Diagnostic Laboratory Professional Advancement Ladder

DLPAL Policies and Procedures Manual

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I. Vision and Goals

Vision/Mission
To promote, support, recognize and reward employees who grow within their professional roles as defined within the context of the VUMC culture and their profession.

Goals
1. To empower staff to take ownership of their professional development.
2. To afford staff opportunities for increased participation and leadership within the VUMC Diagnostic Laboratories by setting explicit criteria for promotion.
3. To offer a model for professional staff to utilize at all stages of career development.
4. To establish consistent expectations for professional staff across programs in the Medical Center.
5. To recognize and reward laboratory professionals for excellence in clinical practice and customer service.
6. To create career growth and opportunities for laboratory professionals.
7. Increase employee satisfaction and retention and decrease turnover within the lab.
8. Increase employee morale and engagement.
9. Decrease operational costs by improving inefficiencies and enhance quality of services.
10. Improve patient satisfaction.

Charter/Background
In January 2013, the charter for the Diagnostic Laboratory Professional Advancement Ladder (DLPAL) was created. This program includes the following laboratory professionals: Medical Laboratory Scientist, Cytogenetics Technologist, Cytotechnologist, Histotechnologist, Medical Laboratory Technician, Cytotechnician, and Histotechnician. The DLPAL Charter based the program on other clinical ladder implementations within VUMC, and similar clinical ladders implemented at other academic medical centers. The committee’s purpose was to analyze and develop a model that recognizes performance; determines job responsibilities for the levels of laboratory professionals; and educates staff and management in the benefits and use of the model. Diagnostic Lab staff and leadership and Human Resources participated in the development of the program for implementation in July 2014.
### II. General Descriptions of Clinical Advancement Levels

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level One Professional Staff</th>
<th>Level Two Professional Staff</th>
<th>Level Three Professional Staff</th>
<th>Level Four Professional Staff</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Level one professional staff are new graduates who have at least minimal competencies and emerging skills. The role is primarily guided by policies, procedures and standards.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Level two professional staff are independent, competent, and reliable professionals with multiple skills. Staff will use past experiences to identify solutions for current situations. Staff makes independent decisions guided by experience as well as policies and standards; knows resources for complex situations. Staff are expected to achieve this level of career development after completion of their first year of employment.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Level three professional staff have developed specialties. Staff will demonstrate skilled laboratory reasoning, problem solving and communication. Staff demonstrates an in-depth knowledge base as foundation for laboratory proficiency. Accommodates unplanned events and responds with speed, efficiency, flexibility and confidence. Staff serves as a model for other staff and is able to supervise and assist managers with leading programs. Advancement to a level III may be applied for after a minimum of 3 years of full-time equivalent professional employment. Staff are encouraged to achieve this level of career development experience level.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Level four professional staff are those who are considered to be leaders and master laboratory professionals/teachers or experts who are a known resource to the department and professional community at large. These staff members advance the profession and multidisciplinary efforts in their role through teaching, mentoring and service to their department and profession. Operates from a deep understanding of a total situation to resolve complex issues. Advancement to a level IV may be applied for after a minimum of 5 years of full-time equivalent professional employment. Staff are encouraged to achieve this level of career development experience level.</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Example of Level I – IV Practitioner

Level I MLS/Technologist/Technician

Level I Technologists/Technicians are new hires to Vanderbilt and beginning his or her professional practice. The Level I Technologists/Technicians demonstrate his or her skills, capabilities, and contributions made throughout their probationary period to the manager. Those Technologists/Technicians who function at Level I of the DLPAL will demonstrate competent skills/abilities/qualities in all components of practice. DLPAL recognizes individuals at this level require mentoring and time to fully integrate into his or her department and demonstrate attainment of appropriate competencies. Level I Technologists/Technicians will advance after 1 year per manager’s approval that the required clinical competencies have been met. The purpose of this brief is to further describe combinations of activities characteristic of Level I Technologists/Technicians. There has been no attempt to make these descriptors all-encompassing and/or exhaustive.

