

Skills Certification Overview



TM Call – July 2015

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Compensation Service
Training Chief**



Skills Certification

- Objective: Provide a better understanding of the Skills Certification requirements and the test process



Skills Certification Requirement

- Public Law 110-389, Section 225
 - Mandatory Skills Certification testing for employees and managers responsible for processing claims
- Article 67 of the Master Agreement
 - Testing is for journey-level employees only
 - Once certified, periodic re-testing is required
 - Separated passing the VSR skills certification test with receiving a GS 11 promotion
 - Since May 2012, VSRs are hired at a Full Performance Level (FPL) GS 10
 - FPL GS 10s will reach the GS 11 level through competitive promotion.



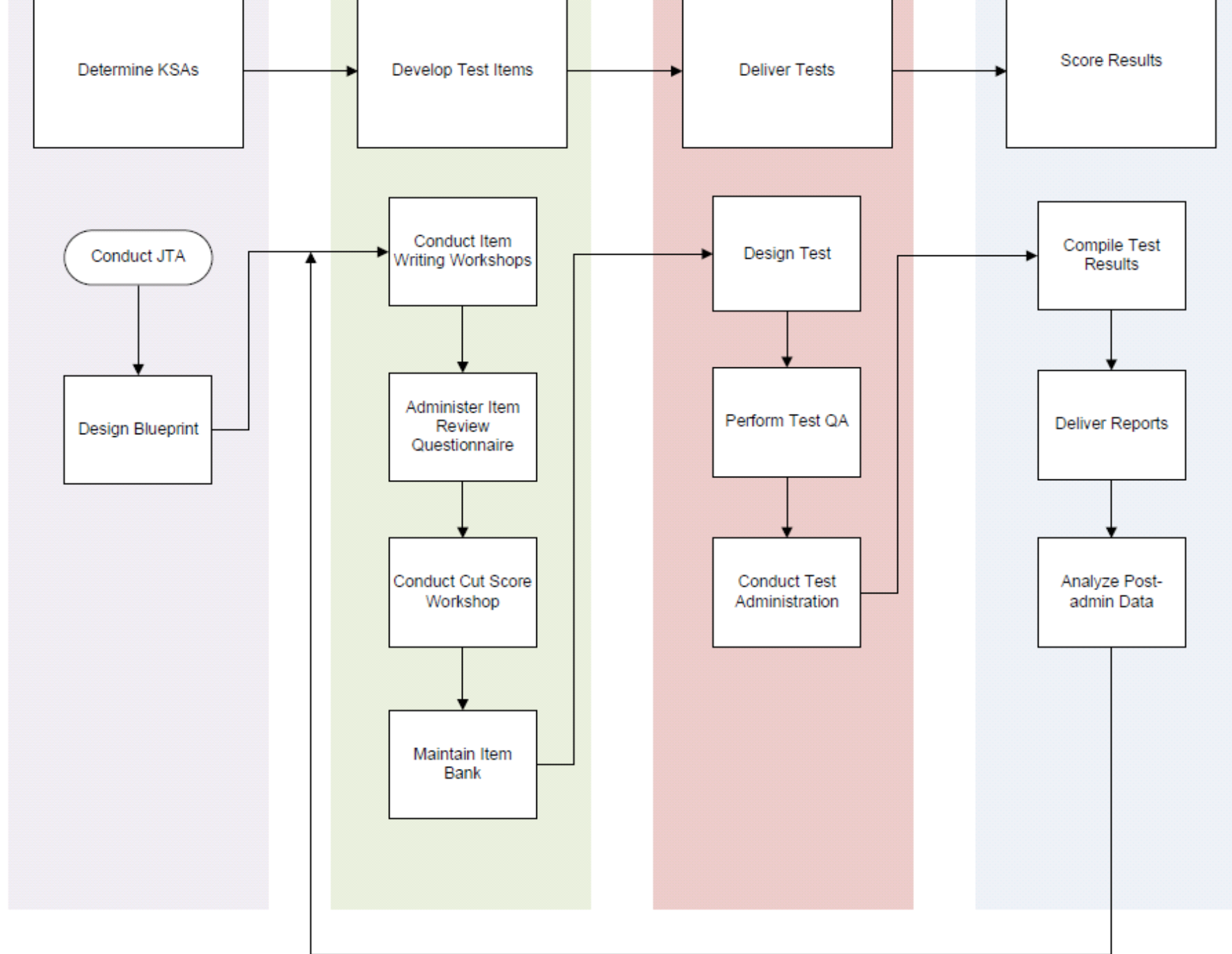
Skills Certification Field Leads

Test	Field Lead
VSR	Renaye Murphy, Denver
RVSR	Pritz Navaratnasingham, Seattle
Pension VSR & VCE	John Limpose, Waco
Decision Review Officer	Marlan Waldrop, Houston
Senior VSR	Jesse Severe, Milwaukee
Coach	Mike Blazis, Newark



