

**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF  
VETERANS AFFAIRS**

# **School Certifying Official**



# **Handbook**

**Revision 5.6.5  
January 31, 2020**

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## PREFACE

This Handbook is written for VA Certifying Officials and anyone at a school involved with certification of beneficiaries of VA education benefits. This Handbook is a collaboration of the three Regional Processing Offices and Education Service and is intended to be the official source of information for VA Certifying Officials.

Certification instructions in this handbook are based on the use of VA-ONCE and include general information about the program. VA-ONCE is a VA Internet based application for certifying students. Detailed information about VA-ONCE is available at [http://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/school\\_training\\_resources.asp](http://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/school_training_resources.asp)

VA-ONCE electronic certification is required for all programs of education *except on-the-job training, apprenticeship training, and correspondence training.*

There are a number of additional resources that are also available on the [School Certifying Officials](#) webpage, including [Online Training For New Certifying Officials](#). The web-based training course is **required** for new VA Certifying Officials and is also useful as refresher training for existing VA Certifying Officials.

This Handbook is hyperlinked. You may click on any hyperlink or Table of Contents entry and you will go to that topic. Click on an Internet address or a cross-reference and you'll go to that page on the Internet or in the Handbook.

The Handbook can be downloaded as a PDF from this hyperlink [SCO Handbook](#).

The Handbook's revision date is on the bottom of the cover page and there is a chronological list of [revisions](#). Periodically check the Handbook on the Internet. If there's an updated version, download and replace the copy you have.

If you have questions about VA policies and procedures or about completing VA Forms, contact your Education Liaison Representative (ELR). You can locate your ELR on the GI Bill® Website via the following hyperlink [Education Liaison Representatives](#).

If you have questions about VA Education benefits, please visit our website at [http://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/post911\\_qibill.asp](http://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/post911_qibill.asp) or call the number listed below.

If you have a specific inquiry about a student, please call the number listed below or use the ["Ask a Question"](#) feature at the GI Bill website.

**TOLL FREE EDUCATION NUMBER FOR THE EDUCATION CALL CENTER (THIS CALL CENTER HANDLES ALL EDUCATION CALLS)**

**1-888-442-4551**

**Call between 7 a.m. - 6 p.m. Central Time, Monday-Friday.**

<b>DATE</b>	<b>REVISIONS</b>
8/1/18	Revision Sequence Changed to 5.5 and Date Updated
8/1/18	Website for DoD Transferability Updated
8/1/18	School Certifying Official (SCO) Training Requirement Added
8/1/18	Priority Enrollment, Public Law (PL) 115-48, Section 303
8/1/18	Important Points under VA-ONCE Updated
8/1/18	Reporting Fees to Institution Updated, PL 115-48, Section 304
8/1/18	Applications for Benefits Updated
8/1/18	Licensing and Certification Test – chapters 30, 32, 33, 35, 1606, and 1607 Updated
8/1/18	Entitlement Charge Section Updated and Changed to “Entitlement Charges for Licensing and Certification Tests and National Test”
8/1/18	Comparison of Education Programs Updated
8/1/18	Education Rate chapter 33 Updated
8/1/18	Eligible Individuals under “Post-9/11 GI Bill, chapter 33, Title 38 U.S. Code”
8/1/18	Period of Eligibility Updated
8/1/18	Length of Service Percentage Updated
8/1/18	Private and Foreign Schools under Tuition and Fees Updated
8/1/18	Monthly Housing Allowance (MHA) Updated
8/1/18	Rate of Pursuit and Housing Allowance Updated
8/1/18	Yellow Ribbon Program Updated
8/1/18	Licensing and Certification Test Year and Rate Updated
8/1/18	National Tests Year and Rate Updated
8/1/18	Vocational Flight Year and Rate Updated
8/1/18	Transfer of Entitlement Updated
8/1/18	Fry Scholarship Updated
8/1/18	Entitlement Charges Updated
8/1/18	Certifying Credit (chapter 30, 32, 35, 1606, and 1607) Updated
8/1/18	Yellow Ribbon Program Updated
3/15/19	Certifying Credit - Graduate
3/15/19	Non-Standard Terms -Rate of Pursuit (chapter 33 Undergraduate or NCD Measured in Credit Hours)
6/19/19	Certifying Credit – Graduate (Interim Guidance)
8/14/19	Distance Only Learning and Housing Allowance
8/14/19	Resident Training, Distance Learning, and Independent Study
8/14/19	Difference between Independent Study and Distance Learning
8/14/19	When to Certify Courses As “In-Residence” On VA Enrollment Certifications
8/14/19	When to Certify Courses As “Distance” On VA Enrollment Certifications
8/30/19	Removed Index. See Table of Contents
9/27/19	Enrollment Certification Issues
1/31/20	Sections 501/107 of the Colmery Act
1/31/20	Updated License and Certification Entitlement Charges
1/31/20	Veterans Benefits and Transition Act of 2018, Section 103
1/31/20	Updates on Hybrid Courses
1/31/20	Removed Academic Probation Reporting
1/31/20	Added recommended SCO ratio

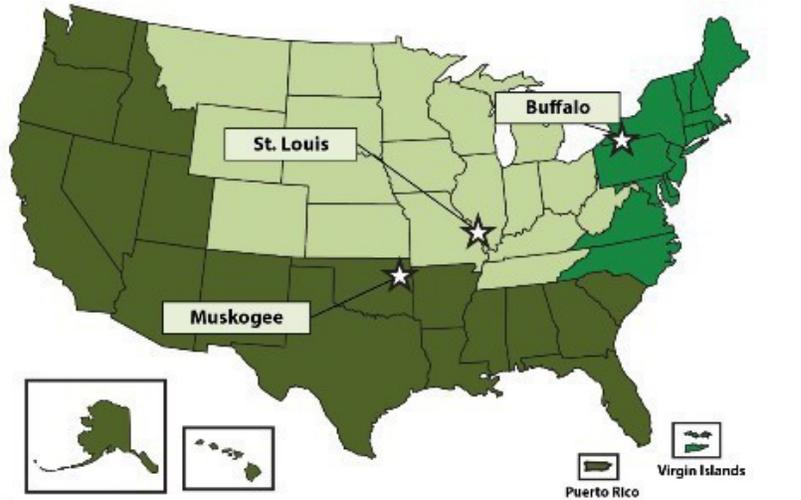
1/31/20	Reporting Hybrid Courses Updated
1/31/20	Section 305 of the Colmery Act; Annual SCO Training Requirements

# **CONTACT INFORMATION**

## PROCESSING JURISDICTIONS

Map 1 represents Claims Processing Jurisdictions. All mail related to claims processing should be sent to the appropriate Regional Processing Office as shown on the [Claims Processing Map](#).

**MAP 1**



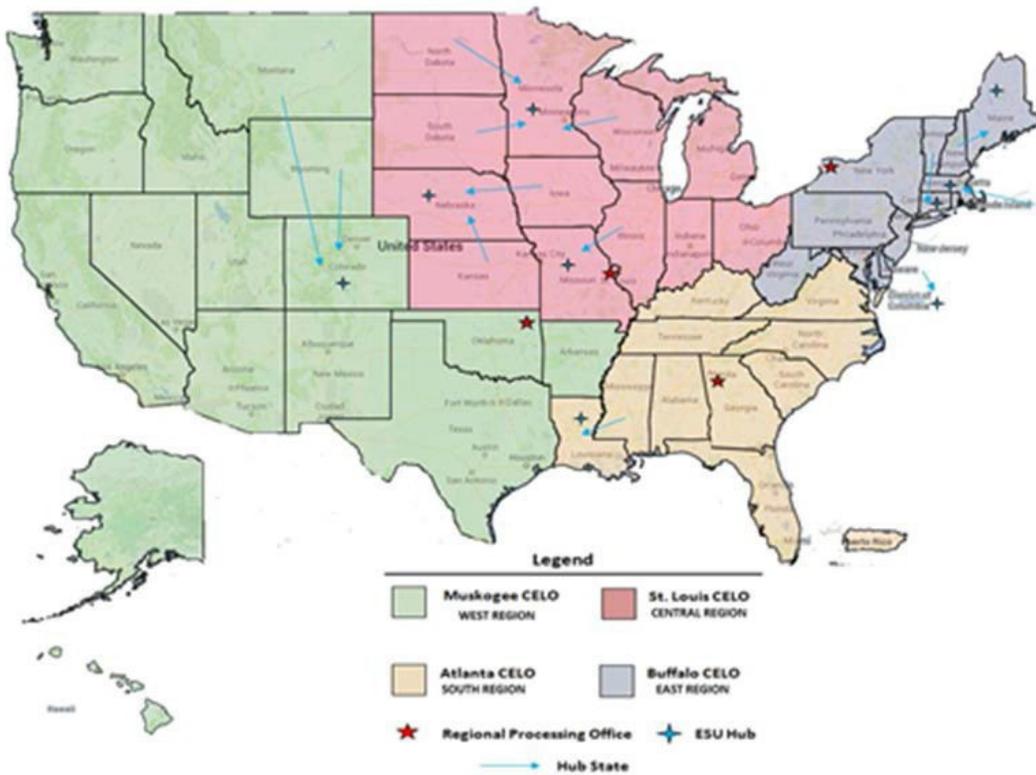
RPO	Address	Fax Number	Jurisdiction																								
<b>Buffalo</b>	VA Regional Office PO Box 4616 Buffalo, NY 14240-4616	716-551-3241	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td>Connecticut</td> <td>Delaware</td> <td>District of Columbia</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Maine</td> <td>Maryland</td> <td>Massachusetts</td> </tr> <tr> <td>New Hampshire</td> <td>New Jersey</td> <td>New York</td> </tr> <tr> <td>North Carolina</td> <td>Pennsylvania</td> <td>Rhode Island</td> </tr> <tr> <td>US Virgin Islands</td> <td>Vermont</td> <td>Virginia</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="3" style="text-align: center;">Foreign Schools</td> </tr> </table>	Connecticut	Delaware	District of Columbia	Maine	Maryland	Massachusetts	New Hampshire	New Jersey	New York	North Carolina	Pennsylvania	Rhode Island	US Virgin Islands	Vermont	Virginia	Foreign Schools								
Connecticut	Delaware	District of Columbia																									
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North Carolina	Pennsylvania	Rhode Island																									
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<b>Muskogee</b>	VA Regional Office PO Box 8888 Muskogee, OK 74402-8888	918-781-7863	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td>Alabama</td> <td>Alaska</td> <td>Arizona</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Arkansas</td> <td>California</td> <td>Florida</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Georgia</td> <td>Hawaii</td> <td>Idaho</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Louisiana</td> <td>Mississippi</td> <td>New Mexico</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Nevada</td> <td>Oklahoma</td> <td>Oregon</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Puerto Rico</td> <td>South Carolina</td> <td>Texas</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Utah</td> <td>Washington</td> <td>Trust Territories</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="3" style="text-align: center;">Philippines</td> </tr> </table>	Alabama	Alaska	Arizona	Arkansas	California	Florida	Georgia	Hawaii	Idaho	Louisiana	Mississippi	New Mexico	Nevada	Oklahoma	Oregon	Puerto Rico	South Carolina	Texas	Utah	Washington	Trust Territories	Philippines		
Alabama	Alaska	Arizona																									
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Puerto Rico	South Carolina	Texas																									
Utah	Washington	Trust Territories																									
Philippines																											
<b>St Louis</b>	Department of Veterans Affairs 9700 Page Avenue Suite 101 –Education St. Louis, MO 63132-1502	314-253-4131	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td>Colorado</td> <td>Illinois</td> <td>Indiana</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Iowa</td> <td>Kansas</td> <td>Kentucky</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Michigan</td> <td>Minnesota</td> <td>Missouri</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Montana</td> <td>Nebraska</td> <td>North Dakota</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Ohio</td> <td>South Dakota</td> <td>Tennessee</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Wisconsin</td> <td>West Virginia</td> <td>Wyoming</td> </tr> </table>	Colorado	Illinois	Indiana	Iowa	Kansas	Kentucky	Michigan	Minnesota	Missouri	Montana	Nebraska	North Dakota	Ohio	South Dakota	Tennessee	Wisconsin	West Virginia	Wyoming						
Colorado	Illinois	Indiana																									
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Ohio	South Dakota	Tennessee																									
Wisconsin	West Virginia	Wyoming																									

## CHIEF EDUCATION LIAISON OFFICER (CELO)

Map 2 represents your ELR and ECSS representatives. Refer to Map 2 to determine the CELO that has jurisdiction over approvals and compliance. See our [Education Liaison Representatives](#) listing for contact information.

**MAP 2**

Central Region	Eastern Region
Department of Veterans Affairs 9700 Page Avenue Suite 101 – Compliance & Liaison St. Louis, MO 63132-1502	VA Regional Office 130 S. Elmwood Avenue Buffalo, NY 14202



Western Region	Southern Region
VA Regional Office 125 S. Main Street Muskogee, OK 74401	VA Regional Office 1700 Clairmont Road Decatur, GA 30033

## IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS

Direct Deposit Enrollment (students)	877-838-2778
Education Benefits	888-442-4551
Foreign Schools Call Center	918-781-5678
Monthly Verification of Enrollment and IVR (Interactive Voice Response System)	877-823-2378
Other VA Benefits (Local Regional Office)	800-827-1000
VA Debt Management Center	800-827-0648

### SCHOOL CERTIFYING OFFICIAL HOTLINE

School Certifying Officials now have a direct line of communication to contact VA for official inquiries on student issues. This line is staffed by Education Case Managers who have the expertise to answer and resolve most SCO questions. The hours of operation are 7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. (CST), Monday through Friday. The toll-free number can be obtained from your [Education Liaison Representative](#). It is very important this hotline number remain confidential and **not be** shared with students.

School Officials must provide the school's facility code and will be validated as a certifying official through the Web Enabled Approval Management System (WEAMS). Routine questions should continue to go through the regular toll-free number.

### EDUCATION CALL CENTER

The toll-free number for the Education Call Center is **1-888-442-4551**. The Call Center is in Muskogee, OK, and Education Case Managers are available 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. (CST), Monday through Friday. The system's automated functions can provide information about benefits, applications, etc., and are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Individual Veterans can access their own record to obtain date of last benefit payment, check amounts, etc. Please utilize the automated system as much as possible.

#### **Call the toll-free line for:**

- Hardship cases
- Status of claim questions
- Questions on individual student payment issues

#### **Call your [Education Liaison Representative](#) for:**

- Approval issues
- Certification questions
- VA-ONCE technical questions

## INTERNET RESOURCES

Web Site	Address	Description
Accreditation	<a href="http://www.ed.gov/admins/finaid/accred/index.html?src=qc">www.ed.gov/admins/finaid/accred/index.html?src=qc</a>	Department of Education - Financial Aid for Postsecondary Students
American Council on Education Military Guide	<a href="http://www.acenet.edu/news-room/Pages/Military-Guide-Online.aspx">http://www.acenet.edu/news-room/Pages/Military-Guide-Online.aspx</a>	Guide to evaluation of educational experiences in the Armed Services
DOD Transferability	<a href="https://milconnect.dmdc.osd.mil/milconnect/">https://milconnect.dmdc.osd.mil/milconnect/</a>	DoD information and instructions for transferability of education benefits to dependents
E-Benefits	<a href="http://www.ebenefits.va.gov/">http://www.ebenefits.va.gov/</a>	eBenefits is a one-stop shop for online benefits-related info
GI Bill Comparison Tool	<a href="https://www.vets.gov/gi-bill-comparison-tool">https://www.vets.gov/gi-bill-comparison-tool</a>	A tool for students to aid in the selection of schools and training programs.
GI Bill Training and Training Resources	<a href="http://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/school_training_resources.asp">http://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/school_training_resources.asp</a>	A valuable resource to help you increase your knowledge, skills, and abilities
Joint Services Transcript (JST)	<a href="https://jst.doded.mil/smart/signIn.do">https://jst.doded.mil/smart/signIn.do</a>	Get a transcript translating army formal military education and job experience into civilian language; also includes college equivalent credit recommendations
Search Accredited Schools	<a href="http://ope.ed.gov/accreditation/Search.aspx">http://ope.ed.gov/accreditation/Search.aspx</a>	Search for accredited schools published by the Department of Education
VA Debt Management Center (DMC)	<a href="http://www.va.gov/debtman">http://www.va.gov/debtman</a>	DMC has collection jurisdiction for all education benefit debts. DMC e-mail address: <a href="mailto:dmc.ops@va.gov">dmc.ops@va.gov</a>
VA Forms	<a href="http://www.va.gov/vaforms">http://www.va.gov/vaforms</a>	Veterans Affairs Forms
VA Home	<a href="http://www.va.gov/">http://www.va.gov/</a>	Official VA website
VA-ONCE Launch	<a href="https://vaonce.vba.va.gov/vaonce_student/default.asp">https://vaonce.vba.va.gov/vaonce_student/default.asp</a>	Official VA-ONCE internet based application for submitting VAF 22-1999 and VAF 22-1995
VA-ONCE Resources	<a href="http://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/school_training_resources.asp">http://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/school_training_resources.asp</a>	Everything you want to know about electronic enrollment certification
Web Automated Verification of Enrollment (WAVE)	<a href="https://www.gibill.va.gov/wave">https://www.gibill.va.gov/wave</a>	This site allows students to submit their monthly verification of enrollment over the Internet

## INTERNET INQUIRIES

What does the Internet Inquiry System do?

The Internet Inquiry System allows you to find answers to Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) without calling the toll-free number. The system can be accessed from our [GI Bill homepage](#) in the right navigation column under FAQs.

By clicking on FAQs, you have access to a database of frequently searched knowledge pertaining to GI Bill benefits. Use keywords to retrieve detailed information pertaining to specific subject matter. If the answer is not easily accessed through search or if an individual has a detailed question pertaining to their benefits, users can send an inquiry to VA using the [Submit a Question](#) tab. See below.

A user can click on the “Submit A Question” button to submit either a general question or a detailed question pertaining to their personal benefits. If an account has not been previously created, it will need to be done so now.

### **How to register log into in the VA inquiry system**

From our [GI Bill® homepage](#) click on “Submit A Question” in the right navigation column in the FAQ box. Enter your username and password if you have an existing account.

To create an account, select “Sign Up” after the words “Not registered yet?” Provide the information needed requested and click the “Create Account” button.

NOTE: Providing state of residence or state of school will expedite your inquiry.

### **How do I send an Inquiry?**

Once you have registered, from the [GI BILL® homepage](#) click on “Submit A Question” in the right navigation column in the FAQ box and complete the page by providing the following information:

- **Subject** – Put “School Official” – Do not put any personally identifiable information (either about the school or student) into this field
- **Question** -- Provide the name of your school, your VA Facility Code, and your inquiry
- **Category** – Select “School Officials ONLY” from the drop-down menu
- **State of Residence** -- Provide the state you live in
- **State of School** -- Provide the state where your school is located
- **SSN/Claim#** -- Provide the beneficiary’s Social Security Number or VA Claim Number.

Once you hit “Continue” the system will alert you that your question hasn’t been submitted yet and will supply you with a list of answers that may help you immediately. Review the list to see if the answer to your question is there and if not, select the “Finish Submitting Question” selection. At this time, you also have the choice to edit your question.

After submitting your question, you will be given a reference number for follow up, keep this number in a safe place in case you need it later. You should receive a reply to your inquiry in 3 to 5 working days.

**IMPORTANT:** Responses to your inquiries will be submitted through the system. You will be notified by e-mail that you have received a response to your inquiry. You must go to the [GI BILL](#)

[homepage](#) and click on the “Submit a Question” button and login with your existing account to review the response.

**Who do I contact if I have questions?**

If you have any questions about the inquiry system please call VA toll free at 1-888-442-4551 or contact your [Education Liaison Representative](#).

# **SCHOOL AND STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES**

## SCHOOL CERTIFYING OFFICIAL (SCO) TRAINING REQUIREMENT

Section 305 (*Training for School Certifying Officials*) of the Harry W. Colmery Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2017, also known as the “Forever GI Bill,” requires the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), in consultation with State Approving Agencies (SAAs), to develop and administer training for School Certifying Officials (SCOs) at “covered educational institutions.” This mandate is effective August 1, 2018 and will be required annually to remain compliant with this law.

A “*covered educational institution*” is an educational institution that has enrolled 20 or more individuals during an academic year, using VA educational assistance under Title 38, United States Code. This includes educational institutions with branch locations that have a combined total of 20 or more individuals.

**New SCOs:** The first phase of training will be available online by August 1, 2018, and only applies to new SCOs. A new SCO is an individual who has been designated, on or after August 1, 2018, to certify enrollment to VA. The name(s) of the new SCO(s) will be identified using VA Form 22-8794, “Designation of Certifying Official(s),” submitted to the Education Liaison Representative (ELR) of jurisdiction.

**Effective August 1, 2018:** New SCOs are required to complete 10 virtual training modules within 14-days of their designation as a SCO. During this initial phase, new SCOs may certify enrollments to VA while completing the training requirement. The ELR of jurisdiction will complete the initial registration process and provide new SCOs with a link to the online training portal. The SCO will then be required to self-register and complete a general questionnaire before accessing the training modules. New SCOs will receive automated email reminders to complete the training requirement before the 14- day window deadline.

**NOTE:** Effective August 1, 2019, new SCOs will be required to complete the training requirement **before** certifying enrollments to VA.

**Existing SCOs:** The second phase of the training will not be available until August 1, 2019 and will impact all SCOs continuing employment on or after August 1, 2019. More information will be provided as Phase 2 training logistics become available.

**Consequence of Non-Compliance:** VA will send reminders and notifications to SCOs throughout the training window to ensure SCOs are aware of the deadline. If a SCO is non-compliant after the deadline has passed, an automated email will be sent to inform them, and their ELR, of the impending loss of their ability to certify. VA may disapprove any course of education offered by the educational institution if it fails to ensure SCO(s) satisfies the training requirements.

More information about the SCO training requirement is available on the [SCO webpage](#).

## SCHOOL RESPONSIBILITIES

The following information provides the basic responsibilities of an educational institution and VA School Certifying Official (SCO). Each school will designate at least one VA Certifying Official to carry out reporting requirements. VA recommends one (1) SCO full-time employee (FTE) for every 200 GI Bill students and/or dependents enrolled in the educational institution. This number should be adjusted as appropriate by the educational institution when the SCO's duties are expanded beyond certifying GI Bill claimants' enrollments. The designation will be made on VA Form 22-8794 (Designation of School Certifying Official(s)). It is important that a new VA Form 22-8794 be submitted anytime there is a change in certifying officials. Each VA Form 22-8794 submitted must include all names, since the new form supersedes the old one. The form may be obtained from your [ELR](#).

### **Responsibilities for Reporting**

Keep VA informed of the enrollment status of Veterans and other eligible persons. Use basic forms to keep VA informed, such as:

- Enrollment Certification (VA Form 22-1999) to report required enrollment information
- Notice of Change in Student Status (VA Form 22-1999b) to report changes to enrollment information
- Monitor the subjects pursued by a student to certify to VA only those subjects that apply to the student's program
- Monitor student's grades to ensure satisfactory progress is being made.
- Report when a student was terminated due to unsatisfactory progress
- Monitor student's conduct and report when student is suspended or dismissed

***NOTE: SCOs should submit initial enrollment information within 30 days of the beginning of the term. If possible, VA recommends pre-certifying a student's enrollment before the beginning of the term in order to prevent gaps in benefit payments. SCOs must also report changes in enrollment within 30 days of any change.***

Keep up-to-date on current VA rules and benefits:

- Provide e-mail address to VA Education Liaison Representative (ELR)
- Read and maintain VA bulletins provided by your ELR
- Attend VA training opportunities

Maintain records of VA students and make all records available for inspection:

- Retain a file of VA papers submitted and records of academic progress, program pursuit, etc.
- Maintain records for at least three years following the student's last date of attendance
- Ensure that records are kept in a safe place and that the privacy of VA students is protected

A school's file for a VA student should contain:

- Copies of all VA paperwork
- The school's transcript, grade reports, drop slips, registration slips (for those courses dropped during drop/add), tuition and fee charges, transcripts from previous schools with evaluations of same, student's school application, records of disciplinary action, program outline, a curriculum guide or graduation evaluation form, and any other pertinent forms

Additional responsibilities required of a Yellow Ribbon school:

- Certify in accordance with the school's Yellow Ribbon agreement
- Maintain these additional records
- Track the number of students enrolled under Yellow Ribbon
- Track the annual amount of tuition and fees
- Develop and document a process for the first come-first served enrollment of students into the Yellow Ribbon Program

These are additional activities that schools are encouraged to carry out, but are not required by VA:

- Assist students in applying for education benefits
- Maintain copies of appropriate application forms
- When requested, help Veterans and dependents fill out and send in applications
- If the student cannot resolve payment problems, assist through VA channels designated for school officials
- Disseminate and/or post information on VA education benefits, programs, and contact points
- Ensure that VA students are fully aware of their responsibilities to the school

Apprise supervisors of any internal problems that may affect service to VA students, such as:

- Failure of records office to provide information on a student's grades, grade changes, or academic problems
- Failure of instructors to provide information on attendance/attendance problems
- Failure of other offices to provide information on new programs, or changes in current programs
- Failure of mail distribution center to forward appropriate mail

### **Priority Enrollment**

VA is required to publicly report if a school offers priority enrollment to student Veterans/service members. Priority enrollment is defined as, "*a student being able to register for classes earlier than other students*". However, this does not mean a student Veteran or service member can register for classes before ALL other groups of students.

**Example:** All seniors can register for classes, then all student Veterans and/or service members, then all juniors, then all sophomores, then all freshmen. Because student Veterans and/or service members can apply before other groups, they are eligible for priority enrollment.

Schools with priority enrollment policies for Veterans and/or service members will need to provide Approvals, Compliance and Liaison (AC&L) with a printout of their course catalog or catalog addenda detailing their school's priority enrollment system.

VA added a "Priority Enrollment" checkbox in Web Enabled Approval Management System (WEAMS) under the "Issue and Remarks" tab of "Program Specific Org Info" to identify priority enrollment schools. Schools offering priority enrollment will also be displayed on the [GI Bill Comparison Tool](#). The publishing date is to be determined.

Each ELR will perform this task, therefore, schools should contact their ELR directly.

**NOTE:** Priority enrollment is **NOT** a condition of approval, and failure to report the existence of a priority enrollment policy is **NOT** grounds for suspension or withdrawal of program approval. However, schools should be encouraged to provide this information to ensure Veterans and service members can make informed decisions regarding how to use their GI Bill benefits.

## **Veterans Benefits and Transition Act of 2018, Section 103 of Public Law 115-407**

**Effective August 1, 2019**, section 103 of P. L. 115-407, requires the State Approving Agency (SAA), or the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), when acting as the SAA, to disapprove programs of education that do not permit individuals using benefits under either chapter 31, or 33, title 38, United States Code, to attend or participate in courses while awaiting payment from the VA.

Educational institutions must have a policy in place that will allow an individual to attend or participate in a program of education if the individual provides the school with a "Certificate of Eligibility (COE)." VA interprets "certificate of eligibility" to be any documentation provided by VA that serves as verification of an individual's eligibility to benefits under chapter 31 or chapter 33.

SAA's are not required to immediately disapprove non-compliant schools on August 1, 2019. Instead, if an SAA determines that a school is not in compliance, it will take appropriate corrective action, including suspension where warranted under 38 CFR 21.4259. This will give the school 60 days to come into compliance or receive a waiver. If the school does not come into compliance or receive a waiver within 60 days, the SAA should withdraw approval under 38 U.S.C. 3679. At the time an SAA determines a school is not in compliance due to reasons outside of the school's direct control (for example, if action is required by the state legislature), the SAA may also recommend that the school request a waiver from the VA through the SAA.

**Waiver Process:** If a school is unable to comply with the requirements of 38 U.S.C. § 3679(e) for reasons outside of the school's direct control (for example, if action is required by the state legislature) the school may submit a waiver request through the SAA of jurisdiction. Waiver requests must contain the following:

- Reasons the school has not been able to come into compliance
  - Steps school has taken to come into compliance
  - What steps are still required
  - What has prevented the school from completing these steps thus far
  - What will prevent the school from completing these steps within the 60 days afforded under 38 CFR § 21.4259
- Target date for the schools to come into compliance
  - Detailed plan (including timeline)

Click [here](#) for questions and answers on how to implement the Transition Act of 2018.

### **VA-ONCE**

[VA-ONCE](#) is VA's Web-based system for certifying the enrollment and changes in enrollment of students. VA-ONCE is the preferred method of enrollment submission to VA. Access is accomplished through the Internet and is available to all schools approved for Veterans' training. VA-ONCE functions best with Microsoft Internet Explorer, IE 11.

