Management			✓		
91. Presenting Your Case	Oral Communication			✓		
92. Problem Solving: The Fundamentals	Creative Thinking			✓		
93. Resolving Conflict	Guiding/Influencing			✓		
94. Shaping the Direction of Customer Service in Your Organization	Customer Service			✓		
95. Shortcut to Creativity	Creative Thinking			✓		
96. Team and Customer Relationships	Customer Service			✓		
97. Understanding the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)	Leveraging Diversity			✓		
98. Decision Making: Making Tough Decisions	Analysis and Problem Solving			✓	✓	
99. Decision Making: Tools and Techniques	Analysis and Problem Solving			✓	✓	
100. Human Resources Fundamentals (HRCI/PHR - 2007 - aligned)	Analysis and Problem Solving			✓	✓	
101. Problem Solving: Determining and Building Your Strengths	Analysis and Problem Solving			✓	✓	

HR Specialist Position Classification Training, Education, and Certifications	Competency	Function Proficiency Level				
		N	L	SP	RM/C	E
102.Strategic Human Capital Management	Strategic Thinking			✓	✓	
103.An Essential Guide to Giving Feedback - COMM0521	Oral Communication				✓	
104.Effective Feedback for Employees and Colleagues Simulation - COMM0520	Oral Communication				✓	
105.Internal Consulting Skills for Federal HR Professionals	Customer Service				✓	
106.Planning and Conducting a RIF	Position Classification & Management				✓	
107.Essential Mentoring Techniques: Building and Maintaining Mentoring Relationships	Coaching/Mentoring				✓	✓
108.Essential Mentoring Techniques: Designing and Initiating Mentoring Programs	Coaching/Mentoring				✓	✓
109.Essential Mentoring Techniques: Mentoring Fundamentals	Coaching/Mentoring				✓	✓
110.Generating Creative and Innovative Ideas: Maximizing Team Creativity	Creative Thinking				✓	✓
111.Analytic Trouble Shooting	Analysis and Problem Solving					✓
112.Communicating to Get Results	Written Communication					✓
113.Writing a Business Case	Written Communication					✓

*Note: Indicates courses do not map to the competency (ratio = 0)

Recommended VA-Specific Experience

HR Specialist Position Classification Experience	Function Proficiency Level				
	N	L	SP	RM/C	E
1. Provide a 15 minute presentation on your experience, in a learning event, to managers and peers	✓				
2. Participate in discussions with supervisor concerning classification problems	✓				
3. Identify, to the manager, the references most frequently used to classify positions	✓				
4. Draft a position report for review by the HR manager	✓				
5. Review the applicability of appropriate articles in bargaining unit agreements and discuss with the HR manager		✓			

HR Specialist Position Classification Experience	Function Proficiency Level				
	N	L	SP	RM/C	E
6. Prepare questions for desk audit for review from manager		✓			
7. Advise an employee on the appeals process by providing established checklists		✓			
8. Respond to basic questions from employees about the appeals process		✓			
9. Identify inconsistencies in organizational structures and discuss concerns with HR manager		✓			
10. Identify changes in new or revised classification standards and provide feedback on the impacts to the HR manager		✓			
11. Evaluate a position description and prepare a final position report for review by the HR manager (including completion of the Optional Form 8 (OF-8) (cover page for GS and FWS PDs))		✓			
12. Take appropriate action based on outcome of position report as directed by the HR manager		✓			
13. Select and apply the appropriate reference(s) for classification, given a position description		✓			
14. Recommend appropriate determination on the FLSA and bargaining unit coverage, competitive level code and whether a position is a single or multiple incumbency for review by the HR manager when given a position description		✓			
15. Make recommendations for adjustments to special salary rate schedules for review by the HR manager, given the annual increases/COLAs		✓			
16. Perform desk audits for a variety of positions independently			✓		
17. Prepare written summary of results of a desk audit to an employee and their manager			✓		
18. Identify inconsistencies in organizational structures and recommend solutions to service managers			✓		
19. Identify changes in new or revised classification standards and provide recommendations to the HR manager and the service manager			✓		
20. Classify a position description and take appropriate action			✓		
21. Classify a leader or supervisor position and take appropriate action			✓		
22. Make appropriate determination, given a position description, on the FLSA and bargaining unit coverage, competitive level code and whether a position is a single or multiple incumbency			✓		
23. Analyze salary and staffing data and make recommendations to upper management for adjustments to special salary rate schedules			✓		
24. Assist supervisors by writing position descriptions using various formats (e.g., FES, GS narratives, FWS)			✓		

