

Education Service Training Webinar | January 9, 2014

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duty

degree

dream



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U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

Agenda

- Today we will be discussing:
 - Progress Update on Principles of Excellence
 - Comparison Tool
 - Feedback System & the Role of the IHL
 - New GI Bill Website
 - Procedural Advisory on Punitive “F” Grades
- We will then answer questions you submitted prior to this webinar.
 - You may submit questions during this webinar
 - Questions received during the webinar will be answered at a later date

Housekeeping

- Participants may submit questions and feedback during the webinar. We want this to be beneficial for you.
- Answers to questions will be provided when a copy of the webinar is uploaded to www.benefits.va.gov/gibill.
- To find the webinars on the website visit www.benefits.va.gov/gibill > click on “For School Administrators” > then select “School Resources” and then select “Education Benefit Presentations” under the Certification and Training header.
- For any **specific** or **situational** questions you may have, please be sure to contact your ELR or call the SCO Hotline .



On behalf of the Under Secretary for Benefits Ms. Allison Hickey, the Deputy Under Secretary for the Office of Economic Opportunity Mr. Curtis Coy, I welcome you to our continuing series of webinars.

We are here to discuss ways in which we can both serve Veteran students better and make the job easier for everyone.

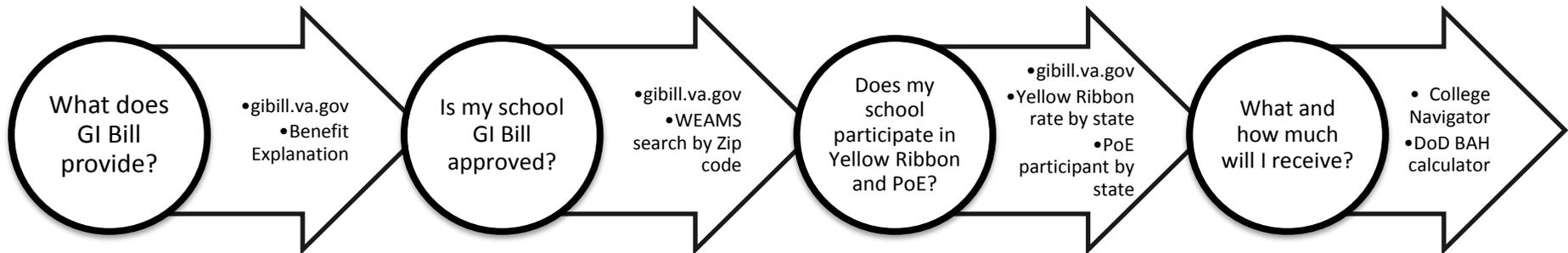


Progress Update; POE

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MODERATORS*

Current GI Bill User Experience



Total = 21 to 24 clicks + 3 agency websites

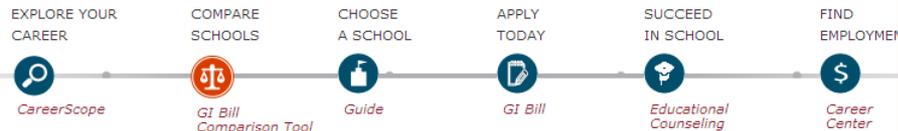
*EO 13607, Sec. 3: "The Secretary of Veterans Affairs...shall **provide...streamlined tools to compare** educational institutions using key measures of affordability and value through the Department of Veterans Affairs' eBenefits portal." PL 112 – 249, Sec. 3698: "...provide veterans and members of the Armed Forces with information regarding postsecondary education and training opportunities available to the Veteran or member."*

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Current GI Bill User Experience

Choosing a School



GI Bill Comparison Tool Beta

*Calculate
your benefits
& research
approved
programs*

Eligibility

Cumulative Post 9-11 Active Duty Service: 36+ months: 100% (includes BASIC) ⓘ

Military Status: Veteran ⓘ

School / Employer Information

GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY (WASHINGTON, DC) ⓘ

Taking all online classes? yes no

Benefit Estimator

GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY
Washington, DC
Private School

Tuition / Fees: \$19,198/year

Housing Allowance: \$2,193/month (full time)