EXAMPLE

Technologist:

- Basic knowledge to perform tests and operate equipment
- Knowledge of clinical implication of testing; critical results, deltas, disease states
- Ability to communicate routine issues related to patient care
- Receptive to training
- Working with basic skills to measure ability to do job
- Demonstrate ability to achieve consistent and accurate results

Technician:

- Basic education training for the job
- Basic knowledge of theory
- Can communicate on routine issues
- Working with basic skills to measure ability to do job
- Demonstrates ability to achieve consistent and accurate results for low complex testing
Level II MLS/Technologist/Technician

The Level II Technologists/Technicians demonstrates to his or her manager they have developed the skills, capabilities, and made contributions as a Level I to prepare them for the role as a Level II. Technologists/Technicians who function at the Level II of the DLPAL will demonstrate exemplary skills/abilities/qualities in all components of standard practice. Level II Technologists/Technicians may be professionals who have at least 1 year of experience, and/or multiple years of practice experience, but new to Vanderbilt. Experienced Technologists/Technicians who do not desire to advance further within the DLPAL may elect to remain at this level. The emphasis on this level is to promote practice development and experience at Vanderbilt while preparing the Technologist/Technician to move forward within the program if he or she elects to advance. DLPAL recognizes there is great diversity among Vanderbilt professionals with regard to their life experiences, roles, responsibilities and goals, meeting a minimum of professional expectations within this program and demonstrating competent practice is a viable option and is mutually beneficial to the employee and the department. The purpose of this brief is to further describe combinations of activities characteristic of Level II Technologists/Technicians. There has been no attempt to make these descriptors all-encompassing and/or exhaustive. Each Level within DLPAL is summative; each level builds on the preceding level.

**EXAMPLE NOTE:** The behavioral descriptions listed under Level II are the standard requirements for all licensed professional staff and also apply to Level III and IV staff.

**Technologist:**

- Serve as a mentor and able to train others
- Cross trained across multiple benches within clinical discipline
- Effective preceptor to develop Level 1 staff’s critical thinking/problem solving
- Effective team player and recognizes when others are in need
- Communicates internally and externally about complex issues
- Ability to perform independently with minimal or no supervision
- Independent decisions guided by experience and SOPs
- Assist in bench training and competency checklist (students/new employees)

**Technician:**

- Knowledge of clinical implication of testing
- Evaluation of results
- Preceptor for Level 1
- Can communication more complex issues
- Effective team player
- Ability to perform independently with minimal or no supervision
- Independent decisions guided by experience and SOPs
Level III MLS/Technologist/Technician

At the time of promotion, the applicant demonstrates to his or her manager and the Advisory Review Board that he or she is prepared for their role as a Level III Technologists/Technicians by demonstration of skills, capabilities, and contributions at Level II. Technologists/Technicians who function at the Level III of the DLPAL will demonstrate exemplary skills/abilities/qualities in all components of skilled practice. Experienced Technologists/Technicians who do not desire to advance further within the DLPAL may choose to remain at this level. The purpose of this brief is to further describe combinations of activities characteristic of Level III Technologists/Technicians. There has been no attempt to make these descriptors all-encompassing and/or exhaustive. Each Level within DLPAL is summative; each level builds on the preceding level.

The Level III practitioner may:

Begin to define a specialty/career interest area and pursue it. The Level III Technologists/Technicians demonstrates skilled reasoning, problem solving, and communication. The skills will reflect the Technologists'/Technicians’ ability to show advanced levels across the four categories of Technical Operations, Professionalism and Leadership, Process/Quality Improvement, and Education and Teaching.

Must have a minimum of 3 years of full time experience. If a new hire, at least 3 months (i.e. successfully complete orientation) at VUMC prior to declaration of intent to advance.

EXAMPLE

Technologist:
- In-depth knowledge to serve as a clinical resource to staff
- Leader
- Provides CE within department
- Provide classroom training and develop educational materials
- Cross trained in another clinical discipline
- Participant in professional activities
- Readily accessible resource person/mentor
- Preceptor for staff training
- Self-directed, proficient in critical thinking, expert resource, troubleshooting skills
- Advanced training for consistency with SOPs

Technician:
- Increased knowledge
- Participates in profession of related activities
- Critical thinking/problem solving ability demonstrated by clinical proficiency
- Serve as next resource
Level IV MLS/Technologist/Technician

At the time of promotion, the applicant demonstrates to his or her manager and the Advisory Review Board he or she prepare for their role as a Level IV Technologists/Technicians by demonstrating skills, capabilities and contributions as Level III’s. Technologists/Technicians who function at the Level IV of the DLPAL will demonstrate exemplary skills/abilities/qualities in all components of advanced practice. The purpose of this brief is to further describe combinations of activities characteristic of Level IV Technologists/Technicians. There has been no attempt to make these descriptors all-encompassing and/or exhaustive. Each Level within DLPAL is summative; each level builds on the preceding level.