### **Important Points:**

- VA-ONCE usage is mandatory for all enrollments and changes (except for On-the-Job Training, Apprenticeship Training, and Correspondence Training).
- To expedite claims processing, please minimize the use of free-text remarks when certifying student enrollments and changes in VA-ONCE
- VA objective and course codes are required in VA-ONCE in order to certify enrollments. These codes can be found in [SCO Handbook, Appendix A](#)

VA has made available to education institutions, information about the amount of educational assistance (Entitlement) to which a Veteran or beneficiary is entitled under chapters 30, 32, and 1606.

However, Veterans or beneficiaries may elect to Opt-Out of providing entitlement information to educational institutions. If a Veteran or beneficiary has decided to “Opt-Out”, VA would not provide personally identifiable information or information about the individual’s education benefits with any education institution.

Viewing a student’s entitlement information will only be available through VA-ONCE under the “VA Data” tab. If a Veteran or beneficiary has opted not to share entitlement information with a school, the following message will be displayed: “Student has opted out”, and no data will be displayed. To access entitlement information, a SCO must do the following:

1. Log into VA-ONCE
2. Enter the individual student’s record in VA-ONCE
3. Select the VA Data tab at the top of the VA-ONCE page for viewing entitlement information.

**NOTE:** Schools that do not use VA-ONCE will not have access to a student’s entitlement information.

### **Signing Up for VA-ONCE**

The first step to participate in VA-ONCE is to complete and print the [Memorandum of Understanding \(MOU\)](#).

Once it has been completed and signed, mail or fax it to your ELR (not to the RPO). When we receive your completed MOU, we will activate your school in the system, enter the names of the certifying officials listed on the MOU and provide a logon name and password to those individuals. The instructions for using VA-ONCE can be located on the GIBILL Website under [VA-ONCE quick reference user guide](#). If you need further assistance, please contact your ELR.

Important items to note:

- Be sure to complete all items on the MOU and make sure an official of the school who has the authority to execute contracts on behalf of the institution signs it. The MOU only needs to be submitted once
- Be sure that each person listed as a certifying official on the MOU has already been designated as such to our office on VA Form 22-8794, Designation of Certifying Officials, and be sure to show their e-mail addresses. It is important that a new VA Form 22-8974 be submitted any time that there is a change in certifying officials. Be sure to include all names as a new VA Form 22-8974 supersedes the old one

### **Reporting Fees to Institutions**

At the beginning of each calendar year, a listing of students who were receiving assistance during the previous calendar year is printed by VA for each institution. Schools are provided a reporting fee based on the number of students who were certified to VA at least once during the year and who received VA educational benefits. SCOs should compare the student list and report any students not included to the ELR of jurisdiction. In the event of errors, you should provide a list of students and the enrollment dates to the ELR.

Yearly rates may fluctuate based on legislation. Please contact your ELR for exact rates per year.

[Public Law 111-377](#) (Section 204) clarified that effective October 1, 2011, “any reporting fee paid to an educational institution or joint apprenticeship training committee after the date of the

enactment of the Post-9/11 Veterans Educational Assistance Improvements Act of 2011, shall be utilized by such institution or committee solely for the making of certifications required under this chapter or chapter 31, 34, or 35 of this title or for otherwise supporting programs for Veterans". When using your reporting fees, ensure that they are being used for the purposes identified in Public Law 111-377.

The Harry W. Colmery Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2017, [Public Law 115-48](#) (Section 304), as amended by the Department of Veterans Affairs Expiring Authorities Act of 2017 ([Public Law 115-62](#), §411), provided the following change, effective August 1, 2018, to Reporting Fees:

- If a school receives Reporting Fees for 100 or more eligible students, then the Reporting Fees paid to the school cannot be used for, or merged with, the school's general fund.

How your school uses its Reporting Fees will be reviewed during Compliance Surveys conducted at your school.

### **85/15 Rule**

The Code of Federal Regulations ([38 CFR 21.4201](#)) states VA shall not approve the enrollment of any VA-eligible person, not already enrolled, in any course for any period during which more than 85 percent of the students enrolled in the course are having all or part of their tuition, fees, or other charges paid to or for them by an Educational Institution or VA. VA asks that you provide this information within 30 days of our request. See [Appendix B - Statement of Assurance of Compliance with 85/15 Enrollment Ratios](#).

## **STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **Applications for Benefits**

VA students can submit applications online at <https://www.va.gov/education/how-to-apply/> If students don't have access to apply online, they can call 1-888-442-4551 and ask that an application be mailed to them.

All VA students must file an application when they first start school before they can receive benefits. Students who have never received VA benefits must file an original application (Veterans or service members applying for chapters 30, 32, 33, and 1606 use VA Form [22-1990](#); dependents applying for chapter 35 or chapter 33 (Fry Scholarship) use VA Form [22-5490](#); students requesting Transferred Post-9/11 GI Bill (chapter 33) use VA-Form [22-1990e](#)). Students who have received VA benefits before, must file a "Request for Change of Program or Place of Training" (Veterans, service members and dependents using Transferred Post-9/11 GI Bill (chapter 33) use VA Form [22-1995](#) and dependents using chapter 35 or chapter 33 (Fry Scholarship) use VA Form [22-5495](#)).

### **Change of Address and Direct Deposit**

Address and direct deposit information must be kept current. chapter 30 and 1606 students can use the [WAVE](#) system to update address and financial institution information. Links are on the "Main Menu" available after they log onto WAVE.

In order for a student to either start or change direct deposit information, the student should have his or her account information handy. The following information is needed to set up direct deposit

and can be found on checks and bank statements:

- Account number
- 9-digit bank routing number
- Type of account (checking or savings)

If a student has chosen direct deposit, the student still needs to keep his or her address current because all other correspondence including award letters are mailed to the student's address.

Students who cannot add their account information through WAVE should contact call 1-877-838-2778 to begin and change direct deposit.

### **eBenefits**

Students are strongly encouraged to register and utilize [eBenefits](#) to assist them in the following:

- Obtaining up to date information on their educational entitlement
- Updating their Direct Deposit and personal contact information
- Downloading VA letters and personal documents
- Viewing the current status of their payments (both education and disability)

Students can register for either a Basic or Premium account but must be enrolled in the Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System (DEERS) to obtain either account type.

### **Student Verification of Enrollment**

Students receiving chapter 30 and 1606 must verify their enrollment monthly by Web Automated Verification of Enrollment (WAVE) or by Interactive Voice Response (IVR). The monthly verification of enrollment has not been added for chapter 33 and chapter 35, with one exception. chapter 35 Non-College Degree (NCD) students are mailed a monthly verification form (VA Form 22- 8979).

The preferred verification method is WAVE, which includes features not in IVR. When students are awarded benefits, the award letter they receive describes WAVE and IVR. The earliest date students can verify their enrollment is the last calendar day of each month.

WAVE allows students to verify their enrollment on the Internet. WAVE is on the Education Service website at <https://www.gibill.va.gov/wave/index.do>.

Students must be currently enrolled in an approved educational program and must have a current benefit award to use WAVE. The WAVE system permits students to perform a multitude of functions. For instance, students may:

- Verify that enrollment has not changed
- Report a change in enrollment
- Change mailing address
- Initiate or change direct deposit information
- View the enrollment period and monthly benefit amount
- View the remaining entitlement
- Sign up for a monthly e-mail reminder

IVR allows students to “phone in” (1-877-823-2378) their monthly verification if there are no changes to the enrollment during the previous month. If there were changes in the enrollment the student must contact the VA Certifying Official to submit a change in status and the payment may be delayed until the reduction is processed.

**Licensing and Certification Tests - chapters 30, 32, 33, 35, 1606 (38 CFR 21.4268)** VA can reimburse the cost of approved licensing and certification tests. Students are reimbursed the cost of the test, not to exceed the approved cost of the test or \$2,000. Benefits can be paid for tests that are not passed, for tests retaken if not passed, and for tests required to be recertified or to renew a license.

Students must be eligible for benefits to receive test reimbursement. They must have remaining entitlement and their delimiting date must not have passed.

Information about test fee reimbursement can be found on our website at [http://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/licensing\\_certification.asp](http://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/licensing_certification.asp). The page includes a [Search for Tests](#) link where you can find all approved licensing and certification tests.

VA students can apply for test fee reimbursement by completing and submitting a VA Form [22-0803](#), "Application for Reimbursement of Licensing or Certification Test Fees".

Attach a copy of the test results to the application. If test results are not available, attach a copy of the license or certification and a payment receipt. Test fee reimbursement can be paid for each test for which reimbursement is claimed and the required documents are submitted.

### **National Tests - chapters 30, 33, 35, 1606**

VA students can be reimbursed all required (mandatory) fees charged for national admission tests and national tests for college credit. Currently the only approved tests are:

- SAT (Scholastic Assessment Test)
- LSAT (Law School Admission Test)
- GRE (Graduate Record Exam)
- GMAT (Graduate Management Admission Test)
- AP (Advanced Placement Exam)
- CLEP (College-Level Examination Program)
- ACT (American College Testing Program)
- DAT (Dental Admissions Test)
- MAT (Miller Analogies Test)
- MCAT (Medical College Admissions Test)
- OAT (Optometry Admissions Testing)
- PCAT (Pharmacy College Admissions Test)
- TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language)
- DSST (DANTES Subject Standardized Tests)
- ECE (Excelsior College Examinations)
- TECEP (Thomas Edison College Examination Program)
- PLA Prior Learning Assessment Testing through Learning

Complete information and directions for applying for reimbursement is available at [http://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/national\\_testing.asp](http://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/national_testing.asp).

A list of all approved national tests and approved charges can be found through the following link: <http://inquiry.vba.va.gov/weamspub/buildSearchNE.do>.

# EDUCATION BENEFIT PROGRAMS

General and detailed descriptions for each program are online at [http://www.benefits.va.gov/GIBILL/comparison\\_chart.asp](http://www.benefits.va.gov/GIBILL/comparison_chart.asp).

NOTE: Students who may be eligible for education benefits should submit an application. Students should not delay submission while waiting on additional information or supporting documentation (DD214, NOBE, etc.). Even if someone appears ineligible, VA will review his or her application and officially deny or grant benefits.

A Comprehensive comparison can be found on the GI Bill® website at the following link: [http://www.benefits.va.gov/GIBILL/comparison\\_chart.asp](http://www.benefits.va.gov/GIBILL/comparison_chart.asp).

## EDUCATION RATES CHAPTER 33

[PL 115-48](#), The Harry W. Colmery Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2017, amends Title 38, United States Code, to make improvements in the laws administered by VA. Among those improvements, Section 107 and 501 significantly alters the administration of payment of a monthly housing stipend under the Post-9/11 GI Bill.

[PL 115-62](#), Section 501, provided technical corrections to the Harry W. Colmery Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2017, is also applicable.

For training beginning on or after August 1, 2018, the Monthly Housing Allowance (MHA) payment amounts are *based* on the Department of Defense's Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH) rates for an "E-5 with dependents" for **the zip code of the campus or training location where student has a majority of classes**.

**NOTE:** For training beginning prior to August 1, 2018, the Monthly Housing Allowance (MHA) payment amounts are *based* on the Department of Defense's Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH) rates for an "E-5 with dependents" for **the zip code of the school**.

BAH rates can be found at the following website: [www.defensetravel.dod.mil/perdiem/bah.html](http://www.defensetravel.dod.mil/perdiem/bah.html).

Monthly Housing Allowance amounts are prorated based on a student's benefit level and may be further reduced based on the rate of pursuit (RoP) rounded to nearest multiple of 10. Benefits are only payable when the RoP is more than 50%, and the student is not on active duty.

## CHAPTERS 30, 33, 1606, and 35

The most current education pay rates for each benefit can be found on the GI Bill® Website.

[http://www.benefits.va.gov/GIBILL/resources/benefits\\_resources/rate\\_tables.asp](http://www.benefits.va.gov/GIBILL/resources/benefits_resources/rate_tables.asp)

## POST-9/11 GI BILL CHAPTER 33, TITLE 38 U.S. CODE

For additional information about chapter 33, visit the GI BILL website:

[http://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/post911\\_gibill.asp](http://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/post911_gibill.asp)

### **Eligible Individuals (38 CFR 21.9520)**

Generally, an individual who served a minimum of 90 days on active duty after September 10, 2001, will be eligible for educational assistance under the Post-9/11 GI Bill. Active duty served as a member of the Armed Forces or as a result of a call or order to active duty from a reserve component under section 688, 12301(a), 12301(d), 12303(g), 12302, or 12304 of Title 10 is qualifying active duty service.

Effective October 1, 2011, VA began paying benefits to members of the Army National Guard and Air National Guard for qualifying service under title 32. The following service may qualify:

- Full time service in the National Guard for the purpose of organizing, administering, recruiting, instructing or training
- Activations in support of a national emergency under section 502(f) of title 32

Benefits are payable retroactively to August 1, 2009, the effective date of the Post-9/11 GI Bill® program with qualifying section 502(f) of title 32 service.

Effective December 31, 2011, VA began paying benefits to members of the United States Coast Guard Reserve for service under section 712 of title 14. Any service performed on or after December 31, 2011, shall be creditable.

Effective August 1, 2018, VA began paying benefits to members of the Armed Forces called or ordered to active duty from a reserve component under Section 12301(h), 12304A, and 12304B of Title 10. Benefits **CANNOT** be paid retroactively with this service.

Effective August 1, 2018, VA began paying benefits at the 100% benefit level to individuals awarded the Purple Heart for service after September 10, 2001. Benefits **CANNOT** be paid retroactively with this service.

The following periods of active duty service are excluded:

- ROTC under 10 U.S.C. 2107(b)
- Service academy contract period
- Service terminated due to defective enlistment/agreement
- Service used for loan repayment

### **Period of Eligibility (38 CFR 21.9530)**

Generally, if release from active duty was before January 1, 2013, individual's eligibility to use chapter 33 benefits expires 15-years from the date of the last discharge or release from active duty of at least 90 consecutive days. The Harry W. Colmery Veterans Assistance Act of 2017 eliminates the 15-year limitation to use the Post-9/11 GI Bill benefit in the case of Veterans who meet the following requirements:

- Last discharge or release from active duty of at least 90 consecutive days was on or after January 1, 2013
- Honorably discharged from the Armed Forces
- Released from the Armed Forces with service characterized as honorable and placed on the retired list, temporary disability retired list, or transferred to the Fleet Reserve or the Fleet Marine Corps Reserve
- Released from the Armed Forces with a service characterized as honorable for further service in a reserve component

Children of deceased service members who become entitled to the Post-9/11 GI Bill on or after January 1, 2013 and all spouses using Fry Scholarship no longer have a time limitation to use their benefits.

### **chapter 33 Entitlement (38 CFR 21.9550)**

Individuals eligible under chapter 33 are generally entitled to 36 months of educational assistance. Individuals are generally limited to a maximum of 48 months of entitlement when using benefits under two or more programs.

Individuals eligible for benefits under the national call to service program and chapter 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, or 36 of title 38; or chapter 107, 1606, 1607, or section 903 of title 10; or the hostage relief act of 1980; or the omnibus diplomatic security and antiterrorism act of 1986 may not receive assistance under two or more such programs concurrently.

### **Election**

Students eligible for chapter 30 or 1606, on August 1, 2009, and on their election date, must relinquish a benefit to receive chapter 33. Students eligible for more than one benefit only have to relinquish one benefit to receive chapter 33.

chapter 33 elections are irrevocable. However:

- Election requests can be **withdrawn** if the Regional Processing Office receives the withdrawal request before either a certificate of eligibility is issued, or a payment processed
- Election requests can be **changed** if the Regional Processing Office receives the change request before either a certificate of eligibility is issued, or a payment processed. The student must request the change in writing

### **Length of Service Percentage (38 CFR 21.9640)**

Eligible students receive a percentage of the chapter 33 benefit for tuition and fees, monthly housing allowance, and book stipend based on their length of service. The percentage is determined by the student's aggregate active duty service after September 10, 2001. All creditable active duty and qualifying call-up service are combined to determine the aggregate service.

Length of service percentages are described in the following table:

<b>Service Requirements (Aggregate Active Duty after 9/10/01</b>	<b>% of Maximum Benefit Payable</b>
At least 36 months	100
At least 30 continuous days on active duty (Must be discharged due to a service-connected disability)	100
Awarded the Purple Heart	100
At least 30 months, but less than 36 months <sup>(1)</sup>	90
At least 24 months, but less than 30 months <sup>(1)</sup>	80 <sup>(3)</sup>
At least 18 months, but less than 24 months <sup>(2)</sup>	70 <sup>(3)</sup>
At least 12 months, but less than 18 months <sup>(2)</sup>	60
At least 06 months, but less than 12 months <sup>(2)</sup>	50
At least 90 days, but less than 06 months <sup>(2)</sup>	40

<sup>(1)</sup> Includes entry level and skill training.

<sup>(2)</sup> Excludes entry level and skill training.

<sup>(3)</sup> If the service requirements are met at both the 80 and 70 percentage level, the maximum percentage of 70 must be applied to amounts payable.

### **Education and Training Available Under chapter 33**

**Effective August 1, 2009.** All programs had to be offered by a degree-granting institution of higher learning (IHL) and approved for chapter 30. Approved programs included undergraduate degrees, graduate degrees, professional degrees, and non-degree programs approved at the IHL. Additionally, tutorial assistance and reimbursement for one licensing or certification test were available under chapter 33.

Students who elected chapter 33 and relinquished chapter 30, 1606, or 1607 received benefits for approved programs not offered by an IHL (non-degree programs, flight training, correspondence courses, apprenticeship/on-the-job training, preparatory courses, and national tests). These students were paid for these programs as if they were still receiving benefits under the relinquished benefit, but their entitlement was charged under chapter 33.

**Effective October 1, 2011.** VA began paying Post-9/11 GI Bill® benefits to individuals pursuing the following approved non-IHL non-degree programs.

- Non-College Degree (NCD) schools
- On-the Job Training (OJT) and Apprenticeship programs
- Flight Programs
- Correspondence courses

Individuals pursuing an approved program at an NCD school received the lesser of the following:

- The actual net cost for in-state tuition and fees after the application of any waiver, scholarship, aid, or assistance [other than loans and funds provided under section 401(b) of the Higher Education Act of 1965], or \$17,500 for the academic year beginning on August 1, 2011.
- The amount of the yearly cap has been adjusted each year based upon a Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) and is subject to proration based upon benefit level.

### **chapter 33 Benefit Payments (38 CFR 21.9640)**

Depending on the student's situation, chapter 33 benefits can include payment of tuition and fees, a monthly housing allowance, a stipend for books and supplies, college fund ("kicker") payments, a rural benefit payment, and a Yellow Ribbon Program benefit. chapter 33 differs from other education chapters in that each type of payment is issued separately, with some payments made directly to the school and others directly to the student.

### **Tuition and Fees**

Tuition and fees are paid directly to the school on behalf of the student when the school's enrollment certification is processed. Tuition and fees are prorated by the student's benefit level.

**Effective August 1, 2009**, this was limited to the highest per credit hour tuition and the maximum fees charged by a public institution for undergraduate training in the state where the student was enrolled. State caps for tuition and fees are located at [http://www.benefits.va.gov/GIBILL/resources/benefits\\_resources/rate\\_tables.asp](http://www.benefits.va.gov/GIBILL/resources/benefits_resources/rate_tables.asp).

Students on active duty received the total amount of tuition and fees, not limited to the state maximum, or the amount of charges that exceeded the amount paid by the military's federal tuition assistance.

**Effective August 1, 2011**. The amount of tuition and fees payable for programs offered by Institutions of Higher Learning changed. The in-state, undergraduate state maximum amounts for tuition and fees no longer apply.

- **U.S. Public Schools:** The actual net cost for in-state tuition and fees after the application of any waiver, scholarship, aid, or assistance [other than loans and funds provided under section 401(b) of the Higher Education Act of 1965], provided directly to the institution and specifically designated for the sole purpose of defraying tuition and fees
- **Private and Foreign Schools:** The lesser of the actual net cost for tuition and fees after the application of any waiver, scholarship, aid, or assistance [other than loans and funds provided under section 401(b) of the Higher Education Act of 1965], provided directly to the institution and specifically designated for the sole purpose of defraying tuition and fees, or up to the academic year cap.

The amount of the yearly cap will be adjusted each year based upon a Cost of Living Allowance (COLA) and is subject to proration based upon benefit level.

**NOTE:** Mandatory fees may include kit charges, supplies or equipment. These charges should follow the rules that oversee mandatory fees. If you are not sure if a specific fee meets the needed criteria to be considered mandatory, you should contact your [Education Liaison Representative](#) for guidance **prior** to certifying the fee. Books may be considered a mandatory fee if they meet all other rules governing mandatory fees. The fee must be the same and be mandatory for all students, even if it could be obtained from other sources.

**NOTE:** Fees are mandatory charges (other than tuition, room, and board) applied by the school for pursuit of an approved program of education. Fees include, but are not limited to, health premiums, freshman fees, graduation fees, and lab fees. Fees do not include study abroad course(s) unless the course(s) is a mandatory requirement for completion of the approved program of education. Fees are defined in the school's catalog or supplement and listed on the school's billing statement or invoice.

### **Monthly Housing Allowance**

**Effective August 1, 2018**. A monthly housing allowance (MHA) is paid directly to the student at the beginning of each month for the previous month. MHA will only be paid while the student is

not on active duty (e.g. MHA payments will stop immediately on the day a member enters on active duty or will begin the day after when a member is released from duty when enrolled and otherwise eligible. The housing allowance is prorated by the student's length of service percentage (e.g. length of service determines benefit level) and the student's rate of pursuit (RoP). The MHA paid is *based* upon the Department of Defense's Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH) for an "E-5 with dependents" and the zip code of the campus or training location where the student physically attends the majority of their courses. More information on monthly housing allowance benefits can be found on the [GI Bill® website](#).

For students affected by Colmery Section 501 (First used chapter 33 on or after January 1, 2018) will receive the capped DoD rate based on the physical campus location where he or she is taking the majority of their credit hours.

Students not affected by Colmery Section 501 (First used chapter 33 prior to January 1, 2018) will continue to receive the uncapped VA MHA rates.

### **Housing Rate Decrease, Rate Protection**

Section 403(b)(6) of title 37 requires the Department of Defense (DoD) to "grandfather", otherwise known as rate protection, the basic allowance for housing (BAH) for members who retain uninterrupted eligibility for the BAH (even if the housing rates decrease). Similar to DoD's grandfathering rule, VA will protect the MHA for individuals who are continuously enrolled. If housing rates decrease, a student will be paid the same monthly housing allowance rate for as long as he or she remains continuously enrolled at the same school (same facility code). Continuously enrolled means no more than a 6-month break in training in enrollment.

**RATE PROTECTION:** Effective for training beginning on or after August 1, 2018, VA will protect the MHA rate for certain individuals. Rate protection will be applied for monthly housing allowance payments until one of the following scenarios breaks that protection.

- A change to the physical location where the student is taking the majority of their classes
- A gap in housing payments six months or greater for a reason other than active duty service
- Active duty service may extend rate protection

**NOTE:** Certain students may have been paid higher MHA rates than authorized during the delayed systems implementation of Colmery sections 107 and 501, however, overpayments to students will not be recouped by VA. All students will be notified individually if they were overpaid as a result of sections 107 or 501.

### **Rate of Pursuit and the Monthly Housing Allowance**

Rate of pursuit of pursuit (RoP) applies specifically to chapter 33. It differs from training time, which is used for all other chapters. Schools certify actual credit. VA calculates RoP by dividing the number of credit (or credit hour equivalents) being pursued by the number of credits considered to be full-time by the school. The resulting percentage is the student's RoP.

Examples: If full-time is 12 credits, then RoP:

- 6 credits (or credit equivalents) is 50% ( $6 \div 12 = 50\%$ )
- 7 credits (or credit equivalents) is 58% ( $7 \div 12 = 58\%$ )

The housing allowance is paid if the student's RoP is more than 50%. Rate of pursuit determines whether a student receives or doesn't receive the housing allowance. If pursuit is more than 50% the student receives the housing allowance. If the RoP is 50% or less, then the student doesn't

receive the housing allowance. (Active duty personnel receiving chapter 33 benefits or spouses of active duty personnel receiving Transfer of Entitlement (ToE) benefits are not eligible for the housing allowance).

**Effective August 1, 2011.** The amount payable for the Monthly Housing Allowance (MHA) changed as follows:

**U.S. In-Residence:** The applicable Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH) rate is multiplied by the RoP rounded to the nearest multiple of 10.

**Foreign In-Residence:** The national average of all Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH) rates will be multiplied by the RoP rounded to the nearest multiple of 10.

**Example 1:** An individual at a RoP of .54 will receive 50% of the applicable MHA rate (subject to the eligibility tier level)

**Example 2:** An individual at a RoP of .85 will receive 90% (subject to the eligibility tier level)

**NOTE:** Basic eligibility requirements for MHA benefits (e.g. Veterans with a RoP >.50) remain unchanged.

The amount payable for the MHA for any academic year (beginning on August 1) will be based upon the BAH rates effective on January 1 of that year. This means that MHA rates for chapter 33 awards will change effective August 1 of each year, and not on January 1.

**NOTE:** Individuals paid housing benefits prior to January 1, 2018, will be paid the VA rate which is higher than individuals affected by Section 501 of the Colmery Act (See [Education Rate Tables](#)).

**Effective August 1, 2011.** Interval pay is eliminated except for periods where a school is closed due to an Executive Order of the President or due to an emergency situation.

- These payments are limited to 4 weeks in any 12-month period
- This applies to **all** VA education benefit programs

### **Distance Learning and Housing Allowance** (38 CFR 21.9505 and 38 CFR 21.4267)

**Effective August 1, 2009.** Students whose enrollment was exclusively distance learning training were not eligible for the monthly housing allowance (MHA). If a student's enrollment was both distance learning and resident training (standard classroom instruction) and pursuit was more than 50%, then the MHA could be paid for the period of residence training.

**Effective October 1, 2011.** Individuals only enrolled in distance learning courses were eligible for an MHA equal to 50% of the national average of all BAH rates. Rates are multiplied by the rate of pursuit (RoP) rounded to the nearest multiple of 10.

**NOTE:** Basic eligibility requirements for MHA benefits (e.g. students with a RoP >.50) remain unchanged.

Information about certifying courses which combine residential and distance learning (hybrid) can be found in the When to Certify Courses As "In-Residence" On VA Enrollment Certifications section.

### **Books and Supplies Stipend**

**Effective August 1, 2009.** The books and supplies stipend is a lump sum payment (each quarter, semester or term attended) paid directly to the student when the school's enrollment certification is processed. The stipend is prorated by the student's length of service percentage. The books and

supplies stipend pays \$41.67 per credit certified, up to 24 credits for the academic year (08/01/YY-07/31/YY). The start date of an enrollment period determines the academic year to which the enrollment period belongs. The maximum stipend is \$1,000 per academic year. Active duty students were not eligible.

**Effective October 1, 2011.** Individuals enrolled in a degree program while on active duty are now eligible for the Books and Supplies stipend of up to \$1,000.00 per academic year. The rules for calculating Books and Supplies payments are the same as those for Veterans.

**Effective August 1, 2011.** Books and Supplies stipend for NCD Schools, Apprenticeship, and OJT programs in an amount equal to \$83 for each month (prorated for partial months and benefit level) became available.

### **Yellow Ribbon Program (38 CFR 21.9700)**

The Yellow Ribbon Program payment is paid directly to the school on behalf of the student when the school's enrollment certification is processed.

- Only individuals entitled at the 100% benefit level (or their dependents using transferred entitlement) may receive Yellow Ribbon funding
- Students who served at least 36 months or more on active duty, and
- Students who served at least 30 continuous days on active duty, and were discharged due to service-connected disability

The following are not eligible for the Yellow Ribbon Program:

- Active Duty personnel
- Spouses of Active Duty personnel using Transferred Entitlement
- Fry Scholarship recipients who attended terms that began prior to August 1, 2018.

**Effective August 1, 2018.** Fry Scholarship recipients and Veterans or service members with eligibility based upon being awarded the Purple Heart are eligible for the Yellow Ribbon Program.

The Yellow Ribbon Program allows schools to enter into an agreement with VA to fund the tuition and fees cost that exceeds the basic tuition and fees amount payable by VA. The Yellow Ribbon Program can provide additional funding to students whose tuition and fees exceeds the in-state, undergraduate cap (before August 1, 2011); or charges for out-of-state tuition, or charges in excess of the yearly cap for students enrolled in private institutions (after August 1, 2011).

