

# ~ Welcome Education Staff ~

## Today's Agenda is A Busy One!

*Opening Remarks by Paula West; NTT-C*

- **Terry Warren:** PL 116-154. Section 5 -Treatment of Certain Preparatory Courses
- **Terry Warren/ Don Ortega:** Veteran Rapid Retraining Assistance Program (VRRAP)
- **Victoria Evans:** Rounding Out
- **Adrienne Reagins:** Isakson & Roe Updates
- **Justin Brown:** Digital GI Bill Status Updates
- **Ellen Shaheed:** SCO Annual Training Requirements – The 90 Day Notice

\* There will be interactive Knowledge Checks we need your participation on too! \*



**\*THIS SESSION QUALIFIES FOR FY'21  
SCO ANNUAL TRAINING CREDIT\***



We will be using Survey Monkey again to obtain your Feedback and Inquiries.  
Remember, its Anonymous!



# EDUCATION SERVICE

## June Office Hours

### 2021

June 2021



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## PL 116-154 Section 5

Terry Warren  
Chief  
Stakeholder Engagement



# PL 116-154 - Section 5

## Ryan Kules and Paul Benne Specially Adaptive Housing Improvement Act of 2019, Section 5 (Public Law 116-154)

- Effective: August 1, 2021
- GI Bill® and chapter 35 benefits can be used to pay for certain preparatory courses in pursuit of a licensing or certification test
- Charge against entitlement is pro-rated based on the actual amount of course fee relative to the rate of one month of entitlement
- To qualify, the course must be approved by the concerned State Approving Agency (SAA) and prepare students for an approved licensing or certification test. An approved licensing or certification test must be used to enter, maintain, or advance employment in a predetermined and identified vocation



# KNOWLEDGE CHECK



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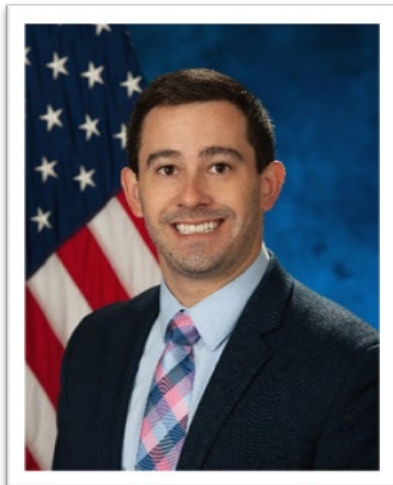


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# Veteran Rapid Retraining Assistance Program (VRRAP)



Terry Warren  
Chief  
Stakeholder Engagement



Donald Ortega  
Assistant Director  
Training Division



# Veteran Rapid Retraining Assistance Program (VRRAP)

- The Veteran Rapid Retraining Assistance Program (VRRAP) was enacted on March 11, 2021, effective immediately. VRRAP is part of the America Rescue Plan of 2021, a \$1.9 trillion economic stimulus package, with aid targeted to help individuals and businesses recover from the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic
- Eligible Veterans participating in VRRAP will receive up to 12 months of tuition and fees and a monthly housing allowance based on Post-9/11 GI Bill® rates. Covered education programs must provide training for a high-demand occupation, which is determined by the Commissioner of Labor Statistics. GI Bill® approved programs of education, excluding bachelor's and graduate degrees, and VET TEC approved training are eligible
- The program ends 21 months after enactment and is limited to a maximum cap of \$386M or 17,250 Veteran participants





# Achievements to Date

## EDU deployed the VRRAP Application for Benefits on May 3, 2021

- EDU stood up an integrated project team solely focused on implementing and administering this program; associated processing and payment work will be completed at the Muskogee Regional Processing Office (RPO)
- The Department of Labor provided a final High Demand Occupation List, confirmation on available data, information pertaining to jobs programs, and outreach and communications materials
- EDU finalized and communicated the Veteran Rapid Retraining Assistance Program (VRRAP) Participation Agreement and Acknowledgement, VA Form 22-10271
- EDU updated the VA.gov website for Veterans with VRRAP information and the Veteran application



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# Why use a “Participation Agreement and Acknowledgement?”

- VRRAP has a unique payment structure
- VRRAP has additional tracking and reporting requirements, required for the facility to receive payments
- Some facilities may be prohibited from participation and not all programs are allowed

**It is important that facilities acknowledge these factors before committing to the program!**

# Unique Payment Structure

By submitting this agreement with the original signature of an official legally authorized to bind the educational institution to this agreement, the institution is:

- Agreeing to certify upon the Veteran's enrollment the actual net cost for tuition and fees for the entire program of education for an eligible Veteran;
- Acknowledging that VA will pay for the actual net cost for tuition and fees-
  - ❑ Based on the provisions of section 3313(c)(1)(A) of title 38, United States Code, including the Academic Year cap applicable for programs pursued at private or foreign schools;
  - ❑ On a staggered basis when specific milestones are met;
    - 50% upon enrollment;
    - 25% upon completion of the program;
    - 25% at employment
  - ❑ On a prorated basis if the student fails to complete the program;



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# Unique Payment Structure

- Agreeing to not seek payment from an eligible Veteran who fails to complete a program and/or fails to find employment in a related field within 180 days of completing or withdrawing from a program for any amounts that VA would have paid to your institution had the Veteran completed the program and found employment within 180 days



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# Prohibitions and Program Eligibility

The educational institution agrees to certify enrolled eligible Veterans under VRRAP in the following programs:

- Programs approved for VA educational assistance under chapter 36 of title 38, United States Code, that do not lead to a bachelor's or graduate degree and are designed to provide training for a high-demand occupation

**NOTE:** See list of high-demand occupations compiled by the Commissioner of Labor Statistics

- High technology programs of education offered by a qualified provider, under the meaning given such terms in section 116 of the Harry W. Colmery Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2017 (Public Law 115–48; 38 U.S.C. § 3001 note), generally referred to as “VET TEC.”

