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Chapter 2
RECEIVING AND PROCESSING CHAPTER 31 APPLICATIONS

2.01 Introduction

A Veteran or Servicemember must file a specific claim to request rehabilitation services or employment assistance under the Chapter 31 program. This chapter provides the specific guidelines and requirements for making a claim. It also includes the necessary steps in processing a Veteran's or Servicemember's application and the procedures for scheduling an applicant for his/her first appointment or initial evaluation.

2.02 References and Resources

Laws: 38 United States Code (U.S.C.) 4304
Public Law (PL) Section, National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year 2008
PL 112-56, VOW to Hire Heroes Act of 2011
PL 110-389, Veterans' Benefits Improvement Act of 2008

Regulations: 38 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 3.12
38 CFR 21.30
38 CFR 21.31
38 CFR 21.196
38 CFR 21.198
38 CFR 21.284

VA Forms (VAF): VAF 28-0588, VA Vocational Rehabilitation - Getting Ahead After You Get Out
VAF 28-1900, Disabled Veterans Application for Vocational Rehabilitation
VAF 28-1902b, Counseling Record Narrative Report
VAF 28-8832, Education/Vocational Counseling Application

Websites: www.va.gov
www.ebenefits.va.gov

2.03 General Information on Claims for Chapter 31

a. Definitions

1. Claim

A claim is a specific request to receive benefits under the Chapter 31

program.

2. Informal Claim

An informal claim is any communication or action indicating intent to apply for rehabilitation services or employment assistance from a Veteran, a duly appointed representative, or a Member of Congress. Upon receipt of an informal claim, an application form, VAF 28-1900, Disabled Veterans Application for Vocational Rehabilitation, will be sent to the Veteran for completion if a formal claim has not been filed.

Note: The date of application is the date of receipt of the informal claim by VA, if the completed VAF 28-1900 is received within one year from the date the original application was sent to the Veteran.

3. Original Claim

An original claim is the first request for Chapter 31 benefits.

4. Application

The application is VA Form 28-1900, Disabled Veterans Application for Vocational Rehabilitation.

5. Reopened Claim

A reopened claim is a subsequent request for Chapter 31 benefits.

6. Pending Claim

A pending claim is any claim for which an eligibility or entitlement or decision has not been rendered.

7. Completed Claim

A completed claim is any claim for which an eligibility or entitlement decision has been rendered.

b. Submitting an Application for Chapter 31 Benefits

1. An application for Chapter 31 benefits may be submitted by one of the following individuals:

(a) A Veteran or a Servicemember.

- (b) A legally recognized guardian or fiduciary.
 - (c) An authorized representative appointed to act on the Veteran's or Servicemember's behalf.
 - (d) A Member of Congress acting on the Veteran's or Servicemember's behalf.
 - (e) An officer or other representative from any of the Veterans' Service Organizations (VSO).
2. A Veteran, a hospitalized Servicemember, a Servicemember on medical hold or medical holdover, or a Servicemember who is within six months of separation from active duty must submit VAF 28-1900, to request for Chapter 31 benefits.
 3. A VAF 28-1900 may be completed manually and submitted on a paper form, or electronically completed and submitted using the Veterans Online Application (VONAPP) website via the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) eBenefits website at www.ebenefits.va.gov.
- c. Required Information on VAF 28-1900

The applicant must sign and complete the information on VAF 28-1900 in order to process the application. The required information includes the following:

- Applicant's name
- Social Security Number (SSN) or VA Claim File (C-File) Number
- Current mailing address
- Sufficient information for the VA to verify the claimed service

2.04 Receipt of Informal Claims

- a. Any VA employee may receive an informal claim for Chapter 31 benefits. If an employee outside the Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (VR&E) Division receives a request for Chapter 31 benefits, he/she should direct the Veteran and/or send the request to the VR&E Division.
 1. If an informal claim is received in writing, the responsible employee must date stamp the request and send VAF 28-1900 to the claimant.

2. If an informal claim is received over the phone, the responsible employee must either send VAF 28-1900 to the claimant or encourage the claimant to file an electronic application through VONAPP at www.va.gov.
3. If the informal claim is made in person at the VR&E Office, the responsible employee must provide the claimant with VAF 28-1900 and provide assistance as needed.
4. Required Documentation

All informal claims must be documented to include the date of contact, the claimant's name, address, telephone number and the Veteran's statement requesting for Chapter 31 benefits.

(a) If a Counseling/Evaluation/Rehabilitation (CER) folder has been previously established, the folder must be obtained and the request must be filed in the folder.

(b) If a CER folder has not been established, the request must be retained in a holding folder.