The Level IV Practitioner may:

Possess official specialist certification and/or experience in a laboratory setting such that she/he will utilize the acquired advanced skills to achieve superior outcomes with patients and advance the profession in professional education and service. Their primary focus is patient care. **Must complete 2 Years at Level III prior to application for Level IV.**

**PRE-REQUISITES**

These Technologists/Technicians should practice as an “expert” or at an advanced level such that this individual provides leadership and direction for superior patient outcomes. They advance the profession and multidisciplinary efforts through teaching, mentoring and service to their department and profession. Service to the department and profession occurs in projects/education/leadership that transcends the laboratory and extends throughout the Medical Center and community. Examples of how Technologists/Technicians can exhibit leadership and direction for superior patient outcomes include:

- Advanced degree beyond entry degree OR
- Experience in focused area of specialty with demonstrated development/investment/maturation in the area. Minimum of 5 years of experience. Experience focus can be documented through manager’s statement, continuing education history, and/or documented history of expertise (i.e., specific program development, mentorship, guest speaking engagements, instructor for courses) OR
- Hold specialty certification with the following criteria:
  - Prerequisite requirements must exist (i.e., years of experience, percentage of time working in specialty area, breadth of experience) for consideration of specialization.
The certification must include competency-based testing (written and/or practical) or, as in the case of Board Certification and specialty certification by the ASCP, meet the criteria set out by the professional organization for certification (i.e., portfolio with review by panel of experts, written professional development plan). A recognized national body and/or the professional association of the applicant must endorse the certification process.

Specialty certification which may include: for example, ASCP specialty certification in Chemistry, Hematology, Microbiology, Cytotechnology, or Blood Bank. *This list is not all inclusive.* If you are unsure if the certification you have obtained, or are pursuing, will meet the requirements for Level IV, contact a member of the DLPAL Steering Committee early in the process. The Steering Committee will look at certifications on a case-by-case basis. (ASCP Certification: [http://www.ascp.org/Board-of-Certification](http://www.ascp.org/Board-of-Certification))

**EXAMPLES**

**Technologist:**
- Serve as a change agent to support increasing efficiency and productivity and process improvement
- Specialist versus cross training (i.e. state supervisor’s license or specialty certification)
- Lecturing – sharing knowledge
- Serves as course director/instructor
- Participates in interdepartmental collaboration
- Leader of activities such as goal improvement, patient safety, high reliability
- Serve as role model and mentor
- Intuitive/comprehensive knowledge for clinical expertise
- Leads problem solving projects (i.e. SOPs)

**Technician:**
- Subject matter expert
- Set expectation for others
- Participates and leads improvement activities, problem solving projects
- Self-directed, flexible, innovative
- Thorough knowledge of all tests & duties in area; mastery of skills; operates independently within license constraints
- Recommends, implements, evaluates practice changes as necessary; proactively supports change (i.e. SOP)
## III. Behaviors and Activities Leading to Promotion

DLPAL consists of four general categories. The categories and definitions are listed below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Technical Operations</td>
<td>Demonstrated ability to perform testing and tasks with consistent, timely and accurate results, according to department policies and procedures.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Professionalism and Leadership</td>
<td>Process of continuing professional development beyond the formal training required for technical proficiency. Professional development improves the capabilities of others to provide safe, high quality and efficient results for patient care. Demonstrated ability to constructively engage others in an efficient and effective process to achieve common goals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Process/Quality Improvement</td>
<td>Activities that enhance performance in compliance, proficiency and patient/employee safety while supporting a culture of continuous improvement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Education and Teaching</td>
<td>Improving knowledge base of others by continuing to improve education focused on development to allow access for learning opportunities for all departments.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The following tables on pages 11 through 22 list the categories and activities that may be considered in the advancement process for Level III and IV.
DLPAL Activities List - MLS/Technologists

In the table below, mark the number of activities (ex. 1, 2, 3) next to each activity you have completed. The minimal activity requirements for each category for each level are described below.

Include written examples or details in the bullets below the activity descriptions listed on the following pages. If something you have done is not included in the list, add it in the “Other” section.

Once you have accounted for all of your activities, delete the description/examples that do not apply to you.

Activity Requirements:

Below are the activity requirements for all disciplines. These are minimum expectations for each level and are used for attainment and maintenance of each level. There is no substitution of categories. Activities in bold are level four (4) activities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CATEGORY</th>
<th>Level III</th>
<th>Level IV</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6 required activities:</td>
<td>4 required activities:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 in each of the 4 categories, and 2 additional activities</td>
<td>at least 1 in each category</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical Ops</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Process/QI</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professionalism/Leadership</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education/Teaching</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Circle: Level  I    II    III    IV
Circle Discipline  Medical Lab Scientist
     Cytotechnologist
     Histotechnologist
     Cytogenetic Technologist
TECHNICAL OPERATIONS: Demonstrated ability to perform testing and tasks with consistent, timely and accurate results, according to department policies and procedures.

