

Date: June 13, 2024

From: Assistant Secretary for Human Resources and Administration/Operations, Security, and Preparedness (006)

Subj: Enhancement of Security Posture (VIEWS 11756350)

To: Under Secretaries, Assistant Secretaries, and Other Key Officials

1. In response to increasing threats from persistent threat actors against Government and health care targets, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is enhancing its security posture by strengthening credential and vetting practices, in accordance with Federal guidelines and consistent with discussions at the April 22, 2024, VA Operations Board. These requirements will be contained in VA Directives/Handbooks 0710, Personnel Vetting Program (Security, Suitability, and Fitness), and 0735, Homeland Security Presidential Directive-12 (HSPD-12), Personal Identity Verification (PIV), Credential Management Program, which are currently under final stages of revision. This represents a significant shift of VA's posture to one of vigilance and trust through verification. As such we anticipate there may be transitional operational impacts and are committed to partnering to implement these changes with minimal disruption to mission delivery.

2. These enhancements will ensure compliance with Government-wide standards, mitigate risk to VA's systems and facilities, and better ensure safety of information, property, employees, visitors, contractors, and other stakeholders. Administrations and Staff Offices must comply with the requirements of these policies as failure to do so subjects the Department to substantial risk of both information and physical security violations.

3. Key enhancements will include: (1) requiring at least a Tier One Federal background investigation for all eligible VA personnel requiring access to VA facilities and/or information systems, such as Health Professions Trainees, researchers, and affiliates; (2) limit PIV-Interoperability (PIV-I) card issuance to the specific length of appointment, not to exceed 180 days; and (3) requiring a Federal Name Check, utilizing a national vetting system, for personnel who are non-U.S. nationals.

4. Collaboration between the Office of Human Resources and Administration/Operations, Security, and Preparedness, the Veterans Health Administration, the Office of Information and Technology, and other key leaders is underway to capture all requirements, update written policy guidance, satisfy any union bargaining requirements, and prioritize implementation of these updates and timelines.

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OPEN FOR
DISCUSSION

A graphic with a torn paper effect. The text "OPEN FOR" is in a green speech bubble, "DISCUSSION" is in a dark blue speech bubble, and "FOR" is in a grey speech bubble. A grey bar is at the bottom.

Program Directors Association Guide for Residency Applicants: An OPDA – GSA Collaboration

**Marcy Verduin, M.D.
Margaret C. Lo, M.D.**





- Provide guidance on key specialty application parameters for student deans and prospective applicants
- Pilot - PD Association Guide for Residency Applicants



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Program Directors Association Guide for Residency

Applicants

1. Application platform
2. Application deadline
3. Match platform
4. Letters of recommendation
5. Away rotation expectations
6. Supplemental information
7. Signal information
8. Use of USMLE/COMLEX scores
9. Interview invitation process
10. Interview format
11. Applicant communications
12. Second Look/Open House planning

Program Directors Association Guides for Residency Applicants

The Program Directors Association Guide for Residency Applicants is a joint effort between the Organization of Program Directors Association (OPDA) and AAMC to improve communication and provide program directors guidance on key specialty-specific application information and resources. Each guide includes information on letters of recommendation, away rotations, program signals, USMLE/Complex scores, interview format, etc. The following program directors associations have provided OPDA with completed guides that include guidance on these key specialty application parameters for student deans and prospective applicants:

- [Dermatology](#)
- [Diagnostic Radiology](#)
- [Emergency Medicine](#)
- [Internal Medicine](#)
- [Medical Genetics and Genomics \(categorical\)](#)
- [Medical Genetics and Genomics \(combined\)](#)
- [Neurology](#)
- [Neurological Surgery](#)
- [Orthopaedics](#)
- [Otolaryngology](#)
- [Pathology](#)
- [Pediatrics](#)
- [Residency recruitment recommendations](#)
- [Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation](#)
- [Preventive Medicine](#)
- [Psychiatry](#)
- [Surgery – General](#)
- [Surgical Critical Care](#)
- [Thoracic](#)
- [Transitional Year Residency](#)



Program Directors Association Guide for Residency Applicants

The Workgroup Updates + 

1. Each subspecialty PD association to update its PD Association Guide by May 1st for the 2025 application cycle.
2. For the completed guide for each specialty PD association to be posted on the specialty's website.
3. For OPDA to continue to host on OPDA webpage the list of (more) specialties participating in this pilot + direct link of these documents on the specialty website.

A photograph of five kittens of various breeds (ginger, tabby, and white) sitting in a row on a carpeted floor. They are all looking upwards with attentive expressions. The background shows a window with blinds and a framed picture on the wall.

**THANK YOU FOR
LISTENING**

ANY QUESTIONS ?

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