If a school participates in the Yellow Ribbon Program, VA will match each dollar the school contributes up to 50% of the difference between the basic tuition and fees amount payable by VA and the tuition and fee amount charged to the student. The combined school and VA contribution can't exceed the tuition and fee amount charged the student.

A comprehensive explanation can be found on the [Yellow Ribbon Program website](#).

### **Kickers and Additional Contributions**

**Effective August 1, 2009.** Students eligible for a kicker under chapter 30 or 1606 may receive the kicker under chapter 33. The kicker will be prorated by the student's rate of pursuit percentage and paid as a lump sum payment to the student when the school's enrollment certification is processed.

chapter 30 and 1607 additional contributions (\$600 Buy-up) are **not** payable under chapter 33.

**Effective October 1, 2011.** Eligible individuals receive payments for chapter 30 and 1606

kicker payments on a monthly, rather than a lump sum, basis.

Kickers will be paid regardless of rate of pursuit or eligibility for the Monthly Housing Allowance. The applicable full-time kicker rate will be multiplied by the rate of pursuit rounded to the nearest multiple of 10.

**Licensing and Certification Tests and National Tests (38 CFR 21.9665)**

**Effective August 1, 2009.** chapter 33 students may be reimbursed for one licensing or certification test. The reimbursement cannot exceed \$2,000. The test must be [approved](#) for VA benefits.

**Effective October 1, 2011.** Individuals may be reimbursed for multiple licensing and certification exams or for multiple national tests (e.g. SAT, GRE, LSAT, etc.). The maximum payable per licensing or certification exam is \$2,000. There is no maximum for national exams. Entitlement shall be pro-rated based on the amount of the fee charged for the test relative to the rate for one month payable set each academic year (See [Education Rate Tables](#) ). The test must be [approved](#) for VA benefits.

The amount equivalent to one month of entitlement is adjusted each year based upon a COLA.

**Effective August 1, 2018.** Entitlement charged for all tests taken under chapter 33 will be prorated based on the actual amount of the fee charged for the test relative to the rate of one month. Prior to August 1, 2018, a claimant was charged one month of entitlement for all Licensing and Certification and National Tests, regardless of the amount of reimbursement.

Under the other benefit programs (chapter 30, 35 and 1606) entitlement is and has always been charged by dividing the amount paid by the full-time monthly institutional rate payable during the fiscal year in which the test was taken.

**Rural benefit (38 CFR 21.9660)**

The rural benefit is a one-time, lump-sum payment of \$500. The rural benefit is issued directly to students who reside in a county with six persons or fewer per square mile who physically relocate at least 500 miles to attend a school or relocate by air (any distance) when no other land-based transportation exists.

**Vocational Flight (38 CFR 21.4263)**

Individuals pursuing an approved flight program (not offered at an IHL) will receive the lesser of the following:

- The actual net cost for in-state tuition and fees after the application of any waiver, scholarship, aid, or assistance [other than loans and funds provided under Section 401(b) of the Higher Education Act of 1965], or
- Up to the academic year flight cap which begins each August first. (See [Education Rate Table](#)).

**Transfer of Entitlement (38 CFR 21.9570)**

The Department of Defense (DoD) offers members of the Armed Forces the opportunity to transfer chapter 33 benefits to their spouse or dependent children. If a member of the Armed Forces (active duty or Selected Reserve) serves at least six years and commits to serve an additional 4 years.

After separating from the Armed Forces individuals cannot designate new dependents to receive transferred entitlement or amend the effective date of the initial transfer of entitlement to an earlier date, except for cases involving death under [Title 38 USC, 3319](#), Section 110, of the Harry W. Colmery Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2017 ([Public Law 115-48](#)).

Requests to modify transferred benefits must be made through the Department of Defense (DoD) [milConnect](#) portal, except under [Title 38 USC 3319](#), Section 110, when a Transferor is designating unused entitlement to a new dependent not previously enrolled in the Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System (DEERS). The Transferor will need to visit a DEERS or Real-Time Automated Personal Identification System (RAPIDS) Center to have that dependent added before allocations can be made in [milConnect](#).

Refer students to the “Transfer Post-9/11 GI Bill to Spouse and Dependents” page at [https://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/post911\\_transfer.asp](https://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/post911_transfer.asp). The page provides instructions on how to apply for transfer of benefits after DoD approval and entitlement has been transferred. Spouses and Dependents must apply online through [Vets.gov](#) or by printing, completing, and mailing [VA Form 22-1990e](#), “Application for Family Member to Use Transferred Benefits” to VA.

When certifying a ToE student, use the student’s social security number as the student’s file

number and identify the student as a chapter 33 student recipient. Certify ToE students like you would any other chapter 33 student.

Information and requirements about transferability can be found on the [Defense Manpower Data Center \(DMC\)](#) portal.

### **Fry Scholarship**

The Fry Scholarship added a new eligibility criterion to chapter 33. It provides benefit eligibility for children of active duty members of the Armed Forces who died in the line of duty after September 10, 2001.

An information sheet about the Fry Scholarship is available at [http://www.benefits.va.gov/BENEFITS/factsheets/education/Fry\\_Scholarship.pdf](http://www.benefits.va.gov/BENEFITS/factsheets/education/Fry_Scholarship.pdf).

Eligible children:

- May be married or over 23 and still be eligible
- Are entitled to 36 months of benefits at the 100% level
- Whom first became entitled on or after January 1, 2013, will not have an expiration date by which to use their benefit entitlement
- Whom first became entitled before January 1, 2013, will have 15 years to use the benefit beginning on their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday, or sooner if graduated from high school and may use the benefit until their 33<sup>rd</sup> birthday
- Are eligible for the Yellow Ribbon Program for terms beginning on or after August 1, 2018

**Effective for terms beginning on or after January 1, 2015.** Section 701 of the Veterans Access, Choice, and Accountability Act of 2014 (Public Law 113-146) expanded the Marine Gunnery Sergeant John David Fry Scholarship to also provide benefits for a surviving spouse.

Eligible spouses:

- Are entitled to 36 months of benefits at the 100% level
- Will not have an expiration date by which to use their benefit entitlement. The period to use the benefit beginning on the date of the service member's death will not expire but they will lose eligibility if they remarry
- Must make an irrevocable election of which benefit he or she wishes to receive for any and all enrollments beginning after January 1, 2015, if eligible for both Dependents' Educational Assistance (chapter 35) and Fry Scholarship benefits
- Will be eligible for the Yellow Ribbon Program for terms beginning on or after August 1, 2018

Identify Fry students as chapter 33 and use their social security number as their file number. Certify Fry students like any other chapter 33 student, except for Yellow Ribbon. Students who are not eligible will be mailed a disallowance letter that explains the reason for their disallowance and that explains the appeal process.

## BENEFIT PAYMENTS

Monthly benefit payments (or Monthly Housing Allowance for chapter 33) are made directly to students. The payment is made to the student for the number of days the student is certified for the month. If a student is certified for a whole month, the full monthly benefit is paid. If the student is only certified for part of the month, the benefit is prorated as follows:

VA uses a 30-day month. Divide the monthly rate by 30 to get the daily rate. If a student is certified from the 1<sup>st</sup> through the 15<sup>th</sup>, the student is certified 15 days and is entitled to 15/30ths of the full monthly benefit.

Example: If the monthly benefit is \$100.00 and the student is certified 1/1/12 through 1/15/12, the student is entitled to \$50.00 (\$3.33 per day for 15 days). If the student is certified 1/16/12 through 1/31/12, the student is entitled to \$50.00 (\$3.33 per day for 15 days). If the student is certified 1/1/12 through 1/31/12, the student is entitled to \$100.00 (a full month's benefit). Remember, VA uses a 30-day month: 1/16 through 1/30 (or 1/31) is 15 days and 2/16 through 2/28 (or 2/29) is 15 days. The month rounds out to 30 days.

Standard benefits are described in the [monthly rate tables](#). An additional kicker may be paid to some chapter 30, 33, 1606, and 1607 students.

Retroactive Benefits (certify as requested for all benefit chapters).

## MONTGOMERY GI BILL - ACTIVE DUTY (MGIB-AD) CHAPTER 30, TITLE 38 U.S. CODE

chapter 30 has four eligibility categories. The benefits generally apply to Veterans who began active duty service for the first time after June 30, 1985, had their pay reduced \$100 a month for 12 months, and received an honorable discharge. For further information on the four eligibility categories, visit [http://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/mqib\\_ad.asp](http://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/mqib_ad.asp).

To be eligible for education payments under chapter 30, Veterans must possess an Honorable discharge. This would exclude those Veterans with a General Under Honorable Conditions discharge or any other discharge other than Honorable. Also excluded are officers who obtained their commission after 12/31/76, through a military academy (Annapolis, West Point, Air Force Academy, or Coast Guard Academy), or through an ROTC scholarship program (payments exceeding \$3,400/year).

Individuals released from active duty with an Honorable character of service by reason of Convenience of the Government (COG) with 20 months of service on a two-year contract, or 30 months on a three-year contract, are eligible even if they did not complete their full contract period. They will receive 36 months of MGIB at the appropriate rate. Other eligibility rules and exceptions may be applicable.

chapter 30 benefits are paid on a monthly basis directly to the Veteran. See the [chapter 30 Rates](#) section on the GI Bill website.

### **chapter 30 Kickers and Additional Contributions**

Higher monthly benefits are paid to chapter 30 participants with "kickers" and to chapter 30 participants who make additional chapter 30 payments. Veterans may have a kicker, additional

contributions, or both. The higher benefit rates are paid automatically when benefits are paid. If Veterans don't receive the benefit they believe they are entitled to receive, they should submit a question through the "Submit a Question" feature on the [GI Bill homepage](#) about the discrepancy so that the VA can resolve the discrepancy with the Department of Defense. A kicker is part of the enlistment contract. It might be referred to as Army College Fund or Navy Sea College Fund. If a contract has a \$12,000 kicker, for example, then the monthly kicker is \$333.33 ( $\$12,000 \div 36$  months).

Servicepersons who participate in chapter 30 contribute \$1,200.00 towards chapter 30. The contribution is non-refundable, with one exception. chapter 30 (category 1 only) students who elect and then exhaust their chapter 33 entitlement and are receiving a monthly housing allowance will receive a refund of the \$1,200.00 contribution proportional to the amount of unused chapter 30 entitlement at the time of election for chapter 33. The refund is included in their last monthly housing allowance payment.

Servicepersons may contribute up to \$600.00 more into the program. The maximum \$600.00 additional contribution will increase the basic full-time chapter 30 benefit by \$150.00 per month. Additional contributions are not refundable for those who elect chapter 33.

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>DEPENDENTS' EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE (DEA) CHAPTER 35, TITLE 38 U.S. CODE</b></p>
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Educational Assistance paid to dependents of Veterans who have a service-connected permanent and total disability or died as a result of service connection. Persons who may be eligible are:

- A child (between ages 18 and 26, with some exceptions) of a Veteran who is permanently and totally disabled due to a service-related condition; or who died in service; or who died of a service-connected disability; or who died while evaluated as having total and permanent service-connected disability; or who is listed as a POW or MIA
- The surviving spouse of a Veteran who died of a service-connected disability, or died in service, or died while evaluated as having total and permanent disability resulting from a service-connected disability. Surviving spouses, whose benefits stopped when they remarried can receive DEA benefits again if their remarriage ends by death, divorce, or they cease to live with the person to whom they presented themselves in public as married
- A spouse of a Veteran or serviceperson who has a total and permanent disability resulting from a service-connected disability; or who is listed as a POW or MIA
- The spouse or child of a service member who is hospitalized or receiving outpatient treatment for a service-connected permanent and total disability and is likely to be discharged for that disability
- A child, spouse, or surviving spouse may be eligible for special restorative training where needed to overcome or lessen the effects of a physical or mental disability for the purpose of enabling an eligible person to pursue a special vocational program or other appropriate goal

Find more information on our [Dependents Educational Assistance webpage](#).

## **MONTGOMERY GI BILL - SELECTED RESERVE (MGIB-SR) CHAPTER 1606, TITLE 10 U.S. CODE**

[chapter 1606](#) is an educational program for members who are actively participating in the Selected Reserve. Selected Reserve components include the Army Reserve, Naval Reserve, Air Force Reserve, Marine Corps Reserve, Coast Guard Reserve, Army National Guard, and Air National Guard. The Department of Defense and the Department of Homeland Security (Coast Guard) determine who's eligible for chapter 1606. The Department of Veterans Affairs administers the program and pays benefits.

Basic eligibility requires a 6-year obligation to serve in the Selected Reserve and satisfactory participation in required Selected Reserve training. chapter 1606 benefits are paid on a monthly basis directly to the reservist. Find more information on our [rates webpage](#).

**chapter 1606 Kickers:** An additional amount, called a kicker, may be added to the benefit of some chapter 1606 students. The possible monthly kicker levels are \$100, \$200, and \$350. A chapter 1606 kicker may be a part of the original enlistment contract or part of a re-enlistment contract.

## **RESERVE EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (REAP) CHAPTER 1607, TITLE 10 U.S. CODE**

This is an educational program for active members of the Selected Reserve called to active duty and members of the Individual Ready Reserve (Army IRR, Air Force IRR, Navy IRR and Marine Corps IRR) called to active duty in support of a contingency operation or a national emergency declared by the President or Congress. The Department of Defense and the Department of Homeland Security (Coast Guard) determine who's eligible for chapter 1607. The Department of Veterans Affairs administers the program and pays benefits.

Members of the Selective Reserve may be eligible for chapter 1607 after serving 90 consecutive days on active duty for a contingency operation. The chapter 1607 benefit pays a percentage of the chapter 30 three-year or more rate based on the number of continuous service days on active duty:

- 90 days but less than 1 year pays 40%
- 1 year but less than 2 years pays 60%
- Service of 2-continuous years or of an aggregate of three years or more pays 80% payment of the three-year rate.

chapter 1607 benefits are paid on a monthly basis directly to the Veteran. Rates can be found at the following link:

[http://www.benefits.va.gov/GIBILL/resources/benefits\\_resources/rate\\_tables.asp](http://www.benefits.va.gov/GIBILL/resources/benefits_resources/rate_tables.asp).

### **chapter 1607 Kicker and Additional Contributions:**

- **Kicker:** A service member eligible for chapter 1607 who's also eligible for the chapter 1606 kicker will be paid the chapter 1606 kicker.

- **“Buy-up” Program:** A service member can pay up to \$600.00 to increase their monthly benefit by as much as \$150.00 per month. The service member must be a member of a Ready Reserve component to pay the “Buy-up”. More information on REAP can be found on the GI Bill® website through the following link: <http://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/reap.asp>.

**National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2016 (PL 114-92, Section 555):** This act amended chapter 1607 of Title 10, United States Code, by inserting a new section ([16167](#)) to sunset chapter 1607. The authority to provide educational assistance under chapter 1607 shall terminate on the date that is four years after the date of the enactment (November 25, 2015) of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2016 (November 24, 2019).

**PL 114-92, Section 555:** Notwithstanding any other provision of chapter 1607, during the period beginning on the date of the enactment of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2016, and ending on the date that is four years after the date of the enactment of that Act, (November 24, 2019), educational assistance may be provided under this chapter only to a member otherwise eligible for educational assistance under this chapter who received educational assistance under this chapter for a course of study at an educational institution for the enrollment period at the educational institution that immediately preceded the date of the enactment of that Act.”

service members should [apply](#) if they believe they are eligible for chapter 1607. VA will release a formal eligibility determination to the service member.

**Harry W. Colmery Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2017 (Public Law 115-48):** Section 106 of this act allowed individuals who lost their chapter 1607 eligibility, due to the sunset of chapter 1607 (under the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2016), the opportunity to make an election to receive entitlement under the Post -9/11 GI Bill Program. Individuals eligible under this provision should have received a “Choice of Election Form” via postal mail. If an individual has any questions, or did not receive a “Choice of Election Form,” and feels that they are eligible under this provision, then they should contact the VA through the Call Center (888-442-4551) or send a written request for a “Choice of Election Form” to:

**Department of Veterans Affairs  
Buffalo Regional Processing Office  
PO Box 4616  
Buffalo, NY 14120-4616**

service members should [apply](#) if they believe they are eligible for chapter 1607.

## **VETERANS' EDUCATION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (VEAP) CHAPTER 32, TITLE 38 U.S. CODE**

VEAP is available if you first entered active duty between January 1, 1977 and June 30, 1985 and you elected to make contributions from your military pay to participate in this education benefit program. Contributions are matched on a \$2 for \$1 basis by the Department of Defense. This benefit may be used for degree and certificate programs, flight training, apprenticeship/on-the-job training and correspondence courses. Remedial, deficiency, and refresher courses may be approved under certain circumstances.

Find more information on the [chapter 32](#) section of the GI Bill website.

## **VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION FOR VETERANS WITH SERVICE-CONNECTED DISABILITIES CHAPTER 31, TITLE 38 U.S. CODE**

A Veteran may be eligible for [Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment](#) (VR&E) benefits if he or she:

- Has received, or will receive, a discharge that is other than dishonorable
- Has a service-connected disability rating of at least 10%, or a memorandum rating of 20% or more from the Department of Veteran Affairs (VA)
- Applies for Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (VR&E) VetSuccess services

The basic period of eligibility in which VR&E's VetSuccess services may be used is 12 years from the latter of:

- The date of separation from active military service, or
- The date the Veteran was first notified by VA of a service-connected disability rating

For additional information about VR&E contact the [Regional Office](#) in the state of the Veteran (RPOs do not process VR&E claims).

**Effective August 1, 2011.** An individual eligible for chapter 33 who is receiving benefits under chapter 31 may elect to receive the applicable chapter 33 Monthly Housing Allowance in lieu of the monthly subsistence allowance. Students should contact their Vocational Rehabilitation counselors for additional information.

## ENTITLEMENT CHARGES

Generally, a student's entitlement is charged one day for every day of full-time training. The entitlement amounts in the table below reflect charges for less than full-time training unless specifically annotated as full-time.

	Post 9/11 (Ch33)	MGIB (Ch30)	MGIB-SR (1606)	REAP (1607)	DEA (Ch35)
Education Program	IHL: Rate of Pursuit x days of training	Training Time x days of training.	Training Time x days of training	Training Time x days of training	Training Time x days of training
	Stand Alone NCD: T&F ÷ Annual amount payable for program type × 360	(< ½ time is charged at ¼ time rate)		(< ½ time is charged at ¼ time rate)	(< ½ time is charged at ¼ time rate)  No charge for 1st 5 months' worth of R/D courses
OJT/APP	Hours worked (rounded to nearest 8 hours) ÷ 120 × 30	Full-time:  22.5 days (75%) for 1st six months  16.5 days (55%) for 2nd six months  10.5 days (35%) thereafter  < Full-time:  Assistance paid ÷	Full-time:  22.5 days (75%) for 1st six months  16.5 days (55%) for 2nd six months  10.5 days (35%) thereafter  < Full-time:  Assistance paid ÷	Full-time:  22.5 days (75%) for 1st six months  16.5 days (55%) for 2nd six months  10.5 days (35%) thereafter  < Full-time:  Assistance paid ÷	Amount paid ÷ full-time rate × 30**
Vocational Flight	T&F ÷ Annual amount payable for program type × 360	Amount paid ÷ full-time rate × 30**	Amount paid ÷ full-time rate × 30**	Amount paid ÷ full-time rate × 30**	N/A
Accelerated Payments	N/A	Accelerated payment ÷ full-time rate × 30**	Accelerated payment ÷ full-time rate × 30**	Accelerated payment ÷ full-time rate × 30**	N/A

License and Certification Tests	1 month for each test taken prior to 8/1/18.  Prorated for each test taken on or after 8/1/18	Amount paid ÷ full-time rate × 30**	Amount paid ÷ full-time rate × 30**	Amount paid ÷ full-time rate × 30**	Amount paid ÷ full-time rate × 30**
Tutorial Assistance	No Charge	No Charge 1st \$600  > \$600:  (Assistance paid - \$600) ÷ full-time rate × 30**	No Charge 1st \$600  > \$600:  (Assistance paid - \$600) ÷ full-time rate × 30**	No Charge 1st \$600  > \$600:  (Assistance paid - \$600) ÷ full-time rate × 30**	No Charge
TA Top Up	Top Up only applies to chapter 30, TA amounts must be identified in Remarks and deducted when reporting.	Amount paid ÷ full-time rate × 30**	N/A	N/A	N/A

\*\*Monthly amount payable for full-time institutional training

# **THE CERTIFICATION PROCESS**

## SUBMITTING ENROLLMENT CERTIFICATIONS

### Original Applications

If an original application is needed, do one of the following:

- If a student applied online, certify the student via VA-ONCE and insert the **“Student Applied Using va.gov”** VA Standard Remark
- If the student already mailed the application, we don’t need another. Insert the VA Standard Remark **“Application Sent Via US Mail”**
- If the student completes and gives you an application, certify the student via VA-ONCE and mail the student’s application to the RPO of jurisdiction. Either way, insert the VA Standard Remark **“Application Sent Via US Mail”**
- If a student asks to be certified retroactively for enrollment periods you haven’t certified previously, certify the previous periods the student asks you to certify. VA will determine the date of eligibility and the beginning date from which benefits can be paid

### Change of Program or Place of Training

A Request for Change of Program or Place of Training is needed for a VA student transferring to your school who has used benefits elsewhere. Get the request from the student and keep it in the student’s file at your school. The student can complete a [VA Form 22-1995](#) or [VA Form 22-5495](#) and submit to the SCO to retain in VA student record. Certify the student and insert the VA Standard Remark **“Student’s signed request for change of program / place of training is on file”**. If the student completed a 22-1995 or 22-5495 online, insert the VA Standard Remark **“Student Applied Using va.gov”**.

If a student changes his or her program while enrolled at your school the change does not have to be reported to VA. You should, however, keep a record of the change in the student’s file and change and save the new program on the student’s VA-ONCE BIO screen.

### chapter 30, 32, 35, 1606, and 1607 Enrollment Certifications

Certifications can be submitted 120 days before the term begins, but *must be submitted within 30 days of the beginning of the term*, unless training time is less than ½-time, the student is on active duty, or accelerated payment is requested. If a student is less than ½-time, on active duty, or certified for accelerated payment the Certification must be submitted on or after the first day of class and tuition and fees must be reported.

### chapter 33 Enrollment Certifications

Schools should submit certifications as early as possible in order to ensure that students receive their benefit payments in a timely manner, *but certifications must be submitted within 30 days of the beginning of the term*. An effective way to minimize student debts and adjustments is for schools to submit an enrollment certification with \$0.00, and then amend the tuition and fees after the end of the drop-add period.

- If Tuition and Fees are known, submit the actual net cost for in-state tuition and fees for each term
- If Tuition and Fees are unknown, submit the term dates, credits and enter \$0.00 for these charges. This allows VA to begin paying the Monthly Housing Allowance on time

Once Tuition and Fees are determined (less any applicable waivers) submit an amended enrollment certification of the actual net costs if the number of credit hours you certified has not changed.

**Enrollment Changes under Post 9/11 after Tuition and Fees are Reported**

- If the enrollment change occurs prior to the first day of the term, an adjustment should be submitted with the new hours and the associated Tuition and Fees
- If the enrollment change occurs on or after the first day of the term, an amendment should be submitted to report the tuition and fees for the original number of hours the student began the enrollment period with on the first day of the term

The next day, an adjustment should be submitted with the new hours and the tuition and fees associated with the new hours.

See Certifying Tuition and Fees for specific instructions for submitting Tuition and Fees.

**Effective August 1, 2011 – Tuition and Fees**

Public Law 111-377 changes the amount of Tuition and Fee charges that should be reported to VA. For periods of enrollment beginning on or after August 1, 2011, you should report the following charges:

The actual net cost for in-state tuition and fees assessed by the institution for the program of education after the application of any waiver of, or reduction in, Tuition and Fees; and any scholarship, or other Federal, State, institutional or employer-based aid or assistance (excluding loans and title IV funds) that is provided directly to the institution and specifically designated for the sole purpose of defraying tuition and fees.

Example: Student gross in-state charges	\$4,000
Veteran Discount	- 400
Tuition Scholarship	-2,000
Title IV (ex. Pell Grant) *	2,500
General Scholarship*	<u>1,000</u>
<b>Net In-State Charges</b>	<b>\$1,600</b>

\* Denotes to exclude calculating net cost

Aid or assistance that is designated for the sole purpose of reducing a student’s Tuition and Fee cost should be deducted from the net in-state charges reported to VA.

In the above example the student also has a \$1,000 scholarship from a local Veterans Service Organization. The scholarship is general in nature and may be used to defray school costs such as food, housing, books, etc. Since it’s not “specifically designated for the sole purpose of defraying tuition and fees”, it is not deducted from the charges submitted to VA.

Only in-state charges should be reported in the Tuition Amount and Fee Amount fields. Any additional out-of-state net charges should be reported in the Out of State Charges field if a contribution is being made under the Yellow Ribbon Program.

An academic year is defined as August 1, YY through July 31, YY for chapter 33 purposes.

## **The following information pertains to all chapters**

### **Type of Training**

Indicate the appropriate “Training Type” for the student’s program. The types of training available at your school are provided on VA-ONCE and can be updated by your ELR.

- Select “IHL Undergrad” for undergraduate degree programs, post-baccalaureate programs required to obtain a teacher certification or endorsement, and post-baccalaureate courses required to gain admission to a graduate degree program
- Select “IHL Grad” for graduate degrees
- Select “NCD (Non-College Degree)” for diplomas and certificate

### **Name of Program**

The Program of Education certified must be a program offered by your school and approved for VA benefits. Select the approved program in VA-ONCE. Refer to VA-ONCE instructions for adding approved programs. As of June 15, 2012, you must associate a VA Objective Code and a VA Course Code with each program (Course Codes are listed in [Appendix A](#)).

On the Bio screen, enter the name of the student’s “Program” from the drop-down list.

### **Undeclared Major**

Students pursuing a bachelor’s degree may not have to declare a major before their junior year at some schools. If a freshman or sophomore hasn’t declared a major, report the student’s program as “Bachelor (undeclared)”. The student cannot be certified beyond his or her sophomore year unless a major is declared. Only “General Education” courses can be certified prior to the declaration of a major.

### **Non-matriculated Students (38 CFR 21.4252 (L) (2) and (3))**

- VA defines matriculated as having been formally admitted to a college or university as a degree-seeking student. VA educational benefits cannot be paid to non-matriculated college or university students unless they are pending admission to your school. In that case they can be certified for two quarters or semesters. The student can be certified beyond this two-term limit only if the student is admitted to your school as a degree-seeking student, irrespective of the number of credits taken
- Certify a non-matriculated student as “Bachelor (non-matriculated)” or “Post-baccalaureate (non-matriculated).” The only courses that can be certified are those required for admission and those required if admitted. When a non-matriculated student is formally admitted, change and save the program name on the student’s VA-ONCE Bio screen

### **Guest Student**

A student who isn’t matriculated at your school may be pursuing a degree at another college or university. The two-quarter or two-semester limit doesn’t apply to a Guest Student taking courses at your school that apply to a program at another school. The procedure for certifying a guest student matriculated elsewhere is described under [Supplemental and Concurrent Enrollments](#).

## **Course Applicability**

Only courses that satisfy requirements outlined by the curriculum guide or graduation evaluation form can be certified for VA purposes. A curriculum guide or graduation evaluation form should be kept in the student's file and courses certified should be checked. If a student takes a course that does not fulfill a program requirement, it cannot be certified for VA purposes. Excessive free electives, for example, cannot be certified.

## **Audited Courses**

Audited courses cannot be certified. If the school's grading policy allows a student who registers for credit to later change to audit, report the change from credit to audit as a withdrawal, effective the day the student changed from credit to audit. Report the withdrawal as you would other withdrawals.

## **Repeating Courses**

Classes that are successfully completed may not be certified again for VA purposes if they are repeated. However, if a student fails a class, or if a program requires a higher grade than the one achieved in a particular class for successful completion, that class may be repeated and certified to VA again.

Example 1: if a Nursing program requires a "B" or better in Biology, then that class may be repeated if a "B" or better was not earned. That requirement must be in the school catalog.

Example 2: If a course is required for graduation, a student may repeat the course and be certified for it **until** it is successfully completed. No further information needs to be provided to VA regarding those courses.

Example 3: If a student chooses to repeat a course that was successfully completed, just to improve their GPA, that course cannot be certified to VA.

**NOTE:** if a Veteran student's situation does not fall under one of these examples, or if a School Certifying Official is unsure if a particular course can be repeated and certified again to VA, the School Certifying Official should contact their [Education Liaison Representative](#) for guidance **prior** to certifying to the class again.

