



## **RN Promotions and Reconsiderations**

**Developed by:  
the VISN NPSB Consultants  
Department of Veterans Affairs  
Veterans Health Administration**

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## **Philosophy**

**The NPSB is about promoting registered nurses when they meet the Qualification Standards for the next grade.**

**This is a process to formally recognize when nurses have elevated their practice with sustained professional performance.**





## **Promotional Reviews: Proficiency Rating System**

**Nurse I's and Nurse II's under the Proficiency Rating System must be reviewed by the NPSB within a reasonable time period after the RN signs the annual Proficiency Report (suggest the next NPSB meeting). Promotions are now effective as of the RN's anniversary date.**

**Effective 6/14/12, time-in-grade was eliminated. This does not mean, however, that an RN can or will be reviewed multiple times during a rating year for promotion.**

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## **Promotional Reviews: ECF Rating System**

**Nurse I's and Nurse II's under ECF will be reviewed by the NPSB at their anniversary date.**

**If the NPSB promotional review will not occur in October right after the close of the ECF rating period, an interim is written by the rater, on a memo addressed to NPSB Chair (*never written on a VAF 10-2623, Proficiency Report form*) and fully addresses each Dimension of Practice. The interim is attached to the ECF document.**

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## Levels of Practice

**An RN must advance/promote sequentially through each grade/level established at Appointment, Nurse I through Nurse III.**

**This means that an RN cannot “skip” a grade from Nurse I through Nurse III because Nurse I thru Nurse III is rank-in-person.**

**Example: RN appointed at Nurse I/Level 2 cannot be promoted to Nurse III until he/she has first been promoted to Nurse I/Level 3 and then Nurse II.**



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## Levels of Practice (Cont.)

**However an RN at any grade can apply and be selected for a Nurse IV or Nurse V position, provided they meet the education and years of experience for these grades because Nurse IV and Nurse V is rank-in-position.**

**Example: An RN at Nurse II can apply for and be selected for a Nurse IV position, provided the RN meets the education requirements and the years of experience.**



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## Promotions

**Promotion Review consists of:**

- ★ **Administrative Requirements**
  - Education requirement.
  - Total years RN experience required for the grade.
  - Proficiency rating of at least Satisfactory rating or ECF rating of at least Fully Successful
- ★ **Dimensions of Nursing Practice.**
- ★ **Criteria for Consideration of Advancements.**

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## Promotions (Cont.)

**Promotions are “performance-driven” and not “project-driven.” It is the totality of the performance with progression in practice. Sustainability is about the RN’s level of practice within that rating period.**

**There is no requirement that an RN has to fully meet the Qualification Standards for promotion for multiple years before being promoted.**

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## Criteria for Consideration of Advancements

From VA Handbook 5005, Part III, Chapter 4

**RNs who meet the administrative requirements and the Dimensions of Practice for the grade they are being considered for, become eligible for promotion once the following four criteria are met:**

- **Have improved the effectiveness of patient care through the use of more complex skills and application of scholarly knowledge to practice;**
- **Have assumed greater responsibility for the improvement of patient care;**

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## Criteria for Consideration of Advancements (Cont.)

- **Have made steady progress toward professional goals for the improvement of patient care; and**
- **Have demonstrated the ability to perform at the level of professional nursing practice as required in the qualification standard for appointment to the grade to which the RN is being considered for promotion to a higher grade level or advancement within the grade.**

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## Writing to the Dimensions

The NPSB is looking for a minimum of one specific example of how each Dimension is met at the next grade/level:

|                              |   |   |
|------------------------------|---|---|
| What was done?               | ➔ | Action  |
| For whom?                    | ➔ | Population  |
| What difference did it make? | ➔ | Outcome   |
| When?                        | ➔ | Sustainability of the RN's overall performance within the current rating period |



## NPSB Reviews

The NPSB must remain flexible in reviewing the narrative.

The Dimensions are not absolute, discrete entities. Give the RN credit for meeting a Dimension if it is “met” anywhere in the narrative.

Example: The Board may not see an example of how the RN is meeting the Criteria of Practice under Practice but may see it under the Criteria of Performance. Practice would then be considered “met.”



## Requesting Clarification

**CLARIFICATION** from the Rater may be sought when **Criteria** are not clearly articulated, and the **NPSB** cannot clearly determine whether a **Criteria** is “met” or “not met.”

This is **NOT** a request for additional information or examples from the Rater to meet the **Dimension**, if the **Criteria** under the **Dimension** are “not met.”



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## Requesting Clarification (Cont.)

If a **Criteria** is “not met,” the **NPSB** does **NOT** request additional information to force a “met” situation.

Example: Eight (8) out of the nine (9) practice **Criteria** are “met” and one is “not met.” The **NPSB** does not request additional information; this is a non-promote situation.

There is no maximum “magic number” of **Criteria** that above which, the **NPSB** will not seek clarification. However, it is expected that it should not be the preponderance of the narrative.