_____ Obtains and demonstrates expertise in sub-specialty areas/instruments
   o Examples:

_____ Participates in clinical trials/beta testing (intermittent)
   o Examples:

_____ Participates in test/validations, research and development protocols
   o Examples:

_____ Provides expert training for test method/instrument
   o Examples:

_____ Performs activities on benches outside of normal job requirements
   o Examples:

_____ Demonstrates expertise in LIS and instrument software systems, trouble shoot common and uncommon issues, and train new employees and students.
   o Examples:

_____ * Demonstrates ability to design and write reagent, instrument validations and test SOPs
   o Examples:

_____ * Manages supplies to meet budget, cost effective use of resources and fully support clinical operations
   o Examples:

_____ * Designs, writes and implements test/validations, research and development methods
   o Examples

_____ * Develops training tools and provide expert training for test method/instrument
   o Examples:

_____ *Super User for LIS and instrument software systems, assist with interface development, installation, and upgrades. Creates and monitors training for new employees and students.

_____ Other Activities

_____ TOTAL Activities
**PROCESS/QUALITY IMPROVEMENT:** Activities that enhance performance in compliance, proficiency and patient/employee safety while supporting a culture of continuous improvement

- Participates as a member in quality improvement projects
  - Example:

- Responsible for ensuring compliance with assigned accreditation standards
  - Example:

- Serves as Safety Officer for laboratory section
  - Example:

- Participates as a member on cross-functional task teams
  - Example:

- Investigates and recommends corrective action of VERITAS report
  - Example:

- Participates as a member of quality audit team
  - Example:

- Participates as an inspector in mock inspections
  - Example:

- Develops and implement “Learner Boards”
  - Example:

- **Leads quality improvement projects**
  - Examples:

- **Leads cross functional task teams**
  - Examples:

- **Leads a quality audit team**
  - Examples:

- **Leads a mock inspection**
  - Examples:

- **Participates in lab inspections**
  - Examples:

- **Develops and implement quality policies**
  - Examples:

- **Acts as a lead contact with inspectors from regulatory agencies**
PROFESSIONALISM & LEADERSHIP: Process of continuing professional development beyond the formal training required for technical proficiency. Professional development improves the capabilities of others to provide safe, high quality and efficient results for patient care. Demonstrated ability to constructively engage others in an efficient and effective process to achieve common goals.

- Specialty certification (primarily for outside hires with many years of experience)
  - Examples:

- Team member of professional project
  - Examples:

- Attends meeting of a relevant association (6 hours)
  - Example:

- Actively participates in department committee.
  - Example:

- Improves expertise of others through coaching and mentoring
  - Example:

- Problem-solving: resolves problems and conflicts independently
  - Example:

- Represented as an author for a poster or abstract
  - Example:

- Involvement in Professional Organizations: assumes responsibilities and is asked to provide leadership within professional groups
  - Example:

- * Consistently improves expertise of others through coaching and mentoring
  - Example:

- * Involvement in Professional Organization: serves in a leadership capacity in a professional organization (elected officer, chair of a committee, member of a program committee or a resource panel of experts)
Example:

- * Committee – facilitates a primary work area committee other than focus team/CQI project
  - Example:

- * Professional presentation at national/regional/state/local meeting/conference
  - Example:

- * Submits article for publication or has article published
  - Example:

- * Participates in advisory boards/collaborative groups outside of Vanderbilt specific to clinical profession
  - Example:

- * Problem-solving: is considered a resource in conflict resolution, negotiation and problem-solving within the department
  - Example:

- * Internal collaboration: coordinates and implements activities aimed at ensuring collaboration and cooperation between groups; is considered a resource in developing collaborations
  - Example:

- * Compliance with accreditation standards: coordinates and implements activities to ensure program/department compliance with mandatory and facility accreditation standards
  - Example:

Other Activities

TOTAL Activities

EDUCATION AND TEACHING: Improving knowledge base of others by continuing to improve education focused on development to allow access for learning opportunities for all departments

- Preceptor for students
  - Example:

- Team member of education project
  - Example:

- Guest lectures
  - Example:
____ Present a CE
   o Example:

____ Initiates the development and/or revisions of clinical handouts/patient education material for department wide use
   o Example:

____ In-service – delivery to members of primary work area at least 30 minutes or to another Vanderbilt service outside of primary work area (up to 3x for same in-service)
   o Example:

____ * Instructor
   o Example:

____ * Resident education
   o Example:

____ * Coordinates a training session and provide training
   o Example:

____ Other Activities

____ TOTAL Activities

Affirmation Statement:
This statement affirms that the contents of this document are true, correct and reflect professional performance. Providing false information may result in disciplinary action.