**NOTE:** *By law, in the case of an accredited program of education, a program of education is not considered a covered program of education under VRRAP if the program has received a show cause order from the accreditor of the program during the five-year period preceding March 11, 2021; VA will verify through Department of Education*

# VRRAP Impacts from the THRIVE Act

- High-Demand Occupation List
- Monthly Housing Allowance Payments
- Employment Assistance & Outreach
- Nonprofit Organization
- Program Reporting
- Program Termination
- Payment of Benefits



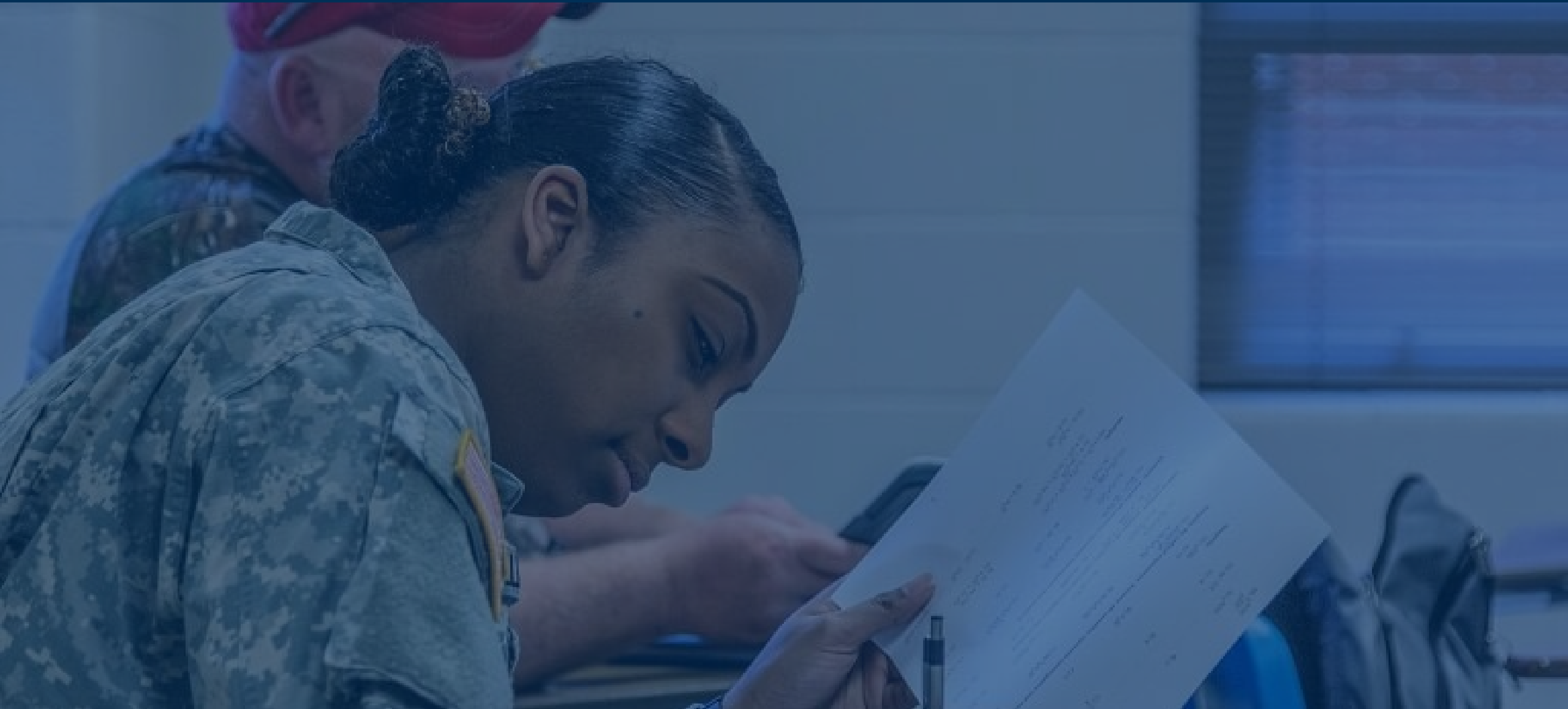
# VRRAP Program Statistics

- As of June 14, 2021, VA has received 5,022 applications for VRRAP benefits
  - ❑ Of those applications, 2,933 Veterans have been issued Certificates of Eligibility
  - ❑ Of those applications, 1,401 Veterans have been determined ineligible to participate in VRRAP.

The Most Common Reasons an individual may be determined ineligible for VRRAP include:

  - Applicant has eligibility for GI Bill® or Veteran Readiness & Employment benefits
  - No Qualifying Service
  - Applicant is not unemployed due to the covered public health emergency
- As of June 14, 2021, VA has received 247 enrollment certifications for Veteran participants in VRRAP
  - ❑ Programs attending include Commercial Driver's License (CDL) training, Master Barber Instructor, HVAC/R training, Healthcare Management, Professional Massage Therapy, Cybersecurity Professional Penetration, Digital Photography, Graphic Design, Illustration, Web Design, Digital Media, Full-Stack Java, Medical Assistant, Electronics Assembly & Technician, Personal Training, and Information Technology Network Support
- As of June 14, 2021, 394 training providers/educational institutions are approved for VRRAP retraining assistance

# KNOWLEDGE CHECK



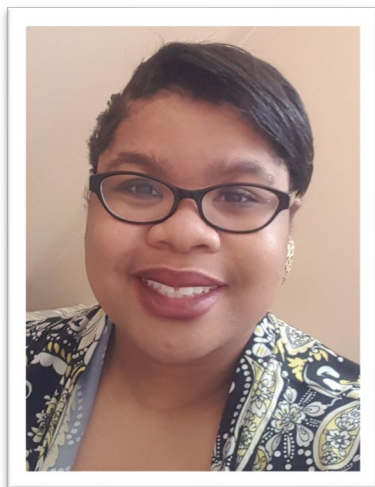
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## Rounding Out

