

Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment

- 1. Are there any Marketing materials available to help advertise Voc Rehab? Many veterans do not know this is even an option.**

Approved marketing materials are available online at <https://www.benefits.va.gov/BENEFITS/factsheets.asp#BM2>

- 2. Some VR counselors ask us to complete paper certifications, and others prefer to use VA Once. One counselor refused to process anything on paper, will only use VA Once, and now won't respond to anything we submit through VA Once. We cannot get them on the phone, either. What should we do? Who should we contact?**

Please attempt to resolve that with the local VR&E Officer. If that does not work, contact our VR&E District Liaisons at 202-461-9600.

- 3. Is there any knowledge as to if/when the VSOC program will begin accepting new applicants?**

We keep a list of potential schools for VSOC expansion but those are contingent on funding approval for additional staff each year.

- 4. How does the vet apply for a memorandum rating for CH 31?**

To apply for a Memorandum rating, they need to fill out VA Form 28-1900 and VA Form 28-0588.

- 5. What is a memorandum rating based on? Time served?**

The Memorandum Rating is determined by reviewing medical and service records that may potentially qualify for a VA rating.

- 6. What was the percentage rating again, please?**

A veteran who has a VA rating must have a disability rating of 20% to qualify for services unless they have a 10% rating and a serious employment handicap.

- 7. Are there exceptions to the 48-month entitlement of Ch. 31, if the veteran has already used both Ch. 30 and Ch. 33?**

There are always exceptions, for example if the individual has a serious employability handicap, also if they went on Active Duty after having used benefits. The counselor on the local level determines the exception, if applicable.

- 8. Please give an example of a "serious employment handicap".**

Primary service connected disability then other factors that may impact their employability. They could be non- service connected disability, criminal record, excessive drug use, etc. It could be a lot of other determining factors.

9. It seems some counselors allow their students to "round-out" during their final term while others say that is not permissible. What is the official Voc Rehab rule on "rounding out?"

I am not sure what you mean by "Rounding out." As long as the participant has entitlement remaining at the start of a school term they are allowed to start and finish that term.

10. Is there a Ch. 31 Handbook for SCOs that details the regulations specific to Ch. 31 especially when the regs differ from other GI Bill benefits, e.g.Ch. 33, and differ from the general SCO Handbook?

No, there is not a CH. 31 Handbook for SCOs. We are working to add VR&E language to the EDU Handbook.

11. What if the student received a degree but still has months left and wants to get a Master's.?

The Ch. 31 program is based on getting the skills or degree REQUIRED for entry level employment so if a Master's degree is not required it generally is not supported.

Exceptions are determined by the assigned VR&E Counselor.

12. Is Chapter 31 Benefits 12yrs from last rating?

No. Eligibility Termination Date is 12 years from initial VA rating or Military separation date, whichever is later.

13. Can a veteran whom is eligible for VR&E seek compensation for previous terms? For example, a VRC has provided a 1905 that has the effective dates of 08/2018 - 12/2018, but the veteran paid out of pocket for school 01/2018 - 05/2018. Can an SCO do a backdate certification for the previous term?

In some cases, yes, if a retroactive induction is approved by the VR&E Counselor for training that would have been approved had the participant been found entitled to benefits earlier.

14. Does the Self-Employment track also help with a business seeking to expand?

No. The Self Employment track is designed for participants to start up, not expand their business.

15. Are there any (fiscal) benefits associated with counseling services under Chapter 36, or is it only counseling?

Chapter 36 is counseling only; no financial benefits are provided.

16. Is Vocational Rehab a VA benefit or is it Department of Defense?

Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Service is a VA program.

17. Can students with vocational rehab benefits available or with remaining eligibility use those benefits for advanced degrees or are they limited to associate/bachelor's programs?

Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Service provides Ch. 31 services needed to obtain entry level requirements into a career field. Those requirements will vary by the field.

18. Where do I find the policy for invoicing and payment, etc., that was sent to the 'field' in 2015?

You can ask for a copy from your local VA Regional Office or call VR&E Service Central Office at 202-461-9600 for that information.

19. Is there a resource to obtain this information for all locations?

The VR&E Website has a lot of this information.

20. Where can an SCO find the regional office phone number for VR&E?

We are working on adding this to the SCO Handbook. Until then, you can reach out to us at VR&E Service at 202-461-9600 for the number to your local VR&E office.

21. Can you please confirm if SCOs are able to certify in VAONCE whatever is authorized on the 1905? CH 31 students are "special" in the sense that they don't necessarily have to be completing requirements for a VA approved program of study, do they?