## **Courses Required for Admission to the Next Level of Training**

Courses required for admission to the next level of training may be approved in two situations. The first is when an IHL requires a student to pursue courses at an educational level for which he or she already holds a diploma or degree. The second is when an IHL requires a student to pursue courses at an educational level for which he or she appears qualified by reason of previous training. For example, a college may require a student with a B.A. degree to take some undergraduate subjects for admission to a graduate degree program, or to gain teacher certification for specific subjects. A statement from the school as to requirements of any specific courses for the student must accompany the claimant's application.

If a graduate school requires a student with a bachelor's degree to pursue undergraduate courses to satisfy admission requirements for a graduate degree program, then the courses required for admission may be certified as part of that graduate degree program. In order to certify the courses, however, the following requirements must be met:

- The student should apply to the school as a graduate degree-seeking student and the student must furnish the school transcripts of all previous education and training
- The graduate school must determine whether the student meets its matriculation criteria. This process includes evaluation of prior credit. If the student cannot matriculate immediately upon enrollment, then the requirements the student must meet in order to matriculate must be identified and documented
- If undergraduate courses are required to matriculate, the graduate school must prepare a statement on the school's letterhead, signed by a responsible school official – the department head, for example – that outlines the required undergraduate courses (identified by course number and name). This statement must be kept in the student's file
- If the student is only certified for undergraduate courses, report training time according to undergraduate credit measurement
- If both graduate and undergraduate course work is certified, report training time according to undergraduate or graduate measurement, whichever is greater

### **Remedial and Deficiency Courses**

Remedial and deficiency credit should be put in the R/D column, rather than the credit column. When students have both credit and R/D credit, VA combines the credit to determine training time. R/D credit is used to correctly charge entitlement for chapter 35 students. Deficiency courses do not need to be listed in remarks.

Remedial and deficiency courses are courses designed to correct deficiencies in basic mathematics, English, and reading at the elementary or secondary level. These courses can be certified as part of an approved program, but only for students for whom a verifiable need has been established. Keep test results and other documents in the student's file that support the student's need for remedial and deficiency courses.

chapter 30, 33, 1606, and 1607: Entitlement is charged for remedial and deficiency training.

chapter 35: Entitlement is not charged up to 5 months of full-time remedial and deficiency training. If you certify a chapter 35 student for 6 standard credits and 6 remedial credits the student is paid at the full-time rate, but entitlement is charged at the ½-time rate.

Remedial and deficiency courses offered as independent study (online) cannot be approved and cannot be certified to VA.

### **Practical Training (38 CFR 21.4275)**

Practical training is academic training that includes actual job experience. Practical training courses are considered to be resident training. Some practical training is measured in clock hours (medical residency, for example) and some practical training is measured in credit hours. When practical training is measured in credit by a school, the school can certify the course as credit or as clock hours, whichever is to the student's advantage.

### **Student Teaching**

If a student takes a 6-credit student teaching course that requires 30-clock hours attendance per week, certify the course in clock hours. The student is ½-time by credit, but full-time by clock hours. If you certify clock hours, in remarks enter: "Student teaching course measured in

clock hours according to M22-4, Part IV, Paragraph 7.09”.

### **Other Practical Training**

Examples are externship, internship, and practicum. Like student teaching, these courses can be certified in credit or in clock hours, whichever is to the student’s advantage. Example: A student takes a 6-credit externship that requires 22-clock hours of practical training per week. If 12 credits are considered full-time for credit-based training, and 22 clock hours is considered full-time for clock hour-based training, you should certify the course in clock hours.

It’s possible to certify both credit and clock hours during the same quarter or semester. Example: If a student takes a 3-credit lecture course and a 4-credit internship that requires 12 clock hours per week (where 18 clock hours is full-time), certify 3 credits and 12 clock hours. Seven credits would be ½-time, but 3 credits and 12 clock hours would be ¾-time. In VA-ONCE remarks enter, “Student taking a 3-credit lecture course and a 4 credit, 12 clock hours per week internship”.

### **Rounding Out**

A VA student can round out a schedule with non-required courses to bring his/her course load up to a full-time schedule in his/her last term only. This allows students to continue to receive benefits at the full-time rate in their last term of enrollment, even though fewer credits are required to complete the program.

This procedure can be done only once per program.

In rounding out a full-time schedule, VA students may use any credit hour unit subject, including a subject that has previously been successfully completed (received a passing grade).

**EXAMPLE:** A claimant needs to complete 60 credit hours to obtain a B. A. degree. After passing 57 credit hours, the claimant enrolls in four 3-credit-hour courses. VA may pay the Veteran educational assistance for full-time training during this last term.

### **Course Substitutions**

If the college allows substitutions for program requirements, VA will allow course substitutions if the school approves them and they are documented in the student's file.

## **PRIOR CREDIT**

One of the criteria for approval of any school for Veterans' training is that it reviews prior credit and grant credit as appropriate to a VA student's current program. This is found in Title 38, Code of Federal Regulations, Sections [21.4253\(d\)\(3\)](#) and [21.4254\(C\)\(4\)](#). In essence, this requires every approved school to have and enforce a policy with regard to transfer courses, credits, and previous experience.

Schools no longer have to report prior credit to VA, Schools must evaluate prior credit, grant credit as appropriate, notify the student of the evaluation, and shorten the program certified accordingly. Whenever a student initially enrolls in your school or changes programs at your school a credit evaluation must be completed. VA will review credit evaluations during compliance surveys and credit evaluation records must be kept and made available to VA upon request.

Schools should make every effort to obtain transcripts to comply with the requirement to

evaluate and grant credit where appropriate. However, if a transcript cannot be obtained, you may continue to certify enrollment as long as the student has matriculated (see definition of [non-matriculated students](#)). Reviews of prior credit policies will be conducted during compliance surveys and treated as approval issues if the school is not complying.

### **Military Education and Training Resources**

Military education and training should be evaluated for prior credit. Information needed to evaluate military education and training is available online.

### **The ACE Military Guide**

Find information about the [American Council on Education \(ACE\) Military Guide \(Guide to Evaluation of Educational Experiences in the Armed Services\)](#) at their website.

### **Military Transcripts**

Find information about the [Military Joint Services Transcripts](#) and how transcripts may be requested by current and former members of the Army, Coast Guard, Marine Corps, and Navy at their webpage. Current and former members of the Air Force can request transcripts from the [Community College of the Air Force \(CCAF\)](#). Air Force personnel can obtain their transcript, even if they have not attended classes at the CCAF. More information about [military transcripts](#) can be found on the vets.gov website.

## **CHANGE OF PROGRAM ([38 CFR 21.4234](#))**

Schools no longer have to certify a change of program and students no longer have to file a Request for Change of Program or Place of Training **if a student changes a degree program while enrolled at the same school.**

If a student changes his or her program from BA Psychology to BS Biology, for example, the change does not have to be reported by the school or the student. However, the change of program remains a compliance survey issue. When a student changes his or her program the change must be made according to your school's academic regulations, a credit evaluation (all previous credit, including your school's credit) for the new program should be completed, and all credit certified following the change must apply to the new program.

When a student changes programs at your school:

- Change the program on the student's VA-ONCE BIO screen then click "Save"
- Evaluate all prior credit for applicability towards the new program
- Only certify credit that applies to the new program

## **ENROLLMENT PERIODS ([38 CFR 21.4200](#))**

Academic years are divided into enrollment periods. VA defines those enrollment divisions as:

**Ordinary School Year:** Generally, a period of 2 semesters or 3 quarters which is not less than 30 nor more than 39 weeks in total length.

**Term:** Any regularly established division of the ordinary school year under which the school operates.

**Quarter:** A division of the ordinary school year from 10 to 13 weeks long.

**Semester:** A division of the ordinary school year from 15 to 19 weeks long.

**Summer term:** The whole of the period of instruction at a school which takes place between ordinary school years. A summer term may be divided into several summer sessions.

**Summer session:** Any division of a summer term.

### **Certifying Enrollment Periods in VA-ONCE**

Each quarter, semester, term, or session requires a new certification in VA-ONCE. If you have loaded your term dates in the maintenance section, you can select them from a drop-down box.

When you select the enrollment period you want to certify from the drop-down list, VA-ONCE will enter the Term Name, Begin Date, and End Date. Enrollment periods that aren't stored in "Standard Terms" can be typed directly into a new Cert (VA-ONCE will combine multiple periods when submitted to the RPO).

A standard quarter is 10 to 13 weeks in length and a standard semester is 15 to 19 weeks in length with courses beginning the first week and ending the last week, the last day of final examinations. The school should report the official begin date of the academic term or the date all students were required to report in advance of the start of the term (if not more than 14 days prior to the beginning of classes) as well as the official ending date of the term.

If a school offers training on a nonstandard term basis, or if there are nonstandard formats or sessions within standard terms, the beginning and ending dates of each term, session or course must be shown separately from the standard semester or quarter (See [Summer Terms and Nonstandard Enrollment Periods](#)).

### **What Beginning Date Must a School Report To VA? (38 CFR [21.4131](#), [21.7131](#), and [21.9625](#))**

Schools should report the first scheduled date of classes for any standard term, quarter, or semester in which the student is enrolled.

Prior to April 25, 2016, if a class began after the initial calendar week then the school would report the actual date those classes began.

**Example (Term Prior to April 25, 2016):** A student is taking 9 credits for two 3 credit classes (held Tuesday and Thursday) and one 3 credit class (held Friday) during a standard term. The term began on a Friday. The school would only certify the Friday class using the normal term start and end dates, and then would submit another term for the other two classes with the start date of the first Tuesday and the normal term end date.

If the standard term is after April 25, 2016 and a course begins within 7 calendar days then the school should certify the course using the first day of the term. If a standard term is taken concurrently with a nonstandard term, the two must still be certified separately.

**Example (Term After April 25, 2016):** A student is taking 9 credits for two 3 credit classes (held Tuesday and Thursday) and one 3 credit class (held Friday) during a standard term.

The term began on a Friday. The school would submit one enrollment certification for this term for all 9 credits with a begin date of the first day of term and the normal term end date.

**Example (Term After April 25, 2016):** A student is taking 9 credits during a nonstandard summer term. The term dates for those classes are:

- 7/01/16 –8/01/16
- 7/07/16 –8/01/16
- 7/13/16 –8/13/16

In this example each of these terms would need to be certified separately because each term is a non-standard term.

## CERTIFYING CREDIT

### **Chapter 33**

Chapter 33 Tuition and Fees, Monthly Housing Allowance, book stipend, and Yellow Ribbon benefits are based in whole or in part on the number of credit hours certified.

Certify the number of resident credits (Res) and distance learning credits (Dist). Do not include distance credits in “Res” or resident credits in “Dist”. If all credit taken is resident credit enter 0 in “Dist” (a numeric entry is required). If all credit taken is distance enter “0” in credit (numeric entry is required). When combined, “Res” and “Dist” should equal the total credit taken.

Example: If a student is enrolled in 15 credits, 6 of which are online, you would certify 9 “Res” and 6 “Dist”. Do not combine the credit anywhere. VA will combine “Res” and “Dist”.

### **Undergraduate**

Certify the number of credit hours the student takes that apply to his or her program (see [Course Applicability](#)).

VA will divide the number of credit hours certified by the number of credit hours required to be full-time to determine rate of pursuit.

**Effective August 1, 2011:** The amount payable for the Monthly Housing Allowance will change as follows: “The applicable Monthly Housing Allowance rate will be multiplied by the rate of pursuit rounded to the nearest multiple of 10”.

### **Graduate**

In addition to certifying the number of credit hours the student takes which apply to his or her program, also report the number of credit hours considered full-time for either the standard semester/quarter, or for the non-standard semester/quarter if individually defined, by your academic regulations, as explained below. The minimum number of credit hours required to be considered full-time for a semester, quarter, or any individually defined time period, as published in your catalog, is referred to as the full-time modifier.

If Training Type is IHL Grad on the student’s Bio screen in VA-ONCE, there will be a TT/FT box on the certification page. When the term is a standard-length semester (15-19 weeks) or a standard-length quarter (10-13 weeks), enter the number of credit hours that

your academic regulations require to be considered full-time for a normal semester or quarter.

When the term is shorter in length (a semester shorter than 15 weeks, or a quarter shorter than 10 weeks) and **does not have an individually defined full-time modifier**, enter the minimum number of hours that your academic regulations require in order to be considered full-time for the normal semester or quarter. VA will calculate equivalent credit hours for each non-standard term to determine rate of pursuit.

**NOTE:** Schools without individually defined full-time modifiers for non-standard terms will follow the interim procedure explained above until such time as the school has been able to define full-time for non-standard terms and able to provide the full-time modifier for all enrollments. Once system VA system enhancements have been fully implemented and all schools are able to provide full-time modifiers for both standard and non-standard terms, manual processing will no longer be necessary, and all enrollments will be reported in the same manner with most being fully automated.

However, when the term is shorter in length (a semester term shorter than 15 weeks, or a quarter term shorter than 10 weeks) and **has an individually defined** full-time modifier for that term length, or for any term longer than 19 weeks for a semester or 13 weeks for a quarter, enter the minimum number of credit hours that your academic regulations require in order to be considered full-time training for the individual enrollment period being certified. The number of credit hours can vary by program or enrollment period. VA will divide the number of credit hours certified by the number of credit hours required to be full-time to determine rate of pursuit. **Additionally, you must include the VBA Standard Remark in VA-ONCE: “Graduate non-standard term” on these certifications.**

Use this chart to help determine what you must enter:

			Minimum number of credit hours required to be full-time by academic regulations (full-time modifier)	Report in the TT/FT the minimum credit hours required for full-time for	Add VBA Standard Remark " <u>Graduate Non-Standard Term</u> "
Semester	standard-length	15-19 weeks	must be defined/published in catalog	the standard-length term	NO
Quarter	standard-length	10-13 weeks	must be defined/published in catalog	the standard-length term	NO
Semester	shorter in length	less than 15 weeks	<b>is not</b> individually defined/published	the standard-length term	NO
Quarter	shorter in length	less than 10 weeks	<b>is not</b> individually defined/published	the standard-length term	NO
Semester	shorter in length	less than 15 weeks	<b>is</b> individually defined/published in catalog	this individual term	YES
Quarter	shorter in length	less than 10 weeks	<b>is</b> individually defined/published in catalog	this individual term	YES
Semester	longer in length	greater than 19 weeks	<b>is not</b> individually defined/published	the standard-length term	YES
Quarter	longer in length	greater than 13 weeks	<b>is not</b> individually defined/published	the standard-length term	YES
Semester	longer in length	greater than 19 weeks	<b>is</b> individually defined/published in catalog	this individual term	YES
Quarter	longer in length	greater than 13 weeks	<b>is</b> individually defined/published in catalog	this individual term	YES

**NOTE:** VA-ONCE VBA Standard Remarks “Graduate Non-Standard Term” must be included for all non-standard terms longer in length regardless of full-time being defined.

Example 1: (Standard term)

If a student takes 6 credit hours in the fall, however your academic regulations state 9 credits or more is full-time, enter 9 in the TT/FT box in VA-Once. VA will divide credits taken (6) by credits considered full-time (FT) to determine the student's rate of pursuit ( $6 \div 9$  equals approximately .67). The student's rate of pursuit is 67%.

Example 2: (Non-Standard term shorter than 15 weeks for a semester or 10 weeks for a quarter-**not individually defined**)

A student takes a total of 9 credit hours for the fall, in 3 overlapping non-standard short terms of 3 credit hours each. If your academic regulations state 9 credits or more is full-time for the standard semester/quarter, enter 9 in the TT/FT box in VA-Once on each of the non-standard terms. VA will calculate the equivalent number of credits for each non-standard term to determine the rate of pursuit.

Example 3: (Non-Standard term-**individually defined**, or, any term longer than 19 weeks for a semester or 15 weeks for a quarter)

A student takes 3 credit hours in a non-standard term and your school considers 6 credit hours to be full-time for the period certified (i.e., the non-standard term), you should enter 6 in the TT/FT box and include the VBA Standard Remark in VA-Once, "Graduate non-standard term". VA will divide credits taken by credits considered full-time (FT) to determine the student's rate of pursuit ( $3 \div 6$  equals .50). The student's rate of pursuit is 50% or exactly halftime.

Example 4: A student takes 6 credit hours in a non-standard long term (term longer than 19 weeks for a semester or 13 weeks for a quarter) where your school considers 6 credit hours to be full-time for the period certified, you should enter 6 in the TT/FT box and include the VBA Standard Remark in VA-Once, "Graduate non-standard term". VA will divide credits taken by credits considered full-time (FT) to determine the students' rate of pursuit ( $6 \div 6$  equals 1). The student's rate of pursuit is 100%.

**NOTE:** MHA is only payable when a student is training at greater than half-time.

**Effective August 1, 2011:** The amount payable for the Monthly Housing Allowance will change as follows: "The applicable Monthly Housing Allowance rate will be multiplied by the rate of pursuit rounded to the nearest multiple of 10".

**Resident Training, Distance Learning, and Independent Study (38 CFR [21.4252\(g\)](#), [21.4267](#), and [21.9505](#))**

**NOTE:** Courses offered in whole or part by independent study routinely cannot be approved at non-accredited schools.

On the enrollment certification, resident training should be identified as "res". Courses that include a traditional classroom component as well as online training are commonly known as "hybrid" courses. If your school's approval includes distance learning, "hybrid" courses with a qualifying combination of resident and online training should be reported as "res." See When To Certify Courses As "In-Residence" On VA Enrollment Certifications for those conditions. These should be added together and placed in the "res" field.

Courses taken SOLELY THROUGH DISTANCE LEARNING should be identified as "dist".

**Difference between Independent Study and Distance Learning (38 CFR [21.4252\(a\)](#), 38 CFR [21.4267](#), 38 CFR [21.9505](#), and [20 U.S.C. 1003](#))**

**Distance Learning** – training which uses one or more technologies to deliver instruction to students who are separated from the instructor and to support regular and substantive interaction between the students and the instructor, synchronously or asynchronously.

For the purpose of distance learning technologies include:

- Web- based learning
- One-way and two-way transmissions through open broadcast, closed circuit, cable, microwave, broadband lines, fiber optics, satellite, or wireless communications devices;
- Audio conferencing

**NOTE:** If a course only utilizes training through the technologies outlined above, the course must be certified as distance training.

**Independent Study** – education that is tailored to fit the interests of a specific student, which occurs outside the traditional “classroom/laboratory setting,” and is carried out under the direct supervision of a trainer.

Independent Study can be offered via in-residence or distance learning.

**When to Certify Courses As “In-Residence” On VA Enrollment Certifications (38 U.S.C. 3313(c)(1)(B)(iii) and 38 U.S.C. 3313(g)(3)(A)(ii)(I)(bb)**

For terms beginning on or after August 15, 2019, you will certify most courses which contain an in-residence component as in-residence training. “Hybrid” training which combines residential and distance learning will be certified as in-residence when the following conditions are met:

- Hybrid training must have at least one session that meets the definition of a standard class session (i.e. one 50-minute class,) but does not have to meet weekly.
- Your school’s approval must specifically include resident and distance learning to report “hybrid” courses to VA. If both modalities are approved, qualifying “hybrid” courses should be reported as “res” on the enrollment certification. Contact your State Approving Agency for clarification as needed.

Example 1: A 3-credit undergraduate course requires students to physically attend class once a week for 1-hour. All the rest of the training is conducted online. You would certify this class as in-residence.

Example 2: A 3-credit undergraduate course requires students to meet in class for the first day of term and attend all mid-terms and finals in person. All the rest of the training is conducted online. You would certify this class as in-residence.

Example 3: A 3-credit graduate course meets once at the beginning of the term. All the rest of the training is conducted online. You would certify this class as in-residence.

Example 4: A 3-credit undergraduate course allows students to voluntarily attend a course in-residence 1-hour a week, though the student has the option to take that hour online. You could certify this class as in-residence, if you have supporting evidence that the student attended at least 1 of the in-classroom sections. If you do not have this supporting information, you cannot certify this course as in-residence and must report it as distance.

Example 5: A 3-credit graduate course has an in-residence meet-up before the term begins. During the actual term all training is conducted online. You would be unable to certify this class as in-residence training. It would have to be certified as distance training.

### **When to Certify Courses As “Distance” On VA Enrollment Certifications**

When a course is taken solely online (through distance learning) the course must be certified to VA as distance training.

### **Certifying for Terms beginning before August 15, 2019**

If you are certifying a course that is not taken solely online or through distance and the begin date for the term is before August 15, 2019, contact your ELR for clarification of how the term should be certified before certifying the term.

**NOTE:** The Procedural Change altering when credits can be certified as in-residence is only applicable for terms beginning on or after August 15, 2019. **These procedures cannot be applied retroactively.**

### **Certifying Credit (Chapters 30, 32, 35, 1606, and 1607)**

The Distance Learning field (Dist) in VA-ONCE is enabled for all educational benefits. Resident credit and distance learning credit is reported separately only for chapter 33.

**NOTE:** Distance learning not leading to a degree may not be certified under chapter 35 (Authority [38 USC 3523](#)).

### **Undergraduate**

Enter the number of credit hours the student will take each quarter, semester, or term. If the student will be full-time, but you don't know the exact number of credits the student will take, enter 12. In a standard quarter or semester VA defines training time as follows:

- 12 credits or more are full-time
- 9-11 credits are  $\frac{3}{4}$ -time
- 6-8 credits are  $\frac{1}{2}$ -time
- 4-5 credits are less than  $\frac{1}{2}$ -time
- 1-3 credits are  $\frac{1}{4}$ -time or less

**NOTE:** Full-time is 13 or 14 credits at some schools. These schools should contact their [ELR](#) about measuring their training time.

### **Graduate**

Enter the training time (full,  $\frac{3}{4}$ , etc.) in the TT/FT box for the enrollment period based on your school's academic policy. The institution determines what is considered full-time. Only credit that applies to the student's program can be certified (see [Course Applicability](#)).

If a student asks to be certified for fewer applicable credits than he or she takes to conserve entitlement, you can certify fewer credits than actually taken. For chapter 33, Tuition and Fees would be reported for the number of credit hours certified, not the number of credit hours taken.

You can certify fewer credits to conserve entitlement, but you cannot change quarter, semester, term, or session dates to conserve entitlement. Actual dates must always be certified. Retain a copy of the student's request in the VA file.

## RATE OF PURSUIT AND TRAINING TIME

### **Undergraduate Rate of Pursuit (Chapter 33)**

VA calculates rate of pursuit (RoP) by dividing the credit hours (or credit hour equivalents) being pursued by the number of credit hours considered to be full-time by the school. The resulting percentage is the student's RoP.

The chapter 33 housing allowance is paid if RoP is more than 50%.

### **Training Time- Chapters 30, 32, 35, 1606, and 1607 (38 CFR 21.4270)**

VA benefits are paid based on training time certified by the school. In standard quarter or semester, VA measures training as follows:

- 12 credits or more are fulltime
- 9-11 credits are  $\frac{3}{4}$  time
- 6-8 credits are  $\frac{1}{2}$  time
- 4-5 credits are less than  $\frac{1}{2}$  time (< $\frac{1}{2}$ -time)
- 1-3 credits are  $\frac{1}{4}$  time or less (< $\frac{1}{4}$ -time)

**NOTE:** Full-time is 13 or 14 credits at some schools. These schools should contact their [ELR](#) about measuring training time.

### **Graduate Rate of Pursuit (Chapter 33)**

VA calculates rate of pursuit (RoP) based on the number of credits the school reports it considers full-time for the period certified. The Monthly Housing Allowance (MHA) is paid if the RoP is more than 50%, and the student is neither on active duty nor the chapter 33 spouse of a person on active duty.

### **Non-College Degree Institutions**

If a program is measured in clock hours, benefits are paid based on clock hours of attendance per week. The beginning date, ending date, and number of clock hours a student is scheduled to attend each week must be reported. If clock hours per week vary **and** the benefit amount is affected, the variance must be reported for calendar weeks, Sunday through Saturday, between the beginning and ending dates.

Do not submit adjustments for absences that are allowed within the school's approved attendance policy. You may not extend enrollment for students who need additional hours simply because of absences. However, if a student failed a portion of the course and has to repeat it, that portion may be re-certified as long as the student continues to meet the Standards of Progress.

Full-time measurement is 18 clock hours if classroom instruction predominates and 22 clock hours if shop practice predominates. The clock hour measurement for all approved programs measured and paid by clock hours is listed in the Web Enabled Approval Management System (WEAMS).

### **Rate of Pursuit (Chapter 33) Conversion Clock to Credit Hours**

VA will convert clock hours to credit and then calculate rate of pursuit. The Monthly Housing Allowance is paid if rate of pursuit is more than 50%.

### **Training Time (Chapters 30, 32, 35, 1606, and 1607)**

Clock hour training time is measured as follows:

#### **18 Hours: Theory Predominates**

- 18 hours or more are full-time
- 13-17 hours are  $\frac{3}{4}$ -time
- 9-12 hours are  $\frac{1}{2}$ -time
- 5-8 hours are less than  $\frac{1}{2}$ -time
- 1-4 hours are  $\frac{1}{4}$ -time or less

#### **22 Hours: Shop/Practice Predominates**

- 22 hours or more are full-time
- 16-21 hours are  $\frac{3}{4}$ -time
- 11-15 hours are  $\frac{1}{2}$ -time
- 6-10 hours are less than  $\frac{1}{2}$ -time
- 1-5 hours are  $\frac{1}{4}$ -time or less

## Summer Terms and Non-Standard Enrollment Periods

Standard quarters are 10 to 13 weeks in length and standard semesters are 15 to 19 weeks in length. Standard quarters and semesters adhere to the school's academic calendar. When a session or course doesn't follow this standard format, certify the actual begin date, end date, and credit for the session or course. Courses taken during a defined session – an eight-week summer session, for example – should be certified from the beginning date to the ending date of the session if the courses start the first week and end the last week of the session.

### **Equivalent Credit Hours (Non-33 Undergraduate)**

VA converts credit earned during nonstandard quarters or semesters to equivalent credit hours. **VA makes the conversion, not schools. Schools must report actual credit.** Refer to the credit hour equivalency tables. The formula for converting quarters or semesters to credit equivalents is the same, except for the multiplier. The formulas are:

- **Quarter:**  $\text{Credit} \times 12 \div \text{weeks} = \text{credit hour equivalents}$ . 4 quarter credits earned in 4 weeks, is the equivalent of 12 credits earned during a standard quarter ( $4 \times 12 \div 4 = 12$ ) and will pay full-time for 4 weeks.
- **Semester:**  $\text{Credit} \times 18 \div \text{weeks} = \text{credit hour equivalents}$ . 4 semester credits earned in 4 weeks is the equivalent of 18 credits earned during a standard semester ( $4 \times 18 \div 4 = 18$ ) and will pay full-time for 4 weeks.

VA pays education benefits for nonstandard enrollment periods based on credit equivalents. Remember, schools report actual number of credits; VA makes the conversion. When enrollment periods overlap, credit hour equivalents for the period of overlap are combined.

Example: A student enrolls for 9 credits summer term; 3 credits in a four-week session, 3 credits in an eight-week session, and 3 credits in a 10-week summer quarter.

⇒ If a quarter system school certified summer session as follows:

Start	End	Credit
06/14/12	07/09/12	3
06/14/12	08/06/12	3
06/14/12	08/27/12	3

⇒ VA would calculate credit hour equivalents as follows

Credit Hour Equivalents
$3 \times 12 \div 4 = 9$
$3 \times 12 \div 8 = 4$ (round 3 days or less down and round 4 days or more up)
Standard length quarter

⇒ And the student would be paid as follows:

From 06/14/12 to 07/09/12 student is training full-time pursuing 9 credit hours. On 07/10/12, student is enrolled in 6 credit hours and training half time. On 08/07/12, the student is pursuing 3 credit hours and equivalent training time is less than ½ time through the end of term.

	Credit Hours	EQH	Training Time
06/14/2012	9	16	FT
07/10/2012	6	7	½
08/07/2012	3	3	>1/2
08/27/2012	End of Term		

**Non-Standard Terms - Rate of Pursuit (Chapter 33 Undergraduate or NCD Measured in Credit Hours)**

Always certify the actual credit hours applicable toward the student's program for all enrollment periods. If you certify a non-standard length term, VA will convert the credit you certify to credit equivalents. Below is how VA will determine term length and rate of pursuit.