Victoria Evans

Chief

National Training Team - Schools



# Rounding Out

- Historically, Education Service (EDU) has allowed the practice of “rounding out” in which a school could certify courses which were not a part of the beneficiary’s approved program of education to increase a beneficiary’s training time during their final academic term
- By authorizing payment for these extra courses, GI Bill® students were eligible for full benefit payments, and maximum allowable monthly housing allowance (MHA) under chapter 33
- This practice, in its current form, exceeds EDU’s legal authority which is limited to payments for pursuit of an approved program of education or training



# Rounding Out

- VA is amending its policy to specify that any additional class(es) taken during the beneficiary's final academic term for the purpose of increasing training time or rate of pursuit, up to full-time, while not required for the beneficiary to graduate, **are:**
  1. **Included within the program and would count toward an enrolled individual's graduation requirements – as specified in the curriculum**
  2. **Have not been already completed. – Cannot retake a class that has already been successfully completed.**
- Although the practice of “rounding out” is explicitly authorized in the School Certifying Official Handbook, it is not codified in regulations. VA will simply amend the authorization in the School Certifying Handbook
- VA will delay implementation of this policy change until **August 1, 2021**



# Rounding Out

- A claimant needs to complete 120 credit hours to obtain a B.A. degree in Political Science with a concentration in International Relations. After passing 117 credit hours, the claimant only needs to earn an additional 3 credits to graduate and enrolls in International Law and Organizations. In order to achieve full-time status, the claimant also enrolls in 3 additional 3-credit-hour courses – American Political Campaigns and Elections; Constitutional Law; and Ancient, Medieval, and Renaissance Political Theories – **which have not been taken previously and are included, by name, in the B.A**
- These classes would be valid for “Rounding Out”.



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# Rounding Out

- A claimant needs to complete 120 credit hours to obtain a B.A. degree in Political Science with a concentration in International Relations. After passing 117 credit hours, the claimant only needs to earn an additional 3 credits to graduate and enrolls in International Law and Organizations.
  - In order to achieve full-time status, the claimant also enrolls in 3 additional 3-credit-hour courses – American Pottery design; Airline Pilot 101; and Underwater Basket Weaving – which have not been taken previously and are not included, by name, in the B.A
- The VA would not consider these classes valid for “Rounding Out”.



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# Isakson & Roe Updates

## Isakson & Roe Updates



Adrienne Reagins

Chief

National Training Team - Compliance



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## Verification of enrollment to receive Post – 9/11 Educational Assistance benefits

As of **August 1, 2021**, chapter 33 students must verify their enrollment status each month to continue receiving their monthly housing allowance (MHA) and/or kicker payments. This change will be implemented in phases, starting with students enrolled at a Non-Degree (NCD) facility

Students are asked to verify their enrollment status relative to what the SCO has reported on their behalf. This is *not* attendance verification

Students can verify their enrollment status in one of two ways:



**Text Messaging** – Students who choose VA’s “Opt-In” feature will receive a text message each month prompting them to verify their enrollment status



**Telephone** – Students may call the Education Call Center (ECC) at 888-442-4551 to verify their enrollment status



# Isakson & Roe: Sec. 1010 cont.

## Verification of enrollment to receive Post – 9/11 Educational Assistance benefits

How MHA payments are altered from this process:



Students who reply **‘Yes’** to the verification text or confirm their enrollment status hasn’t changed by phone will have MHA payments released as usual