Book Stipend: \$1,000/year

Veteran Indicators

Principles of Excellence: Yes

Yellow Ribbon: Yes

Source



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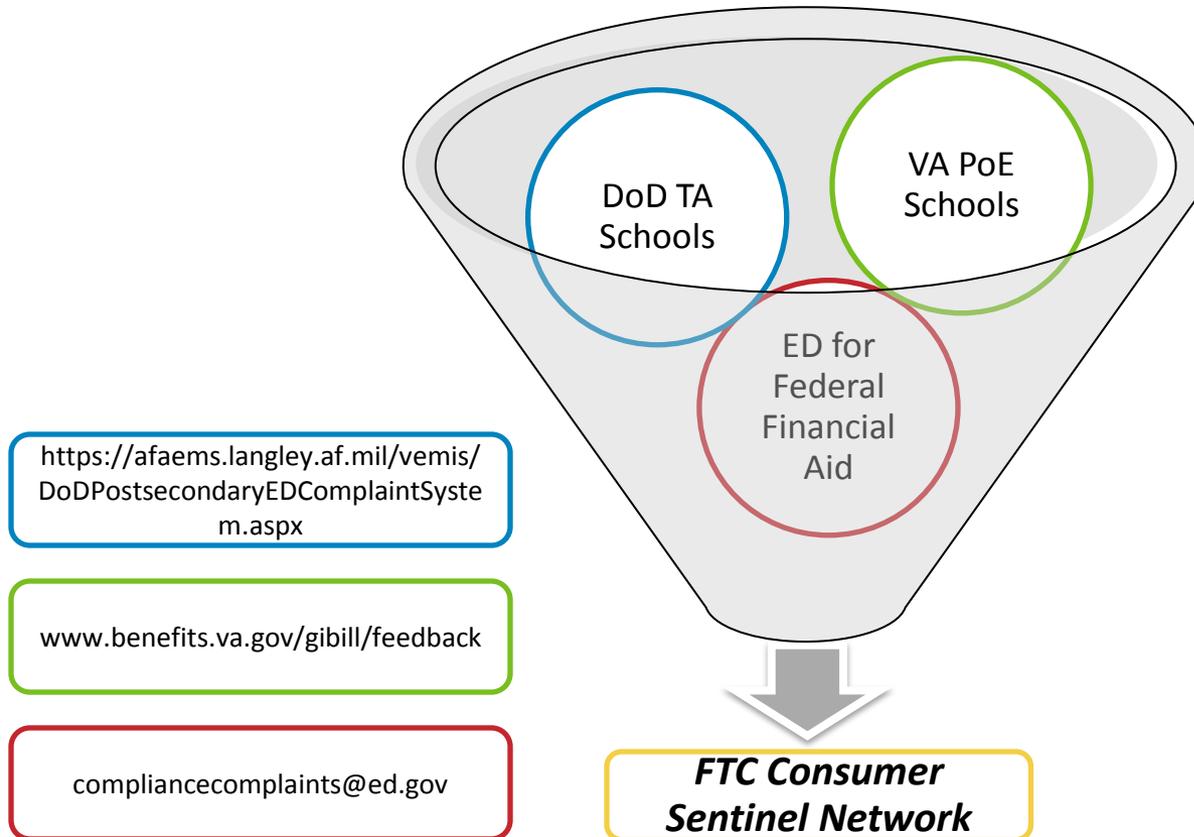
Comparison Tool Implementation

- Interim
 - www.benefits.va.gov/gibill embedded College Navigator
- First Iteration (Beta)
 - Value of GI Bill at a particular school (estimator)
 - School indicators (similar to college scorecard)
 - Veteran indicators (e.g., PoE, Yellow Ribbon, etc.)
- Future Iterations
 - Individualized GI Bill benefits (calculator)
 - Veteran Outcomes
 - Compare Multiple schools at once
 - Integrate with feedback

Beta Functionality

- **Eligibility Information**
 - Eligibility tier (post-9/11 service)
 - Active duty status
 - School/employer information
 - Identify online course enrollment
- **Veteran indicators**
 - Principles of Excellence Signatory
 - Yellow Ribbon School
 - GI Bill beneficiaries
- **Benefit Estimator**
 - Public / Private / For Profit
 - Tuition and fees
 - Housing allowance
 - Book stipend
- **School Indicators**
 - Graduation rates
 - Loan default rates
 - Median borrowing amounts