- b. Upon receipt of an informal claim for Chapter 31 benefits, the responsible employee must verify if a formal claim has been received previously by reviewing information in the Benefits Delivery Network (BDN) and in Corporate WINRS (CWINRS).
 1. If the Veteran has a submitted a completed application (VAF 28-1900), the responsible employee must inform the Veteran of the status of his/her application.
 2. If the Veteran is currently a Chapter 31 participant, the assigned Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor (VRC) must be informed to initiate contact with the Veteran to review his/her program status.

2.05 Receipt of Applications

- a. Application Received via Postal Service or in Person

The following actions must be completed when VR&E service receives an application either via the postal service or in person:

1. Date Stamp the Application

All applications must be date stamped immediately upon receipt. A date

stamp must be used to record the date of receipt. A handwritten date stamp must not be used. Applications received by other business lines in VA, must be forwarded directly to the VR&E Division.

The effective date of the Applicant (APP) status is the original date stamp when application was first received in VA, regardless of the office location.

2. Initiating Generated Eligibility Determination (GED) Processing

After the application is date stamped, the application must be forwarded to the responsible employee to complete the GED processing.

b. Application Received via VONAPP

1. Retrieving the VONAPP Application

The VR&E Officer (VREO) must ensure that a designated employee accesses VONAPP regularly to download and print electronic applications.

The information that is automatically printed at the bottom of a VONAPP application includes:

- Applicant's name
- Date the completed application was received in VONAPP
- Confirmation number

The confirmation number on a VONAPP application is a unique number that is automatically assigned to each submitted claim. The confirmation number may be used to track an application and identify printed applications submitted through VONAPP.

2. Verifying Date Stamp

The application is electronically dated on the upper right corner. This date must be used as date of claim. The responsible employee must verify that the date stamp is present.

3. Transferring a VONAPP Application

If a VONAPP application is received and the claimant resides within another Regional Office's (RO's) jurisdiction, the printed copy of the application and a routing slip, which explains the reason for transferring

the application, must be forwarded to the corresponding RO.

Prior to the transfer, the VREO must contact the VREO of the receiving office to notify him/her of the transfer. This ensures timely processing of the application.

4. Claimant Signature

The claimant's signature is not required for an entirely completed application that is filed electronically through VONAPP.

c. Incomplete Applications

If VA receives an incomplete application for benefits, it will notify the claimant of the information necessary to complete the application and will defer assistance until the claimant submits this information.

If the information necessary to complete the application is not received by VA within one year from the date of such notice, VA cannot pay or provide any benefits based on that application.

2.06 Re-applications Following Rehabilitation and Discontinuance

a. Re-application after Disallowance for Failure to Pursue a Claim

1. A Veteran, who applied for Chapter 31 benefits, but whose case was disallowed for failure to pursue his/her claim, may reapply for Chapter 31 benefits without submitting a new application within one year of the effective date of the discontinuance. A documented contact, either via telephone, mail, or email, is acceptable documentation to process a new claim for benefits.

The Veteran must complete and submit a new application if he/she reapplies after one year from the effective date of the discontinuance.

2. Upon receipt of the application, the Veteran's CER folder must be obtained promptly. The application must be processed immediately upon receipt using AutoGED.
3. The effective begin date of the APP status is the original date stamped on the application, or the date the Veteran requested to reopen his/her claim.

Note: The application and the GED tear sheet must be filed on the left section of the CER folder.

b. Re-application after Discontinuance from a Plan of Services

1. A Veteran who participated in a plan of services and whose case was placed in Discontinued (DIS) status must complete and submit a new VAF 28-1900 to reapply for Chapter 31 benefits.
2. Upon receipt of the application, the Veteran's CER folder must be obtained promptly. The application must be processed immediately upon receipt using AutoGED.
3. The effective date when opening the APP status is the original date stamped on the application or the date the Veteran requested to reopen his/her claim. All reapplications from DIS status will be processed using AutoGED and the case moved to APP status.
4. In cases where the discontinuance was classified as a Maximum Rehabilitation Gain (MRG) closure, the GED will be processed and APP status opened effective the date of reapplication.

Note: The application and the GED tear sheet must be filed on the left section of the CER folder.

c. Removal of Reason(s) for Discontinuance

When the Veteran reports for initial counseling, the VRC will move the case to Evaluation and Planning (EP) status, and explore the reason(s) for prior discontinuance to determine if they have been removed per 38 CFR 21.198(c), as part of the comprehensive evaluation.

The VRC must document this determination, obtain VR&E Officer concurrence when needed, and document both on VAF 28-1902b.