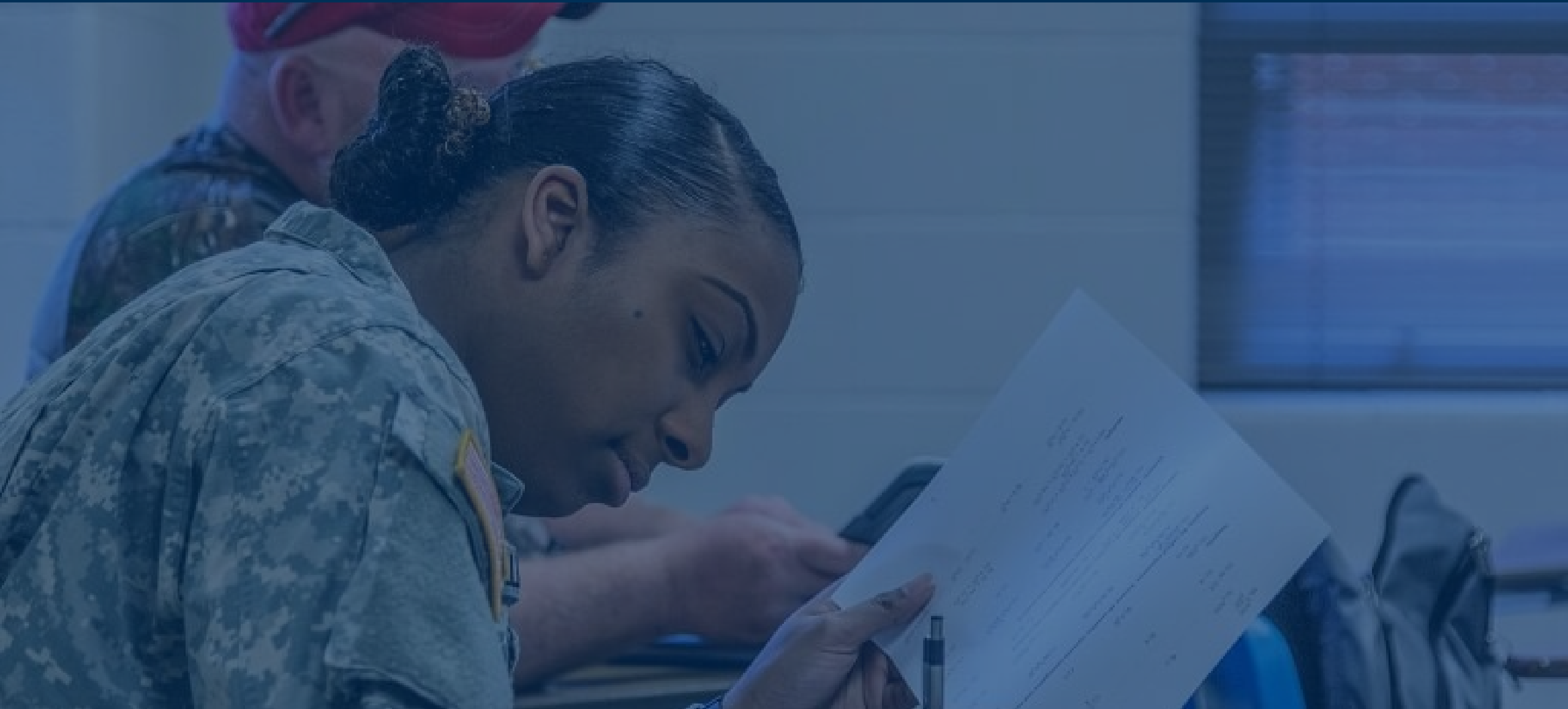


Students who reply **‘No’** or report a change by phone will prompt the VCE to review for updated enrollment information from the SCO. If no updated information is pending, the VCE will contact the SCO to request an update be submitted. MHA payments will be held in the meanwhile

If a student fails to verify for two consecutive months, VA will withhold future MHA payments until they call the Educational Call Center (ECC) to verify



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# Isakson & Roe: Sec. 1015

## Additional requirement for approval of educational institutions for purposes of the educational assistance programs of the Department of Veterans Affairs



VA advises accredited educational institutions that currently do not participate in Title IV to begin the process of interpreting and implementing all provisions of Public Law 116-315



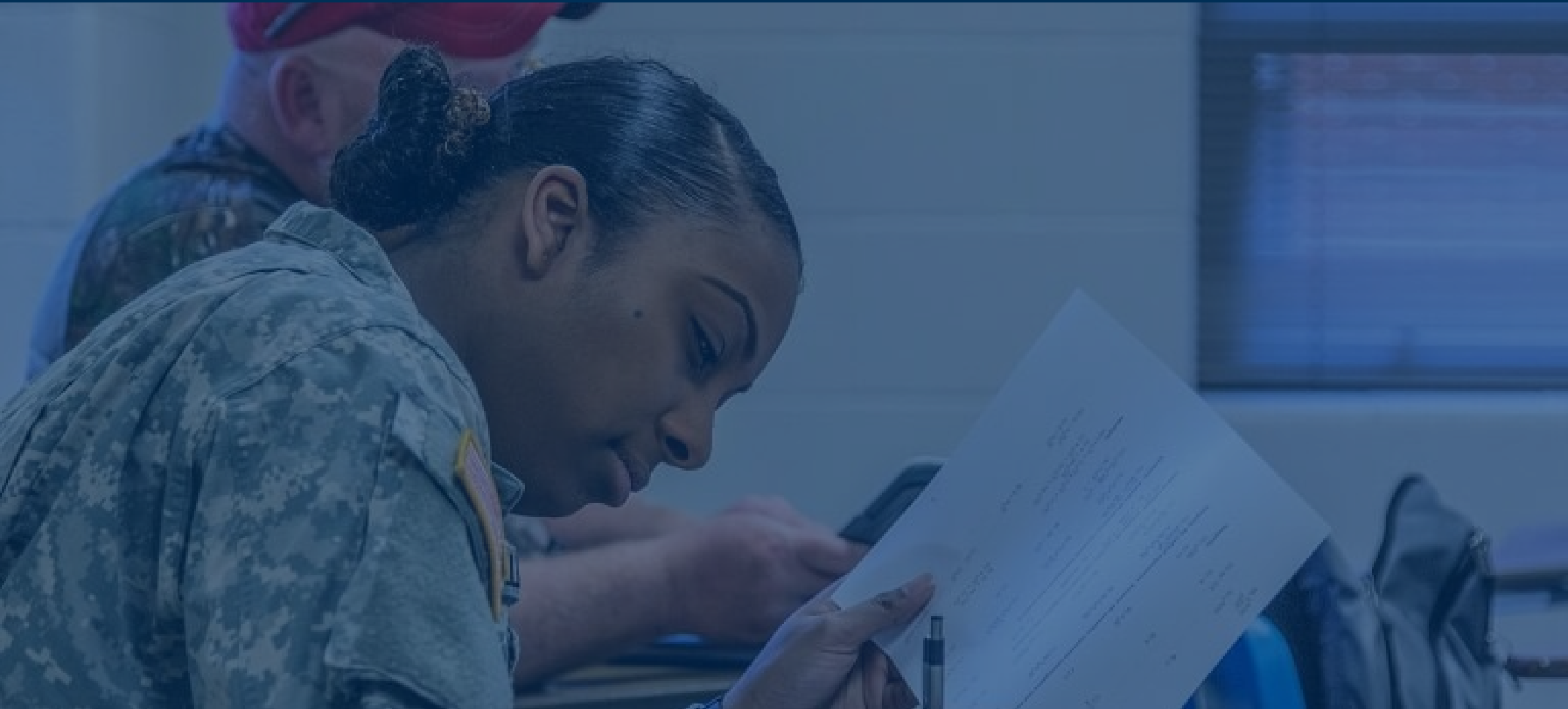
Provisions for a waiver are under review and will be communicated to all schools no later than **August 1, 2021**. All waiver requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis and an institution should not assume a waiver will be granted

For institutions that are accredited and currently have a Program Participation Agreement with the Department of Education, it is expected Title IV eligibility and participation will continue beginning **August 1, 2021**