- VA will begin by calculating the number of weeks in the period certified. VA will count the number of days in the enrollment period (first day through the last day) and divide by 7. VA will disregard a remainder of 3 days or less or count a remainder of 4 days or more as an additional full week.
- In a standard quarter or semester for chapter 33 students the rate of pursuit is determined by dividing the credit hours pursued by the full-time equivalent (normally 12). For instance, 7 credit hours divided by 12 would be 58%. chapter 33 students' rate of pursuit must be more than 50% to receive the Monthly Housing Allowance.
- For non-standard terms, the equivalent credit hours will be determined prior to computing rate of pursuit. For instance, 4 credit hours in a 6-week semester is the equivalent of 12 credit hours. VA will then divide the 12 credit hours by 12, for a rate of pursuit of 100%. However, 4 credit hours in a 6-week quarter is the equivalent of 8 credit hours. VA will divide the 8 credit hours by 12, for a rate of pursuit of 67%. For determining the monthly housing allowance, the rate of pursuit will be rounded to the nearest 10%. MHA could be paid at 70% for the student enrolled in quarters.  
(See the formulas VA uses to calculate equivalent credit hours under the section titled [Equivalent Credit Hours \(Non-33 Undergraduate\)](#).)

**NOTE:** Always report the inclusive dates of official school vacation periods which are 7 or more consecutive days when certifying non-standard enrollment periods for all benefits in the remarks. Do not report vacation periods on standard length terms.

**Equivalency Tables (Chapter 30, 32, 35, 1606, and 1607)**

The training time credit hour equivalency tables for chapters 30, 32, 35, 1606, 1607, and show undergraduate training time for nonstandard length quarters and semesters at schools where 12 credits is full-time. Training time for nonstandard length terms is paid based on [credit equivalents](#).

Calculate number of weeks by counting the number of days in the enrollment period (first day through the last day) and dividing by 7. Disregard a remainder of 3 days or less and consider a remainder of 4 days or more a full week

**Quarter Credit Equivalency Table (non-CH33)**

<b>▼Credit</b>	<b>Weeks▶</b>	10 to 13	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
12 or more		FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT
11		3/4	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT
10		3/4	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT
9		3/4	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT
8		1/2	3/4	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT
7		1/2	3/4	3/4	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT
6		1/2	1/2	3/4	3/4	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT
5		<1/2	1/2	1/2	1/2	3/4	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT
4		<1/2	<1/2	1/2	1/2	1/2	3/4	FT	FT	FT	FT
3		1/4	<1/2	<1/2	<1/2	1/2	1/2	3/4	FT	FT	FT
2		1/4	1/4	1/4	1/4	<1/2	<1/2	1/2	1/2	FT	FT
1		1/4	1/4	1/4	1/4	1/4	1/4	1/4	<1/2	1/2	FT

**Semester Credit Equivalency Table (non – CH33)**

<b>▼Credit</b>	<b>Weeks▶</b>	15 to 19	14	13	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
12 or more		FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT
11		3/4	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT
10		3/4	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT
9		3/4	3/4	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT
8		1/2	3/4	3/4	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT
7		1/2	3/4	3/4	3/4	3/4	FT									

6	1/2	1/2	1/2	3/4	3/4	3/4	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT
5	<1/2	1/2	1/2	1/2	1/2	3/4	3/4	3/4	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT
4	<1/2	<1/2	<1/2	1/2	1/2	1/2	1/2	3/4	3/4	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT
3	1/4	1/4	<1/2	<1/2	<1/2	<1/2	1/2	1/2	1/2	3/4	3/4	FT	FT	FT	FT
2	1/4	1/4	1/4	1/4	1/4	1/4	<1/2	<1/2	<1/2	1/2	1/2	3/4	FT	FT	FT
1	1/4	1/4	1/4	1/4	1/4	1/4	1/4	1/4	1/4	1/4	1/4	<1/2	1/2	3/4	FT

**SUPPLEMENTAL AND CONCURRENT ENROLLMENTS**

A student may take courses at more than one school that apply to his or her degree. The school that will grant the degree is the student's "primary" school. All other schools are "secondary" schools.

VA can pay benefits for courses taken at secondary schools. If the student is only enrolled at the secondary school (supplemental enrollment), VA will pay for the credits taken at the secondary school. If the student is enrolled at the primary school and the secondary school at the same time (concurrent enrollment), VA will pay for the combined credit, taking overlapping enrollment dates into account.

**If You're the "Primary" School**

If a student takes courses elsewhere that satisfy requirements for his or her degree at your school, then you're the primary school and the student is a "Guest Student" at the secondary school. The primary school provides a letter ("primary school letter") addressed to the VA Certifying Official at the secondary school. Keep a copy of the letter in the student's file. The letter should:

- Identify the student (name, as a student at <insert name and facility code of your school> pursuing a <insert name of your student's program>
- State, "The courses listed below satisfy <insert name of program> requirements and will transfer at full value to <insert name of your school>"
- List the courses the student is taking or will take at the secondary school that your school will accept as transfer credit that apply to the student's program
- State, "<Student> intends to take the above courses at <Secondary School> <Identify term, for example, fall quarter 2010>. Please certify the course(s) to VA as the secondary school. VA data and history for both primary and secondary schools will be in VA-ONCE

Ensure a transcript is obtained from the secondary school and that transfer credit is granted, grade permitting. When a compliance survey is conducted, your records will be reviewed to see if the course applied to the student's program and to see if transfer credit was granted, grade permitting.

**If You're the "Secondary" School**

If a student takes courses at your school that will apply to a degree the student is pursuing elsewhere, you are the secondary school and the other school is the primary school. The student's primary school will send you a primaryschool letter.

In VA-ONCE:

- Add the student
- Certify the student as a "Guest Student". VA-ONCE will have you enter the name of the primary school. VA-ONCE will insert "Guest Student" for program and insert "Courses Confirmed to Be Applied To A Degree ProgramAt <Name of primary school you entered>" in remarks

Only certify courses listed in the primary school letter. Remember Tuition and Fees if the student is less than 1/2-time, active duty, or chapter 33.

Secondary schools must report all changes in enrollment for guest students. Amend, adjust, and terminate as you would for any VA student. VA data and history for both primary and secondary schools will be in VA-ONCE. The data and history can be seen by both the primary and the secondary school.

	NAME AND ADDRESS OF PRIMARY SCHOOL
Date	
NAME AND ADDRESS OF SECONDARY SCHOOL	
<i>&lt;Student's Name (Claim Number)&gt; is a chapter &lt;e.g., 30&gt; student at &lt;Name of School (facility code)&gt; pursuing a &lt;Name of Program, e.g. B.S. History degree&gt;.</i>	
The course(s) listed below satisfy <Name of Program> requirements and will transfer at full value to <Name of School>.	
List course(s) by title and number	
Student intends to take the above course(s) at <Secondary School> <Identify term, e.g., spring term 2004> as a guest student. Please certify the courses to VA as the secondary school.	
SIGNED BY THE CERTIFYING OFFICIAL TELEPHONE NUMBER	

**Sample Primary School Letter (Suggested Format)**

**NOTE:** An e-mail containing the required information can be accepted in lieu of a formal letter. The e-mail message simply needs to convey the facts outlined in the primary school instructions and a copy must be kept in the student's file by the primary school.

## YELLOW RIBBON PROGRAM ([38 CFR 21.9700](#))

The Yellow Ribbon GI Education Enhancement Program ([Yellow Ribbon Program](#) - YRP) is a provision of the Post-9/11 Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2008. This program allows an institution of higher learning in the United States to voluntarily enter into an agreement with the VA to fund tuition expenses that exceed the highest public in-state undergraduate tuition rate.

The institution can contribute up to 50% of those expenses and VA will match the same amount as the institution.

The Institution of Higher Learning (IHL) must agree to:

- Provide contributions to eligible individuals who apply for the Yellow Ribbon Program on a first-come first-served basis, regardless of the rate at which the individual is pursuing training in any given academic year
- Provide contributions during the current academic year and all subsequent academic years in which the student maintains satisfactory progress, conduct, and attendance;
- Make contributions toward the program on behalf of the individual in the form of a grant, scholarship, etc.;
- State the dollar amount that will be contributed for each participant during the academic year;
- State the maximum number of individuals for whom contributions will be made in any given academic year

**NOTE:** Funds used by the institution for the YRP must be available for unrestricted use by the institution. Funds provided by third parties that are restricted in their use for specific programs, students or groups, or internal institution funds that are restricted to specific programs, students, or groups shall not be used as all or part of the institution's contribution for the YRP.

### **How Does the Yellow Ribbon Program Benefit the Veteran?**

**Effective August 1, 2009.** The Post-9/11 GI Bill pays the highest public in-state undergraduate Tuition and Fees. Veterans may have Tuition and Fees that exceed that amount if they are attending a private institution, graduate school or attending in an out-of-state status. If they are enrolled at a Yellow Ribbon participating institution and the Tuition and Fees exceed the highest public in-state undergraduate Tuition or Fees, additional funds may be available for their education program without an additional charge to their entitlement.

**Effective August 1, 2011. U.S. Public Schools.** The actual net cost for in-state Tuition and Fees after the application of any waiver, scholarship, aid, or assistance [other than funds provided under section 401(b) of the Higher Education Act of 1965] provided directly to the institution and specifically designated for the sole purpose of defraying Tuition and Fees.

**Effective August 1, 2011. U.S. Private Schools:** The lesser of the *actual net cost* for Tuition and Fees after the application of any waiver, scholarship, aid, or assistance [other than loans and funds provided under section 401(b) of the Higher Education Act of 1965] provided directly to the institution and specifically designated for the sole purpose of defraying Tuition and Fees, or the annual maximum for the academic year beginning on August 1 of each year.

Veterans may have Tuition and Fees that exceed that amount if they are attending a private institution or attending in an out-of-state status. If they are enrolled at a Yellow Ribbon participating institution and the Tuition and Fees exceed the amount payable by VA, the Yellow Ribbon Program may provide additional funds for their education program without an additional charge to their entitlement.

Institutions that voluntarily enter into a Yellow Ribbon Agreement with VA choose the amount of Tuition and Fees that will be contributed. VA will match that amount and issue payment directly to the institution. These amounts are considered maximums that the school will contribute.

Regardless of the agreement, VA will match a school's contribution up to 50% of the uncovered Tuition and Fees. If a school submits an amount that is more than 50% of the uncovered Tuition and Fees, VA will pay 50% of the uncovered Tuition and Fee costs under the Yellow Ribbon Program.

**Effective August 1, 2018.** The Yellow Ribbon Program includes Fry Scholarship recipients, and Veterans or service members awarded the Purple Heart for service after September 10, 2001.

**Effective August 1, 2022.** The Yellow Ribbon Program will include active duty service members and their spouses.

### **Who is Eligible?**

- Only Veterans and their spouses using transferred entitlement, eligible at the 100% benefit level (based on service requirements) may receive this funding
- ToE children are eligible for Yellow Ribbon if the sponsor is eligible at the 100% benefit level, regardless of the sponsor's active duty status
- Fry Scholarship recipients and
- Veterans or service members awarded the Purple Heart for service after September 10, 2001

### **Who Is Currently Not Eligible?**

- Active duty service members are not eligible unless they are a Purple Heart Recipient
- Spouses of members on active duty unless the service member is a Purple Heart Recipient

**Effective August 1, 2009. Example:** The student enrolled in 12 credit hours during the fall term and the institution charged the student \$5,000 for tuition and \$1,200 in fees. The Maximum Charge Per Credit Hour for the State = \$250 and the Maximum Fees for a single term = \$1,000: 12 credit hours x \$250 = \$3,000 - VA will pay \$3,000 of the \$5,000 tuition charged VA will pay \$1,000 of the \$1,200 fees charged. VA has paid \$4,000 of the \$6,200 charged to the student. \$2,200 could be applied to the Yellow Ribbon Program. Your institution can choose to contribute up to \$1,100 of this amount and VA will match that contribution.

If your institution contributes more than 50%, VA will still pay 50% of the remaining uncovered charges. For example, in this case if the school contributes \$1,200, VA will pay \$1,100.

**August 1, 2012. Example:** The student enrolled in a private school for 12 credit hours during the Spring term and the institution charged the student \$25,000 for tuition and \$1,200 in fees. (The \$18,077.50 cap has already been met).

- The school contributes \$10,000 towards Yellow Ribbon
- VA will match \$10,000 towards tuition
- The student will be \$6,200 out of pocket

### **Yellow Ribbon and VA-ONCE**

The chapter drop down menu on a student's VA-ONCE BIO screen includes "33" and "33 Yellow" selections. If your school participates in the chapter 33 Yellow Ribbon Program and the student will be a Yellow Ribbon participant select "**33 Yellow**" (select "**33**" if the student will not participate in the Yellow Ribbon Program). Enter the amount the school will contribute. The amount entered must be greater than zero.

### **Example of Yellow Ribbon Accounting**

Example: A VA Form 22-1999 enrollment certification was submitted for a term that begins August 25, 2014, through December 10, 2014, for a total of 12 credits. Tuition and Fees are in the amount of \$21,000 with a Yellow Ribbon payment of \$1,530 to cover the unmet charges. The VA would pay \$20,235.02 for Tuition and Fees and another \$382.49 for Yellow Ribbon (split between the VA and the school).

A reduction is then sent into the VA of 6 credits beginning October 1, 2014. The 6-credit hour exclusion has been applied and the Tuition and Fees have been reduced to \$15,000 with \$0 for Yellow Ribbon. A student debt for Tuition and Fees has been created for \$1499.17 and Yellow Ribbon for \$382.49. Because of this reduction, Tuition and Fees have been cleared in LTS with a debt created on the student's account.

LTS recognizes that the educational institution has been paid the maximum cap of \$20,235.02 and will not release another Tuition and Fees payment for the academic year. Instead, if a new enrollment is received, the payment will go to offset the debt created on the student's account. No debt has been created on the school's account and the school may keep the \$20,235.02 and Yellow Ribbon amount of \$382.49 sent by the VA.

An enrollment certification for the spring 2015 is received for the term January 10, 2015, to April 9, 2015 for 12 credits. Tuition and Fees are reported as \$18,000 with a \$10,000 Yellow Ribbon contribution. In turn, a payment of \$1,499.17 is released to the student to clear the debt for Tuition and Fees. A Yellow Ribbon payment is made in the amount of \$8,250.42.

The accounting is broken down the following way:

Academic Year Maximum: \$20,235.02

Educational Institution was paid: \$20,235.02

Student's debt for Tuition and Fees: \$1,499.17 (freeing up Tuition and Fees by this same amount)

The amount of Yellow Ribbon reported by the educational institution is reported as \$10,000 and Tuition and Fees as \$18,000. LTS recognizes the facility was paid the maximum (\$20,235.02) but because of a reduction a student debt was created in the amount of \$1,499.17 (creating Tuition and Fees cap space). LTS will clear the student debt of \$1,499.17 on the next enrollment before creating new payments for Yellow Ribbon. In turn, this reduces the amount LTS uses to calculate half of the unmet charges or  $\$18,000 - 1,499.17 = \$16,500.83$ . When the remaining amount is divided to meet half the unmet charges, the Yellow Ribbon payment will equal \$8,250.42.

**ADVANCE PAYMENT (38 CFR [21.4203 \(a\)\(i\)\(ii\)](#) and [21.9715](#))**

**Chapters 30, 32, 35, and 1606. Advance payment is not available under chapters 33 and 1607.**

An advance payment provides a student with benefit payments at the beginning of a school term to help the student meet expenses concentrated at the beginning of the term. An advance payment pays the student's monthly benefit for the first and second month of the quarter or semester in advance. The first month will only pay from the start date through the end of the month.

If you are interested in participating in advance payment, contact your ELR. Schools must certify they can carry out the provisions of advance payment: Schools must handle advance paychecks securely and they must give the advance paycheck to the student when he or she registers (or not more than 30 days before the beginning of school if registration is earlier). Participation in advance payment is voluntary on the part of schools.

If a school participates in advance payment, it can be paid if:

- The student requests advance pay, **and**
- There's more than 30 days between terms
- The student is enrolled at least half-time, **and**
- VA receives the advance payment request at least 30 days but not more than 120 days before the enrollment period

Create a form that students can sign and date to request advance pay. If a student wants advance pay, have the student complete the form and staple it to the file copy of the Cert. If you have a signed request, check the "Advance Pay" box when you create the student's Cert for the quarter for which he or she is requesting advance pay. The Cert will be annotated "Advance Payment Requested and Signature of Student on Record."

Advance pay requests should be submitted 30 to 120 days before the begin date. The check will be sent to the school, payable to the student. A separate, Certification of Delivery (VA Form 22-1999V) will be sent to the school. When the check is given to the student, immediately complete and return the Certification of Delivery.

An advance will pay the first and second month. The first month may be a partial month,

with payment prorated for the number of days attended that month. Advance pay for a student certified September 20, 2010 through June 10, 2011 would pay September 20, 2010 through October 30, 2010. Since VA normally pays after a month is completed, the student wouldn't receive another check until December when payment for November is made. When an advance paycheck is issued, the next check won't issue unless the Certification of Delivery (or the chapter 1606 generated letter with the same information) mailed to the school is received and processed by VA. If VA sends a letter that says a Certification of Delivery you returned wasn't received, do the following:

Call VA (1-888-442-4551) and explain the problem to the Education Case Manager. If the Certification of Delivery has not been input, ask the Education Case Manager to input the certification of delivery.

## CERTIFYING TUITION AND FEES

### **Tuition and Fees (Chapter 33)**

#### **Tuition**

Tuition is the actual established charges for tuition the student is required to pay. Tuition is defined in the school's catalog or supplement and listed as tuition on the school's billing statement or invoice.

#### **Fees**

Fees are mandatory charges (other than tuition, room, and board) applied by the school for pursuit of an approved program of education. Fees include, but are not limited to, health premiums, freshman fees, graduation fees, and lab fees. Fees do not include study abroad course(s) unless the course(s) is a mandatory requirement for completion of the approved program of education. Fees are defined in the school's catalog or supplement and listed on the school's billing statement or invoice.

Examples of fees that are not allowed include, but are not limited to:

- Penalty fees (i.e. late registration, late course changes, returned checks, repeated courses)
- Add/drop course fees
- Fees for any food or lodging expenses, meal ticket fees
- Parking fees that are not required of every student
- Overload fees for course loads that require special permission
- Transportation/transit system fees that are not required of every

\*Application for admission fees cannot be certified to VA. For specific information about other fees, contact your [ELR](#).

Report the Tuition and Fees charged to the student after deducting any amounts paid with Federal Funds, excluding Federal Financial Aid Programs (title IV). Examples of non-title IV Federal funds include Reserve Officers Training Corps (ROTC), Military Spouse Career Advancement Accounts (MyCAA), Health Professionals Scholarship Program (HPSP), and Government Employees' Training Act (GETA).

If the student is charged out-of-state tuition, the school will report the in-state Tuition and Fees on the enrollment certification. If the school is participating in Yellow Ribbon to cover the out-of-state charges, indicate the school contribution amount in the Yellow Ribbon Box, and insert the out-of-state charges in the "Out St Chg" field.

**Effective August 1, 2009.** The Post-9/11 GI Bill pays the highest public in-state undergraduate Tuition and Fees. Report the Tuition and Fees charged to the student after deducting any amounts paid with Federal Funds, excluding Federal Financial Aid Programs (title IV).

**Effective August 1, 2011. US Public Schools.** The actual net cost for in-state Tuition and Fees after the application of any waiver, scholarship, aid, or assistance [other than loans and funds provided under section 401(b) of the Higher Education Act of 1965] provided directly to the institution and specifically designated for the sole purpose of defraying Tuition and Fees.

Only in-state charges should be reported in the Tuition and Fee field. If a contribution is being made under the Yellow Ribbon Program, any additional out-of-state net charges should be reported in the out-of-state field of the Enrollment Certification.

**Effective August 1, 2011. Private and Foreign Schools:** The lesser of the actual net cost for Tuition and Fees after the application of any waiver, scholarship, aid, or assistance [other than loans and funds provided under section 401(b) of the Higher Education Act of 1965] provided directly to the institution and specifically designated for the sole purpose of defraying Tuition and Fees, or \$17,500 for the academic year beginning on August 1, 2011.

Tuition and Fees shall be reported for all chapter 33 students for each enrollment period. If a contribution is being made under the Yellow Ribbon Program, the school should report their contribution within the Yellow Ribbon Field. Private schools should always report the total net tuition charges regardless of whether the designated cap has been attained. (\$17,500 or most current applicable maximum as determined bylaw).

### **Tuition and Fees (Chapters 30, 32, 35, 1606, and 1607)**

Tuition and Fees must be reported for enrollment periods when training time is less than ½- time, when the student is on active duty, and when accelerated payment is requested. If none of these conditions apply, Tuition and Fees do not have to be reported and you can enter 0 in Tuition and in Fees.

If you certify overlapping enrollment periods report Tuition and Fees for any enrollment period that's less than ½-time by itself.

Example: If you certify 9 quarter credits for an 8-week summer session and 3 credits for an 11-week summer quarter that both begin 6/15/09, then Tuition and Fees must be reported for the 3 credits, 11-week quarter. Report the amount charged for the 3 credits, not the amount charged for all 12 credits.

### **Flat Rate Tuition Schools (Chapter 33)**

Schools that charge flat rate tuition must also report the net Tuition and Fees (see [Certifying Tuition and Fees](#)). When a student is enrolled in modular terms (i.e. mini-sessions within the standard term), the net Tuition and Fees should be associated and reported with the first credits that total the minimum number of credits required to be a full-time student at the school. The following questions, answers, and examples provide guidance on how to

accurately certify net charges for modular terms at schools with flat rate tuition.

**Question 1:** How should schools with flat rate tuition **certify tuition** for chapter 33 claims during modular terms?

**Answer:** Schools with flat rate tuition should certify modular terms by first dividing the total tuition charged by the minimum number of hours considered full-time (usually 12). They should then multiply that per-credit hour cost by the number of hours of enrollment for each modulated term (until the minimum full-time hours are reached) and certify the results. No tuition should be certified for subsequent hours pursued.

**Example 1:**

VA College charges a flat rate of \$6,250.00 per semester for each individual pursuing between 12-18 credit hours. Each semester has 3 five-week terms. ( $\$6,250/12 = 520.83$  per credit hour).

Spring Semester	Credit Hours Enrolled	Tuition Reported
Term 1	9	\$4,687.50
Term 2	3	\$1,562.50
Term 3	3	\$0

**Question 2:** How should schools with flat rate tuition **certify fees** for chapter 33 claims during modular terms?

**Answer:** If the school also has a flat rate fee schedule, it should be divided just as the flat rate tuition is divided in Example 1. However, if there are additional fees associated with individual classes, they should be certified for the term in which the class is attended.

**Example 2:**

Same details as Example 1 above, but this college charges a flat rate of \$600 in fees each semester and the student is enrolled in a class in Term 3 that also has a lab fee of \$100.

Spring Semester	Credit Hours Enrolled	Tuition Reported	Fees Reported
Term 1	9	\$4,687.50	\$450.00
Term 2	3	\$1,562.50	\$150.00
Term 3	3	\$0	\$100.00

**Question 3:** How should schools with flat rate tuition **certify Yellow Ribbon** for chapter 33 claims during modular terms?

**Answer:** The school can only certify Yellow Ribbon for the terms where the annual cap has been exceeded.

**Example 3:**

Same details as Example 1 above but this student has been certified for \$16,000.00 in tuition during previous terms. The annual cap for the academic year is \$18,077.50.

Spring Semester	Credit Hours Enrolled	Tuition Reported	Unmet Charges	Maximum Reportable YR
Term 1	9	\$4,687.50	\$2,610.00	\$1,305.00
Term 2	3	\$1,562.50	\$1,562.50	\$781.25
Term 3	3	\$0	\$0	\$0

**Question 4:** How should schools with flat rate tuition report changes for **added classes** during modular terms?

**Answer:** See the following examples and the explanation for each.

**Example 4a.** If classes are added to the student's schedule that do not change the term in which the student reaches the number of hours required for full time status, no change to tuition amounts is required but the change in credit hours will still need to be reported.

Original Cert			Change of Enrollment	
Semester	Credit Hours	Tuition Reported	New Credit Hours	Tuition Reported
Term 1	9	\$4,687.50	9	\$4,687.50
Term 2	3	\$1,562.50	3	\$1,562.50
Term 3	3	\$0	6	\$0

**Or:**

Original Cert			Change of Enrollment	
Semester	Credit Hours	Tuition Reported	New Credit Hours	Tuition Reported
Term 1	9	\$4,687.50	9	\$4,687.50
Term 2	3	\$1,562.50	6	\$1,562.50
Term 3	3	\$0	3	\$0

**Example 4b.** If classes are added to the student's schedule that change the term in which the student reaches the number or hours required for full time status, the change in hours and the change in tuition amounts associated with the terms should be reported.

Original Cert			Change of Enrollment	
Semester	Credit Hours	Tuition Reported	New Credit Hours	Tuition Reported
Term 1	9	\$4,687.50	12	\$6,250.00
Term 2	3	\$1,562.50	3	\$0
Term 3	3	\$0	3	\$0

**Or:**

Original Cert			Change of Enrollment	
Semester	Credit Hours	Tuition Reported	New Credit Hours	Tuition Reported
Term 1	9	\$4,687.50	10	\$5,208.33
Term 2	3	\$1,562.50	3	\$1,041.67
Term 3	3	\$0	3	\$0

**Question 5:** How should schools with flat rate tuition report changes for **dropped classes** during modular terms?

**Answer:** See the following examples and the explanation for each.

**Example 5a.** If classes are dropped from the student’s schedule that do not change when the student reaches the number of hours required for full time status, no change to tuition amounts is required but the change in credit hours will still need to be reported.

Original Cert			Change of Enrollment	
Semester	Credit Hours	Tuition Reported	New Credit Hours	Tuition Reported
Term 1	9	\$4,687.50	9	\$4,687.50
Term 2	3	\$1,562.50	3	\$1,562.50
Term 3	3	\$0	0	\$0

**Example 5b.** If classes are dropped from the student’s schedule that change when the student reaches the number of hours required for full time status, the change in hours and the change in tuition amounts associated with the terms should be reported.

Original Cert			Change of Enrollment	
Semester	Credit Hours	Tuition Reported	New Credit Hours	Tuition Reported
Term 1	9	\$4,687.50	6	\$3,125.00
Term 2	3	\$1,562.50	3	\$1,562.50
Term 3	3	\$0	3	\$1,562.50

Or:

Original Cert			Change of Enrollment	
Semester	Credit Hours	Tuition Reported	New Credit Hours	Tuition Reported
Term 1	9	\$4,687.50	8	\$4,166.67
Term 2	3	\$1,562.50	3	\$1,562.50
Term 3	3	\$0	3	\$520.83

**Question 6:** How should schools with flat rate tuition report changes for **added or dropped classes** during modular terms outside of the flat rate course load (usually 12 to 18 hours)?

**Answer:** See the following examples and the explanation for each.

**Example 6a.** If classes are dropped from the student’s schedule that reduce the course load to **less than the minimum full-time amount for flat rate tuition**, the actual charges for each term must be reported. In this example, \$530 is the per-credit hour charge when below 12 hours or above 18 hours.

Original Cert			Change of Enrollment	
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Semester	Credit Hours	Tuition Reported	New Credit Hours	Tuition Reported
Term 1	9	\$4,687.50	4	\$2,120.00
Term 2	3	\$1,562.50	3	\$1,590.00
Term 3	3	\$0	3	\$1,590.00

**Example 6b.** If classes are added to the student's schedule that **exceed the course load for flat rate tuition**, the actual charges for the additional classes must be reported for the term where the additional classes are attended. In this example, \$530 is the per-credit hour charge when below 12 hours or above 18 hours.

Original Cert			Change of Enrollment	
Semester	Credit Hours	Tuition Reported	New Credit Hours	Tuition Reported
Term 1	9	\$4,687.50	14	\$6,250.00
Term 2	3	\$1,562.50	3	\$0
Term 3	3	\$0	3	\$1,590.00

# **CHANGE IN ENROLLMENT PROCESS**

## AMEND, ADJUST, AND TERMINATE ([38 CFR 21.4203](#))

A copy of the *Notice of Change in Student Status* should be printed and put in the student's school file.

A Notice of Change in Student Status reports one of three distinct actions.

- **Amend** is used to change begin date, end date, Tuition and Fees, Yellow Ribbon, add a remark, and advance pay and accelerated pay requests on a certification already submitted.
- **Adjust** is used to report an increase or decrease in credit hours. If tuition, fees, or Yellow Ribbon were reported, they must also be changed to correspond to the adjusted number of credit hours.
- **Terminate** is used to report a complete withdrawal from an enrollment period, or to report graduation or program completion. If a student certified for multiple enrollment periods completely withdraws from one enrollment period, then terminate the enrollment period from which he withdrew. VA- ONCE will give you the option to terminate any subsequent enrollment periods or to leave those periods as certified.