Post Secondary Education Complaint System (PECS)



PECS Complaint Lifecycle

Initiate Complaint

- Individuals may submit complaints either for themselves, on behalf of someone else or anonymously against educational institutions they feel have acted fraudulently, deceptive or misleading practices, or failed to adhere to the Principles of Excellence
- Online through GI Bill® website – www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/feedback
- GI Bill National Call Center – 1-888-442-4551

Review Complaint

- Determine if complaint is valid
- Does complaint need to be referred to another agency?
- Is complaint routine or egregious?
- Is complaint from a whistleblower or anonymous source?

Refer Complaint

- Routine - send to school for response
- Egregious - determine appropriate course of action – refer to other federal agencies, VA Office or RPO (ELR/SAA)

Process Complaint

- Response from school forwarded to complainant

Close Case

- Close case , send to FTC
- Complaint profile available to personnel for VA Risk-Based Program Review analysis

Role of the IHL

- When feedback is received for a school, VA will contact school on behalf of the student and work toward a resolution
 - The School Certifying Official (SCO) on record will be contacted
 - Institutions will have an opportunity to appoint another representative other than the SCO to handle complaints
- Complaints should be handled within 60 days from submission
- Complaints and their resolution(s) will be forwarded to the FTC Consumer Sentinel Network
 - These complaints will be accessible by over 650 federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies



New GI Bill Website

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NEW GI BILL WEBSITE

- New GI Bill Homepage <http://benefits.va.gov/gibill>
- To access the School Certifying Official pages click “For School Administrators” on the left hand side of the page. It is underneath “Education and Training”

The screenshot shows the homepage of the new GI Bill website. On the left, a dark blue sidebar contains a navigation menu. The 'Education & Training' section is expanded, and the 'For School Administrators' link is circled in red with an arrow pointing to it. The main content area is titled 'Education and Training' and features a 'CareerScope' banner with a couple and a 'GI BILL' logo. Below the banner are sections for 'Choose a School', 'Apply for Benefits', and 'Contact Us'. A 'New Announcements' section displays a 'FRAUD ALERT' dated November 22, 2013. On the right side, there are sections for 'POST 9/11 GI BILL', 'FAQS', and 'Check Your Current Post-9/11 GI Bill Enrollment Status on eBenefits'.

NEW GI BILL WEBSITE

The School Resources submenu takes you here, this is everything you should need including links to VA-ONCE, Conference announcements, a list of ELRs, and much more

The screenshot displays the VA website's navigation menu on the left, with the 'Education & Training' submenu expanded. The main content area is titled 'Education and Training' and features a 'School Resources' section. This section includes a paragraph explaining the resources for higher education faculty and staff, and a list of links under 'Certification and Training' and 'Events and Information'. A right-hand sidebar contains a 'POST 9/11 GI BILL' logo, a 'FAQS' section with a 'Submit a Question' button, an 'eBenefits' section with a 'Check Your Current Post-9/11 GI Bill Enrollment Status on eBenefits' button and the website URL, a 'VERIFY SCHOOL ATTENDANCE' section, and a 'RESOURCES' section with links to 'Benefits A-Z', 'Benefits Summary Materials', 'Fact Sheets', 'Federal Benefits for Veterans, Dependents, and Survivors', and 'Trouble Making Payments'.

Home Veteran Services Business About VA Media Room Locations Contact Us

1 AXIA...
Select One

Pre-Discharge
Compensation
Education & Training
Education & Training Home
For Students
For School Administrators
School Resources
School Training Resources
About GI Bill
Contact Us
Vocational Rehabilitation & Employment
Home Loans
Life Insurance
Pension
Special Groups
Services
Applying for Benefits
Locations
VBA Claims Transformation
VBA Performance
About VBA

VA - Veterans Benefits Administration - Education and Training - School Resources

Education and Training

School Resources

If you're a higher education faculty or staff member or college administrator in need of resources to support student Veterans, you've come to the right place. Here you can find information about training opportunities, enrollment systems, job aids, presentations, and more to help you assist student Veterans pursuing education and training with VA benefits.