If eligibility is lost or participation ceases at any point after **August 1, 2021**, a waiver would need to be sought to continue GI Bill® eligibility



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## Requirements for educational institutions participating in the educational assistance programs of the Department of Veterans Affairs



While the provisions take effect on **June 15, 2021**, they are not applicable to educational institutions until **August 1, 2021**

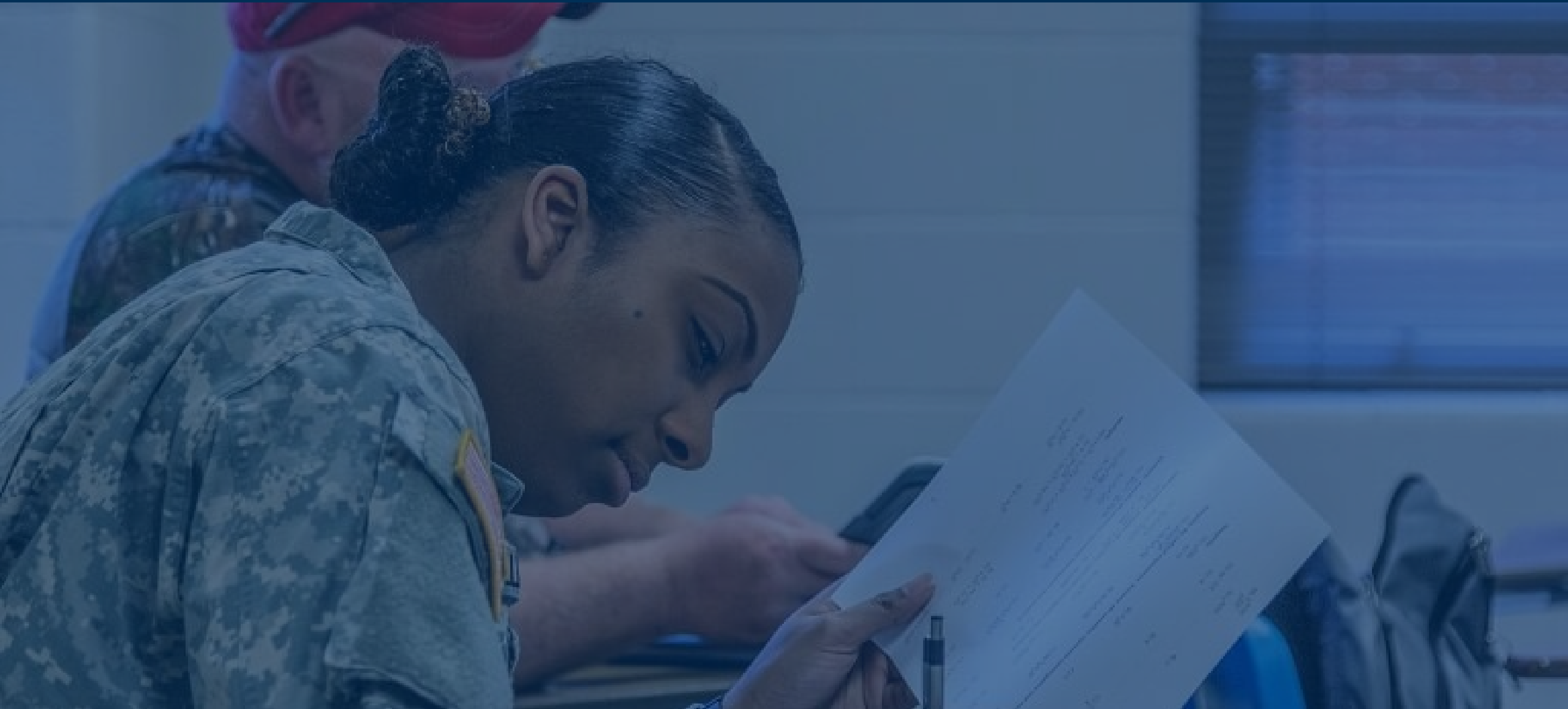


VA is continuing to review and interpret the provisions of this section and will inform schools as soon as possible regarding the requirements, including any criteria and procedures for applying for a waiver

As with section 1015, there is no expectation of immediate disapproval on **August 1, 2021**. All waiver requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis and an institution should not assume a waiver will be granted



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## Improvements to limitation on certain advertising, sales, and enrollment practices

This section defines current limitations on advertising, sales and marketing tactics a school can utilize and remain eligible for GI Bill® funds.