1. If the comprehensive evaluation reveals that the reason(s) for discontinuance can be removed and requirements for basic entitlement are met, the VRC will notify the Veteran of the entitlement decision and conduct evaluation and planning activities, if appropriate.
2. If the comprehensive evaluation reveals that the reason(s) for discontinuance cannot be removed, regardless of whether the basic entitlement criteria are met, the VRC will inform the Veteran in writing that he/she is not entitled to additional benefits because the reasons for prior program discontinuance have not been resolved.
3. If a Veteran is not entitled because the reason(s) for discontinuance have not been removed, the VRC will close EP status and open DIS status in CWINRS using Reason Code (RC) 10, No Employment Handicap, and disallow the Control Code (CC) 719. The Veteran must be informed of the decision in writing.

4. Obtain VR&E Officer concurrence as needed. VR&E Officer concurrence is not required to terminate discontinued status, except in the case of an MRG closure and if re-application occurs within one year of the closure. For cases discontinued as an MRG for one year or longer at the time of reapplication, VR&E Officer concurrence is not required to reopen the case.
- d. Reapplication after Veteran is declared Rehabilitated
1. Submitting an Application

A Veteran who has been declared rehabilitated and whose case was placed in Rehabilitated (REH) status must complete and submit a new application to request for additional services under Chapter 31.
 2. Establishing Control Code (CC) 795

On the day of receipt of the application, the responsible employee must:

 - (a) Establish End Product (EP) 795 in BDN for tracking purposes.
 - (b) Ensure that the case remains in REH status.
 - (c) Obtain the Veteran's CER folder and file the application on the left section of the CER folder.
 3. Tracking CC 795
 - (a) Use the Veterans Service Network (VETSNET) Operations Reports (VOR) 2.0 "Pending Detail" function to track pending EP 795.
 - (b) Complete the Pending Full Detail selections.
 - (1) File Date – default date pulls all EPs pending through current date.
 - (2) Station – use drop-down list to highlight/select station.
 - (3) All End Product Description – use drop-down list to highlight/select VR&E.
 - (4) End Product – use Search function to select 795.
 - (5) Report Type – use drop-down list to highlight/select Flash.

(6) Description – use drop-down list to highlight/select All Unique.

(7) Hit Apply button.

(c) The resulting report will provide a count of pending EP 795. It will also allow sorting options in Excel (i.e., Veteran; station number; date of claim; number of days pending).

4. Required VRC Determination

A VRC must make a determination whether the previous rehabilitation decision may be set aside as outlined in 38 CFR 21.284 or 38 CFR 21.196(c). The VRC must schedule the Veteran for the determination to reopen his/her claim immediately upon receipt of the application. The determination must be documented on VAF 28-1902b, Counseling Record - Narrative Report.

5. VR&E Officer's Concurrence

(a) Reapplication Prior to the One-Year Period

VREO concurrence is required prior to reopening a case that has been placed in REH status for less than one year at the time of reapplication.

The concurrence must be documented on VAF-28-1902b and filed on the right section of the Veteran's CER folder.

(b) Reapplication After the One-Year Period

VREO concurrence is not required to reopen a case that has been placed in REH status for one year or longer at the time of reapplication.

6. Application Processing

(a) If the decision is to re-open the claim, the responsible employee must:

(1) Clear (PCLR) the pending EP 795.

(2) Process the application through AutoGED.

(b) If the decision is not to re-open the claim, the responsible employee must:

(1) Clear (PCLR) the pending EP 795.

(2) Notify the Veteran of the decision in writing and provide him/her with due process.

2.07 Memorandum Rating

a. Definition

A memorandum rating, or "memo" rating, is an anticipated compensable rating of 20 percent or more that is granted to a Servicemember who is awaiting discharge from active military service and is hospitalized, or receiving outpatient medical care, services, or treatment for service-connected disability condition(s).

A memo rating is established for a Servicemember who applies for Chapter 31 benefits within six months prior to his/her discharge and 12 months after his/her discharge from active military service.

A proposed rating in Virtual VA that has been established by the Department of Defense (DOD) Integrated Disability Evaluation System (IDES) and VA's compensation disability rating system may serve in lieu of a memo rating to establish basic eligibility and entitlement for VR&E. This rating may be used by VR&E to document the anticipated rating for a Servicemember.

b. Request for Memorandum Rating

A Servicemember may request a memorandum rating by completing VAF 28-0588, Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment – Getting Ahead after You Get Out. Refer to Appendix O, VA Forms. This form is submitted to the Veterans Service Center (VSC) for processing.

