

DBQ Frequently Asked Questions

What are Disability Benefits Questionnaires (DBQ)?

- Disability Benefits Questionnaires (DBQs) are downloadable forms created for Veterans' use in the evaluation process for disability benefits. DBQs will help speed the processing of Veterans' disability compensation and pension claims.
- DBQs allow Veterans and Servicemembers to have more control over the disability claims process by giving them the option of visiting a primary care provider in their community, at their expense, instead of completing an evaluation at a Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) facility.
- The streamlined forms use check boxes and standardized language so that the disability rating can be made accurately and quickly.

Why were DBQs developed?

- DBQs were developed to streamline the collection of necessary medical evidence for the purpose of processing Veterans' claims. DBQs provide Veterans with an improved means to submit medical evidence to support their claims.

Who is authorized to complete Disability Benefits Questionnaires?

- In the private sector, a private physician with an active medical license is qualified to sign and attest to completed DBQs.
- The DBQ can be completed by the Veteran's private treatment provider or VHA clinicians.

Will VA reimburse providers' examination costs or travel costs to the Veteran for DBQ-related actions?

No. This information is printed on the DBQ forms and appears on the Internet website where DBQs are publicly available. Veterans have the option to take a DBQ to their private provider or Veterans Health Administration (VHA) clinician for completion, but Veterans are responsible for any related co-pay or costs, including costs for travel or testing. (A Veteran is always entitled to an examination and any required testing at no charge for a scheduled compensation appointment that has been requested by VBA.) Asking your primary care provider to complete a DBQ is no different than asking your provider to write a letter or note providing medical evidence of a medical condition in support of a claim. The same co-pay rules apply equally to both situations.

How are completed Disability Benefits Questionnaires submitted to VA?

- Veterans and/or their physicians may mail or securely fax completed DBQs to the VA Regional Office handling the Veteran's claim. To find mailing addresses, visit the VBA website at: www.vba.va.gov/bln/21/ro/ROcontacts.htm. To find fax numbers, visit the VA website at <http://benefits.va.gov/disabilityexams>. Completed DBQs may also be submitted directly to the VA Regional Office.
- Vietnam Veterans with verified in-country service can also submit their claims for one of the three new Agent Orange presumptive conditions electronically through the Fast Track system at <https://www.fasttrack.va.gov/AOFastTrack/>. The Fast Track system contains the Ischemic Heart Disease, Hairy and other B-cell Leukemia, and the Parkinson's Disease DBQs in interactive electronic format, so physicians can quickly and easily access, complete, and submit those specific DBQs.

How many medical conditions are covered by DBQs?

More than 70 DBQs cover a full range of medical conditions. While some DBQs are specific to a single condition (for example: hypertension, arthritis, and prostate cancer), most forms can be used for several related conditions (for example: heart conditions, kidney conditions, endocrine conditions). Please see the extensive list of conditions on the VA website at: <http://benefits.va.gov/disabilityexams>

Are DBQs just for presumptive conditions (conditions presumed to be service connected)?

No, DBQs will be used for almost every condition for which a Veteran can receive compensation.

What are the benefits of using DBQs?

DBQs simplify the documentation of medical conditions. By completing check-the-box DBQs rather than generating long narrative summaries, it is anticipated that VBA will reduce the time it takes to make a claims decision. Also, providers treating Veterans who are familiar with their conditions can speed the process by completing DBQs for their patients.

Are DBQs mandatory?

No. Use of DBQs is not mandatory.

Will DBQs reduce claims processing time?

If a provider uses a DBQ to evaluate a medical condition for a disability claim, it has the potential to significantly reduce the processing time.

Will VA make these forms available for additional medical conditions?

There are no more DBQs planned for public release. With few exceptions, the current DBQs cover every condition for which a Veteran can receive compensation.

What DBQs are not available for use by private providers?

There are no DBQs for the following medical examinations:

- Initial Examination for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder
- Hearing Loss and Tinnitus
- Residuals of Traumatic Brain Injury
- Cold Injury Residuals
- Prisoner of War Examination Protocol
- Gulf War Medical Examination
- General Medical Examination for Compensation Purposes
- General Medical Examination for Pension Purposes

Why are those DBQs not available for public use?

VA has determined that the examinations required to complete those DBQs either require specialized training, specialized equipment, or specialized testing generally not available through private providers or, if these examinations are available, the cost to the Veteran would be so great as to render the DBQ cost-prohibitive. For these reasons, VA has determined that it is in the Veteran's best interest to still require these examinations to be conducted by a VA clinician.

How do DBQs help with VA's Fully Developed Claims (FDC) Program?

DBQs are valuable for Fully Developed Claims processing because they provide medical information that is directly relevant to determining a disability rating which helps ensure the VA's ratings specialists have precisely the information they need to start processing the claim.

Fully Developed Claim (FDC) program

When a Veteran calls with questions about the DBQ process, the PCR should advise the Veteran of the FDC program. The PCR should state "We also have a Fully Developed Claims program, which allows VA to expedite your claim for disability benefits. It is one of the fastest means of getting your compensation or pension claim processed. To qualify for the program, you must complete and submit an FDC Certification and either a VA Form 21-526EZ, *Fully Developed Claim (Compensation)*, for a compensation claim, or a VA Form 21-527EZ, *Fully Developed Claim (Pension)*, for a pension claim. You must also submit, with the application and certification, all relevant and pertinent evidence to "fully develop" the claim. The application forms provide in detail, claims eligible for the FDC program as well as notification of all information and evidence needed to "fully develop" and substantiate your claim.

Link to Benefits Assistance Service FAQs:

http://vbaw.vba.va.gov/bl/27/quality_training/training/pcrfaqs.htm

Information is contained on the PCR Index under:

Fully Developed Claims Program

[Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQs\) for Fully Developed Claim Program](#)

Link to Compensation Service FAQs

http://vbacodmoint1.vba.va.gov/bl/21/faq/FAQ_Answer.asp?ref=373

Link to the FDC website

[Fully Developed Claims \(FDC\) - VA Claims Transformation Plan](#)