HR Specialist Position Classification Experience	Function Proficiency Level				
	N	L	SP	RM/C	E
25. Provide training to staff and new supervisors			✓		
26. Review proposed organizational changes and discuss solutions with upper level management				✓	
27. Identify changes in new or revised classification standards and provide recommendations to the upper management				✓	
28. Advise staff on proper format for evaluating positions				✓	
29. Assist staff with determining appropriate standards and levels				✓	
30. Provide training to experienced supervisors				✓	
31. Present a formal plan for implementation of new classification initiatives					✓
32. Serve as a consultant to other classification specialists across the VA*					✓
33. Participate in a roundtable discussion in an HR field. Debate ideas regarding recent developments and/or emerging trends*					✓
34. Evaluate and comment on proposed classification standards					✓

*Note: Indicates a social learning activity

Recommended VA-Specific Other

HR Specialist Position Classification Other	Function Proficiency Level				
	N	L	SP	RM/C	E
1. Review standard appeals procedure letter	✓				
2. Review Classification Appeal Checklist - both advisory and employee (OHRM website)	✓				
3. Review OHRM website (compensation & classification)	✓				
4. Review OPM website (classification)	✓				
5. Review OPM Guides (Classifiers Handbook)	✓				
6. Review OPM Guides (Primary Standard)	✓				
7. Review standard forms for evaluating positions under the Factor Evaluation System and Narrative formats	✓				
8. Review VA Handbooks and directives	✓				
9. Review 5 CFR	✓				
10. Review Classification Appeal Checklist - both advisory and employee (OHRM website)		✓			
11. Review OPM Guides (Classifiers Handbook)		✓			
12. Review OPM Guides (Primary Standard)		✓			
13. Review standard forms for evaluating positions under the Factor Evaluation System and Narrative formats		✓			
14. Review OHRM website (compensation and classification)		✓			
15. Review OPM website (classification)		✓			
16. Review 5 CFR		✓			
17. Review VA Handbooks and directives		✓			
18. Review Classification Appeal Checklist - both advisory and employee (OHRM website)			✓		
19. Conduct formal or informal mentoring relationship - discussions etc.*			✓		
20. Review OPM Guides (Classifiers Handbook)			✓		

HR Specialist Position Classification Other	Function Proficiency Level				
	N	L	SP	RM/C	E
21. Review OPM Guides (Primary Standard)			✓		
22. Review standard forms for evaluating positions under the Factor Evaluation System and Narrative formats			✓		
23. Review OHRM website (compensation and classification)			✓		
24. Review OPM website (classification)			✓		
25. Review 5 CFR			✓		
26. Review VA Handbooks and directives			✓		
27. Read prior classification appeals decisions				✓	
28. Read prior consistency reviews				✓	
29. Review OHRM website (compensation & classification)				✓	
30. Review OPM website (classification)				✓	
31. Review 5 CFR				✓	
32. Review Classification Appeal Checklist - both advisory and employee (OHRM website)				✓	
33. Review OPM Guides (Classifiers Handbook)				✓	
34. Review OPM Guides (Primary Standard)				✓	
35. Review VA Handbooks and directives				✓	
36. Read prior classification appeals decisions					✓
37. Read prior consistency reviews					✓
38. Review OHRM website (compensation & classification)					✓
39. Review OPM website (classification)					✓
40. Review 5 CFR					✓
41. Review Classification Appeal Checklist - both advisory and employee (OHRM website)					✓
42. Review OPM Guides (Classifiers Handbook)					✓

HR Specialist Position Classification Other	Function Proficiency Level				
	N	L	SP	RM/C	E
43. Review OPM Guides (Primary Standard)					✓
44. Review VA Handbooks and directives					✓

**Note: Indicates a social learning activity*

APPENDIX

CORE Competencies Defined:

- **Analysis and Problem Solving:** Making sound, well-informed, and objective decisions. Identifying problems, determining the accuracy and relevance of information, and using sound judgment to generate and evaluate alternatives. Perceiving the impact and implications of decisions.
- **Attention to Detail:** Performing work in a thorough and conscientious manner while attending to detail.
- **Coaching/Mentoring:** Working to improve and reinforce performance of others. Facilitating their skill development by providing clear, behaviorally specific performance feedback, and making or eliciting specific suggestions for improvement in a manner that builds confidence and maintains self-esteem.
- **Consulting:** Providing advice, expertise, methodologies, and problem-solving assistance to clients/customers within and outside the agency.
- **Creative Thinking:** Using imagination to develop new insights into situations and applying innovative solutions to problems. Designing new methods where established methods and procedures are inapplicable or are unavailable.
- **Customer Service:** Working with clients and customers to assess their needs, provide information or assistance, resolve their problems, or satisfy their expectations.
- **Flexibility:** Adapting behavior or work methods in response to new information, changing conditions, or unexpected obstacles. Open to change and new information.
- **Integrity/Honesty**
- **Interpersonal Skills:** Establishing rapport with people easily, developing and maintaining a network of contacts that can provide information, help, and access to others.
- **IT Application:** Using job-relevant information systems and/or software applications such as word processing, spreadsheets, automated research tools, database applications, and the Internet.
- **Leveraging Diversity:** Supporting and promoting an environment that holds opportunities for all, regardless of race, gender, culture, and age.
- **Oral Communication:** Expressing information to individuals or groups effectively, taking into account the audience and nature of information. Making clear and convincing oral presentations. Listening to others, attending to nonverbal cues, and responding appropriately.
- **Planning/Time Management:** Organizing work, setting priorities, and determining resource requirements. Determining short- and long-term goals and strategies to achieve them.

- **Reasoning:** Identifying rules, principles, or relationships that explain facts, data, or other information. Analyzing information and making correct inferences or drawing accurate conclusions.
- **Teamwork:** Encouraging and facilitating cooperation, pride, trust, and group identity. Fostering commitment and team spirit. Working with others to receive goals.
- **Written Communication:** Recognizing or using correct English grammar, punctuation, and spelling. Communicating information in a succinct and organized manner. Producing written information, which may include technical material that is appropriate for the intended audience.

TECHNICAL Competencies Defined:

- **Employee Benefits:** Applying HR concepts, principles, and practices relating to retirements, insurances and other employee benefit programs.
- **Employee Development:** Applying employee development concepts, principles, and practices related to planning, evaluating, and administering training, organizational development, and career development initiatives.
- **Employee Relations:** Applying laws, rules, regulations, case law, principles, and practices related to employee conduct, performance, and dispute resolution.
- **Labor Relations:** Applying laws, rules, regulations, case law, principles, and practices related to negotiating and administering labor agreements.
- **Pay Administration:** Applying pay administration concepts, principles, and practices relating to pay setting, pay schedules, pay determinations, and other pay administration regulations.
- **Performance Management:** Applying performance management concepts, principles, and practices related to planning, monitoring, rating, and rewarding employee performance.
- **Position Classification & Management:** Determining the correct title, series, and grade of a position. Ensuring the accuracy of a position description, and advising management on organization and position management issues.
- **Recruitment & Staffing:** Applying HR concepts, principles, and practices related to identifying, altering, and selecting individuals and placing them into positions to address changing organizational needs.
- **Work/Life Integration:** Helping others meet the needs of their lives in a way that helps them be most productive, effective, and healthy, both at work and outside of work.
- **Workforce & Succession Planning:** Applying HR concepts, principles, and practices in order to determine the composition of the workforce, projecting the composition of the future workforce, and identifying current and future competency gaps to align human capital with organization goals. Consulting

with organizations to produce action plans to bridge both workforce and competency gaps and ensuring an adequate and well qualified workforce to fulfill the mission.

STRATEGIC Competencies Defined:

- **Change Management:** Maintaining balance in the face of ambiguity, rapid pace, and changing business conditions and to deal with the concerns of the organization and the people in it, including oneself.
- **Guiding/Influencing:** Guiding others to accept recommendations, cooperate, or change their behavior. Working with others towards an agreement. Working to find mutually acceptable solutions.
- **Project & Program Management:** Planning, monitoring, and controlling projects/programs. Ensuring optimum use of talent, budget, time, and materials.
- **Strategic Thinking:** Maintaining a current knowledge and understanding of global, industry, market, and societal trends and applying them to create long-range options, scenarios, and plans to successfully advance the organization's mission.