QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

1) Question: Do the NCD schools who are only 1 year or less long have to report "Graduation" as well?

Answer: Yes. All schools are requested to report graduation or program completion, regardless of the type or length of the program.

2) Question: How should we report a Leave of Absence for a student?

Answer: For an IHL school: This does not need to be reported, unless it is during the term and affects the end date. If this is the case, submit an amended VA-1999 with the revised end date. If the student is taking a term or two off, this does not need to be reported.

For an NCD school: If the begin and end date of the leave of absence are known – you may submit an amended 1999 with the revised end date. Include a free text remark which states that the student took a leave of absence and include that date it began and the date the student resumed. If the end date of the leave of absence is not known: Submit a termination with the Reason for Termination “Withdrawal or Interruption (Non college Degree Programs Not On A Term Basis)” and enter the last date attended. When the student resumes, submit a new 1999. Include the remark that the student is resuming class after a leave of absence, and include the dates.

3) Question: Certifying officials can report a sum of $0 for tuition and fees at the beginning of the semester. However, the student is sent a letter stating that the school did not report any tuition and fees on their behalf. This often confuses the student. Can this letter be omitted or maybe only one letter sent after the tuition is sent?

Answer: The Post-9/11 GI Bill education award letter was modified in November 2012. In cases where $0 tuition and fees are reported, the letter states that the $0 submission is most likely due to precertification in order to ensure that the books & supplies stipend and the monthly housing allowance will be paid on time. It also states that, in this case, VA will issue a tuition and fees payment once the school has calculated and submitted the net charges for the enrollment.

4) Question: Is there a specific time period when the Academic Probation list is due VA?
Answer: While there is no specific time period, VA would like schools to submit the information as early as possible. Once notified, VA reaches out to the “at risk” Veteran in order to offer additional assistance and services in order to foster educational success.

5) Question: More and more schools are offering online courses. Entire degree plans are online in some cases. Will VA ever treat online courses as residence courses?

Answer: That would require new legislation. Both the statutes and regulations covering VA benefits define residence courses and distance learning (including online) courses. Benefit programs such as the Post-9/11 GI Bill mandate different payments and/or payment amounts depending upon the type of courses attended. Consequently, VA does not have the authority to treat them the same.

6) Question: If a student's tuition and fees are paid by their academic department, will VA still pay for the coursework?

Answer: Under the Post-9/11 GI Bill we cannot pay any of the tuition and fee costs if the remaining net charges are $0, but we can issue other benefit payments, such as the monthly housing allowance and the books & supplies stipend, if the Veteran is otherwise eligible. For all other GI Bill programs the issue of a Veteran having to pay their tuition and fees or not makes no difference in the GI Bill payment.

7) Question: What is the best practice for submitting class schedule changes when a student withdraw has been reported for a specific date an then at the end of the semester an instructor submits a Fail for Non Attendance or F because the student stopped attending and now the change needed for benefits is prior to the date already submitted for the withdraw. Example: Post 9/11 GI Bill Student starts with 12 credits for term 08/27/2012 thru 12/21/2012 Student withdraws from a course on 10/11/2012 which appears on an a report that is run monthly, reduction send through VA ONCE to reduce to 9 credits with decreased T&F’s as of 10/11/2012. End of term when the instructors report grades student received an F grade with LDA (Last Date of Attendance) of 09/28/2012 because student stopped attending class, instructors are not required to report this information until grading is opened for submission.

Answer: If it a complete withdrawal from all classes, send a termination with the effective date of 9-28-12. (Note – it will be terminating from 12 hours since the reduction from 12 to 9 did not occur until 10-11-12.) If it is a reduction from only a portion of the hours, send an adjustment showing the change in hours, selecting “other” as the Reason for Adjustment. You should use a free text remark in VA-ONCE explaining that there was a reduction from 12 to 9 on 9-28-12 and a reduction from 9 to 6 on 10-11-12. Include the type of grade assigned for each reduction – punitive or non-punitive.

8) Question: Repeating Classes if a person gets a D in a class will the VA ever allow the student to take the class again to obtain a better grade to help out his or her GPA
Answer: Benefits can only be paid for repeating a course if a) the course is a requirement for program completion, and b) the grade assigned isn’t considered passing for the purposes of meeting the program requirement. Benefits can’t be paid for repeating a class solely to get a better grade.

9) Question: Where can we find information on how to report academic probation to VA?


10) Question: Are veterans still able to exhaust CH 30 benefits and get an additional 12 months under CH 33? Or was that changed under PL 11-377?

Answer: Public Law 111-377 now requires separate periods of qualifying service in order to be eligible for more than one benefit program.

11) Question: We have been approved for a new program that is 14 months. We certify by the program. How does the VA pay since they will be in 2 award years? Will they pay up to the cap for the first award year, and the balance in the 2nd award year? The program cost is $20,890.00.

Answer: It depends on the type of program being offered. If the program is on a term basis (e.g. quarter or semester) then each term will be paid with respect to the cap effective on the start date of the term. If the start dates fall within more than one academic year, then benefits will be paid toward more than one cap. If the program is not on a term basis, then it will be paid based on the start date of the program and will not involve payment for multiple academic years.

12) Question: As a modular program school, why can we only submit 120 days at a time. Some of our programs are only 8 months long and when we have 200 VA students having to keep track of who you need to go back in a certify for their remaining months is quite tedious.

Answer: Schools may submit modular program certifications without a date limit for students using the Post-9/11 GI Bill. Schools may submit certifications up to 120 in advance for any other education benefit such as the Montgomery GI Bill – Active Duty.

13) Question: Our bursar often needs to ask questions about debt letters, but she is not listed as one of our SCO’s. Because she is not listed as an SCO, no one at the VA will speak to her. If the only question she has regards debt, why can’t she speak to the VA?

Answer: Schools may designate an employee in the school’s bursars or finance office as a School Certifying Official (SCO) by submitting a VA Form 22-8794. Once designated, our customer service staff will be able to verify SCO status in order to answer pertinent benefit and payment questions.
14) Question: For NCD programs, 9 months long per se, can we submit a block certification from start to end of program? Or does this have to be done mod by mod individually?

Answer: Courses which are offered on a term basis (whether called a semester, quarter, or some other name) must be reported on a term basis, but may submit multiple terms up to the entire academic year. Schools that are not on a term basis may submit an enrollment for the entire program.

15) Question: I have a VRAP student who has not paid his tuition, is there anything the VA can do to help?

Answer: No. VRAP pays a monthly stipend directly to the Veteran, similar to the Montgomery GI Bill program, and doesn’t deal directly with tuition and fee charges. Any indebtedness issues are between the student and the school.