### **Last Date of Attendance/Effective Date**

VA-ONCE asks for the "LDA/EFF Date" (Last Date of Attendance/Effective Date).

- If a student officially withdraws, the date the student withdrew is the effective date.
- If a student is administratively withdrawn or stops attending without officially withdrawing, the actual last date of attendance must be determined and reported.
- 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.

Use one of the following methods to determine the last actual date of attendance: (1) attendance records, (2) grading reports, (3) last date on which examination or other papers filed, or (4) last day of activity in the instructor's records.

**NOTE:** A signed statement from the student as to the last day of his or her attendance may not be used as the sole means of verifying attendance.

## REDUCTIONS AND WITHDRAWALS ([38 CFR 21.4203](#))

### **Reduction and Withdrawals (chapter 33)**

All changes in credit must be reported, generally within 30 days of the change in enrollment [[38 CFR 21.4203](#)]. Keep in mind that credit may be divided between resident credit (Res) and distance learning credit (Dist) for chapter 33. Adjust resident credit and distance hours separately based on how the adjustment affects one, the other, or both.

Whenever credit hours change, prepare and submit an adjustment. **Adjust credit hours, and Tuition and Fees (if necessary)**. If a student certified for 12 credit hours drops to 9 credit hours:

- Change credit hours from 12 to 9 credits. Remember, the 12 credits hours may be divided between Resident and Distance. Adjust the credit where appropriate.
- Change the tuition amount reported for the 12 credits hours to the tuition amount **that would have been reported** for the 9 remaining credit hours.
- Change the fees amount reported for 12 credit hours to the fees amount that would have been reported for the 9 remaining credit hours. Some courses have lab fees or associated fees pertaining to that particular course. Make sure the Tuition and Fees reported after the reduction are specific to the credit hours that remain; as if those were the only courses taken during the entire enrollment period.

### **Reductions and Withdrawals (Chapters 30, 32, 35, 1606, and 1607)**

Changes in credit hours that do not change the student's training time do not need to be reported unless the student is a Serviceperson and there is a change in Tuition and Fees. Example: You do not have to report a change from 12 to 15 hours or vice versa because both are full-time for a standard quarter or semester.

If a reduction drops a student to <1/2-time, Tuition and Fees must be reported. Changes in Tuition and Fees should always be reported for students on active duty and students training at <1/2-time even if there is no change in the training time.

**NOTE:** Reductions that do not change training time are not required to be reported, but there is no harm in reporting this information to the VA.

### **Adjustment and Terminations On or Before the First Day of Term (chapter 33)**

#### **Adjustments**

- If a change in credit hours is reported, the corresponding change in tuition, fees, and Yellow Ribbon for the remaining credit hours must also be reported.
- If a student does not attend and withdraws from a course before the first day of the term, report the adjustment as: "Preregistered but reduced prior to First Day of Term" VA-ONCE will automatically populate the "LDA/Eff Date" with the day before the First Day of Term.
- If a student withdraws from a course on the first day of the term, report the adjustment as a "Reduction First Day of Term" VA-ONCE will automatically populate the "LDA/Eff Date" with the First Day of Term.

#### **Terminations**

- If a student does not start the term, report the termination reason as "Withdraw Before Beginning of Term" or "Preregistered But Never Attended". In both cases, VA-ONCE will automatically populate the "LDA/Eff Date" with the day before the first day of the term.
- If a student attends class and then terminates on the first day of the term, you should report the termination reason as "Withdrawal during drop period" and report the "LDA/EFF Date" as the first day of the term. VA will treat this termination the same as a "Withdraw Before Beginning of Term" or "Preregistered But Never Attended" and will generate a school debt for tuition and fees.

- If a student attends classes and terminates later in term, report the termination reason accordingly and indicate the “LDA/EFF Date”.

### **Adjustments During Drop Period**

- If a change in credit hours is certified for chapter 33 the corresponding change in tuition, fees, and Yellow Ribbon for the remaining credit must also be reported
- If a student withdraws during the school’s drop period, identify the adjustment or termination as “During Drop Period”. The drop period is the designated period at the beginning of a term when a student can add and drop classes without a grade being recorded on the transcript.

### **Adjustments After Drop Period**

- When a change in credit is certified for chapter 33 the corresponding change in tuition, fees, and Yellow Ribbon for the remaining credit must also be reported
- If a student withdraws after the drop period, report the adjustment or termination as “After Drop Period – Non-punitive Grades Assigned” or “After Drop Period – Punitive Grades Assigned” as appropriate. Accurately identify whether the grade assigned is non-punitive or punitive. The action VA takes differs for non-punitive and punitive grades. If the grade is non-punitive [Mitigating Circumstances](#) are an issue.

### **Non-punitive Grades**

- A non-punitive grade is a grade that doesn’t count as earned credit and isn’t considered in progress standards for graduation. A withdrawal after the drop period is non-punitive if it isn’t calculated into the student’s GPA or it isn’t considered in academic progress criteria like probation and suspension. Non-punitive grades have the same effect as an audit. They don’t apply to the degree and they don’t affect academic progress.
- Non-punitive repeat grades do not have to be reported under some circumstance. Review the forgiveness policy under [Repeating Courses](#).

### **Punitive Grades**

- A punitive grade is a grade assigned for pursuit of a course which is used in determining the student's overall progress toward completion of the school's requirements for graduation, e.g., a failing grade.
- Unlike the non-punitive grade, the punitive grade does affect the criteria to be met by the student for graduation, i.e., it is a factor in computing the student's grade average or grade point average.

## **Mitigating Circumstances**

Mitigating Circumstances are circumstances beyond the student's control that prevent the student from continuing in school or that cause the student to reduce credits.

### **Examples are:**

- An illness or death in the student's immediate family.
- An illness or injury afflicting the student during the enrollment period.
- An unavoidable change in the student's conditions of employment.
- An unavoidable geographical transfer resulting from the student's employment.
- Immediate family or financial obligations beyond the control of the claimant that require him or her to suspend pursuit of the program of education to obtain employment.
- Discontinuance of the course by the school.
- Unanticipated active military service, including active duty for training.
- Unanticipated difficulties with childcare arrangements the student made for the period during which he or she is attending classes.

When a student terminates or reduces **after** the drop period and a non-punitive grade is assigned, mitigating circumstances are an issue. If mitigating circumstances are needed and adequate evidence of mitigating circumstances isn't received, VA will not pay for the course(s) in question. If the student has already been paid for the course or courses, VA will create an overpayment (subject to the 6-Credit Hour Exclusion described below) from the beginning of the term.

If mitigating circumstances are an issue for the adjustment or termination reason you select, VA-ONCE will display a Mitigating Circumstances box. The drop-down arrow for the box will display the above list of mitigating circumstances. If you know the circumstance and it's clearly one of the circumstances listed, then select that circumstance. Documentation of mitigating circumstances provided by the student should be retained within the student's file.

If you don't have documentation of the student's circumstance, then leave the mitigating circumstance box blank. If you leave the mitigating circumstance box blank, VA will ask the student to provide evidence of a mitigating circumstance.

## **Six-Credit Hour Exclusion**

VA automatically grants mitigating circumstances for up to 6 credits the first time a student reduces or terminates and mitigating circumstances must be considered. This automatic grant is called the 6-Credit Hour Exclusion. The exclusion is a **one-time grant** made the first-time mitigating circumstances must be considered for the student. Up to 6 credits can be excluded if the student has been awarded benefits for the credit. The 6-Credit Hour Exclusion cannot be granted if the student **completes** the term and receives non-punitive grades.

- If the student withdraws from 3 credits, the exclusion will be granted for 3 credits and the student's one-time exclusion is used.
- If the student withdraws from 12 credits, the exclusion will be granted for 6 credits, the student's one-time exclusion is used, and the student must provide mitigating circumstances for the other 6 credits.

## **NON-PUNITIVE GRADES - END OF TERM (38 CFR 21.4203(c))**

A non-punitive grade is a grade that does not count as earned credit and that does not affect progress standards for graduation.

If a student completes the term and receives non-punitive grades, the non-punitive grades must be reported to VA. Do not report end of term non-punitive grades that students receive for courses that were certified as remedial courses. Examples of non-punitive grades are an "X" (no basis for grade), a "NP" (no pass), a "NC" (no credit) or a "U" (unsatisfactory) that do not count as earned credit and that are not calculated into the grade point average.

The "LDA/EFF Date" for end of term non-punitive grades is the end date of the term. If a change in credit is certified for chapter 33 the corresponding change in tuition, fees, and Yellow Ribbon for the remaining credit must also be reported.

If the change is an adjustment, the reason is "Student Completed Term But Non-Punitive Grades Assigned For One Or More Courses". If a student certified for 12 credits receives a non-punitive grade for a 3-credit class, report the non-punitive grade as an adjustment from 12 to 9 credits hours.

If the change is a termination, select "Other" or "Unsatisfactory Attendance, Conduct, or Progress" as the reason as appropriate. In remarks, report the number of non-punitive credits hours. Example: "Student received 6 non-punitive credits, reducing him from 12 to 6 credit hours."

## **INCOMPLETE GRADES**

Some institutions allow the assignment of an "I" (incomplete) grade on a provisional basis only. These institutions require a student to remove the "I" grade within a specified time (e.g., by the end of the term following the term for which the "I" grade was assigned). If the student does not replace the "I" grade within the prescribed time period, a punitive failing grade will be assigned and recorded in the student's academic record. Institutions that have and enforce such a policy and prescribe a maximum time period for grade replacement of less than one year, are not required to report the assignment of an "I" grade as an NP grade.

Many institutions have a grading policy that permits an "I" grade to be replaced with a NP grade, or which allows a NP "I" grade to remain in a student's record indefinitely. In such cases the school must report the incomplete grade as non-punitive at the time the grades are assigned.

When a report is received that an "I" grade has been assigned (which is subject to replacement within a prescribed time period), VA will adjust the student's payment and set up a control to track the grade. If it is resolved into a punitive grade (passing or failing) within one year of the date it was originally assigned, the school should report the change to VA. Such reports should clearly indicate that the change in enrollment status being reported is the replacement of an "I" grade previously reported. If at the end of the 1-year control period no report has been received from the institution to indicate that the "I" grade has been replaced, the VA will assume that the "I" grade has not been changed.

**Chapter 33:** All incomplete grades must be reported for chapter 33 per the rules above.

**Chapters 30, 32, 35, 1606, and 1607:** An incomplete grade doesn't need to be reported if training time isn't affected. Example: A student takes 15 credit hours, completes 12 credit hours, and receives 3 credit hours incomplete. Training time isn't affected because the incomplete doesn't change the student's full-time training time.

## VA COUNSELING SERVICES

VA offers free Educational-Vocational Counseling services (also called chapter 36 counseling) that are available to:

- Service members within six months prior to discharge from active duty
- Veterans within one year following discharge from active duty.
- Current beneficiaries of educational assistance under chapters 30, 31, 32, 33, 35, 1606, 1607.
- Veterans and qualified dependents who are eligible for and have entitlement to education assistance under chapters 30, 31, 32, 33, 35, 1606, 1607.

### **Services include:**

- Counseling to facilitate career decision making for civilian or military occupations.
- Educational and vocational counseling to choose an appropriate civilian occupation and develop a training program.
- Academic and adjustment counseling to resolve barriers that impede success in training or employment.

Detailed information regarding counseling and the entire program can be found on the [Vocational Rehabilitation & Employment \(VR&E\) Service website](#).

## UNSATISFACTORY PROGRESS, CONDUCT, AND ATTENDANCE

([38 CFR 21.4203\(d\)](#), [38 CFR 21.4277](#), [38 CFR 21.7154](#), [38 CFR 21.7653\(c\)](#), [38 CFR 21.7654](#), and [38 CFR 21.9725](#))

The law requires that educational assistance benefits to Veterans and other eligible persons be discontinued when the student ceases to make satisfactory progress toward completion of his or her training objective. Benefits can be resumed if the student reenrolls in the same educational institution and in the same program. In other cases, benefits cannot be resumed unless VA finds that the cause of the unsatisfactory attendance, conduct or progress has been removed and the program of education or training to be pursued by the student is suitable to his or her aptitudes, interests, and abilities.

Both accredited and non-accredited schools are required by law to have and to enforce standards of progress and conduct in order for their programs to be approved for VA benefits. Only non-accredited schools are required by federal law to have attendance standards. These standards should be stated plainly in the school's catalog or bulletin.

A school's policy and regulations for standards of progress, conduct and attendance must define:

- The school's grading system
- The minimum satisfactory grade level
- Conditions for interruption of training due to unsatisfactory grades or progress
- A description of any probationary period
- Conditions for a student's reenrance or readmission following dismissal or suspension for unsatisfactory progress
- Conditions for dismissal due to unsatisfactory conduct
- The school's attendance policy

All schools are required to maintain an academic record for each student which includes, for a Veteran or eligible person, the credit allowed toward the student's current program due to previous training and experience. The record must also show the results of each enrollment period, to include the unit courses or subjects undertaken and the final result (e.g., grade, passed, failed, withdrawn test results). The record must be cumulative and document the progress being made toward completion of the program. For those institutions that use a narrative grading system and/or unspecified academic terms, as opposed to the traditional grading system and specified terms, the academic record must contain sufficient information to permit the recipient of a transcript to make an informed evaluation of the student's educational experience. For those institutions not operating on a term basis, the record must show the student's proficiency at the various stages in the training program.

School officials are responsible for enforcing their established standards of progress. This will require that the school specify intervals between enrollment and graduation (i.e., completion) when each student's progress will be evaluated. Each such evaluation must compare the student's progress with clearly defined progress standards such as:

- For programs offered on a term basis, a minimum grade average or credit level which should bear a reasonable relationship to final attainment of graduation requirements. It is frequently appropriate that separate evaluations be made for overall grade point average and the grade point average attained in courses from the student's major field of study.
- For programs not offered on a term basis, a minimum proficiency level expected of a student if he or she is to successfully complete the program within the number of hours of training that has been approved by the SAA. Measurement of a student's proficiency should be based on instruction appraisals, graded course work, periodic testing, or other techniques that will permit an evaluation of student's progress toward satisfactory completion of the program.

When a student has failed to maintain prescribed standards of progress, VA must be informed promptly so that benefit payments can be discontinued in accordance with the law. The termination date assigned by the school will be the last day of the term or other evaluation period in which the student's progress became unsatisfactory. Schools that provide a period of academic probation may not continue to certify a Veteran or eligible person (who remains in a probationary status) for an indefinite period of time. It is reasonable to expect that an institution will report a termination due to unsatisfactory progress if a student remains on academic probation beyond two terms, quarters, or semesters.

## **Termination for Unsatisfactory Progress**

Unsatisfactory progress (Academic Suspension) must be reported to VA as a termination. Terminate the semester the student is suspended. If suspension follows the fall semester, for example, terminate fall semester. Choose “Unsatisfactory Attendance, Conduct, or Progress” as the reason. VA-ONCE will insert the end date of the term as the default “LDA/EFF Date”. You can change the default end of term date if it isn’t the correct date.

If a student successfully petitions the dismissal, is readmitted, and is already certified the subsequent term, don’t terminate the student. Instead, annotate the student’s file that the student was dismissed and readmitted following a successful appeal. If enrollment status changed the subsequent term, be sure to adjust the credit for the term. When you submit the termination, a pop-up window will appear asking about subsequent terms if any are to be certified. Consider this window carefully:

- If the student won’t attend the subsequent term, select “Cancel.” VA-ONCE will terminate the following terms.
- If you terminate a student and the student is readmitted after your termination, certify the student as you normally would. If VA-ONCE terminated the term as described in the previous bullet, the term will have to be certified again.

## **Recertification of VA Claimant**

A school's standards of progress must include specific conditions a Veteran or eligible person is required to satisfy to permit recertification for VA benefits after being terminated (for benefit purposes) because of unsatisfactory progress or conduct. When a school recertifies a student’s enrollment to VA after a termination due to unsatisfactory progress or conduct, it is presumed the school has established that there is a reasonable likelihood that the student will be able to maintain satisfactory progress and conduct in the future.

Upon recertification to VA the school's certifying official should maintain in the student’s file a statement that describes the conditions for the student's continued certification to VA. These conditions should prescribe the minimum performance standards to be achieved by the student during the next enrollment/evaluation period.

To initiate action by VA to determine whether further payments of VA educational assistance allowance should be authorized, the student must submit a specific request for resumption of VA benefits following an interruption due to unsatisfactory progress or conduct. Requests may be submitted on [VA Form 22-1995](#) or [VA Form 22- 5495](#).

## **Progress Records**

All schools must maintain progress records (academic transcript, for example) that clearly illustrate students’ progress towards the completion of their program.

Courses organized on a term basis must have records that show the subjects taken each term and the grade assigned at the end of the term.

For courses not organized on a term basis, the school must establish standards that define a minimum proficiency level necessary for successful completion at given periods of time. The school must establish specific points within the course for evaluation of a student's progress toward completion.

## GRADUATION

Schools are required to report graduation or program completion information to VA. Once a student graduates from a degree program or completes a Non-College Degree program, you should submit a Notice of Change in Student Status. If the student is graduating from a degree program, "Graduation" should be selected as the termination reason. If the student is completing a Non-College Degree program, "End of Term or Course" should be selected as the termination reason. The last date of the term selected will be pre-populated as the date of termination. If subsequent terms were previously certified, [VA-ONCE](#) will prompt you to terminate those enrollments , or to leave them as previously certified. Ensure that the program information is accurate.

Graduation should only be reported for students who graduated while using benefits.

# **MISCELLANEOUS PAYMENT ISSUES**

## ACCELERATED PAYMENT

### Chapters 30, 1606, and 1607

Complete information about accelerated payment is available for students and schools on our Education Benefits website at [http://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/accelerated\\_payments.asp](http://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/accelerated_payments.asp).

### **Acceleration Basics**

Accelerated payment is a lump sum payment of 60% of Tuition and Fees for certain high cost, high tech programs. For chapters 1606 and 1607 it applies to non-college degree programs that are less than two years but does not specify that they must be “high tech programs.” If there isn’t enough entitlement to cover 60% of Tuition and Fees, VA will pay based on actual remaining entitlement. Accelerated payments are paid one semester, quarter, or term at a time. If a program isn’t offered on a semester, quarter, or term basis, the accelerated payment is paid for the entire program.

High cost means tuition and fees must be more than double the benefit the student would otherwise receive. Example: A typical semester is 1/11/10–5/7/10 (17 weeks) and a typical quarter 3/22/10–6/4/10 (11 weeks). If chapter 30 pays \$1,368.00 per month full-time, it pays \$5,335.20 for the semester or \$3,328.80 for the quarter. In order to meet the “high cost” requirement, tuition and fees must be more than \$10,640.70 for the semester or more than \$6,657.60 for the quarter before a student could receive an accelerated payment.

High technology means students must enroll in a high-tech program and they must certify their intent to seek employment in a high-tech industry as defined by VA. VA maintains a list of high-tech programs and high-tech industries on the Internet as noted in the second paragraph above.

### **Certifying Accelerated Payment**

If students request accelerated payment, make sure they understand the basics described above and, if they haven’t already been there, direct them to the accelerated payment link on VA’s website.

Certify accelerated payment as you normally do, except:

- All accelerated payment certifications must be confirmed certifications. That means they cannot be signed, dated, and submitted until on or after the beginning date of the enrollment period certified.
- Check the “Accelerated Pay (high-tech courses only)” box on a new Cert. When this box is checked, VA-ONCE enters “Student has requested Accelerated Pay” in remarks. To make this certification, you must have the student’s written request for accelerated payment in your files for each term that accelerated payment was requested.
- The student’s written requests are simple. “I request accelerated payment”, followed by the student’s signature and the date. Obtain the request from the student, print a copy of the Cert, attach the student’s request to the Cert, and keep the copy in the student’s file. On the student’s very first request for accelerated payment, the written request must also contain the following: “I certify that I intend to seek employment in a high technology industry as defined by VA. I have read VA’s approved list of high technology industries.”

- Certify one term at a time and include the total charges (tuition and fees) for the courses certified. The student must request accelerated payment separately for each term.
- If the student's enrollment status changes, adjust or terminate the Cert in the usual manner. Be sure to include tuition and fees. [Mitigating circumstances](#) may be an issue.

<p><b>COOPERATIVE TRAINING</b>  (38 CFR <a href="#">21.4233</a>, <a href="#">21.4257</a> and <a href="#">21.4264</a>)</p>
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**Chapters 30, 32, 33, 35, 1606, and 1607**

Colleges and universities are increasingly offering work experience or work internship programs. VA uses the term **cooperative training** (co-op) to denote school-sponsored programs that consist of school instruction and on-the-job (OJT) training. For example, a community college may offer an A.A.S. Automotive Technology degree with course work at the college and OJT at a car dealership. Like all programs, co-op programs must be specifically approved by these.

Cooperative training, like some forms of practical training (see [Practical Training](#) and [Training Time](#)), can be certified by credit or by clock hours, whichever is to the student's advantage. Examples: A student takes 12 credits at the college one quarter and 6 credits OJT (40 clock hours) at a place of business the next quarter. The student is certified 12 credits the first quarter and 40 clock hours the second quarter. The student is full-time both quarters.

Co-op training may occur in two formats: alternating co-op or parallel co-op.

**Alternating Co-op**

The student alternates full-time school attendance with full-time OJT training. For example, a student may alternate one term of full-time school attendance with one term of full-time OJT, or a student may take a term of classroom instruction phase and then finish a program with a one term OJT phase (internship or externship). The school and the OJT phases must be full-time.

The school and OJT phases may alternate on a weekly, monthly, or term basis. However, they alternate, the school phase must be at least as long as the OJT phase. If a school phase is certified for one month, then the subsequent OJT phase cannot be more than one month. A school phase can be longer than an OJT phase, but an OJT phase can never be longer than the school phase.

**Parallel Co-op**

The student attends school half-time and works (OJT) half-time. For example, a student takes 6 classroom credits in the morning and 3 OJT credits (20 clock hours) in the afternoon. The combination of school and OJT must equal full-time. In this case, the student is full-time because the 6 classroom credits are ½-time and 20 clock hours are ½-time.

The school phase of training must be at least as long as the OJT phase of training. The student must be attending school at least half-time each day the student works OJT, but the student can't work more than 4 hours per day. A student could be attending school three-quarter time each day and working half-time or less, but not the other way around.

## **Rules for Cooperative Training**

Cooperative training must be a **full-time** program. The school phase and the OJT phase together constitute one co-op cycle. The OJT phase must be an integral part of the school's approved program. The OJT must be supervised by school instructors, the school must arrange the OJT phases with employers, the school must arrange for the placement of individual students in the OJT, and the school must grant credit for the OJT.

A VA student must elect co-op in writing. The best method is for the student to write an election statement in the "Remarks" block of the Enrollment Certification that the student signs and dates. With VA-ONCE, the school should obtain a written election statement, keep the statement in the student's school file, and enter in the Cert's remarks, "Student's written election for co-op training on file." Once a student elects co-op training, the student must complete both phases (school and OJT) of each co-op cycle. If the student finishes the first phase, starts the second phase, and drops out; an overpayment may be created back to the beginning of the first phase, to the start of the cycle.

Although VA regulations require certain procedures and a specific minimum ratio of school and OJT, local and state requirements always take precedence and Veterans are expected to follow the same rules and internal procedures as all other students. Sometimes this means a particular co-op program cannot be approved for Veteran training because state or school rules conflict with VA regulation.

## **DUAL MAJORS, MINORS, AND DUAL OBJECTIVES**

Students may pursue a dual major or a minor as part of a single objective.

### **Dual Major**

Dual majors pursued under an academic policy that defines the dual major's requirements can be certified if both majors are approved. Only courses required to complete the dual major can be certified. During VA site visits, or during compliance surveys, if VA reviews a case for a student who is pursuing dual majors, we should ensure the student is not enrolled in courses outside either major and that the courses are approved.

### **Minor**

A minor pursued as part of an approved major can be certified, even if the minor will require additional credit to graduate. Only courses required to complete the degree, including the minor, can be certified.

### **ROTC Programs**

A student in a Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) program is commissioned as an officer if he or she receives a degree. The objective of commissioned officer is a professional objective. Students in a ROTC program can be certified for courses required for their degree (including electives) **and** for courses required for the ROTC program.

## **Dual Objectives**

A student may want to pursue a dual objective. For example, a student may want to concurrently pursue two different degrees or pursue a degree and a certificate. A program of education may lead to more than one educational, professional, or vocational objective if all objectives pursued are generally recognized as being reasonably related to a single career field. The objectives do not necessarily have to be on the same professional or technical level.

Specific approval procedures vary among institution types and states. Check with your ELR about dual objective approvals. A combination of two approved degree programs at the same school does not need additional approval.

## **INCARCERATED CLAIMANTS (FELONY CONVICTIONS)** **(38 CFR 21.4135(m))**

### **Incarcerated Claimant Defined**

An **incarcerated claimant** is any Veteran, service member or Eligible Person incarcerated in a Federal, State, or local prison, jail or other penal institution **for a felony**.

### **Benefit Payments**

VA can authorize **only** the costs of **tuition, fees, necessary books, equipment, and supplies** for a claimant incarcerated under a **felony conviction** up to the statutory limits for these payments specific to a particular education benefit program. VA cannot make payments for tuition, fees, books, equipment, or supplies if another Federal State or local program pays these costs in full.

Convicted felons residing in halfway houses (also known as "residential re-entry centers") or participating in work-release programs can receive full benefits.

**NOTE:** Beneficiaries incarcerated for a misdemeanor should be paid full benefits as well.

### **Process to Certify Enrollment (applies to all chapters)**

The SCO must provide the following on VA Form 22-1999, Enrollment Certification, or VA Form 22-1999b, Notice of Change in Student Status (also known as *amendment* in VAONCE):

- Report tuition and fees for all benefit types **ONLY** in the field designated for tuition and fees
- The SCO must report "net charges" for chapter 33 claims and report "actual costs" for non-33 claims
- **DO NOT** include costs for books, equipment, and supplies with tuition and fees
- In the **Remarks** section of VA Form 22-1999 or 22-1999b
  - Indicate that the claimant is "Incarcerated"
  - Provide a breakdown of **all** costs reported
  - Itemize individual costs for each book, equipment and/or supply item
    - Exception: Consumable supplies (such as pens, pencils, notebooks, and paper) may be combined up to \$10.00 as a single line item
    - If necessary, add additional remark fields to enter itemized costs
  - Indicate any tuition, books, equipment, and supplies **with the exact payment amount paid in whole or part by a Federal, State or other governmental entity**
- Provide the student with an invoice and/or receipt for the purchase of books, equipment and supplies whenever possible, to justify funds issued to prison officials

**NOTE:** The Prison Official must notify VA of incarcerated claimants (felony incarceration) receiving education benefits by providing a VA Form [21-4193](#), Notice to Department to Veterans Affairs of Veteran or Beneficiary incarcerated in Penal Institution

## STUDY ABROAD

**Under chapter 33**, VA will pay:

- Home school's tuition and fees
- Books and supplies
- Monthly housing allowance based on the home school's address
- In order for VA to pay any additional fees specific to the Study Abroad program, the Study Abroad option must be required for graduation

VA will not pay:

- Costs related to travel (airfare, lodging and meals)
- Third party charges

Schools that charge a flat rate for all charges must be able to break down the amounts charged for tuition, lodging, meals, etc., so that the correct amount can be reported to VA. If the school is unable to provide a breakdown of the charges, no amount should be reported to VA.

Find more information about [Study Abroad](#) at the GI Bill webpage.

### Other Benefit Programs

- Benefits are paid on a monthly basis directly to the Veteran just like attendance at U.S. schools

## TUITION ASSISTANCE

Tuition Assistance (TA) is a Department of Defense (DoD) program. VA does not administer TA. TA rules vary by branch of service and can even vary between components within the branches depending on whether the service member is Active duty, Reserve, or National Guard.

If a student receives education benefits from VA and receives TA benefits from the military, duplication of benefits may be an issue. The issue might involve VA regulations, DoD regulations, military branch specific regulations or all three since VA, DoD, and the military branches all have regulations about receiving VA benefits and TA at the same time. Potential duplication issues are outlined below.

DoD has established a policy that Federal Tuition Assistance will not be authorized for classes for which a member is also receiving benefits under the Montgomery GI Bill® – Selected Reserve program (chapter 1606 of title 10, United States Code), Reserve Educational Assistance Program (chapter 1607 of title 10, United States Code), or any other GI Bill® program other than the Montgomery GI Bill® – Active Duty program (chapter 30 of title 38, United States Code) or the Post-9/11 GI Bill® program (chapter 33 of title 38, United States Code).

States Code).

