

Below are the references regarding ACE Exams (M21-1 III.iv.3.A.4)

4. ACE Examinations

Introduction This topic contains information on ACE examinations, including

- [examinations based on ACE](#)
- [categories of examinations for which the ACE process is prohibited](#), and
- [examination requests and ACE](#).

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III.iv.3.A.4.a.Examinations Based on ACE In lieu of scheduling an in-person examination, VHA and contract examiners generally (subject to some limitations) have the option to complete a DBQ based on review of existing paper and/or electronic medical evidence. They may also conduct an interview with the claimant. Examinations based upon medical records and history without an in-person clinical examination or testing are known as **ACE examinations** or the **ACE process**.

Reference: For more information on categories of examinations where the ACE process is prohibited, see [M21-1, Part III, Subpart iv, 3.A.4.b](#).

III.iv.3.A.4.b.Categories of Examinations for Which the ACE Process Is Prohibited The ACE process is *not* available in the following categories of examinations:

- examinations when necessary electronic medical records are not available for examiner review
- IDES or the BDD pre-discharge program
- general medical examinations
- initial and review traumatic brain injury (TBI) examinations, and
- mental disorder examinations.

VBA may also specifically require an in-person examination, but in the interest of expediting the claims process, RO employees should not routinely exclude the use of the ACE process absent a compelling reason, particularly for

- homeless Veterans, and/or
- the following conditions:
 - hearing loss
 - tinnitus
 - cardiac conditions
 - amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS), and
 - any terminal condition.

Reference: For more information on the requirement to identify evidence for the examiner's review, see [M21-1, Part III, Subpart iv, 3.A.8.d](#).

III.iv.3.A.4.c.Examination Requests and ACE When entering an examination request in CAPRI, ensure that the examination request

- specifies that the ACE process is permitted, or
- clearly states that the ACE process may not be used, and an in-person examination is required to complete the DBQ.

Notes:

- VBA has updated the DBQ templates in CAPRI to include the ACE check boxes that contain the rationale for the use of ACE,

requiring the clinician to identify the materials relied on when using ACE to prepare the DBQ.

- The ERB contains the appropriate ACE language to include in the CAPRI examination request.

Reference: For more information on requirements of ACE examinations, see [M21-1, Part III, Subpart iv, 3.D.2.m.](#)