Certification and Training

- VA-Once
- VA-ONCE Guidance
- Adult College Completion Toolkit to assist state administrators and local practitioners in identifying and implementing state adult education leadership priorities.
- School Officials Handbook
 - School Official Handbook Cover Letter
 - School Official Handbook (Updated September 30, 2013)
 - Online School Official Training
 - Education Benefit Presentations
 - Submit a Question or Search FAQs
 - Updated Procedures for Reporting Students on Academic Probation
 - Program Approval for Foreign Schools
 - Approval of On-the-Job Training Programs
 - Automation of Post-9/11 GI Bill and VA-Once Remarks
 - The Treasury Offset Program: How to Receive Your State and Federal Funding

Events and Information

- Conferences and Events
- Yellow Ribbon Program Information
- Letter from the Under Secretary of Benefits to Higher Education Executives for Summer 2013
- Letter from Department of Education on Commitment to use the Financial Aid Shopping Sheet
- Principles of Excellence Information and Q & A as published by the Department of Education. (This Executive Order does not affect the current VA policy or procedures for establishing or collecting overpayments created by changes in enrollment status. Schools should continue to follow existing procedures for returning monies to VA and/or students in receipt of GI Bill benefits.)

Student Veteran Assistance

- VA Campus Toolkit - Faculty, staff, and administrator resources to support student Veterans.
- Counseling Resources
- Employment Assistance
- Scholarships/Financial Aid
- Toolkit for Veteran-Friendly Institutions UPDATED
- 2013-2014 School Year: Yellow Ribbon Schools
- VRAP Q & A for Schools
- Payment and Debt Information Resources
- Find Your Education Liaison Representative

eBenefits
Your VA & DoD Benefits Online.
Register Now
www.ebenefits.va.gov

CONNECT WITH BENEFITS
Facebook Twitter YouTube Instagram LinkedIn

Affordable Care Act
WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

POST 9/11 GI BILL
FAQS
Submit a Question

eBenefits
Check Your Current Post-9/11 GI Bill Enrollment Status on eBenefits
www.ebenefits.va.gov

VERIFY SCHOOL ATTENDANCE
Keep receiving education and training benefits from VA by verifying your attendance.

RESOURCES
Benefits A-Z
Benefits Summary Materials
Fact Sheets
Federal Benefits for Veterans, Dependents, and Survivors
Trouble Making Payments

NEW GI BILL WEBSITE

The second submenu “School Training Resources” will take you here, this is similar to the other page, but geared more towards providing resources that will assist you in your job. These pages will be undergoing refinement in the next few months.

The screenshot displays the VA website's "Education and Training" page, specifically the "School Training & Information Resources" section. The page features a navigation menu on the left with "Education & Training" selected, and a sub-menu where "School Training Resources" is highlighted. The main content area includes a list of resources such as "Submit forms with VA-Once", "School Officials Handbook", and "Access VA-Once". A sidebar on the right contains sections for "FAQs", "eBenefits" (with a "Check Your Current Post-9/11 GI Bill Enrollment Status" button), "VERIFY SCHOOL ATTENDANCE", and "RESOURCES". The footer of the page includes a "Register Now" button and the URL "www.ebenefits.va.gov".



Procedural Advisory on Punitive “F” Grades

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Procedural Advisory on Punitive “F” Grades

- **Background:** VA’s regulations covering school reporting requirements are contained in section 21.4203 of title 38, Code of Federal Regulations. Subsection (d), in particular, states that “When a veteran or eligible person interrupts or terminates his or her training for any reason, including unsatisfactory conduct or progress, or when he or she changes the number of hours of credit or attendance, this fact must be reported to VA by the school in a form specified by the Secretary [emphasis added].” However, section 21.4253 of the same part only requires accredited schools to maintain attendance records if the school has an established attendance policy.

Procedural Advisory on Punitive “F” Grades

- Question: If a student completes a period of enrollment with a failing punitive grade (i.e. an F) assigned, does the school need to report the last date of attendance during that enrollment period?
- Answer: No. The last date of attendance during a period of enrollment does not need to be reported if a student completes the enrollment period with a punitive grade and does not violate the school’s standards of conduct, progress, or attendance during that term.



Questions & Answers

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Questions

1) Q: Is the \$19,198.31 applied separately to private IHL and NCD training?