__________________________________________________________  Date _____________
Employee’s Signature

__________________________________________________________
Employee’s Printed Name

__________________________________________________________  Date _____________
Manager’s Signature

__________________________________________________________
Manager’s Printed Name

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DLPAL Activities List - Technicians

In the table below, mark the number of activities (ex. 1, 2, 3) next to each activity you have completed. The minimal activity requirements for each category for each level are described below.

Include written examples or details in the bullets below the activity descriptions listed on the following pages. If something you have done is not included in the list, add it in the “Other” section.

Once you have accounted for all of your activities, delete the description/examples that do not apply to you.

Activity Requirements:

Below are the activity requirements for all disciplines. These are minimum expectations for each level and are used for attainment and maintenance of each level. There is no substitution of categories. Activities in bold are level four (4) activities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CATEGORY</th>
<th>Level III 6 required activities: 1 in each of the 4 categories, and 2 additional activities</th>
<th>Level IV 4 required activities: at least 1 in each category</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Technical Ops</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education/Teaching</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Circle: Level I II III IV

Circle Discipline

Medical Lab Technician

Cytotechnician

Histotechnician
TECHNICAL OPERATIONS: Demonstrated ability to perform testing’s and tasks with consistent, timely and accurate results, according to department policies and procedures.

_____ Obtains and demonstrates expertise in sub-specialty areas/instruments
   o Examples:

_____ Participates in test/validations, research and development protocols
   o Examples:

_____ Provides expert training for test method/instrument
   o Examples:

_____ Performs activities on benches outside of normal job requirements
   o Examples:

_____ Demonstrates expertise in LIS and instrument software systems, trouble shoot common and uncommon issues, and train new employees and students.
   o Examples:

_____ * Writes reagent, instrument validations and test SOPs
   o Examples:

_____ * Manages supplies to meet budget, cost effective use of resources and fully support clinical operations
   o Examples:

_____ * Develops training tools and provide expert training for test method/instrument
   o Examples:

_____ Other Activities

_____ TOTAL Activities
PROCESS/QUALITY IMPROVEMENT: Activities that enhance performance in compliance, proficiency and patient/employee safety while supporting a culture of continuous improvement

_____ Participates as a member in quality improvement projects:
   o Example:

_____ Responsible for ensuring compliance with assigned accreditation standards
   o Example:

_____ Serves as Safety Officer for laboratory section
   o Example:

_____ Participates as a member on cross-functional task teams
   o Example:

_____ Investigates and recommend corrective action of VERITAS report
   o Example:

_____ Participates as a member of quality audit team
   o Example:

_____ Participates on a mock inspection team
   o Example:

_____ * Leads quality improvement projects
   o Examples:

_____ * Leads a quality audit team
   o Examples:

_____ * Leads a cross functional task team
   o Examples:

_____ * Participates in preparation in lab inspections
   o Examples:

_____ Other Activities

_____ TOTAL Activities
PROFESSIONALISM & LEADERSHIP: Process of continuing professional development beyond the formal training required for technical proficiency. Professional development improves the capabilities of others to provide safe, high quality and efficient results for patient care. Demonstrated ability to constructively engage others in an efficient and effective process to achieve common goals.

_____ Team member of professional project
   o Examples:

_____ Attends meeting of a relevant association (3 hours)
   o Example:

_____ Actively participates in department committee.
   o Example:

_____ Problem-solving: resolves problems and conflicts independently
   o Example:

_____ Improves expertise of others through coaching and mentoring
   o Example:

_____ Involvement in Professional Organizations: assumes responsibilities and is asked to provide leadership within professional groups
   o Example:

_____ * Consistently improves expertise of others through coaching and mentoring
   o Example:

_____ * Committee – participates in a primary work area committee other than focus team/CQI project
   o Example:

_____ * Problem solving: is considered a resource in conflict resolution, negotiation and problem solving within the department
   o Example:

_____ * Participates in advisory boards/collaborative groups outside of Vanderbilt specific to clinical profession
   o Example:

_____ * Submits article for publication or has article published (not CQI project)
   o Example:
* Compliance with accreditation standards: participates in activities to ensure program/department compliance with mandatory and facility accreditation standards
  o Example:

Other Activities

TOTAL Activities

EDUCATION AND TEACHING: Improving knowledge base of others by continuing to improve education focused on development to allow access for learning opportunities for all departments

Preceptor for students during clinical rotations
  o Example:

Develops topics for CE, lectures and other educational tools and assists in the creation of the documentation or presentation
  o Example:

In-service: delivery to members of primary work area at least 30 min or to another Vanderbilt service outside of primary work area (up to 3 times for same in-service)
  o Example:

Present a CE
  o Example:

Initiates the development and/or revisions of clinical handouts/patient education material for department wide use
  o Example:

* Presents an A/V project for departmental education/in-service/CE (6 times for same in-service)
  o Example:

* Team member of education project
  o Example:

* Coordinates a training session and provide training
  o Example:

Other Activities

TOTAL Activities
Affirmation Statement:
This statement affirms that the contents of this document are true, correct and reflect professional performance. Providing false information may result in disciplinary action.