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## **Requesting Clarification (Cont.)**

**The Board Chair should request clarification of the Rater via an e-mail with a suggested 2-week deadline. Attach a copy of the e-mail to the Board Minutes.**

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## **Degree Waivers**

**The NPSB may recommend a one-time waiver of a degree requirement, if all other Practice and Administrative standards are met.**

**“The approving official may authorize a waiver of ... degree requirements for individuals whose professional accomplishments, performance, and qualifications warrant such consideration based on demonstrated ability to meet the requirements for promotion to the next higher grade or advancement to a higher level within the grade.” (From VA Handbook 5005, Part II, Appendix G6)**





## **Degree Waivers (Cont.)**

**All RNs are subject to the current Qualification Standards, dated March 17, 2009.**

**There is no provision for a “double-waiver” of both a bachelor’s and a master’s degree for a Nurse II ADN or Diploma nurse to attain Nurse III. They are ineligible for promotion to Nurse III unless they attain a BSN or a bachelor’s degree in a field related to nursing.**

**This includes ADN Nurse IIs who attained Nurse II when a bachelor’s degree was not required.**

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## **Degree Waivers (Cont.)**

**Degree waiver example:**

**Dave is a Nurse I/Level 3 ADN meeting all the standards for promotion to Nurse II except the Education requirement (Bachelor’s required). The NPSB can recommend a waiver of the Bachelor’s degree requirement for promotion to Nurse II.**

**Then Dave becomes a Nurse Manager, but the NPSB cannot recommend a second waiver of the Bachelor’s degree (“double-waiver”) and a waiver of the Master’s degree for him to be promoted to Nurse III.**

**However, if Dave earns a Bachelor’s degree, the NPSB can recommend a one-time waiver of the Master’s degree for promotion to Nurse III, provided he meets all the other Standards.**

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## Frequency of Board Reviews

An employee at Nurse I or Nurse II who is not promoted or advanced [within Nurse I] will be considered for promotion or advancement within the grade on the next anniversary date of grade.

A longer period between considerations, not to exceed three (3) years, may be established by the NPSB when an RN at Nurse II does not meet the qualification standard's education or experience requirements.

(Effective 6/14/12, VA Handbook 5005, Part III, Chapter 4.)

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## Frequency of Board Reviews (Cont.)

**NOTE:** A deferral of the next promotional consideration for 2 or 3 years **DOES NOT** affect completing an annual appraisal on any RN.

Annual appraisals and NPSB operations are two separate processes.

All RNs will receive either an annual Proficiency Report or an annual ECF.

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## Board Action

Actions are recorded on Board Action:

- Demographic information on front
- Recommendation on back

If promotion is not recommended, must state the specific standards not met, including the Dimensions, Criteria, and the Criteria for Consideration of Advancement.

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## Sample Board Action

(Non-Promote to Nurse II)

| Recommend non-promotion. Next Promotional Review: <i>(enter year)</i> |     |         |   |     |               |
|---|-----|---------|---|-----|---------------|
|   | MET | NOT MET |   | MET | NOT MET       |
| VA Handbook 5005, Part II, Appendix G6                                |     | X       | Education Requirement: BSN or Bachelor's Degree in a related field w/ADN/Diploma  |     |               |
|   |     |         | <b>DIMENSIONS OF PRACTICE AND CRITERIA</b>  |     |               |
|   |     | X       | <b>PRACTICE</b>   |     | X             |
|   |     | X       | Practice  | X   | Collaboration |
|   |     | X       | Ethics  |     | Collegiality  |
|   |     | X       | Resource Utilization  |     | X             |
|   | X   |         | <b>PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT</b>   |     | X             |
|   | X   |         | Education/Career Development  |     | X             |
|   | X   |         | Performance   |     | Research      |
| VA Handbook 5005, Part III, Chapter 4, Section 6                      |     | X       | Has improved the effectiveness of patient care through the use of more complex skills and application of scholarly knowledge to practice. |     |               |
|   |     | X       | Has assumed greater responsibility for the improvement of patient care  |     |               |
|   |     | X       | Has made steady progress towards professional goals for the improvement of patient care.  |     |               |



## Notice of Decision

**In the event of non-promotion, the supervisor is required to meet with the RN and issue the written feedback document outlining specifically what standards were not met.**

**The responsibility of communicating the non-promote decision and a discussion of related performance issues to an RN rests with the supervisor.**

**(Supervisory notification is outlined in VA Handbook 5005, Chapter 4.)**

**Sample feedback letters on ONS website.**

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## Notice of Decision (Cont.)

**The RN signs and dates receipt of the written feedback document and the signed receipted copy is filed in the event the RN wants to request formal reconsideration.**

**If the RN refuses to sign the written feedback document, then the supervisor simply writes "refused to sign" on the feedback document, signs their own name, and dates it.**

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## **Notice of Decision (Cont.)**

**The RN does not sign receipt on the Board Action form.**

**The RN can access their own Board Actions via the electronic Official Personnel Folder (e-OPF).**

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## **Local Promotion Considerations to Nurse IV by Nurse Executive**

**Nurse Executive will conduct a one-time review of scope and complexity of assignment on all Nurse IIIs for promotion consideration to Nurse IV, one year after appointment or promotion to Nurse III.**

**The review is documented using a Board Action form. The Nurse Executive signs in the Chair's signature box.**

**Non-promote letter goes to the RN.**

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## Local Promotion Considerations to Nurse IV by Nurse Executive (Cont.)