Skills Certification Process

- Design Team Meetings
- Item Writing Workshops (IWW)
- Item Review Questionnaire Event (IRQ)
- Cut Score Workshops (CSW)
- Test Administrations





Skills Certification Schedule

- Each Skills Certification test is typically scheduled for two test administrations each fiscal year
- Current FY15 schedule is posted on the CS Skills Certification website at:
https://www.ttande.org/CPTraining/Skills_Cert/Index.htm



Eligibility for Skills Cert Tests

Journey Level employees

VSR = GS 10

RVSR = GS 12

DRO and RQRS = GS 13

Coach = GS 13

Senior VSR and AQRS = GS 11-12

- Must take Skills Certification test within one year of reaching journey level status in the absence of extenuating circumstances such as Active Duty Recall or long term illness.
- Exception: VSRs are considered to be at the journey level once they have been promoted to GS-11 or higher (including AQRS). No one year waiting period.



VSR Eligibility

VSRs hired under Full Performance Level GS 11

- Guidance dated April 18, 2012, to hire at FPL 10
- Must take the Skills Cert test within one year of reaching the Journey level or August 2012, whichever is later
- Employee is given three consecutive attempts to pass the test
- Per Article 67, if they are unable to pass in the three consecutive attempts, they are placed under the full performance level GS 10 PD
- If they pass, they are promoted to a GS 11



PIP/Performance Standards

- Employees on a PIP or not meeting performance standards are still required to take the appropriate Skills Certification test
- Exception is VSR test, 2 categories of employees
 - VSRs hired under FPL GS-10 are still required to test regardless if meeting performance standards or on a PIP.
 - VSRs hired under FPL GS-11, currently on a PIP or not meeting performance standards do not take the VSR Skills Certification test at that time. Passing the VSR test is tied to the promotion to GS-11, which would conflict with their current performance issues. Does not eliminate requirement to later take the Skills Certification test.



Re-Certification Requirement

- Skills Certification status of “pass” is valid for 2 years
- Upon expiration of certification “pass” status, employee is required to take the next offering of the appropriate Skills Certification test
- Exception: AQRS and RQRS are required to take and pass the appropriate Skills Certification test every year per Fast Letter 13-18
 - AQRS take the Senior VSR Test
 - RQRS *who were previously DROs* take the DRO Test
 - RQRS *who were not previously DROs* take the JRVSR Test



Preparing for the test

- TMS training prior to taking test for the first time
- Resources include **Skills Certification Readiness Guide** and **Prep Test** with sample questions
- TMS description of each class provides more details

Test Name	Preparation Class (3.5 HRS) TMS Number	Self-Study Excluded Time (3.0 HRS) TMS Number
VSR	3770184	3770186
JRVSR	3730250	3730251
DRO	3770183	3770185
SrVSR	3880727	3880725
Coach	3894269	3894268



Test Feedback

- **Individual Feedback Reports (IFR)** are generated based on the employee's responses on the test
- Individualized report shows employee strengths, areas needing improvement, and recommended training and references.

Example

Knowledge of the genitourinary system to include symptoms, conditions, diagnostic codes, and tests and treatments

In your test you incorrectly answered a question that contained the following: Private medical records, Service treatment records

You were asked to (provide a/an): Grant/Deny service connection

Resources for Review

- Genitourinary System. (VA 61822)
- 38 CFR 3.383
- 38 CFR 4.115(b), DC 7524 (Note)



Skills Certification Future

- Public Law 112-154, Section 703
 - Regularly assess the skills and competencies of appropriate employees and managers
 - Provide training if the employee did not pass
 - Reassess the skills and competencies
 - Take appropriate personnel action if the employee still does not pass
- Guidance concerning this Public Law will be forthcoming.



Skills Certification

Questions?