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IV. Overview of the Process

Advancing from Level I to Level II

There is no review by the DLPAL Board for advancement to Level II. It is a stated expectation of the job performance for the Level I employee that she/he will clearly demonstrate these behaviors by the end of the first year of employment. If the supervisor believes the individual can demonstrate the independence and competencies consistent with a Level II and they have completed certification requirements (if applicable), advancement will be made at the end of the first year of employment. There is no salary adjustment for advancement to Level II.

Advancing to Level III or Level IV

Advancement to a Level III (from a Level II) or Level IV (from a Level III) involves a formal review by the DLPAL Review Board. The application procedure is described in this document. The Board will be seeking evidence that the candidate not only currently demonstrates the behaviors listed under the categories, but also that there is a pattern, history and consistency of behaviors and/or accomplishments that meet these criteria.

Maintenance

Once a staff member has been promoted to a new level, he/she is expected to maintain activities at that level. Not only will they assume a new job description commensurate with the new level, but additional “department specific” duties may be added to their job description. Consequently, the annual performance evaluation will address these new expectations. Supervisors rather than the Review Board are expected to ensure maintenance of these new expectations. Supervisors will have Level III and IV staff complete the DLPAL monitoring tool twice a year (as part of the annual performance evaluation and as part of the mid-year performance conversation).
V. Criteria for Advancement

Candidacy

Candidates must have at least a rating of “expected performance” for all key functions and the six VUMC Credo points on the current annual performance evaluation. Employees are not eligible for advancement while on Performance Accountability and Commitment or Progressive Discipline.

To Advance from Level I to Level II

Candidates must complete one year (12 months full-time equivalency) of employment and demonstrate the ability to perform all of the behavioral expectations for the key functions required for Level II staff.

To Pursue Advancement from Level II to Level III

- **Experience** – Three years of full-time equivalent professional employment.
- **Technical Operations** – Candidates must demonstrate behaviors consistent with at least one (1) activity listed under Level III or Level IV.
- **Professionalism and Leadership** – Candidates must demonstrate behaviors consistent with at least one (1) activity listed under Level III or Level IV.
- **Process/Quality Improvement** – Candidates must demonstrate behaviors consistent with at least one (1) activity listed under Level III or Level IV.
- **Education and Teaching** – Candidates must demonstrate behaviors consistent with at least one (1) activity listed under Level III or Level IV.
- Candidate must demonstrate behaviors in an additional **two (2)** activities in any category consistent with the description under level III or Level IV.

To Pursue Advancement from Level III to Level IV

- **Experience** – Five years of full-time equivalent professional employment.
- **Technical Operations** – Candidates must demonstrate behaviors consistent with at least one (1) activity listed under Level IV.
- **Professionalism and Leadership** – Candidates must demonstrate behaviors consistent with at least one (1) activity listed under Level IV.
• *Process/Quality Improvement* – Candidates must demonstrate behaviors consistent with at least one (1) activity listed under Level IV

• *Education and Teaching* – Candidates must demonstrate behaviors consistent with at least one (1) activity listed under Level IV
VI. Advancement Steps and Procedures

Step 1

*Obtain Support and Endorsement.* Candidates must meet with their supervisors to obtain support and endorsement to initiate the advancement process. This may be an outgrowth of discussions at the annual performance reviews. Should a candidate not obtain support from his/her supervisor, he/she may meet with the director to discuss. When obtaining support to pursue advancement, the candidate, in collaboration with the primary supervisor, selects the dimensions within advancement categories that best reflect his/her career pathway. Where appropriate, there is an opportunity for another qualified individual to serve in this capacity with the approval of the designated manager/director. If a candidate has not met the minimum years of experience expected to advance to a Level III or Level IV and believes that she/he has completed the work based on the requirements, then the staff member and the manager review the body of work. If the manager determines the work may support advancement, the staff member will follow all of the steps noted in the Advancement Manual, including completing a “Request for Consideration” form in the portfolio.