*Sample Board Action, front side:*

### **PROMOTIONAL CONSIDERATION to NURSE IV**

In accordance with VA Handbook 5005, Part III, the Associate Director for Patient/Nursing Services has conducted the required one-time review of qualifications for promotional consideration to Nurse IV.



## Local Promotion Considerations to Nurse IV by Nurse Executive (Cont.)

*Sample Board Action, reverse side:*

Recommend non-promotion to Nurse IV, per review by the Associate Director for Patient/Nursing Services. The scope and complexity of this nurse's current assignment does not support advancement to Nurse IV. Future review will occur only if there is a significant change in the nature of present assignment or future reassignments.



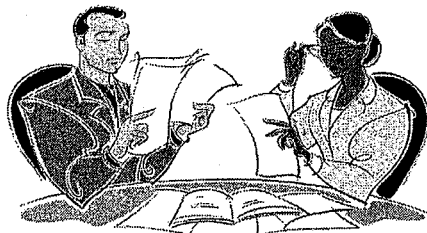
## Local Promotion Considerations to Nurse IV by Nurse Executive (Cont.)

If a Nurse Executive thinks a position (*not the nurse's performance*) meets the scope and complexity intent of Nurse IV, s/he will need to first seek local Resource Board and Director approval for the additional Nurse IV position. If the local approval has been obtained, the VISN Board must conduct a review of the Functional Statement, organizational chart, and other related documents to determine whether the position is truly a Nurse IV position.

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## The Reconsideration Process



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## Reconsideration

- Applies only for non-promotion within Nurse I, to Nurse II, and to Nurse III.
- Includes reconsideration of promotion when all practice requirements are met, but the Educational requirement is not met.
- Does not apply to non-promotion from Nurse III to Nurse IV (NIV is rank-in-position).
- Does not apply to Temporary promotions.

Reference: VA Handbook 5005, Part III, Chapter 4.

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## Reconsideration (Cont.)

**There is no threshold of total “not met’s” above which an RN cannot request reconsideration.**

**An RN can file reconsideration whether he/she did not meet one practice Criteria or all nine practice Criteria.**

**A facility does not have the authority to establish a “maximum” number of “not met’s” nor can a facility deny a local reconsideration or VACO reconsideration review.**

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## Informal Discussion

**RNs will discuss their concerns with their immediate supervisor prior to submitting a request for reconsideration.**

**RNs can also be offered the opportunity to seek further clarification from the Board Chair.**

**(Board Chairs should meet with the RN and the supervisor together)**

**If the employee is not satisfied with the explanation, the supervisor will inform the RN of their right to request reconsideration.**

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## Local Reconsideration

**If the RN wants to request reconsideration by the local NPSB, s/he has a deadline of 30 calendar days (effective 6/14/12) after receiving the non-promote document to submit his/her written request, including additional performance documentation. (Can be new information or relate to documentation in the Proficiency.)**

**Supervisors must review and write *concur* or *do not concur* on the additional performance documentation the RN submits before it goes to the local Board.**

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## **Local Reconsideration**

(Cont.)

**This is the RN's one opportunity to provide additional narrative comments to the Board.**

**An extension beyond the 30 calendar days may be approved by the Approving Official (Director or Nurse Executive if delegated to) if the RN is unable to submit information for reasons beyond their control.**

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## **Local Reconsideration**

(Cont.)

**There is one local reconsideration meeting. It does not have to be the same Board members from the first meeting.**


**Board Action is processed as usual, forwarded to the Approving Official.**

**RN is notified in writing of the promote or non-promote decision. Supervisor issues the letter to the RN in a meeting for the RN to sign and date receipt.**

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## VACO Reconsideration

If the RN wants to request reconsideration by the VACO NPSB, s/he has a deadline of  30 calendar days (effective 6/14/12) after receipt of the written local reconsideration non-promote notice.

The RN cannot submit any additional performance information at this point. The VACO NPSB wants to see exactly what the local Board reviewed.

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## VACO Reconsideration

(Cont.)

VACO NPSB Checklist of required documents must be completed by the HR Technical Advisor. The Checklist is on the ONS website.

Send the exact same information the local NPSB reviewed to the VACO NPSB; do not add anything.

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## **VACO Reconsideration**

(Cont.)

**The final decision will be made by the Chief Nursing Officer/designee, who is the Approving Official for VACO Board Actions.**

**Board Action is forwarded back to the facility.**

**Decision notice is generated from the Nurse Executive and is issued to the RN by his/her supervisor.**

**A non-promote decision by VACO is final. There is no further reconsideration.**

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## **References**

**VA Handbook 5005, Part II, Appendix G6**

**VA Handbook 5005, Part III, Chapter 4**

**VA Handbook 5005, Part III, Appendix K**

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