The VSC establishes the memorandum ratings to document the anticipated rating for VR&E purposes. These ratings are established based on the Servicemembers' available Service Treatment Records (STR) and must be compensable at least 20 percent or more.

Upon receipt of the application, VSC is expected to complete the memorandum rating within three business days. Upon completion, VSC establishes EP 095 and forwards the memo rating and application to the appropriate VR&E Office.

c. Memorandum Rating Established

The VREO must ensure that the Servicemember's claim is immediately processed using the AutoGED when a rating decision indicating that a memo rating has been established for a Servicemember.

d. Memorandum Rating Not Established

The VREO must ensure that the Veteran's claim is immediately processed for disallowance when a rating decision indicating that a memo rating cannot be established for a Servicemember.

e. Disallowance Processing for a Memorandum Rating

1. Update CWINRS case status by closing APP status with RC 01, using the date of the decision and open DIS status using the same date the APP status is closed. BDN 320 screen will be automatically updated.
2. In BDN, use the 'CAST' command and enter 'CADJ' on the last field located on the bottom right of the screen and press ALT/ENTER. On the next screen, CADJ 408, enter "X" on the field for disallowance reason code "AA – Declared Ineligible". At the last field of the 408 screen, enter 501 to authorize the action and press ENTER. Press Y (Yes) to authorize the disallowance processing. This automatically clears the pending CC 095, and generates and prints the Disallowance Tear Sheet.
3. The generated Disallowance Tear Sheet must be filed on the left section of the Veteran's CER folder.

f. Notification of Disallowance

The Servicemember must be notified by letter that all actions on his/her claim have been closed. The date of the notification letter must coincide with the date the claim has been processed for disallowance and the CC 095 is cleared.

The notification letter must contain an explanation that the actions for the Servicemember's claim have been suspended because an anticipated rating of 20 percent or more cannot be established at this time. The letter must also contain a statement that the Servicemember may request to reopen his/her claim at any time by filing a new application.

2.08 Disallowance Processing Based on Ineligibility

When a rating decision is received from VSC that states that a service-connected disability rating cannot be established for a Veteran at the time, the VREO must

ensure that the Veteran's claim is immediately processed for disallowance.

- a. Update CWINRS case status by closing APP status with RC 01 using the date of the decision and open DIS status using the same date the APP status is closed. BDN 320 screen will be automatically updated.
- b. In BDN, use the 'CAST' command and enter 'CADJ' on the last field located on the bottom right of the screen and press ALT/ENTER. On the next screen, CADJ 408, enter "X" on the field for disallowance reason code "AA – Declared Ineligible". At the last field of the 408 screen, enter 501 to authorize the action and press ENTER. Press Y (Yes) to authorize the disallowance processing. This automatically clears the pending CC 095, and generates and prints the Disallowance Tear Sheet.
- c. The generated Disallowance Tear Sheet must be filed on the left section of the Veteran's CER folder.

2.09 Abbreviations and Acronyms Used for Application Processing

The following are abbreviations and acronyms that are regularly used in GED processing:

- BDN – Benefits Delivery System
- BFLD – Beneficiary Folder
- BINQ – BIRLS Inquiry (BDN and Share)
- BIRLS – Beneficiary Identification Records Locator Subsystem (VA database containing records of all beneficiaries including Veterans whose survivors applied for death benefits.)
- C-File – Claims File
- CADJ – Claims Adjudication (BDN)
- CEST – Claims Establishment
- CAUT – Claims Authorization
- EOD – Entrance on Duty
- HON – Honorable

- IRND - Initial Rating Notification
- MINQ – Master Record Inquiry (BDN)
- PINQ – Pending Inquiry (BDN)
- RAD – Release from Active Duty
- Share – VA Information Technology system that interfaces with multiple VETSNET systems
- UHC – Under Honorable Conditions
- VADS – Veterans Assistance Discharge System
- VETSNET – Veterans Service Network
- Virtual VA – VA's document repository
- VOW – Veterans Opportunity to Work (VOW) to Hire Heroes Act of 2011

2.10 Generated Eligibility Determination (GED) Processing

a. Priority Processing

All Chapter 31 applications must be processed immediately upon receipt. However, only Servicemembers and Veterans who are seriously, or very seriously, ill or injured receive priority processing. See M28R.III.B.3 for additional information and procedures on priority processing.

b. General Information

AutoGED allows CWINRS users to perform the GED processing in an automated module. The AutoGED platform in CWINRS sends and retrieves data in the background of the application without using BDN.

1. For original GED processing, a Chapter 31 Master Record must be established in CWINRS and BDN environments.
2. For a reopened GED processing, the Chapter 31 Master Record must be updated in CWINRS and BDN environments.