This question would require additional clarification to answer. While the Ch. 31 program is unique in its requirements, students are only authorized courses required for their program unless pre-approved by their VR&E Counselor.

22. How do we find out who our local VR&E manager is? Is there a way to get a comprehensive list of VR&E staff/counselors per state?

We are working on adding this to the SCO Handbook. Until then, you can reach out to us at VR&E Service at 202-461-9600 for the number to your local VR&E office.

23. I thought all VR&E had to be entered into VA-ONCE.

This is generally true. If there are questions regarding this process that cannot be answered by your local VR&E office, please contact VR&E Service Central Office at 202-461-9600.

24. Can we receive more Ch. 31 information pertaining to the burden on SCOs for certifying?

We have been told to certify through VA Once as we would for other chapters, but I would like that confirmed because of some of the complications of certifying. Please request through your Education Service Central Office staff and VR&E Service would be happy to provide additional information in collaboration with them.

25. What if a Veteran qualifies for Chapter 33, while also using Chapter 31? Will benefits used under CH31 also use months from CH33?

No, policy has determined Ch. 31 services do not deduct from Ch. 33 benefits.

26. Some of my Ch. 31s have told me that they are being informed by their Voc Rehab counselor that there are "too many" Master's in Social Work submissions. Is there a cap on what type/how many degrees can be pursued?

No. Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Service provides Ch. 31 services needed to obtain entry level requirements into a career field. Those requirements will vary by the field.

27. Is Voc Rehab determined by state or Federally funded?

Federal Funding.

28. How does VR&E consider CH 33 TOE benefits when determining the client's available months of entitlement?

Generally, CH 33 benefits used or transferred are deducted from CH 31 benefits. However, please contact VR&E Service for a more comprehensive explanation of this process from our Policy Team.

29. How do you get approved for a VR&E VSOC Counselor at an institution?

We keep a list of potential schools for VSOC expansion but those are contingent on funding approval for additional staff each year. Schools who express interest are noted on this list.

30. Mr. Hart, can a student go from one program to another? Example, school, then starting their own business?

Yes, if approved by their local VR&E Counselor. This is approved on a case by case basis contingent on the needs of the individual participant.

31. Does Chapter 31 cover online remedial courses?

I am unsure if I understand the question. Please send this to us with more detail to the VR&E mailbox at: VAVBAWAS/CO/VR&E VRE.VBACO@va.gov

32. If I can recall there was a quota or specific number of students that are being serviced at a school to get a VSOC resource person on campus. Can you tell me what that number of students is?

Size of the school's student population using VA education benefits is one criteria, but we don't have a set number.

33. Is an invoice required for Chapter 31 Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (VR&E) to pay tuition/fees for a Veteran's school program?

Yes. An itemized invoice is needed for each Veteran who is utilizing VR&E benefits. If VA Form 28-1905, Authorization and Certification of Entrance or Reentrance into Rehabilitation and Certification of Status, is received for a Veteran authorizing a particular semester or training period, the school needs to both certify the Veteran's enrollment and provide a separate itemized invoice. All items authorized on the 28-1905 form, including tuition/fees (T&F) and books/supplies (B&S), should be itemized on the invoice provided to VR&E. For schools who own or have business agreements with campus bookstores, the school needs to develop an internal protocol for the school VA certifying official to notify the school bookstore that B&S have been authorized and for obtaining itemized receipts for the B&S purchased.

The enrollment certification allows VR&E to provide the appropriate subsistence allowance for the Veteran and the invoice allows for T&F and B&S, if authorized, to be paid. It is not sufficient to indicate the amount of T&F or B&S charged in a VA- Once certification as an itemized invoice needs to breakdown the exact charges and detail other financial aid the Veteran is receiving.

34. Is it a requirement to separate remedial/deficiency (R/D) hours from standard credit hours when completing a VR&E enrollment certification for a Veteran's term?

While it is not a requirement, it is recommended that R/D hours be separated from standard credit hours. This allows for the VR&E counselor to be informed of exactly what a Veteran is pursuing.

35. Is VA-Once used to certify the enrollment for Veterans utilizing VR&E benefits?

Yes. All schools should certify Veterans' enrollments in the VA-Once system for the VR&E program. For schools who are not able to utilize this system for some reason, certifying a Veteran's enrollment on VA Form 28-1905 is also acceptable. Please keep in mind, however, that the VA-Once enrollment certification is used to provide the appropriate subsistence allowance payments and a separate itemized invoice is needed for tuition/fees or books/supplies to be paid.