Creates a tiered penalty system for institutions that do not comply with the law

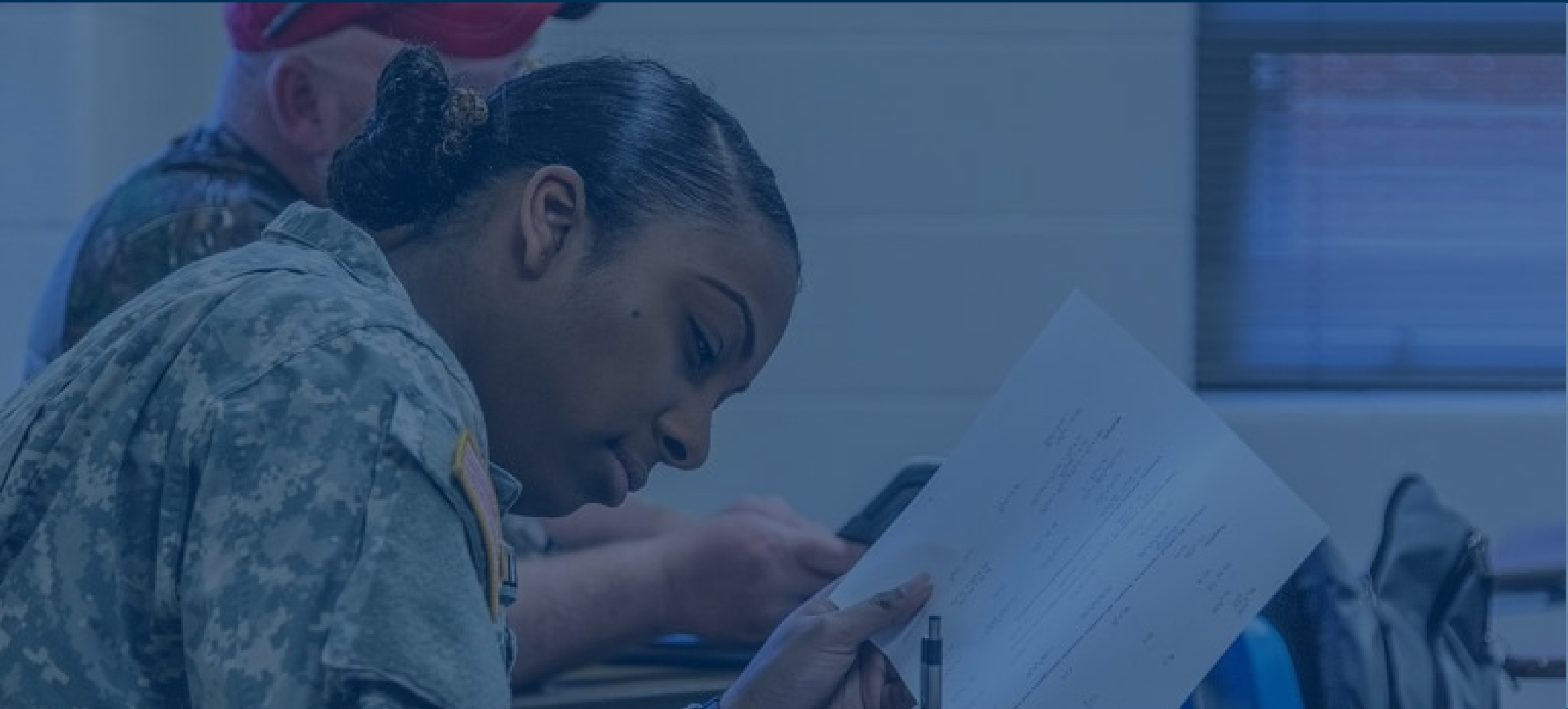


Sets up a mechanism for institutions to work with the State Approving Agencies and VA on coming back into compliance

It is advised that education institutions begin to review internal policies to ensure compliance with section 1020 by **August 1, 2021**



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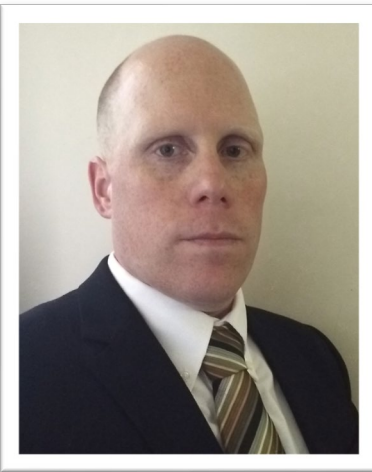
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# GI Bill Status Updates



Justin Brown  
Education Quality & Training Specialist  
National Training Team - Compliance



# Digital GI Bill Update| August 1 Release

VA has been working to implement new functionality in accordance with the Isakson and Roe Act. Implementation of IT updates for these provisions are a key milestone in the pathway towards Digital GI Bill® modernization

## Development Priorities for August 1

### Isakson/Roe Improvement Act of 2020



**Section 1010:** Requires Chapter 33 students who receive housing and/or kicker payments to verify their attendance. This will include a phased rollout, starting with NCD students Aug 1



**Sections 1019:** Shifts the responsibility for Tuition and Fees and Yellow Ribbon Debts from students to facilities



**Section 1001:** Extends the STEM scholarship to students pursuing dual degrees and clinical training; removes entitlement limitations; changes priority of scholarship selection



**Section 1005 and 1020:** Places responsibility on Schools to report in state tuition requirements and advise advertising, sales, and enrollment practices

### Automation Improvements

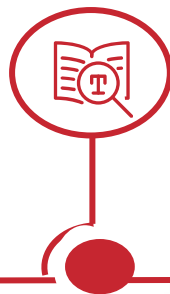
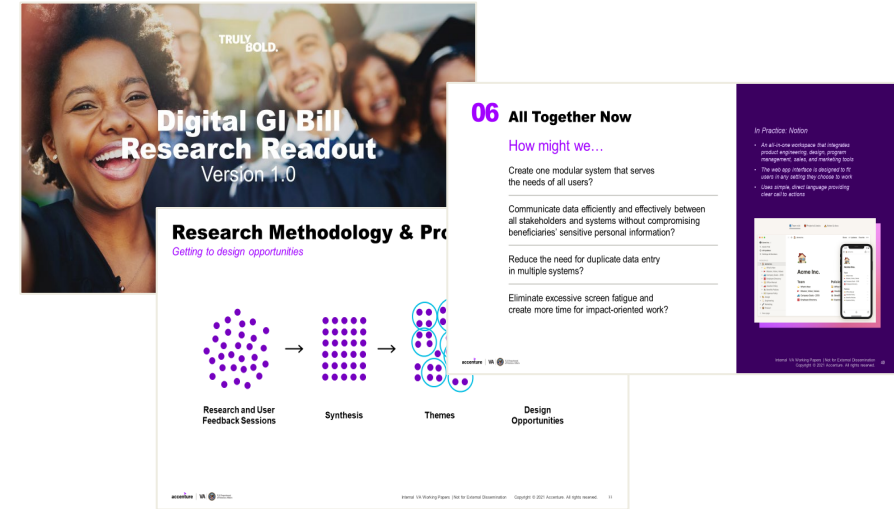


**Project initiative** to reduce the amount of manual work necessary to adjudicate Chapter 33 claims. This will allow GI Bill® students to receive their benefits faster