## **Active Duty, National Guard, and Reserve service member Status Definitions**

### **Active Duty service member**

Individuals serving full-time duty in the Armed Forces (*NOTE: The term Armed Forces includes the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, Coast Guard, and the seven Selected Reserve components: Army Reserve, Navy Reserve, Air Force Reserve, Marine Corps Reserve, Coast Guard Reserve, Army National Guard and Air National Guard*)

### **Active Guard and Reserve (AGR)**

AGR soldiers are full-time military members of the National Guard or Reserve who support the National Guard and Reserves, even when the units are not mobilized. They are on either Title 10 or Title 32, full time duty AGR orders. AGRs may be transferred to Title 10 active duty status under several authorities when a unit is Federally mobilized or deployed.

### **Traditional Drilling Status - National Guard and Reserve members (M-day)**

A traditional drilling Reservist or Guardsman is an individual who serves in the National Guard or Reserves part-time. Their typical obligation is to drill one weekend a month and participate in 15 days Annual Training (AT) each year. These individuals are also referred to as M-day Guardsman or Reservists. From time to time, drilling members may be placed on active duty for training (ADT), special work assignments (ADSW), operational support (ADOS) and deployments as a member of the Reserve Component (RC) or members of National Guard Units can also be placed on full time National Guard duty (FTNGD) this duty is often considered active duty. However, the VA does not consider all “active duty” in the Reserves or National Guard “active duty” for the purposes of paying benefits. Always refer those questions directly to VA to make a determination on active duty status with the assistance of DoD/DHS.

### **Drilling Status - National Guard and Reserve Technicians (MilTechs)**

National Guard and Reserve MilTechs are Federal civilian employees where a condition of their employment is that they must also be members of the National Guard or Reserves. National Guard MilTechs are required to wear their uniform at work but Reserve MilTechs are not. Both have the same obligation as the traditional M-day soldier to drill one weekend a month and participate in 15 days Annual Training (AT) each year. MilTechs are not on “active duty” for the purpose of VA Education Benefits. Just like all members of the Ready Reserve, “active or drilling,” they may have a change in duty status.

## **Chapter 33 Recipients**

**Active Duty, National Guard, and Reserve service members** may receive chapter 33 benefits for the same courses for which they receive TA from the military. Depending on their mobilization time, National Guard and Reserve service members may have varying percentages of chapter 33 benefits ranging from 40 to 100%. Schools must deduct TA benefits from the net tuition and fees submitted to VA, and chapter 33 is used to pay toward the remaining out-of-pocket costs.

## **Chapter 30 Recipients**

**Active Duty service members and National Guard and Reserve AGRs** may not receive standard chapter 30 benefits for the same courses for which they receive TA from the military (with the exception of Top-up). If a student takes several courses, the student cannot receive chapter 30 benefits for the courses for which TA is paid, but the student can receive chapter 30 benefits for the courses for which TA isn't paid.

**Former Active Duty service member, who earned chapter 30 benefits while on Active Duty and are currently M-day members of the National Guard or Reserve**, may receive standard chapter 30 benefits for the same courses for which they receive TA from the military National Guard and Reserve (AGRs cannot).

### **Chapter 30 and “Top-up”**

Individuals on active duty who are eligible for chapter 30 and approved for TA are eligible for Top-up. What is Top-up? Top-up allows VA to pay the difference between what TA pays and the cost of the course. The law prohibits Active Duty students from receiving regular chapter 30 benefits and TA for the same course. Find more detailed information about [Tuition Assistance Top-up and applying for Top-up](#) on the GI Bill website.

**NOTE:** *Normal chapter 30 certification procedures should be followed for courses for which a National Guard or Reserve service member will receive TA if they are in M-Day status and not AGR status. Top-up only applies to individuals on Active Duty.*

### **Chapter 1606 and 1607 Recipients**

As noted in the beginning of this section, DoD will not authorize Federal Tuition Assistance for classes for which a member is also receiving benefits under the Montgomery GI Bill® – Selected Reserve program (chapter 1606 of title 10, United States Code), or the Reserve Educational Assistance Program (chapter 1607 of title 10, United States Code). National Guard and Reserve M-day service members can receive Federal TA for some classes and receive chapter 1606 or 1607 benefits for other classes (for which Federal TA isn't paid) during the same term. Also, students may receive chapter 1606 or 1607 benefits and State TA simultaneously.

### **Certifying Students Receiving Tuition Assistance**

**Chapter 33** - Students receiving TA should be certified as any other chapter 33 student, with the Federal and/or state TA benefits deducted from the net tuition and fee charges submitted to VA.

**Chapter 30** - DoD now requires GI Bill approval in order to qualify for Federal TA. Consequently, SCOs should certify those classes for students on Active Duty using the following additional procedures:

- Only include those classes for which Federal TA is paying for some, but not all, of the tuition and fee charges
- Only report the remaining “out-of-pocket” charges for tuition and fees, or a lesser amount if desired by the service member
- Enter “Top-Up” into the Remarks field

This will allow service members to receive reimbursement for the full out-of-pocket charges.

**NOTE:** *If a service member also wishes to receive “regular” chapter 30 benefits for enrollment in classes not supported by TA, you must certify those classes on a separate VA Form 22-1999.*

**Chapters 1606 and 1607** - School Certifying Officials should not certify any class to VA for benefits under chapter 1606 or 1607 if the member is receiving Tuition Assistance for the class. If a school, through the actions of the Tuition Assistance Administrator and the School Certifying Official (whether those are two separate individuals or one person functioning in both capacities), does certify a class for both Tuition Assistance and chapter 1606 or 1607 benefits, then the school and the service member may be subject to the

following DoD actions:

- Censure and possible suspension from the Tuition Assistance program for violations of the memorandum of understanding.
- Debt collection on the service member for the amount of Tuition Assistance paid.
- VA will not establish or collect any debts for the amounts paid under 1606 or 1607 due to concurrent receipt.

**Can I submit an Enrollment Certification (VA form 22-1999) for the same classes for which Federal Tuition Assistance is being paid?**

	Active Duty/AGR	Drilling Status
Chapter 33	Yes <sup>1</sup>	Yes <sup>1</sup>
Chapter 30	Yes <sup>2</sup>	Yes
Chapter 1606/1607	No	No
Chapter 1606/1607 less than ½-time	No	No
All other chapters	No	No

<sup>1</sup>The amount paid by Federal (as well as state) TA should be deducted in the net charges determination

<sup>2</sup>Follow the procedures detailed in this section.

**TUTORIAL ASSISTANCE**  
**(38 CFR [21.4236](#) and [21.9685](#))**

**Chapter 30, 32, 33, 35, and 1606**

Tutorial assistance may be paid to students under chapters 30, 33, 35 and 1606. Tutorial assistance is not authorized for chapter 1607. Tutorial assistance helps the student pay for necessary tutoring and is a supplement to the student's regular education benefit.

**Overview**

VA may pay tutorial assistance to a student receiving education benefits.

The monthly rate may not exceed the cost of tutoring or \$100. The maximum amount payable is \$1,200 per student per benefit program. There is no entitlement charge for the first \$600 under chapter 30 and 1606. There is no entitlement charge under chapter 33 or 35.

The student, tutor, and certifying official must complete an Application and Enrollment Certification for Individualized Tutorial Assistance ([VA Form 22-1990t](#)). The application may be submitted at the end of each month or combination of months. The application must be signed and dated on or after the date of the last tutoring session certified. VA can pay for tutorial assistance during the one-year period before the date VA receives the application.

## **Eligibility**

All of the following criterion must be met for a student to be eligible for tutorial assistance.

- The student must be in a post-secondary program  $\frac{1}{2}$ -time or more. For chapter 33, rate of pursuit must be "at least 50%."
- The student must have a deficiency in a course that is part of his or her approved program.
- The student must be enrolled in the course during the quarter, semester, or term in which the tutoring is received for the course. Tutoring may not occur between quarters or semesters.

## **School Certification**

When a SCO signs an Application and Enrollment Certification for Individualized Tutorial Assistance, he or she certifies that:

- Tutoring is essential to correct a deficiency. A letter from the course instructor should be put in the student's VA file. The letter must state that the student is deficient in the course and that individual tutoring is required to correct the deficiency.
- The tutor meets the college's qualifications. Ideally, the school maintains a list of approved tutors. The list should indicate the subjects a tutor is qualified to tutor and the hourly charge. Students should be assigned a tutor from the approved list. A tutor may not be a close relative of the student.
- The charges do not exceed the usual charges for tutoring.

# VET REP LISTING

VA will mail your School Certifying Official a report known as the Vet Rep Listing Report. This report may be issued weekly if payments were made during the previous week. Only those payments made directly to the schools will be shown on the listing. Chapter 33 payments issued to the claimant are not associated with any facility code; therefore, these payments are not on the Vet Rep Listing. The Vet Rep Listing will reflect the student's name, the term dates, the amount and whether payment was for tuition, fees or Yellow Ribbon. Below is a sample Vet Rep Listing.

```

VARO, ATTN:EDUC. LIASON REP.
PO BOX 4616
BUFFALO NY 14240

VA CERTIFYING OFFICAL

HULL COLLEGE
QUEENS GARDENS, HU1
3 DG
HULL, EAST YORKSHIRE 800

SCHOOL CODE 11105674

MAY 28, 2009

POST 9/11 G.I. BILL (CHAPTER 33)
TUITION AND YELLOW RIBBON PAYMENTS

*****
* L - E - G - E - N - D *
* *****
* CHAPTER-SUFFIX DESCRIPTION *
* -----
* 33Y YELLOW RIBBON *
* 33T TUITION & FEES *
* *****

*****
* REPORT BEGINS ON REVERSE SIDE *
*****
*DJDJE FORM=HOGBAR,MODIFY=CMEV2, END;
  
```

```

MAY 28, 2009
FACILITY 11105674 HULL COLLEGE HULL, EAST YORKSHIRE PAGE 1

FILE TRNG FIRST TWO ZIP BENEFIT
RO NUMBER AMT PAID PERIOD FOR TIME ADDRESS LINES CODE PAID

31 1457841387 8600.00 081509-121509 IKE T DOG 33T
| 86 DOGGY LANE 85007

31 234481486 13333.00 081509-121509 MOLLY S BOXER 33T
9842 DESERT AVE 87501

31 514077087 7808.82 100510-031510 SKID D ROWE 33Y
1122 FELINE PL 87501

*DJDJE SIDE=(NUFRONT,NOFFSET), FORM=NONE, MODIFY=CMEVI,END;
  
```

## **WORK-STUDY ([38 CFR 21.4145](#))**

### **Who is Eligible for the Work Study Program?**

- A student receiving VA education benefits under title 38 USC, chapters 30, 31, 32, 33, or 35; or Title 10 USC, chapter 1606, chapter 1607; and
- Attending school at the  $\frac{3}{4}$  time or full-time rate.

### **What Type of Work Does a Work Study Student Do?**

Students must be assigned to work sites that will permit them to perform VA related activities. These work sites include, but are not limited to: Regional Offices, VA Medical Centers, Vet Centers, VA Outpatient Clinics, National Cemeteries, and local education institutions.

If assigned to a non-VA work site, the student's primary employment responsibilities must be to perform VA related outreach assignments under the supervision of a VA employee.

***NOTE: In the case of a student receiving education assistance under title 10 USC, chapter 1606, activities relating to the administration of the chapter 1606 program at Department of Defense facilities are authorized.***

### **How Much Does VA Pay?**

Pay is based on the higher of the Federal minimum wage or the State/Local minimum wage. Work performed on or after the effective date of any minimum wage increase will be paid at the higher rate even though the contract may show a lower rate.

### **How Do Students Apply for the Work Study Program?**

Students can apply by completing [VA Form 22-8691](#), "Application for Work-Study Allowance" and submit to the appropriate Regional Processing Office.

### **How Many Students Can Work at a Work-Study Job Site?**

The number of work-study students allowed at any approved work site is determined by the VA and is based on the type of work site (VA Regional Office, VA hospital, School, Military base) and the amount of VA related work available based on the position description provided by the work-site.

**All School Certifying Officials are highly encouraged to disseminate this information so that Veterans are offered the opportunity to engage in the [Work Study Program](#).**

**SCHOOL FISCAL ISSUES,  
STUDENT  
OVERPAYMENTS, AND  
DEBT COLLECTION**

## CHAPTER 33 FISCAL ISSUES

Generally, overpayments of VA benefits are the responsibility of the student. However, there are instances under the Post-9/11 GI BILL (chapter 33) when an overpayment is created on a school and funds need to be refunded to VA.

### **Debts and Overpayments**

#### **A debt is established on a school when:**

- The student never attended any classes for which he or she was certified regardless of the reason for non-attendance
- The student completely withdraws **on** or before the first day of the term (FDOT)
- The school received payment for the wrong student
- The school received a duplicate payment
- The school submitted an amended enrollment certification, or an Amendment in VA-ONCE, and reported reduced tuition and fee charges, reduced Yellow Ribbon amount, or reduced both.
- The student died during the term, or before start of the term
- VA issued payment above the amount certified on the enrollment certification that was used to process the payment (VA data entry error)

#### **A debt is established on the student for Tuition/Fees/Yellow Ribbon when:**

- The student withdraws **after** the first day of the term
- The student reduces hours whether the reduction occurred before or during the term
- The school submitted a change in enrollment (on VA Form 22-1999b, or an Adjustment through VA-ONCE) and reported a reduction in tuition, fees, and/or Yellow Ribbon due to student action reducing or terminating training.
- If a student drops a course and adds a course so that there is no net change in training time, any change to tuition, fees, and/or Yellow Ribbon is a student debt

Schools must refund tuition and fee payments to students in accordance with their established refund policies so that the students can resolve any overpayments.

If a school debt has been established and your school believes that it is not appropriate, please notify VA through the [Internet Inquiry System](#) or by letter to the [RPO](#) (not the Agent Cashier).

## **SCHOOL OVERPAYMENTS**

When a school debt is created, the RPO of jurisdiction sends a letter notifying the school of the overpayment with details regarding the associated student, debt amount, and the reason for the creation of the debt. The debt is electronically submitted to VA's Debt Management Center (DMC). Within 3 days of receipt of the debt, DMC will issue the first Notice of Indebtedness (NOI) which provides 30 days to repay or dispute the debt. If the school doesn't contact DMC, a second NOI will be issued providing an additional 30 days for the school to respond, and it also informs the school of VA's obligation to report delinquent debts to the Treasury Offset Program (TOP) for further collection. If the school still does not contact DMC, a third NOI will be sent informing the school of VA's intent to refer the debt to TOP if no response is received within 60 days. If no response is received within 60 days, the debt will automatically be referred to TOP for further collection.

**NOTE:** *NOI's are mailed to the School Certifying Official address located in WEAMS.*

### **How does Treasury Offset Program (TOP) work for school debts?**

Once debts are referred to TOP, VA is no longer collecting the debt and control of the collection is managed by Department of Treasury. The TOP process will capture funds payable to the school issued by other government entities. When an offset occurs Treasury will also assess a \$17.00 administrative fee. Once funds are captured, they are forwarded to DMC who is responsible for applying the funds to the school debt. Additional information on TOP, and contact information, can be found at the following website

[http://fiscal.treasury.gov/fsservices/gov/debtColl/dms/top/debt\\_top.htm](http://fiscal.treasury.gov/fsservices/gov/debtColl/dms/top/debt_top.htm)

### **How can a school dispute a debt?**

Schools must contact DMC to dispute a debt. The best way to submit a dispute is to email DMC at [dmcedu.vbaspl@va.gov](mailto:dmcedu.vbaspl@va.gov). Schools may also call DMC's toll-free number and speak to a customer service representative or mail a written dispute to DMC. DMC's contact information can be found at: <http://www.va.gov/debtman/>

DMC will automatically suspend collection of a school debt if a dispute is received prior to referral to TOP. The school will be notified of VA's decision regarding the dispute, and DMC will continue the collection action if appropriate.



DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS  
ATLANTA REGIONAL OFFICE  
P.O. BOX 100022  
DECATUR GA 30031-7022

## Letter 1

MARCH 5, 2013

ALTERED STATE UNIVERSITY  
ATTN: SCHOOL CERTIFYING OFFICIAL  
101 NORTH MAIN ST  
ANYTOWN, ST 12345

316/22  
GIJOE

Dear School Certifying Official:

We are writing to notify you about an overpayment of Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits for Gerald I. Joe. Please ensure your Bursar's Office (or Financial Business Office) receives a copy of this letter.

Our records show VA released payment(s) to your school as follows:

Certified Enrollment Period	Tuition and Fees	Yellow Ribbon
January 9, 2013 - May 1, 2013	\$ 2,682.50	\$ 6,338.75

ALTERED STATE UNIVERSITY must return the payment(s) for enrollment beginning January 9, 2013 for the reason(s) below:

- The school submitted an amended 1999 showing a reduction in tuition and fee charges or a reduction in Yellow Ribbon amount, or both.

### How Much Is Owed

Total overpayment of **\$537.50** for ALTERED STATE UNIVERSITY during the term that began on **January 9, 2013** was determined as follows:

- **Yellow Ribbon Program:** We paid \$6,338.75 for the enrollment; however, ALTERED STATE UNIVERSITY is only due \$5,801.25. The Yellow Ribbon Program overpayment is \$537.50.

### Returning Funds

Our Debt Management Center will send you additional information about the amount of the debt and how to repay it.

**Questions**

- If you returned the funds to VA before receipt of this letter and wish to confirm the debt has been resolved, please call our VA Education Call Center at 1-888-GI Bill-1 (1-888-442-4551).
- If you have questions about the reason for this debt, please call our VA Education Call Center at 1-888-GI-Bill-1 (1-888-442-4551). If you use the Telecommunications Device for the Deaf (TDD), the Federal number is 711.
- If you have questions about how to repay this debt, please call our Debt Management Center toll-free at 1-800-827-0648.

Sincerely,

Education Officer

cc: Gerald I. Joe



**DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS**  
**Debt Management Center**  
 Bishop Henry Whipple Federal Building  
 P.O. Box 11930  
 St. Paul, MN 55111-0930

1<sup>st</sup> Collection Letter School  
 Effective March 1, 2013

Letter 2

File Number:  
 Payee Number:  
 Person Entitled:  
 Deduction Code:  
 E-Mail Address: [dmcedu.vbaspl@va.gov](mailto:dmcedu.vbaspl@va.gov)  
 (Please provide the information above  
 on any e-mail correspondence)

The Department of Veterans Affairs recently notified you that the education benefits for  
 were adjusted. As a result, a debt was created for \$  
 due to non-entitlement. Since the funds for this enrollment were sent directly to the school, we  
 ask that you return these funds.

**WHAT ARE YOUR OPTIONS?**

- You can pay the debt in full by check or money order. Make your check or money order payable to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and mail in the enclosed envelope with the remittance slip from the bottom of this letter. Please include the student's name and VA file number or Social Security number on your check or money order to ensure proper credit.
- You can pay using a major credit card, debit card or electronic funds transfer from your savings or checking account. You can do this on-line by visiting our website, [www.pay.va.gov](http://www.pay.va.gov), or by calling our toll-free number 1-800-827-0648.
- You may send us a payment from any nearby Western Union Agent location, or by visiting [www.westernunion.com](http://www.westernunion.com). The Western Union Agent or the website will require a host city code, which is "VADMC". You will need the code to complete the transaction.

**WHERE DO YOU CALL IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS?**

If you have questions regarding payment of the debt, you should contact the VA Debt Management Center at 1-800-827-0648. Our office hours are 7:30 AM to 6:00 PM Central Time. Please note that we experience our highest call volumes on Mondays and throughout the first week of each month. By avoiding these peak times, you will minimize your wait time. Your call may be monitored to ensure quality information. You can also contact us via e-mail at [dmcedu.vbaspl@va.gov](mailto:dmcedu.vbaspl@va.gov). If you have questions regarding specific Veterans or payments, please submit a separate inquiry for each.

FOR PROPER CREDIT TO YOUR ACCOUNT, PLEASE DETACH AND RETURN WITH YOUR PAYMENT

Department of Veterans Affairs	<b>PAYMENT REMITTANCE</b>
--------------------------------	---------------------------

* FILE NO. ▶		AMOUNT ENCLOSED	ENTER YOUR CURRENT ADDRESS BELOW ONLY IF THE ONE ABOVE IS INCORRECT. PLEASE INCLUDE YOUR ZIP CODE.
PAYEE NO. ▶		\$	
PERSON ENTITLED ▶		YOUR TELEPHONE NO. (Include Area Code)	
DEDUCTION CODE ▶			
* Please include this number on your check or money order.			

FL 4-509, TCD 2012



DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS  
 Debt Management Center  
 Bishop Henry Whipple Federal Building  
 P.O. Box 11930  
 St. Paul, MN 55111-0930

2<sup>nd</sup> Collection Letter School  
 Effective March 1, 2013

Letter 3

File Number:  
 Payee Number:  
 Person Entitled:  
 Deduction Code:  
 E-Mail Address: [dmcedu.vbaspl@va.gov](mailto:dmcedu.vbaspl@va.gov)  
 (Please provide the information above  
 on any e-mail correspondence)

You were previously notified that education benefits for were adjusted resulting in the creation of a debt. The balance on that account is now \$ . The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) notified schools in April 2009 and again in January 2011 of circumstances where schools would be held responsible for refunding tuition, fees and Yellow Ribbon payments to the VA. Those circumstances are summarized on the back of this letter. If you already sent funds to the VA for payment of this account, please advise this office where you sent the payment, and provide the amount and the date of the payment. If you have a copy of the cancelled check, please provide this office with a copy of the front and back of the check. If you have not returned the funds to the VA and sent the funds to the Veteran in error, you are responsible for the debt. Refunding money to the Veteran does not automatically transfer your liability of the debt to the Veteran unless you specifically followed the instructions on the back of this letter. If you dispute the debt, you should explain why you refunded monies to the Veteran and did not return them to the VA. Your payment options are listed on the back of this letter.

**WHAT WILL HAPPEN IF YOU IGNORE THIS LETTER?**

We may refer your account to the Department of the Treasury for further collection, which will include offset of any federal payment to which you are entitled. In addition, the Department of the Treasury may refer your account to private collection agencies, which will result in additional fees, interest and penalties being added to the balance.

**WHERE DO YOU CALL IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS REGARDING THIS LETTER?**

If you have questions regarding payment of the debt, you should contact the VA Debt Management Center at 1-800-827-0648. Our office hours are 7:30 AM to 6:00 PM Central Time. Please note that we experience our highest call volumes on Mondays and throughout the first week of each month. By avoiding these peak times, you will minimize your wait time. Your call may be monitored to ensure quality information. You can also contact us via e-mail at [dmcedu.vbaspl@va.gov](mailto:dmcedu.vbaspl@va.gov). If you have questions regarding specific Veterans or payments, please submit a separate inquiry for each.

Chief, Operations Division

FOR PROPER CREDIT TO YOUR ACCOUNT, PLEASE DETACH AND RETURN WITH YOUR PAYMENT

Department of Veterans Affairs	<b>PAYMENT REMITTANCE</b>
--------------------------------	---------------------------

* FILE NO. ▶		AMOUNT ENCLOSED	ENTER YOUR CURRENT ADDRESS BELOW ONLY IF THE ONE ABOVE IS INCORRECT. PLEASE INCLUDE YOUR ZIP CODE.
PAYEE NO. ▶		0	
PERSON ENTITLED ▶		YOUR TELEPHONE NO. (Include Area Code)	
DEDUCTION CODE ▶			
* Please include this number on your check or money order.			

FI 4-573, FEB 2013



**DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS**  
**Debt Management Center**  
 Bishop Henry Whipple Federal Building  
 P.O. Box 11930  
 St. Paul, MN 55111-0930

3<sup>rd</sup> Collection Letter School  
 Effective March 1, 2013

**Letter 4**

File Number:  
 Payee Number:  
 Person Entitled:  
 Deduction Code:  
 E-Mail Address: [dmcedu.vbaspl@va.gov](mailto:dmcedu.vbaspl@va.gov)  
 (Please provide the information above  
 on any e-mail correspondence)

**You have a delinquent student tuition debt for** \_\_\_\_\_ **with the Department of Veterans Affairs.** The balance is \$ \_\_\_\_\_. We have tried to contact you on numerous occasions to satisfy this debt. If you do not pay the balance in full or establish a satisfactory payment agreement within 60 days, we will refer your debt to the Department of the Treasury for offset under the Treasury Offset Program (TOP).

Under TOP, the Department of the Treasury will collect this debt by reducing or withholding Federal and State payment(s), not protected by law, to which you are entitled. This offset process is authorized by the Debt Collection Improvement Act of 1996. (VA benefits on behalf of a student are typically protected by law.)

Before we refer your debt to TOP, we are required to tell you that you have the right to inspect and copy records related to the debt. If you have questions about the repayment process, please call our office on the toll-free number shown below.

You must pay the debt in full or establish a satisfactory payment plan with our office within 60 days of the date of this letter to avoid referral to TOP. Please include the remittance stub at the bottom of this letter with any payment you send to our office. If you have any questions regarding the debt or actions you need to take to prevent referral, please call us toll-free at 1-800-827-0648 or email us at [dmcedu.vbaspl@va.gov](mailto:dmcedu.vbaspl@va.gov). Our normal business hours are Monday through Friday from 7:30 am to 12:15 pm and 12:45 pm to 6:00 pm Central Time. We experience our highest call volumes on Mondays and through out the first week of the month. By avoiding these peak times, you will minimize your wait time. Your call may be monitored to ensure quality information.

Chief, Operations Division

FOR PROPER CREDIT TO YOUR ACCOUNT, PLEASE DETACH AND RETURN WITH YOUR PAYMENT

Department of Veterans Affairs	<b>PAYMENT REMITTANCE</b>
--------------------------------	---------------------------

* FILE NO.	▶	AMOUNT ENCLOSED	ENTER YOUR CURRENT ADDRESS BELOW ONLY IF THE ONE ABOVE IS INCORRECT. PLEASE INCLUDE YOUR ZIP CODE.
PAYEE NO.	▶	\$	
PERSON ENTITLED	▶	YOUR TELEPHONE NO. (Include Area Code)	
DEDUCTION CODE	▶		
* Please include this number on your check or money order.			

FL 4-972, SEP 2012

## **Returning Funds to VA**

Schools should wait to refund payments to VA until a collection notice from the VA Debt Management Center (DMC) is received. In those instances where schools are responsible for making a remittance to VA for excess Tuition, Fees, or Yellow Ribbon payments, schools may make a refund to VA in one of five options.

**NOTE:** If making a payment directly to VA (see options 1, 2, and 3 below).

1. Schools may send a check, payable to the **US Department of Veterans Affairs**, to the VA Debt Management Center. It is essential that schools include the student's name and VA file number when making a payment to VA. If you have received a collection notice from DMC, VA requests the tear off sheet from the collection notice be included with the payment. The address to the VA Debt Management Center is:

**VA Debt Management Center  
Bishop Henry Whipple Federal Building  
P.O. Box 11930  
St Paul, MN 55111-0930**

2. Schools may make a payment using a major credit card, debit card, or by electronic funds transfer from a checking or savings account. You may do this on-line by visiting the DMC website [www.pay.va.gov](http://www.pay.va.gov), or by calling the DMC toll free number at 1-800-827-0648. Schools paying on-line or by phone will be required to provide details from the DMC collection notice.
3. Schools may also send a payment to VA from any Western Union Agent location, or by visiting [www.westernunion.com](http://www.westernunion.com). The Western Union Agent or the website will require a host city code, which is "VADMC". You will need the code to complete the transaction.
4. Should the school receive payment in the form of a paper check, the school may return the **uncashed Treasury check** to:

**U.S. Department of the Treasury  
Financial Management Service  
P.O. Box 51318  
Philadelphia, PA 19115-6316**

**NOTE:** To avoid delays in the processing of the uncashed Treasury check, please alert DMC by calling the toll-free number at 1-800-827-0648 or by emailing DMC at [dmcedu.vbaspl@va.gov](mailto:dmcedu.vbaspl@va.gov).

5. Should the school receive payment via Electronic Funds Transfer, schools may refund VA electronically via Automated Clearing House (ACH). To do so, schools shall request their banks return the full payment amount using an R31 ACH return code. Each bank has its own procedures and time constraints for returning direct deposit payments. Please speak with your bank's representative to obtain specific instructions on this process.
6. For additional information about school debt, you can contact DMC via email at [dmcedu.vbaspl@va.gov](mailto:dmcedu.vbaspl@va.gov), by telephone at 1-800-827-0648, or by fax at 612-970-5782.

Refunds to VA not submitted in one of the approved methodologies may result in delays in debt processing. These delays may result in erroneous collection notices to students and/or schools and possibly referral of the debt to private collection agencies and the credit reporting bureaus.