Example. A veteran enrolls in a program at a private IHL during the 2013 fall semester, 8/19/13 to 12/13/13. The school certifies \$20,000.00 for his tuition and fees, and receives a payment for \$19,198.31. In the spring of 2014, the veteran decides to change his program, and enrolls in a private NCD institution. The new school certifies \$20,000.00 for his tuition and fees. Will they too receive a payment of \$19,198.31?

A: Yes, the annual tuition and fees cap would be applied separately to private IHL and NCD training. The annual cap is applied separately per school/program type to which an annual cap applies (i.e., private IHL, technical/NCD, vocational, flight training). Therefore, in the example, the individual would receive the additional \$19,198.31 for the new enrollment at the private NCD institution.

2) Q: Does anyone have a first come first served Yellow Ribbon selection process that is well received by your vet population?

A: The first-come first-served basis for awarding Yellow Ribbon is done in a manner proscribed by the institution. We are not currently aware of a best practice for this.

Questions (cont.)

3) Q: Are same sex partners allowed to receive Transfer Eligibility of Chap 33 benefits?

A: Transfer of Eligibility is determined by the Department of Defense. VA does not make determinations on who is eligible for this benefit.

DOD is recognizing same sex marriages as long as a valid marriage certificate is provided. As a result, those persons in same sex marriages may be eligible to transfer benefits to their spouse.

4) Q: For Reservist or National Guards can they use T/A and Post 911 at the same time? What if they are eligible for 1607/1606, can they also use Post 911?

A: Reservists and National Guardsmen can receive Post 9/11 benefits for the same course, but only for the remaining unpaid portion of the course after Tuition Assistance has been applied. In the SCO handbook (pages 85-86) we direct schools to only certify the remaining Tuition and Fees after the tuition assistance has been deducted.

In accordance with section 3322 of title 38, United States Code, individuals eligible for 1606 or 1607 and the Post-9/11 GI Bill are prohibited from using these benefits simultaneously. Individuals must choose under which program they would like to receive benefits.

Questions (cont.)

5) Q: Do you know if there is a new Tuition Cap for the 2014-2015 Academic Year (last year's cap was \$19,198.31)?

A: A new 2014-2015 annual cap is currently under review by VA officials and will be published in the Federal Register when approved.

6) Q: We are a private institution and award 'Merit Scholarships' ranging from \$10K - \$20K per year to our students (pending academic achievement). We also participate in VA's Yellow Ribbon program which requires our college to match up to \$10K for students who qualify for this education benefit. **Can our college consider our Merit Scholarship as part (or all) of the College's matching contribution for the Yellow Ribbon program?**

A: Schools can utilize institutional scholarships to count towards their contribution to the Yellow Ribbon program. It is important that they check the appropriate box on the Yellow Ribbon form to clarify that is how they award Yellow Ribbon funds. It is paragraph six of the agreement (shown below). A combination of scholarship and direct grant would be permissible as well, but "other" would be checked in that case with a note explaining both would be utilized.

6. The IHL agrees to provide contributions for each Yellow Ribbon Program participant using the following:

Direct Grant Scholarship Other

Questions (cont.)

7) Q: What is the timeframe to report the F grades after grades have posted?

A: As soon as can be accommodated by the SCO

8) Q: What happens if the student doesn't complete the course?

A: Generally speaking, if the student does not complete a course, then the SCO should report the reduction or withdrawal to VA as soon as possible. Please contact your ELR for additional guidance.

9) Q: What happens if the student earns an "F" three times for the same course?

A: VA can only pay benefits for punitive grades. Therefore, if non-punitive grades are earned and VA has already issued a payment for the course, the school must report the non-punitive grades to VA. Check your school's Satisfactory Academic Policy and consult your ELR for additional guidance.

10) Q: Can a student that is failing sap still be processed for the term for VA payment?

A: No. The law requires that GI Bill benefits be discontinued if a student ceases to make satisfactory progress towards the completion of his/her training objective. Benefits can be resumed if the student re-enrolls in the same institution and the same program. In other cases, VA cannot pay benefits unless we have determined that the issue which led to the unsatisfactory academic progress has been removed.

Questions (cont.)

11) Q: What if the student completed the term before the term ended, for instance the term ended on 12/24/13, but the student completed the class on 12/18/13?