Note: For security purposes, the VA employee who completes the CEST action must not authorize and complete the GED processing. Additional system edits in BDN prevent the employee who originally authorized the GED

processing from subsequently authorizing the entitlement disallowance on the same case.

c. Basic Development Steps Prior to AutoGED Processing

Before processing the application, the following data must be reviewed and verified by the responsible employee:

1. Date of Claim Accuracy

(a) VAF 28-1900 or Informal Request

Verify the date of receipt of formal or informal claim. The original date on the application must be stamped by VA. Hand written date is not acceptable. VA offices that may receive applications include any of the following:

- VA Regional Office including outbased and outreach locations
- VA hospital or medical center or community-based clinic
- Vet Center
- National Cemetery Administration (NCA)

Note: The original date stamped on the application or the date of the informal request is the effective date of claim and is the effective begin date in APP status.

(b) Online Application

Verify the date stamp of receipt for any application submitted electronically through the VONAPP. The date stamp of receipt is the effective date of claim and is the effective begin date in APP status.

2. Original or Reopened Claim Status

Verify if the claim is an original or reopened claim by completing the following steps:

(a) Log on to BDN.

(b) Enter the MINQ command and 4-digit password at the Ready Screen.

(c) Enter M35 in Screen Number field, input the Veteran's claim number or

SSN, and press Alt/Enter.

(d) From the M33 screen, obtain the Initial Rating Notification Date (IRND) if Veteran had a previous claim.

(1) If the Veteran has an established CH31 Master Record as verified by the M35 screen, process the claim as a reopened claim.

(2) If the Veteran has no established CH31 Master Record as verified by "Record does not exist at Hines" message displayed at the bottom of the Ready screen, process the claim as an original claim.

3. Basic Period of Eligibility

Verify the Veteran's basic period of eligibility. This period begins on the day VA notifies the Veteran of the VA rating determination that he/she has a qualifying compensable service-connected disability. This period ends 12 years from the date of notification.

4. Qualifying Military Service

(a) Log on to BDN.

(b) Enter the BINQ command and 4-digit password at the Ready Screen.

(c) Tab to Veteran's claim number or SSN and press enter to execute the inquiry.

(d) Verify the following information:

- Name
- Claim number or SSN
- Date of birth
- EOD and RAD
- Character of service, either HON or UHC

Note: Questions regarding suitable character of discharge should be referred to the VSC for determination.

5. Qualifying Compensable Service-Connected Disability (SCD)

To verify if the Veteran has a qualifying SCD rating, and obtain the initial rating notification date, complete the following steps:

- (a) Log on to Share.
- (b) Select Corporate Inquiries and press submit.
- (c) Select Awards/Ratings. (Print option is available in Share).
 - (1) For Compensation Ratings
 - Verify the service-connected diagnostic code for each disability condition
 - Verify the percent of disability rating for each disability condition
 - Verify the combined SCD rating is at least 10 percent for a Veteran
 - (2) For Memorandum Ratings
 - Verify the service-connected diagnostic code for one of more disability
 - Verify that the rating is at least 20% for an active duty Servicemember
- (d) Select Claims/Denials (Print option is available in Share.)
 - (1) Highlight the Initial claim for compensation. A new screen will appear with the life cycle details for the Initial claim.
 - (2) Verify the IRND. The closed date is the date, upon which the initial compensation claim was closed, authorized, or promulgated. The IRND is the date upon which action to award compensation benefits and to notify the Veteran, in writing, of the outcome of the disability claim.
- (e) Repeat the process of finding the IRND if the original rating granted is less than 10 percent. The alternate sources of IRND are:
 - Virtual VA (rating decision and letter)

- Claims Folder
- VSC

d. Seriously Ill or Injured Servicemembers

Eligibility and entitlement is granted without regard to a VA SCD rating for a Servicemember who applied under the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA). Basic eligibility is based on documentation from military service rather than on the establishment of a VA disability rating or memorandum rating. Entitlement to Chapter 31 services is automatically established without the requirement that an employment handicap must exist.

In order for the Servicemember to meet the requirement for automatic entitlement, he/she must complete the following actions:

1. Complete and submit VAF 28-1900.
2. Provide supporting documentation that establishes his/her eligibility under NDAA.
3. Report for his/her first scheduled appointment.

