



Australian Government
Department of Veterans' Affairs

Businessline

Action Required: Staff in the Client Benefits Division (CBD) who determine disability pensions under the *Veterans' Entitlements Act 1986* (VEA) are to read and apply the new optional assessment model (OAM).

To:

Assistant Secretaries, Client Benefits Division
Directors, Client Benefits Division
Assistant Directors, Client Benefits Division
Division Coordinators

Distribute to:

All staff, Client Benefits Division

For information:

Secretary
Deputy President
Chief Operating Officer
First Assistant Secretaries
Assistant Secretaries

SUBJECT: Simplification of VEA disability pension re-assessments

Purpose:

To inform CBD staff of new assessment options that relate to VEA disability pension re-assessments.

Key Points:

- From 31 May 2021, the OAM allows delegates to use previously obtained medical evidence for accepted condition(s) when a client advises that the condition(s) have not worsened.
- Delegates undertaking re-assessments of VEA disability pensions are authorised to use previously obtained medical evidence in subsequent re-assessments if clients opt not to have a previously accepted condition re-assessed.
- The OAM is not recommended for use in the following circumstances:
 - where newly accepted or disallowed conditions possibly affect the body parts that are required to be re-assessed, or that may impact any aspect of the current re-assessment; and
 - accepted conditions that are subject to Offsetting Provisions.

- Delegates are still required to investigate the claim to their reasonable satisfaction. They will have to determine if the medical evidence is appropriate to use in the re-assessment or if new medical evidence is required to clarify the current level of impairment.

Background

On 14 May 2021, the Commissions agreed to a procedural change aimed to improve veteran satisfaction and claims processing efficiency under the *Veterans' Entitlements Act 1986* (VEA), for the re-assessment of disability pensions, by providing claimants with a greater level of input into the assessment process.

Currently, under the VEA, when a client is already in receipt of a disability pension lodges an application for increase (AFI) or has a new condition accepted as service related, delegates are required to obtain new medical evidence to re-assess all of a client's accepted conditions. Some veterans who have many accepted conditions were required to undergo multiple medical appointments and tests in order to have the necessary DVA paperwork completed.

This requirement has now been removed, and clients can inform the department which accepted conditions have worsened since the previous assessment. Delegates are to consider these requests on a case by case basis, and consideration is to be given to use previously obtained medical evidence.

This businessline provides greater consistency and further aligns the investigation process undertaken by staff who conduct assessments using GARP V (Guide to the Assessment Rate of Pensions 5th Edition) and GARP M (Guide to Determining Impairment and Compensation).

Further information

Information about the simplification of VEA disability pension re-assessments is available in the Consolidated Library of Information and Knowledge (CLIK) at: *Military Compensation Reference Library > VEA disability pension re-assessments* or access via the following link [VEA disability pension re-assessment – optional assessment model](#)

Contact

Any enquires regarding this businessline should be directed to Greg Ross on extension 471 654.



Natasha Cole
First Assistant Secretary
Client Benefits Division