A: No action is needed from the SCO unless the he or she learns that the term was reported incorrectly.

12) Q: If a student attends the entire class but gets an F then we do not need to do anything.

A: Correct, as long as the “F” is considered punitive by the school. Otherwise, the school would need to report that non punitive grades were received for the course. Please verify with your ELR for further guidance.

13) Q: If a student takes a Leave of Absence how should that be entered in VA-ONCE when they leave and when they return.

A: Report the student ‘s LDA and annotate the leave of absence, then submit a new 1999 when the student returns.

14) Q: What if a student stops attendance due to depression?

A: Terminate the enrollment certification and utilize the “Remarks” section of VA-Once to report the reason for termination.

Questions (cont.)

15) Q: I have instructors tell students not to return because they will not pass their class and they give them an F during grading and put a last date of attendance should I report those F's

A: You do not need to report the “F” unless it is non-punitive. However, you should report the last date of attendance or the effective date of withdrawal. Please contact your ELR for guidance on more specific cases.

16) Q: Could you please address steps for "WF" grades (Withdrew Failing)

A: If the school regards a “Withdrew Failing” as a Non-punitive grade, this would need to be reported to VA. Please contact your ELR for guidance on more specific cases.

17) Q: We were told at an online school, if the student does not complete the final or complete an assignment in the last week, and receives an F grade, we have to report the LDA. Is this correct? Some students receive an F grade due to non-attendance. What do we do in this case?

A: Please review to the SCO handbook at http://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/docs/job_aids/SCO_Handbook_v3.pdf (p. 73) and contact your ELR for additional guidance.

18) Q: Going back to failed grade, I have been trained that if a student fails all classes in a term you submit a termination. If the student fails one class, you do nothing. Was the speaker saying that we do nothing in either case.

A: : If a student completes the term with all “F” and/or non-punitive grades, then determine and report the actual last date of attendance for each course and, if required, terminate the student for unsatisfactory progress. If the grades are all failing, but punitive, then no action is required from the school.

Questions (cont.)

19) Q: I would like more information about 3rd attempts for a class after 3 punitive grades.

A: Courses that are successfully completed cannot be certified for VA purposes when they are repeated. If a program requires a higher grade than achieved, that course may be repeated. Please see the “Repeating Courses” section of the SCO handbook or contact your ELR for information specific to your situation.

20) Q: Whom can we contact if our ELR does not respond to questions/concerns?

A: Utilize the Submit a question feature on the GI Bill website, call the SCO Hotline or contact your local SAA.

21) Q: Is there a limit to the amount of F's the VA will cover for the same course?

A: Review your school’s policy regarding Satisfactory Academic Progress and consult your ELR for additional guidance.

22) Q: I just want to get clarification from the question earlier I was unable to hear part of the answer. If a student switches from a private IHL to a private NCD or vice versa, does the cap start over?

A: Yes.

23) Q: Is there a way for a Veteran to request less than 1 full month of CH33 be restored to them from a designated dependent. This may be necessary so that the Veteran can qualify to receive the CH31 P911 subsistence allowance rate

A: We cannot restore entitlement once the payment has been issued for the Post-9/11 GI Bill.

Questions (cont.)

24) Q: Can an individual use and receive CH35 benefits simultaneously (i.e from 2 parents). And if yes, how would they be certified in VA ONCE? And the same question - can they use CH33 simultaneously from two parents?

A: No. Individuals may only use one education benefit program at a time.

25) Q: If a student fails only one course - do nothing?

A: : It depends on whether the failing grade is punitive or non-punitive. Non-punitive grades should be reported to VA. Review your school policy regarding Satisfactory Academic Progress. See answer question #26 below for additional information.

26) Q: I think some more clarification is needed on the punitive F grades?

A: See the SCO handbook about punitive grades at http://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/docs/job_aids/SCO_Handbook_v3.pdf (p. 73)

Questions (cont.)

28) Q: Chap 35 can be used consecutively?

A: Advise the student to apply directly to VA and we will make a formal determination.

29) Q: If a veteran gets a debt from the VA for school can they go back to school under VA and how?

A: Yes, however the student has to repay any existing GI Bill debt from prior enrollments before he/she can receive a GI Bill payment. These amounts are deducted from the monthly housing allowance and books and supplies stipend.