Note: Refer to section 2.12 of this chapter for information on application processing for seriously ill or injured servicemembers.

e. Chapter 36 Application Received

1. The responsible employee must verify in CWINRS if the Servicemember or Veteran has a previous or current application, VAF 28-8832, Education/Vocational Counseling Application.
 - (a) If a prior Chapter 36 record exists, the Chapter 36 folder must be obtained and the information from the folder must be incorporated in the CER folder.
 - (b) If an application for Chapter 31 services is received while a Veteran or Servicemember has an open application for Chapter 36, the responsible employee must take actions outlined below.
2. Verify Basic Eligibility Criteria for Chapter 31 by completing the following:
 - (a) Review CWINRS for prior Chapter 31 record.

(b) Review the record to determine if the applicant meets basic eligibility criteria, including:

- Qualifying military service
- Character of service
- SCD status, memorandum rating, or NDAA-eligibility

3. Process the Application.

(a) If the applicant meets basic eligibility criteria, the responsible employee must process the Chapter 31 application using AutoGED and proceed with Chapter 31 evaluation and entitlement processing. CWINRS will incorporate the Chapter 36 record into the Chapter 31 record, and the History screen will be annotated with "Counseling Completed in Chapter 31."

In addition, the Chapter 36 folder must be obtained and the information from the folder must be incorporated in the CER folder.

(b) If the applicant does not meet basic eligibility criteria for Chapter 31, proceed with Chapter 36 application processing before disallowing the Chapter 31 claim.

(c) After processing the application, schedule the applicant for vocational counseling.

- If the applicant reports for the scheduled appointment and completes his/her vocational counseling, the Chapter 36 case may be closed as "Completed with Counseling" in CWINRS.
- If the applicant does not report for the scheduled appointment and does not complete his/her vocational counseling, the Chapter 36 case may be closed as "Completed without Counseling" in CWINRS.

f. Initiating AutoGED Processing

1. From the CWINRS Navigator, click on GED PROCESSING button with AutoGED Processing showing in the drop-down field as the default selection.
2. Sort by date or status, and click OK.

3. From the processing options buttons, click ADD.
4. Enter C-File Number, and click OK. AutoGED will now check the corporate environment to ensure the claimant is a Veteran. If the message "There is no BIRLS record on file" appears, then the claimant is not a Veteran.
5. Complete the Form Entries:
 - (a) Enter STUB NAME.
 - (b) Enter APP RECEIVED DATE. This automatically formats the dates and advances to the next field. This date must reflect the date stamp when VA first received the application.
 - (c) Enter TELEPHONE NUMBER.
 - (d) Enter EDUCATION LEVEL using two digits to indicate the NUMBER OF YEARS:
 - 00-11 indicates the number of years of elementary to secondary education completed
 - 12 indicates a high school diploma or equivalent
 - 13 indicates at least 30 semester or 45 quarter hours of undergraduate study successfully completed
 - 14 indicates at least 60 semester or 90 quarter hours of undergraduate study successfully completed
 - 15 indicates at least 90 semester or 135 quarter hours of undergraduate study successfully completed
 - 16 indicates the receipt of a Bachelor's Degree
 - 17 indicates the completion of at least one year of graduate study
 - 18 and above indicate an unknown level of education
 - (e) Enter IRND or DATE OF MEMORANDUM RATING.
 - (f) Enter ADDRESS.

Note: Do not enter the Veteran's name in address. If name is entered,

the Veteran's name will appear twice in the address in CWINRS and Share.

(g) In the field, CASE READY TO BE PROCESSED, perform the following actions:

(1) Enter NO, if a memorandum rating is required or other delay occurs, and then enter description of the reason in the User Remarks field.

(2) If this is an NDAA case, check the box. AutoGED will automatically enter 5555 under DIAG 1 code.

(h) In the field, TEMPORARY ENTITLEMENT, do not check the box for RE-OPENED application. The IRND will be on the M33 screen if claim is a re-opened claim.

(i) If the Veteran is classified as OEF/OIF/OND, you may check GWOT (optional). The indicator will be attached to the pending EP, which allows traceability using the end product codes.

(j) Enter the site-within the station and location, and click OK.

6. Click OK.

g. Rating Decisions

1. Actual Rating

If the Veteran has a rating, AutoGED will find it through the corporate applications.

If left blank and it does not pick up an actual rating, AutoGED will return the record for a disallowance.

2. Memorandum Rating

If the Veteran has a memorandum rating, enter the 4-digit diagnostic code in the Memo Rating box. AutoGED will not disallow for absence of a compensation rating. It will set the claim up as a memorandum rating and move on to the point of authorization.

The memorandum rating from Compensation must be on hand to ensure that the date of the rating and diagnostic code(s) are entered correctly.

h. Case Enters 010-Pending Verification Status

1. Certain fields are still editable at this point, before the record moves on to the CEST command.

If the Date of Claim is incorrect, it can be changed before it gets to the 030 CEST status.