As of June 7, 2021, 15 out of 32  
Isakson and Roe Provisions  
have been implemented

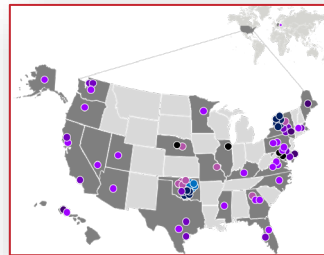
# Human Centered Design | Focus Groups

- Focus groups are underway to understand the needs of stakeholders. This month, VA has been holding sessions with:
  - GI Bill® Students
  - School Certifying Officials
  - Chief Education Liaison Officers/Supervisory Compliance and Liaison Specialists
  - Veteran Claims Examiners/Education Quality and Training Specialists
  - Education Call Center
- These sessions will be used to create Stakeholder Journey Maps to inform training and communications
- Other Human Centered Design activities include:



## RESEARCH & USER FEEDBACK SESSIONS

Conduct primary research through unstructured user feedback sessions and directed storytelling to understand the needs and pain points of participants

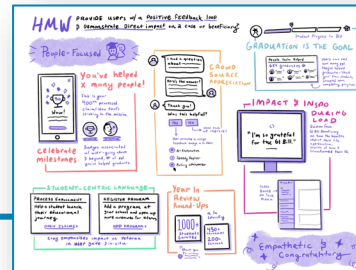


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## DESIGN CONCEPTING

Design ideas to address pain points and opportunities identified from Research & User Feedback Sessions



## USABILITY TESTING

Test and validate prototypes with different users to measure success and feasibility

3

Feedback from the HCD process is used to inform and tailor configuration updates



# Communications Accomplishments



@GIBillEducation



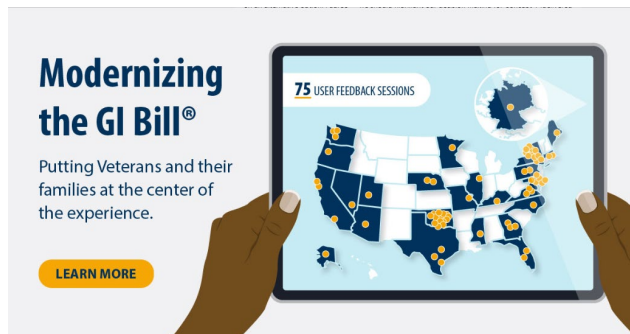
@VAVetBenefits



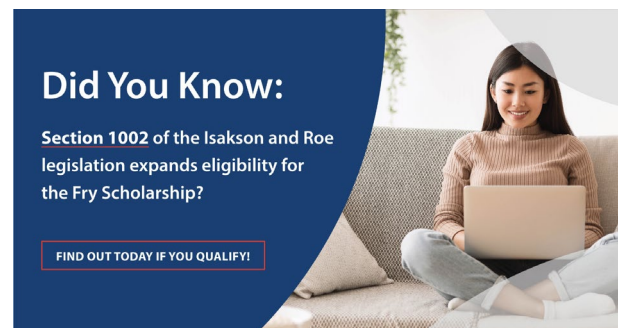
VeteransBenefits@Messages.VA.gov



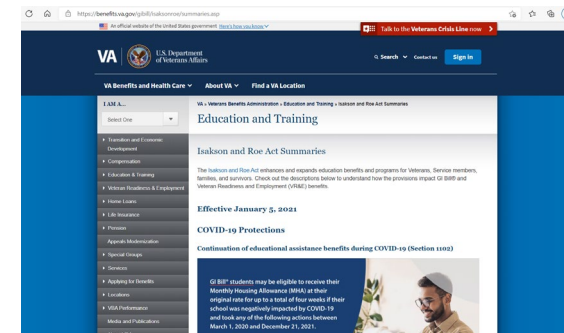
Digital GI Bill® Webpage to be launched this month



Focus Groups



Social Media “Quick Hits”



Isakson & Roe Summaries  
Webpage



Veteran Roadmap to  
Success Infographic



# SCO Training Requirements

Ellen Shaheed  
Management & Program Analyst  
National Training Team - Compliance





# FY21 SCO Annual Training Reminders

## New Training Cycle

- The new training cycle runs from October 1 thru August 31<sup>st</sup> of the following year.
  - ❑ Existing SCOs have 11 months to meet their annual training requirement.
- September 1 -30:
  - ❑ Training Window Closes for Existing SCO
  - ❑ New SCO training is continuous throughout the year

## Training Compliance

- Compliance will be determined by the number of modules completed

## Centralized Certifications

- Only designated SCOs are required complete the annual training
- SCOs listed as points of contact are not required to complete the training because they are not authorized to submit enrollment certifications to VA

# FY21 SCO Annual Training Reminders

## Training modality to complete annual training requirement:

- Asynchronous Online training located on the SCO training portal
  - ☐ Mandatory training topics specific to facility type
  - ☐ PowerPoint Presentations from virtual training events
- Synchronous SCO Approved training events (virtual or in-person instructor led) presented by or co-presented with a VA employee at:
  - ☐ Online Training Events
  - ☐ National or Regional Conferences
  - ☐ Local Workshops or
  - ☐ One-On-One Training with the ELR of jurisdiction

# FY21 SCO Annual Training Requirements

## New SCOs

- Must complete the training prior to being authorized to certify enrollments to VA
- Upon training completion must submit training certificates with the VA Form 22-8794, to the ELR of jurisdiction

Facility Type	Number of Training Modules Required
Institutions of Higher Learning (IHLs)	10
Non-College Degree (NCD) Programs	10
High Schools and Residency Programs	1
OJT/Apprenticeship Programs	1
Vocational Flight	1

# FY21 SCO Annual Training Requirements

## Existing SCOs

- Must complete one (1) mandatory self-paced online training module specific to their facility type
- Must complete three (3) elective modules using the training modality of their choice