Step 2

*Select a sponsor.* The candidate will select a sponsor. The sponsor may be the candidate’s direct supervisor or someone with direct knowledge of the candidate’s work and the DLPAL process (a team leader/director in your area, a faculty member, or someone who is currently at level III or IV in the DLPAL system – the sponsor’s level must be at or above the level being challenged by the candidate). In addition, the sponsor should be someone who can verify compliance with the behavioral descriptor criteria. The sponsors are expected to complete a “sponsor statement” (See DLPAL Portfolio Petition Cover Sheet, p.31), which should amplify the activities and accomplishments listed in the candidate’s report.
Step 3

*Prepare the DLPAL Portfolio.* Candidate prepares the DLPAL Portfolio, which includes an introductory summary of no more than 3 pages, DLPAL Portfolio Petition Cover Sheet (p. 31) with the sponsor’s statement, an updated CV (see p. 32 for CV format), copy of the latest performance evaluation report (score summary pages), and a typed summary of activities which accompanies the Activities List. The summary of activities is no more than 6 pages and is a listing of achievements or demonstrated behaviors that are consistent with the Criteria for Advancement (p. 24) in the target level defined in the activity summary format (see p. 12 through 22). The submitted packet should be no more than 50 pages in length.

Step 4

*Submit Materials for Review.* The DLPAL portfolio (introductory summary, CV, performance evaluation report, Portfolio Petition Cover sheet, and Activities List and supporting documents) is submitted to the primary supervisor to ensure completeness and accuracy, and to identify any issues or need for further information or supportive data/evidence.

Step 5

*Submit the Completed Portfolio.* Candidate submits eleven collated copies of the portfolio to the Advancement Board no later than the deadline noted in the DLPAL’s current calendar.

Step 6

*Meet with the Board.* Candidate meets with the Advancement Review Board in May and is expected to make an oral presentation (10 minutes for Level III candidates, 15 minutes for Level IV candidates) of accomplishments, current activities, and future activities and answer questions. If a candidate’s sponsor is on the Review Board, the sponsor will not be permitted to vote, ask questions or comment on the candidate’s application during this process.

Step 7

*Decision made.* Candidate and supervisor are advised of the decision and recommendations of the board in June.
VII. Preparing your DLPAL Portfolio

The examples in the Appendix will give you a general idea of the kinds of activities a candidate might list under each Category as evidence of having met the criteria for advancement. Note that in these examples we have provided sample evidence for more than the minimum amount of areas required within a couple of categories. This is just to give you some “for instance” examples. The candidate must complete a total of 6 activities (one from each dimension and another two from any combination) to promote to a Level 3. To promote to a Level 4, an additional 4 activities must be completed, one from each of the dimension.

Also note that different aspects of one activity or achievement might apply to different categories. For example, serving as a team leader in a performance improvement activity that was aimed at improving clinical services through better team communications could be applied as evidence for having met a criterion for the “Education and Teaching” dimension (for a project under the Process/Quality Improvement category) and for the “improving expertise of others” (under Professionalism and Leadership category).

The PAL Portfolio will have the following sections separated with appropriately labeled divider tabs.

I. Introduction
A. Introduction Summary Page
   (No more than 3 pages, double-spaced, 12 font, 1” margins)

The introduction should describe how your past and current experiences have led you to this point in your career and how you plan to achieve your professional goals. Include your career goals and direction in this area. Be specific.

B. DLPAL Portfolio Petition Cover Sheet
C. CV/Resume (no references included)
D. Candidate’s Performance Evaluation

II. Technical Operations, Process/Quality Improvement, Professionalism and Leadership, Education and Teaching
A. Written Summary of each section with a minimum of at least 1 paragraph per section and a limit of 6 pages total. (double spaced, 12 font, 1” margins)
B. Activity List Forms
C. Supporting documentation (Process or QI proposal, QI summary, bibliography logs, created materials, results, committee/facilitator assessments, or additional project worksheets)
Recommendations:

- Utilize your mentor
- Review the activities guidelines for what are “DLPAL approved” acceptable activities
- Refer to the descriptors to make sure you have made significant links with the required behaviors of a Level III/IV
- All portfolios must be legible, typed, spell checked/edited, labeled with name, credentials and advancing level, in the portfolio folder, and supporting documentation included as indicated
- Delete any unused portion of the activity forms before submitting
- Do not use VUMC specific terms without explanation (Heart, Elevate)
- There is a 50 page limit (combination of page and plastic sleeves). Front and back is allowed. (Sleeves are to be used for larger documents like publications or booklets)
- Final submission: Prepare 12 copies and submit 11 by the timeline date to Diagnostic Lab administration in 4605 TVC (keep one copy for yourself for reference).