If CEST is successful, the date of claim is no longer editable. It is now committed to the record.

2. Cases can only be processed individually when in the ALL RECORDS grid view.
3. Cases can be processed in batches by status through 030-040 (CEST):
 - (a) Choose the specific processing status.
 - (b) Select all (when selecting a group; certain functions cannot be used as when working on an individual case).
 - (c) Click the PROCESS button once, which will take records through the CEST and CADJ processes.
 - (d) Click PROCESS.

i. Case Moves to 030-Pending CEST 095/295

Address and date of claim is committed. This field is no longer editable.

1. Select case and click PROCESS. End product is established in Corporate and BDN.
2. Verify end product in Share and/or BDN using the PINQ command.

j. Case Moves to 050-PENDING GED/Disallowance (CADJ)

1. Select the individual case and click PROCESS.
2. Ensure there are no pending corrections.

k. Case Moves to 070-Pending Authorization (CAUT)

The case is now ready for CAUT 070 Processing Status.

Note: The employee who established (CEST) the claim cannot authorize (CAUT) the claim. The authorizer must have an equal or higher authority to CAUT than the employee who completed the CEST/CADJ work processes.

The authorizer must process each case individually, not in batches.

I. Case Moves to 110-Pending Complete Status

m. Creating CER Folder Location

Establish a CER folder location in BIRLS in order to update the PROCESSING tab within the record.

1. On the BDN Ready Screen enter BFLD command, then enter 4-digit "Ready Screen" password.

Note: Process BFLD for an original GED after the GED is authorized. Process BFLD for transfer-in before the EP is established.

2. Enter LOC in Screen field (optional).

(a) Enter the Veteran's claim number or SSN in Veteran's Claim Number field.

(b) Press Tab to Payee Code and enter 00.

(c) Enter CH31 in Benefit Type field.

(d) Enter stub name using the following format: first initial of first name, press SPACE, first initial of middle name, press SPACE, first five letters of last name.

(e) Enter name in the Name fields as follows: First name, press TAB, first initial of middle name, press TAB, Last name, press TAB suffix (II, III, Jr. Sr.).

(f) Press Enter.

3. On the LOC screen, press TAB.

(a) Enter X before Establish.

(b) Enter CER before Folder.

(c) Press Alt/Enter.

n. Reviewing Entered Data

Upon completion of the BFLD command, return to MINQ/M35 to confirm that the CER location field on the M35 screen contains the correct RO number.

o. Verifying CER Folder Location

Enter verification of CER folder location in CWINRS under the PROCESSING tab within the record. History screen is complete.

p. Printing Tear Sheet

Place Tear sheet on the left side of the CER folder. The Tear sheet shows who completed the CEST, CADJ, and CAUT commands and when the date of those actions was taken.

q. Completing GED Claim Processing

To complete the GED claim processing, close AutoGED and return to CWINRS, paste the Tear sheet content into the CWINRS notes (optional).

The case is now ready to be assigned to a VRC for scheduling of the initial evaluation.

2.11 Possible Problems During AutoGED Processing

a. Resolving Identified Issues

Refer any case related technical questions using either one of the following:

1. Submitting a Trouble-ticket

If a problem is identified in during the AutoGED processing and cannot be resolved locally, the responsible employee must submit a trouble-ticket at the National Service Desk by calling (855)-673-4957 (NSD-HELP).

The RO Information Resource Management (IRM) may also assist with submitting a trouble-ticket.

2. Contacting Designated Field Liaison

Alternately, the responsible employee may submit the details of the

identified issue to their designated Field Liaison to obtain assistance.

b. Discrepancy in Data in BDN and BIRLS

A discrepancy in the record data in BDN or BIRLS will stop the AutoGED processing. The processing can be resumed once the record data discrepancy is fixed.

c. Reopening Claims

1. BDN restricts case status movement on a Ch31 Master Record that has a last status date greater than 25 years ago. This means that the standard method of moving a case from REH or DIS status to APP status will not work and a re-opened GED will fail.
2. Special processing is necessary to allow the BDN Ch31 Master Record to accept GED processing in these instances. Review the CER folder location on the M35 screen to ensure that the record is located within the VR&E Office's jurisdiction. Use the CAST command directly from the BDN 320 screen to adjust the effective date of the last case status. The adjusted dates must be calculated appropriately.

(a) Re-opening a Case in Rehabilitated (REH) Status

For a case in REH status, adjust the end date of Job Ready status and the beginning date of REH status, entering the dates as less than 25 years. Do not change the RC entries.