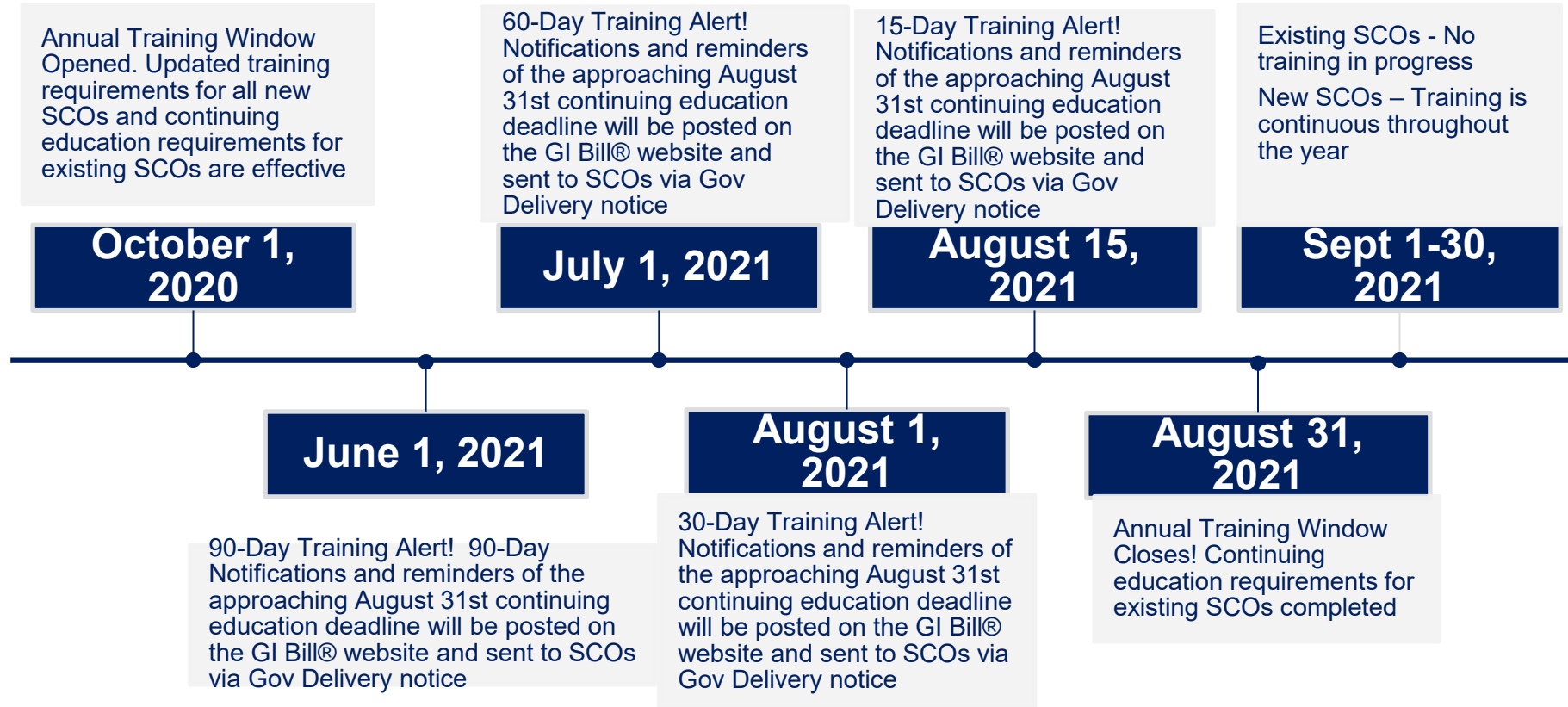
**\*Note: The three (3) electives are not required if only one (1) training module is needed to meet compliance**

Facility Type	Number of Training Modules Required
Institutions of Higher Learning (IHLs)	4
Institutions of Higher Learning (IHLs) with Flight Courses	4
Institutions of Higher Learning (IHLs) with NCDs	4
Non-College Degree (NCD) Programs	4
Vocational Flight	4
*High Schools and Residency Programs	4
*OJT/Apprenticeship Programs	1



# SCO Annual Training Requirements

Here are important training dates for School Certifying Officials (SCOs)



Please remember, if you don't complete your annual training requirements, VA has the authority to remove your access from VA-ONCE and the SAA has the authority to disapprove your school's programs.



# FY21 SCO Annual Training Reminders

## Non-Compliance

- When covered institutions fail to complete the required training by the end of the training cycle, a notification via Gov.Delivery will be sent of the delinquency informing the institution of the impending loss of their ability to certify enrollments to VA
- If covered institution remains non-compliant after the end of the training cycle the ELR will remove their ability to certify to VA and refer the institution to the SAA for review and determination on suspension or withdrawal actions in accordance with Colmery Act section 305
- It will be a function of the National Training Team – Schools to generate training compliance reports at the 90, 60, and 30-day milestones, and at the end of the training cycle to determine compliant and non-compliant institution

# How To Self Certify!

1. Click on the URL Below or Copy and Paste it in your web browser  
<https://vba-tpss.vbatraining.org/assess/trkSignIn?refid=XSCO>
2. Enter your email address and eight (8) digit facility code and click Next  
**(If you do not have a User Profile, click New User Account and follow the steps to set up your profile)**
3. Scroll down and click the Conference/Workshop/Virtual Training tab
4. Select the applicable training session from the list of topics that appears on the right side of the screen by clicking Begin
5. To enter Conference/Workshop/Virtual Training Title, click the dropdown arrow, select SCO Virtual Training Session and click Submit
6. Enter the start date and the end date
7. Enter your Facility Name, City and State (Main Campus) and click Submit
8. Certify your attendance by clicking Agree and then submit
9. Print your training certificate and keep for your records



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# FY21 SCO Annual Training Reminders

**Thank You**



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