

March 10, 2003

CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER MEMORANDUM 10-03

MEMORANDUM FOR: REGIONAL ADMINISTRATORS AND DIRECTORS FOR
VETERANS' EMPLOYMENT TRAINING

FROM: GORDON J. BURKE, JR. [Signed]
Chief Operating Officer

SUBJECT: USERRA/VP Investigator "Distance Learning" for Veterans'
Program Assistant (VPA) and Management Services Assistant
(MSA) Staff

REFERENCE: DM 40-98 (same subject) dated June 5, 1998
DM 28-00, Delineation of Duties of the GS-303-07 Veterans'
Program Assistant (VPA) Position dated July 6, 2000
DM 34-98, Working Out of Classification, dated April 23, 1998

I. PURPOSE: To provide training in USERRA/VP basic investigative knowledge and skills to appropriate Veterans' Program Assistants (VPAs) and Management Services Assistants (MSAs), via the three phases of "Distance Learning" materials associated with VETS' USERRA/VP Investigator's Course at the National Veterans' Training Institute (NVTI).

II. BACKGROUND: The USERRA/VP Investigator "Distance Learning" course offers the opportunity to learn sufficient and necessary skills for VPAs to conduct allowable investigative work. (Director's Memorandum 28-00 dated July 6, 2000 provides direction as to the specific work that VPAs and MSAs may perform in reference to USERRA.) This training is provided in lieu of attendance at the USERRA/VP Investigator on-site training at NVTI as VPAs and MSAs are not authorized to attend the NVTI Investigator on-site training course.

The USERRA/VP Investigator "Distance Learning" is a mentored course. The course is self-paced study at the student's usual duty station. Each participant studies under the tutelage of an experienced USERRA/VP Investigator. The course has three phases. Upon completion of the course the mentor will send a verifying letter to the student and appropriate managers.

The USERRA/VP Investigator "Distance Learning" course is available on an on-going basis.

III. ACTION:

1. Whenever it is desired for VPAs and MSAs to take the USERRA/VP Investigator “Distance Learning” course, Regional Administrators are to send the names of VPA/MSA nominees to the USERRA Regional Lead Center (URLC--via email addressed to the “ATL-VETS-USERRA-RLC GROUP”.) The Region originating the request will assign each VPA or MSA to one of the following two categories:
 - A. Those who need to learn only general background on USERRA/VP investigation (only the materials from the first phase of the three Investigator Distance phases will be used).
 - or
 - B. Those who need to study in detail all three phases of the Investigator Distance materials--for those VPAs/MSAs who will be expected to work directly in some USERRA/VP case investigation activities.
2. The URLC will identify Cluster of USERRA Experts (CUE) members or other qualified staff interested in “mentoring” VPAs/MSAs throughout their study of the Investigators' Distance Learning phases.
3. Within two weeks of the request for training, mentors will be assigned to each student. Also by this date, NVTI will send a set of the materials (including the "book" answers) to each mentor.
4. Within two weeks of being assigned, CUE “Mentors” should contact their student to discuss how best they can proceed through the study process, and to reach an agreement on mutually convenient time lines for completion of each Distance Learning phase.

Once agreement is reached between CUE mentor and VPA/MSA "mentee", the CUE member will re-draft the following template of an introductory letter (especially the parts highlighted **in bold and underlined** in this draft), to include the actual time lines and course specifications agreed upon with the VPA/MSA:

____ __, 200_

Welcome to the Investigator's Course, Distance Learning Phase(s) **I, II, and/or III**. Enclosed please find all materials needed to complete (this/these phase(s)). These are reading materials and related questions covering the following course topics:

- * **Potential liability for VETS and individual investigators**
- * **Determining when and what information should be shared with all parties.**
- * **Applicable laws as they apply to witnesses.**
- * **Information employers are required to maintain.**
- * **Reasonable Accommodation: ADA, resources, rights and application.**

We estimate it will take you approximately **four** hours to complete this self-paced training activity. Please return the completed materials by these due dates:

- Phase I due _____, 200**
- Phase II due _____, 200**
- Phase III due _____, 200**

For complete instructions, read the inside cover of the enclosed VETS Investigator's Course Handbook. If you have questions on any of the materials, please contact me. I encourage you to use the phone, fax, e-mail or regular mail.

E-mail address: _____:

Fax: _____

Phone: _____

Mail: _____

Internet: <http://www-nvti.cudenver.edu/>(NOTE: a trainee's answers to Distance phase #3 questions can be transmitted via the Internet).

Thank you for your interest and participation in the VETS Investigators training Distance Learning.

Sincerely,

5. The mentor will email the re-drafted letter to NVTI, which will then attach that letter to the set of Distance materials, which will be sent to the VPA/MSA. The student should receive their material within two weeks.

6. The VPA/MSA with the assistance of the mentor will progress through the Distance Learning materials at the mutually agreed upon time frame.

At the completion of the study process, the mentor--via the URLC--will send a letter to the VPA/MSA (cc: the VPA's DVET and RAVET; the URLC; NVTI), verifying the VPA/MSA's completion of the Distance phase(s).

IV. Effective Date: Immediately.

V. Inquiries: Direct questions on this Memorandum to Norm Lance (202) 693-4731 or Bo Wroble (404) 562-2368.

Expiration Date: When superseded