(b) Re-opening a Case in Discontinued (DIS) Status

For a case in DIS status, adjust the end date of Interrupted status and the beginning date of DIS status, entering the dates as less than 25 years. Do not change the RC entries.

3. CWINRS AutoGED will process the GED as a "New", or first time, processing transaction. However, it will reopen the BDN as the reapplication or reopened transaction.

2.12 Processing Application for Seriously Ill or Injured Servicemembers

On January 28, 2008, section 1631(b)(1) of NDAA was enacted. It provides that a seriously ill or injured Servicemember is automatically entitled to vocational rehabilitation services, without regard to a SCD rating or determination of employment handicap.

a. Application and Qualifying Documentation

A seriously ill or injured Servicemember is considered automatically entitled to Chapter 31 services upon the receipt of a completed VAF 28-1900, qualifying information related to the Servicemember's military service, and attendance at the initial appointment. Acceptable qualifying information includes the following:

- Copy of the IDES flash screen in SHARE showing that the Servicemember is participating in IDES.
- Completed Military Service Status Referral (MSSR). Refer to Appendix AT, for a copy of the MSSR.
- Copy of a referral to a military Physical Evaluation Board (PEB)

DoD personnel may complete the MSSR to refer a seriously ill or injured Servicemember who is participating in the Education and Employment Initiative (E2I), has not been referred to a PEB, or is not enrolled in IDES.

The Physical Evaluation Board Liaison Officers (PEBLO), community based health care organization, E2I personnel, and other referral sources may submit the application and qualifying information. Service treatment records are not necessary to establish entitlement for VR&E services if the Servicemember is enrolled in IDES or a copy of the PEB referral or MSSR is received by VR&E.

b. GED Processing of Application for a Seriously Ill or Injured Servicemember

1. Upon receipt of a completed VAF 28-1900 and qualifying documentation, and when the Servicemember reports for the first appointment, the VR&E Office must initiate GED processing.
2. When creating a record in CWINRS, choose NDAA as the benefit type. This will allow cases to be filtered by benefit type and facilitate tracking and review of accuracy in the provision of services.
3. Authorize the AutoGED, confirm the corporate record creation in CWINRS, and enter the 4-digit diagnostic code "5555" on the 433 screen in BDN. This diagnostic code will be used for all eligible participants under PL 110-181.
4. A manual GED may be processed if problems occur with AutoGED. The employee must manually complete an "in-service" GED in BDN by placing

an "X" in the corresponding field of the 431 screen, and entering the 4-digit diagnostic code "5555" in the corresponding field of the 433 screen. This diagnostic code is used for all eligible participants under NDAA.

5. Another employee must authorize the GED, which establishes the EP 719 with the same effective date of receipt of the application.
6. The employee then establishes a CER folder for the case. The CER folder must have "CH31/NDAA" written in bold, red marker on the front cover.

c. Scheduling First Appointment

Servicemembers will be scheduled only after VA receives VAF 28-1900 and qualifying documentation. The following procedures must be followed when scheduling the first appointment:

1. Within one business day of receiving the case, the assigned VRC must attempt to contact the Servicemember by phone and offer an initial appointment within five business days of the phone contact.
2. If the Servicemember cannot be reached by phone, he/she must be scheduled within 10 business days of the attempted phone contact. The appointment letter is mailed the same day to the Servicemember.
3. A Servicemember who is unable to report to a VR&E Office must be scheduled in a convenient location. Coordination with military treatment facilities and other DOD sites must be developed through VA military service coordinators, IDES counselors, Coming Home to Work (CHTW) coordinators, and other available contacts.
4. If the Servicemember is not able to attend the scheduled appointment, the VRC must reschedule the appointment as soon as possible, based on the Servicemember's availability. An existing appointment should not be rescheduled more than once, if possible.

2.13 Cancelling and Clearing an Established CC 719

a. Cancelling CC 719 (PCAN)

An established CC 719 may only be cancelled when either one of the two conditions exists:

1. When CC 719 was established in error.

2. When a case with an established CC 719 is to be transferred to RO's jurisdiction before the entitlement determination is made due to the Veteran's relocation.
- b. Clearing CC 719 (PCLR)

A CC 719 may be cleared after the Veteran's entitlement to Chapter 31 benefits has been determined and the Veteran has been informed of the entitlement decision.

2.14 Required Actions After GED Processing

- a. Eligibility and Appointment Notification

Upon establishment of EP 719, the Veteran or Servicemember must be notified immediately of his/her eligibility and must be scheduled for initial evaluation appointment.

- b. Notification Letters

Refer to M28R.III.A.1, for information on how to develop the required appointment notification letter.