VIII. Preparing for your DLPAL Interview

The DLPAL interviews with the Review Board are scheduled as noted on the DLPAL’s current calendar. You should be prepared to speak to the documented activities in each category for approximately 10 minutes and to respond to questions from the Review Board for approximately 10 minutes. You should keep your comments organized in category list order and relevant to the DLPAL categories. You should be prepared to highlight your major accomplishments and to state why you are seeking promotion.

The candidate is expected to make an oral presentation (limited to 10 minutes for Level III candidates, limited to 15 minutes for Level IV candidates) of their accomplishments, current activities, and future activities and answer questions. If a candidate’s sponsor is on the Review Board, the sponsor will not be permitted to vote, ask questions or comment on the candidate’s application during this process.
IX. DLPAL Portfolio Petition Cover Sheet

When preparing your petition portfolio packet refer to Criteria for Advancement (p.24) and Steps and Procedures (p. 26) and an example of a Level III portfolio on the DLPAL website. The petition packet is due to the Chair of the Review Board no later than the deadline noted on the DLPAL’s current calendar (submit 11 copies).

Candidate Name: ______________________ Advancement to Level: _________

Sponsor Name: ________________________ Sponsor Level/Status: _________

Packet includes: This cover sheet with sponsor statement, introductory summary sheet (limit this summary to 3 pages), coversheet of the most recent performance evaluation, candidate’s curriculum vita, and summary of activities and achievements across all categories (limit this summary to 6 pages).

Sponsor Statement:

____ I verify the information contained in the report is accurate.
____ I endorse this Candidate’s advancement to Level ______ without reservation.

Signature of Sponsor:

________________________________________

Sponsor’s Printed Name
X. CV Format

Name and Title
Business Address and Telephone
Home Address and Telephone
E-Mail Address

EDUCATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

(List in reverse chronological order by site, title, dates of employment, and indicate whether full or part-time)

PUBLICATIONS

PRESENTATIONS

(Indicate presentation format, i.e., poster session, traditional session, mini-seminar, workshops, etc., length of presentation and order of authorship if multiple authors/presenters and place in appropriate categories below)

Local

State

Regional

National

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS, SERVICE, CREDENTIALS

INCLUDE memberships and offices held; professional service including committee work and leadership roles; licensure, CCC, teacher licensure, and special credentials/training)

TEACHING AND SUPERVISION

(Differentiate between single and multiple lectures vs. entire course. In supervision, indicate number of students, clinical fellows or other staff who are supervised and the average number of hours per week spent in supervisory activities)

HONORS, AWARDS, PUBLIC SERVICE

(Public service should focus on experiences most relevant to the professional role)
XI. DLPAL Annual Review

Once a staff member has been promoted to a new level, he/she is expected to maintain activities at that level. Not only will they assume new job descriptions commensurate with the new level, but additional “department specific” duties may be added to their job description. Consequently, the annual performance evaluation will address these new expectations. Supervisors, rather than the Review Board, are expected to ensure maintenance of these new expectations. Supervisors will have Level III and IV staff complete the DLPAL monitoring tool twice a year (as part of the annual performance evaluation and as part of the mid-year performance conversation). The completed form will be filed in the employee’s department file.

The following is a review of the expectations for each promotion level and a detailed listing of the behaviors and activities for each level. The DLPAL Annual Review Form follows this information.

SUMMARY OF EXPECTATIONS

**Level II**: Employees must complete one year (12 months full-time equivalency) of employment and demonstrate the ability to perform all of the behavioral expectations and Key Functions required for Level II staff.

**Level III**  
*Experience*—Three years full-time equivalent professional employment.  
*Service*—Employees must demonstrate six (6) behaviors consistent with descriptions listed under Level III in all four (4) categories listed.

**Level IV**  
*Experience*—Five years full-time equivalent professional employment.  
*Service*—Employees must demonstrate four (4) behaviors consistent with descriptions listed under Level IV in all four (4) categories listed.
**XII. DLPAL Annual Review**

From: ____ to _______.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME:</th>
<th>SUPERVISOR:</th>
</tr>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TITLE (circle one):</th>
<th>Medical Lab Scientist</th>
<th>Technologist</th>
<th>Technician</th>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LEVEL (circle one):</th>
<th>III</th>
<th>IV</th>
</tr>
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**CATEGORY 1—TECHNICAL OPERATIONS**

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**CATEGORY 2—PROCESS/QUALITY IMPROVEMENT**

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**CATEGORY 3—PROFESSIONAL AND LEADERSHIP**

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**CATEGORY 4—EDUCATION AND TEACHING**

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