## **LOST CHECKS**

If a student does not receive a VA education check or EFT deposit that he/she believes was issued, the VA should be called immediately on our toll-free number at 1-888-442-4551. Education Case Managers can check the date and amount of any VA education check issued to a student and whether it has been returned. If a check or EFT payment was issued, but not received within three business days from the date of the check, then we can initiate tracer action with the U.S. Treasury Department (VA education checks are issued by the U.S. Treasury Disbursement Office in Philadelphia, PA). Once Treasury has completed its review, the following action will be taken, as appropriate:

If the check is not cashed, a courtesy disbursement check will be issued to the student.

If Treasury finds the check to have been negotiated (cashed), they will send a photocopy (front and back), a claim form and instructions on how to complete the form. The student will return the completed form to the address provided (in Hyattsville, Maryland). A Treasury claim form review could take over six weeks. The results of their review will determine if Treasury replaces the check. If the student claims non-receipt of a benefit check, is issued a courtesy disbursement check, and the original check is received, only one of the checks should be cashed. The other check should be marked "VOID" and returned to the U.S. Treasury in Austin, Texas, immediately. If both checks are negotiated, VA will then be responsible for collecting this dual payment from future benefits.

## **STUDENT OVERPAYMENTS**

When an overpayment is created, a first demand letter is sent notifying the student of the overpayment. When the letter is received, the student should immediately contact VA regarding the debt. The response should be sent (in writing) directly to the office sending the letter, unless otherwise stated. Responding immediately and reaching a valid repayment agreement in a timely manner could prevent future benefits from being withheld. Due process (rights to appeal or waiver) as well as time limits for each step in the process is given in the first demand letter.

Time limits - A request for waiver must be received no later than 180 days (6 months) from the date of the initial notification of the overpayment. If a waiver request is received within 30 days of the first demand (notification) letter, no benefits will be withheld until the decision is made. If benefits were withheld and the waiver request was found to be timely, a refund will be issued. If a waiver is granted, any funds that have been applied will be refunded. NOTE: If a waiver is requested after the first 30 days, but within 180 days, offset of benefits will continue. If a waiver is granted, the amount collected will be refunded.

- Compromise offers can be made any time. The offer must be a lump sum offer, in writing, and accompanied by a current Financial Status Report (form available through our toll-free telephone number).
- If a waiver is denied, the student will receive a written notification of the decision that will also indicate when future benefits will start being withheld. An appeal to a waiver denial

must be made within one year from the date of the denial letter. Withholding of benefits will continue while this issue is pending.

- Second and third demand letters and one warning letter are sent before referrals are made to nationwide credit bureaus.
- Second and third demand letters and two warning letters are sent before referral to the Internal Revenue Service to offset the debt from any federal payments being made to the claimant.

**DEBT MANAGEMENT CENTER (DMC)**

**P.O. Box 11930  
St. Paul, MN 55111-0930  
1-800-827-0648**

[www.va.gov/debtman](http://www.va.gov/debtman)

Business hours are 7:30 am to 12:15 pm and 12:45 pm to 6:00 pm, Central Time. Mondays and the first business day of the month are always the busiest. The best times to call on those days are 10:30 am to 12:15 pm and 1:15 pm to 3:00 pm, Central Time.

If you cannot reach the DMC by phone, try later in the day or consider e-mailing:

[dmc.ops@va.gov](mailto:dmc.ops@va.gov).

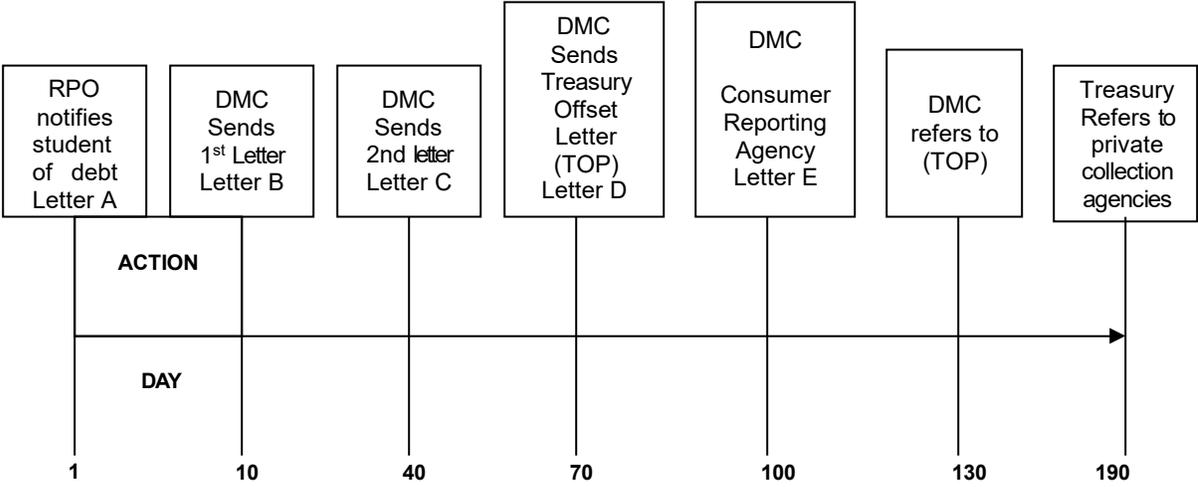
There is specific information about debt resolution on the DMC web-site.

**Committee on Waivers and Compromises**

The Committee on Waivers and Compromises (COWC) has the authority to consider waiver of all student benefit overpayments.

Should a Veteran/claimant have an overpayment and desire waiver consideration, a request must be received at VA no later than six months from the date of initial notification of the overpayment. When an overpayment is established, written notification is sent to the Veteran/claimant detailing the information needed to be considered for waiver. Briefly, the request must be in writing, specifically stating the reasons for the waiver request, accompanied with a financial status report listing all income, living expenses, installment contracts, assets, etc. The request should be sent to the [St Louis Regional Processing Office](#).

# STUDENT DEBT COLLECTION TIMELINE



This timeline reflects letters sent by VA and Debt Management Center Reference A-E.



DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS  
810 VERMONT AVE. NW  
WASHINGTON DC 20420

JANUARY 28, 2011

Letter A

101/22

Dear Mr.

We reduced your benefits for the term(s) that began on the date(s) below. We did this because you or your school sent us a noticed that you reduced your training.

- September 9, 2009 at University

### What You Need to Know About Your Overpayment

You were overpaid for the following enrollment(s):

- Beginning September 1, 2009, and ending December 1, 2009 at University

This is a debt you must repay.

Our Debt Management Center will send you information about the amount of the debt, how to repay it, and your rights regarding your debt. If you have questions about your debt, please call our Debt Management Center toll-free at 1-800-827-0648, or write to:

Debt Management Center (389)  
Bishop Henry Whipple Federal Building  
P. O. Box 11930  
St. Paul, MN 55111-1930

### How Much Do You Owe

Your total overpayment of **\$8,500** for University during the term that began on **May 5, 2010** was determined as follows:

- **Tuition and Fees:** We paid your school \$15,000.00 for 12 credit hours on your behalf, however, you are only due \$7,000.00 based on your current course load. Your Tuition and Fees overpayment is \$8,000.00.

LTSver5.0 SR1

- **Yellow Ribbon Program:** We paid your school \$1,000.00 for 12 credit hours on your behalf; however, you are only due \$500.00 based on your current course load. Your Yellow Ribbon Program overpayment is \$500.00.

**If You Have Questions or Need Assistance**

If you have questions or need assistance, contact us. See the "If You Need Help" enclosure for contact information. If you disagree with us, you have the right to appeal our decision. You must write and tell us why you disagree. The enclosed VA Form 4107 explains your rights.

Sincerely,

Education Officer

Enclosures: VA Form 4107  
If You Need Help

cc: American Legion



DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS  
 Debt Management Center  
 Bishop Henry Whipple Federal Building  
 P.O. Box 11930  
 St. Paul, MN 55111-0930

Letter B

File Number:  
 Payee Number:  
 Person Entitled:  
 Deduction Code:  
 E-Mail Address: [dmc.ops@va.gov](mailto:dmc.ops@va.gov)  
 (Please provide the information above  
 on any e-mail correspondence)

The Department of Veterans Affairs recently sent you a letter explaining that your entitlement to benefits had changed. As a result, you were paid \$ more than you were entitled to receive.

**WHAT ARE YOUR OPTIONS?**

- You can pay the debt in full, by check or money order. Payment instructions are on the back of this letter. We also accept VISA, MasterCard, American Express, Discover, and Western Union "Quick Collect". Please call our toll-free number for more information.
- If you cannot make payment in full, we will work with you to establish a monthly payment schedule to clear the debt within a reasonable time frame.

**WHAT ARE YOUR RIGHTS?**

You have the right to dispute the debt and the right to request waiver. If you request waiver, you also have the right to request an oral hearing. Information regarding these options is on the enclosed document entitled, **Notice of Rights and Obligations**. Read it carefully.

**WHERE DO YOU CALL IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS?**

You can contact this office by calling toll-free, 1-800-827-0648. Our office hours are 7:30 AM to 6:00 PM Central Time. Your call may be monitored to ensure quality information.

FOR PROPER CREDIT TO YOUR ACCOUNT, PLEASE DETACH AND RETURN WITH YOUR PAYMENT

	<b>PAYMENT REMITTANCE</b>
--	---------------------------

* FILE NO. ▶		AMOUNT ENCLOSED	ENTER YOUR CURRENT ADDRESS BELOW ONLY IF THE ONE ABOVE IS INCORRECT. PLEASE INCLUDE YOUR ZIP CODE.
PAYEE NO. ▶		\$	
PERSON ENTITLED ▶		YOUR TELEPHONE NO. (include Area Code)	
DEDUCTION CODE ▶			
* Please include this number on your check or money order.			

4-4134, OCT 2010



DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS  
 Debt Management Center  
 Bishop Henry Whipple Federal Building  
 P.O. Box 11930  
 St. Paul, MN 55111-0930

**Letter C**

File Number:  
 Payee Number:  
 Person Entitled:  
 Deduction Code:  
 E-Mail Address: dmc.ops@va.gov  
 (Please provide the information above  
 on any e-mail correspondence)

The Department of Veterans Affairs paid you benefits to which you were not entitled. We asked you to pay the debt in full or contact this office to establish a repayment plan. The balance on your account is \$ \_\_\_\_\_ which may include interest and administrative costs, if applicable.

**WHAT WILL HAPPEN IF YOU IGNORE THIS LETTER?**

We will report your delinquent balance to credit reporting agencies within 60 days from the date of this letter. This will affect your ability to obtain credit in the future. We will also refer your delinquent balance to the Department of Treasury for further collection, which will include offset of any federal payment to which you are entitled. This includes tax refunds, social security benefits, and salary or retirement benefits. Any future VA benefits to which you may become entitled will be withheld to satisfy this debt.

**HOW CAN YOU AVOID THIS ACTION?**

You can pay the debt in full or make arrangements to pay the debt in monthly installments. To be considered for monthly installments, you will need to complete and return the enclosed Financial Status Report in the envelope provided. Make sure you fill in Item 24B. To pay your debt, make your check or money order payable to the U. S. Department of Veterans Affairs and write your VA file number or social security number on the check to ensure proper credit. Include the remittance slip from the bottom of this letter with your payment and mail it in the enclosed envelope. We also accept VISA, MasterCard, American Express, Discover and Western Union "Quick Collect". Call us for information regarding payment by credit card or "Quick Collect". Our toll-free telephone number is 1-800-827-0648.

Other options for eliminating your debt are explained on the back of this letter.

FOR PROPER CREDIT TO YOUR ACCOUNT, PLEASE DETACH AND RETURN WITH YOUR PAYMENT

Department of Veterans Affairs	PAYMENT REMITTANCE
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* FILE NO.	▶	AMOUNT ENCLOSED	ENTER YOUR CURRENT ADDRESS BELOW ONLY IF THE ONE ABOVE IS INCORRECT. PLEASE INCLUDE YOUR ZIP CODE.
PAYEE NO.	▶	\$	
PERSON ENTITLED	▶	YOUR TELEPHONE NO. (Include Area Code)	
DEDUCTION CODE	▶		
* Please include this number on your check or money order.			

4-615a EP 2010



DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS  
 Debt Management Center  
 Bishop Henry Whipple Federal Building  
 P.O. Box 11930  
 St. Paul, MN 55111-0930

Letter D

File Number:  
 Payee Number:  
 Person Entitled:  
 Deduction Code:  
 E-Mail Address: [dmc.ops@va.gov](mailto:dmc.ops@va.gov)  
 (Please provide the information above  
 on any e-mail correspondence)

**You have a delinquent debt with the Department of Veterans Affairs.**  
 The balance is \$ \_\_\_\_\_ plus interest and administrative costs, if applicable. We have tried to contact you on numerous occasions to satisfy this debt. If you do not pay the balance in full or establish a satisfactory payment agreement within 60 days, we will refer your debt to the Department of the Treasury for offset under the Treasury Offset Program (TOP).

Under TOP, the Department of the Treasury will collect this debt by reducing or withholding Federal and State payment(s) to which you are entitled. This offset process is authorized by the Debt Collection Improvement Act of 1996.

Before we refer your debt to TOP, we are required to tell you that you have the right to inspect and copy records related to your debt. When your debt was first established, you were notified of your right to dispute the existence or amount of the debt and your right to request waiver of collection. You were also advised of the time frame allowed for pursuing these actions. If you have questions about the appellate process or your status within that process, call this office immediately on the toll-free number shown below.

You must pay the debt in full or establish a satisfactory payment plan with this office within 60 days of the date of this letter to avoid referral to TOP. You have the option of submitting a compromise offer if you cannot pay the total debt. We have the authority to accept a lesser amount in full settlement of the debt but we normally require a lump sum payment. A compromise offer must be submitted in writing and include a completed Financial Status Report which is enclosed with this letter. Please include the remittance stub at the bottom of this letter with any payments you send to this office. If you have any questions regarding your debt or actions you need to take to prevent referral, please call us toll-free at 1-800-827-0648.

Chief, Operations Division  
 Enclosure

FOR PROPER CREDIT TO YOUR ACCOUNT, PLEASE DETACH AND RETURN WITH YOUR PAYMENT



PAYMENT REMITTANCE

* FILE NO.	▶	AMOUNT ENCLOSED	ENTER YOUR CURRENT ADDRESS BELOW ONLY IF THE ONE ABOVE IS INCORRECT. PLEASE INCLUDE YOUR ZIP CODE.
PAYEE NO.	▶	\$	
PERSON ENTITLED	▶	YOUR TELEPHONE NO. <small>Include Area Code</small>	
DEDUCTION CODE	▶		
* Please include this number on your check or money order.			

PL 4-503a, JUN 2010



# **MISCELLANEOUS INFORMATION**

## COMPLIANCE SURVEYS

The law requires that periodic surveys be conducted at educational institutions. The two main purposes of these surveys are to (1) ensure that VA payments going to the school and students enrolled at the school are based upon proper and correct enrollment information as furnished by the school to VA; and, (2) assist school and training officials and students in understanding the requirements of the law in order to prevent deficiencies or violations which could develop because of misunderstandings or misinterpretations of the law.

Compliance Surveys are usually conducted on-site however, under certain conditions, a remote survey review option could be used. The remote survey option is intended to make more efficient use of time and funds expended for travel while conducting compliance survey reviews. Remote reviews are intended to supplement, rather than replace, personal contact.

### Remote Survey Option

A remote survey review can be conducted if the following circumstances are met:

- a) The IHL/NCD has been surveyed at least once on-site
- b) The facility agrees to complete the review remotely
- c) The facility agrees to submit copies of specified documents regarding each student to be surveyed
- d) Documents submitted by school must be delivered with a tracking device

## REVIEW OF SCHOOL RECORDS BY VA AND SAA

Schools that have sought and obtained approval to provide training under title 38, United States Code, are required by law ([38 U.S.C. 3690\(c\)](#) and [38 CFR 21.4209](#)) to maintain certain records and to make these records available for examination by authorized representatives of the government. All records and accounts of schools pertaining to Veterans and eligible persons, as well as the records of other students that are necessary to determine compliance with the law, must be available for examination.

The law ([38 U.S.C. 3690\(c\)](#)) provides that records and accounts must be made available for review by authorized representatives of the government "NOTWITHSTANDING ANY OTHER PROVISION OF LAW." The effect of this provision is to allow VA to examine necessary records that may be restricted under laws regarding privacy of student records such as PL 93-380 (Buckley Amendment) or other provisions of the law. Failure to make records available may result in discontinuance of educational assistance benefits.

Records of an institution or establishment must be retained for a period of at least **THREE YEARS** following the termination of the enrollment of an eligible individual, or longer if requested by the VA or Government Accountability Office (GAO). Any institution offering courses approved for the enrollment of eligible individuals must maintain a complete record and copies of all advertising, sales, or enrollment materials utilized by or on behalf of the institution during the preceding 12-month period.

Schools must maintain a written record of the student's previous education and training, grant appropriate credit and shorten the course proportionately. The amount of credit granted should have been reported by the non-accredited school on the student's Enrollment Certification

A school's records, such as applications, transcripts, grade reports, and school enrollment records, will be reviewed during a compliance visit to ensure that:

- The specific curriculum in which a student is enrolled was correctly reported
- Changes in credit hours were correctly and promptly reported
- The last date of attendance was correctly and promptly reported
- Unsatisfactory progress (based upon grades or grade point average required or other approved progress criteria, and approved length of course) was correctly and promptly reported
- Certifications of 85 percent enrollment restriction ([38 CFR 21.4201](#)) are verified
- Certifications of two-year period of operation for branch locations are verified

### **Finance Records Review for Chapter 33:**

- Tuition and fees paid by the VA to schools (chapter 33) and by VA students (all other GI Bill® programs) are accurate and not more than those paid by non-VA students. The charges to VA students for tuition and fees may not be more than the charges to non-VA students in the same program. Any discount or payment plan which is available to non-VA students but not available to VA students, and which reduces the tuition and fees for non-VA students is, in effect, an overcharge to VA students
- Tuition and fees refunds, in accordance with school policy, were given to students who discontinued courses
- School procedures for care and delivery of advance payment checks meet requirements of the law
- Procedures for delivery of other education assistance checks, mailed to a school address do not violate power-of-attorney restrictions

In addition, work-study records may be examined to ensure that student services are related to the preparation of VA paperwork and the hours worked have been properly reported; tutorial assistance records to ensure recipients of tutorial assistance have academic deficiencies, tutors are known by the school to be qualified, and charges for tutoring are reasonable and customary.

If a compliance survey identifies serious discrepancies in reporting or record keeping requirements, payments of educational assistance allowance benefits to students may be discontinued. ([38 CFR 21.4210](#))

## **COMMON REPORTING ERRORS AND PITFALLS**

### **General Issues**

- New Certifying Officials ensure that a VA Form 22-8794, Designation of Certifying Official, is submitted to VA and training provided
- Lack of internal controls by SCO for monitoring pursuit during terms to meet the 30-day reporting timeliness
- Lack of relationship between SCO and Business Office regarding chapter 33 tuition and fee evidence necessary for certifications and changes
- SCO has no institution access to student financial records in Business Office
- SCO concerns on providing institutional records (academic and financial) for VA and non-VA students due to Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

### **Enrollment certification issues**

- Courses which combine residential and distance learning incorrectly certified assistance
- Non-standard terms scheduled with quarter or semester are not separately certified when student is also enrolled in other credits for the full-term
- Certifying remedial or deficiency credits when pursuit is on-line
- Certifying subjects that do not apply to the degree or diploma program
- Tuition and fees are not confirmed or verified (sources must be student account ledger) with Business Office before certifying enrollment to VA
- Insufficient or no academic evaluation for prior credit transfer
- Concurrent enrollment issue – no documentation at parent institution to grant secondary institution subject; parent institution not obtaining grade reports from secondary institution

### **Changes in enrollment issues**

- Failure to report credit load reduction (withdrawals) within 30 days
- Failure to report end of term non-punitive grades
- Failure to report unearned F grades and effective dates
- Failure to report when student cancels registration or completely withdraws during a term

### **Content and Organization of VA Student Folders**

We recommend the following format for VA student folders. This format isn't mandatory, but it does cover everything necessary for accurate certification. Contents should be in chronological order. This order will make it more convenient for anyone working with the folder.

#### **Left Side**

- Copy of student's application for admission to the school
- Copies of transcripts from all schools previously attended and your school's transfer evaluations
- A summary grade report of the student's progress at your facility
- Copies of degree plans for all certified objectives with all credit
- posted Tuition and fee schedule and student billing statements
- Copy of remedial and deficiency test scores and justification for any remedial and deficiency courses certified to VA
- Course substitution form(s)
- Course elective approval(s) when applicable
- Copies of drop slips and withdrawal forms when applicable
- Other school documentation

#### **Right Side**

- Copies of VA Form [22-1990](#) or [22-5490](#) if available
- Copies of VA Form [22-1995](#) or [22-5495](#) if available
- Copies of all enrollment certifications (VA Form 22-1999)
- Copies of all notices of changes in student status (VA Form 22-1999b)
- Any correspondence from the Department of Veterans Affairs, which you may have received for the student

## IMPROPER PAYMENTS ELIMINATION AND RECOVERY ACT (IPERA)

As part of the Improper Payments Elimination and Recovery Act (IPERA), VA Education Service performs quarterly audits of randomly selected individuals receiving VA benefits. Part of the audit requires review of supporting documents for student enrollment certification submitted.

**NOTE:** this is **NOT** an audit against your school, however, against individual student records requested by VA.

The e-mail example provided below is what you will receive when an IPERA request is required from your school. You must provide all requested evidence via email.

### Sample e-mail you will receive:

Dear School Certifying Official:

As part of the Improper Payments Elimination and Recovery Act (IPERA), VA Education Service performs quarterly audits of randomly selected Veterans. Part of the audit requires review of supporting documents for enrollment certifications submitted. Please note that we are not auditing your school, just the individual listed below. Please review the file for:

Sample ID	Name of Student	Last 4	RO	Term	Facility Code	Name of School
FY16Q4ED_33_160						

Per [38 CFR 21.4209](#), Examination of Records, we request you send **one** PDF for the above student that includes the following for the specified term:

- Copy of the transcript
- Billing/financial records
- Attendance records (attendance, if taken, for the referenced term)

Identifying information for the student needs to be on the documents submitted (student last name and last four of social security number).

Please include the Sample ID Number, listed above, in the Subject Line of your email and return to [22Quality.VBAVACO@va.gov](mailto:22Quality.VBAVACO@va.gov).

We request this information be sent to our office 2-weeks from the date of request, not to exceed 30 days.

If you have further questions, please contact your ELR directly.

## FORMS

The majority of VA forms needed to apply for benefits or report enrollment information are available electronically through [va.gov](http://va.gov) and VA-ONCE. If needed, other forms may be located and printed by accessing the following website: <http://www.va.gov/vaforms/>.

## RETENTION OF VA RECORDS

VA students' records must be kept for 3 years following the ending date of the last period certified to VA. Records need to be kept longer than 3 years only if a written request to keep the records longer is received from the Department of Veterans Affairs or the General Accounting Office 30 or more days before the end of the 3-year period. This requirement is in the Code of Federal Regulations ([38 CFR 21.4209\(f\)](#)).

Although VA requires that records be kept for 3 years, record retention regulations for individual states may require that VA records be kept more than 3 years.

## EXECUTIVE ORDER 13607 AND PRINCIPLES OF EXCELLENCE

[Executive Order 13607](#) was signed by the President Barack Obama on April 27, 2012, to ensure Educational Institutions serving service members, Veterans, spouses, and other family members are provided with the information, support and protections they deserve while using Veterans educational benefits programs.

Principles of Excellence are established for Educational Institutions serving service members, Veterans, Spouses and other Family Members. Schools may sign up for POE at: [principles.vbavaco@va.gov](mailto:principles.vbavaco@va.gov). Schools should adhere to the "Principles of Excellence" to provide high-quality student support and service, and compliance with the principles is assessed during compliance surveys at participating schools.

The GI Bill® website houses numerous resources to assist Veterans and beneficiaries in making informed decisions when choosing a school to use their GI Bill benefits, these are:

[CareerScope®](#)—An assessment of interest and aptitude at no cost to all eligible benefit recipients.

[The Comparison Tool](#) – Streamlines information into an easy-to-use online tool, combines resources from more than 17 different web pages and three Federal Agencies, provides information to calculate benefits and research approved programs, compares multiple schools, displays school-level complaint data from the Feedback System and displays Section 702 school approval information.

VA Education Service will respond to reports of technical issues and any feedback to improve the GI Bill® Comparison Tool. [EDUAPPMGMT.VBACO@va.gov](mailto:EDUAPPMGMT.VBACO@va.gov)

[Feedback System](#) — A centralized online reporting system designed for Veterans, service members, and eligible dependents to report negative experiences with educational

institutions receiving funding from Federal military and Veterans educational benefits programs. The complaints are reviewed to determine if they are consistent with the Principles of Excellence (POE) program; for those that are, the complaints are worked toward resolution with the schools.

POE related complaints are reviewed and sent to schools. The institution should provide a response to the complainant and to VA as soon as possible, but no later than 30 days from the date that the complaint is sent to the school.

- Respond to the complainant
- Use school letterhead
- Respond with a proposed resolution
- Reference the complaint case number
- Forward the response to VA at [process.vbavaco@va.gov](mailto:process.vbavaco@va.gov)

For complaints associated with GI Bill® benefits and other non-POE issues, individuals are directed to submit their concerns via the “Ask a Question” section of the GI Bill® Web site or call the GI Bill® hotline at 1-888-442-4551.

**Trademark Terms of Use – Authorized Use** – The term “GI Bill®” is a federally registered trademark owned by VA. Authorized third-party users of the trademark are-

- Educational institutions approved for GI Bill® benefits
- State Approving Agencies
- Recognized Veterans Service Organizations

Authorized users may use the registered trademark “GI Bill” in print, electronic, radio, digital, or other media as established by the terms of use. The trademark symbol “®” should be placed at the upper right corner of the trademarked phrase in the most prominent place at first usage; such as the title of a brochure, form, or the very top of a Web page and the following trademark attribution notice must be prominently visible: “GI Bill® is a registered trademark of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). For more information see the [GI Bill Trademark terms of use](#).”

### **School Decision Resources**

Many VA and other government resources exist to help Veterans and beneficiaries choose a school and education program. For more information see the [School Decision Resources](#) page.

**Academic Credentialing for service members** – The Departments of Defense, Education and Veterans Affairs are dedicated to identifying, supporting and sharing promising strategies for institutions of higher education to use when evaluating military training and experience in order to award appropriate amounts of credit for the skills and knowledge service members gain through their service.

**8 Keys to Veterans' Success** – Steps postsecondary institutions can take to assist Veterans and service members in transitioning to higher education, completing their college programs, obtaining Career-ready skills and achieving success.

**Outcome Measures** - VA, Department of Education, and Department of Defense in response to the Executive Order 13607 developed, defined and published Outcome Measures to provide information on available education program on:

- Retention and persistence rate
- Transfer rate
- Graduation rate
- Certificate completion rate

For more information on Outcome Measures see the “[Download Data on All Schools \(Excel\)](#)” at the bottom the webpage.

## APPENDIX A: VA OBJECTIVE AND COURSE CODE LISTINGS

### VA Objective Codes (Institution of Higher Learning (IHL) only)

Non-Mat (000)	= Non-matriculated
AA (011)	= Associate of Art
AS (012)	= Associate of Science
AD (013)	= Associate Degree Not Elsewhere Classified
BA (021)	= Bachelor of Art
BS (022)	= Bachelor of Science
BD (023)	= Bachelor Degree Not Elsewhere Classified
MA (031)	= Master of Art
MS (032)	= Master of Science
M (033)	= Master Degree Not Elsewhere Classified
Dr of Philosophy (041)	= Doctor of Philosophy
Doctors Degree (042)	= Doctors Degree Not Elsewhere Classified
Postdoctoral (051)	= Postdoctoral Degree Not Elsewhere Classified

**VA Course Codes – Institutions of Higher Learning (IHL):**

Non-matriculated (000)	Occupational Therapy (142)
Undecided Major (001)	Other Medical or Related Courses (exclude Technicians) (143)
Business and Commerce (060)	Mathematics and Statistics (150)
Engineering (070)	Astronomy (161)
Preparation for Teaching (080)	Chemistry (162)
Applied Arts (091)	Environmental Sciences (163)
English and Literature (092)	Physics (164)
Fine Arts (093)	Physical Sciences, N.E.C. (165)
Foreign Languages (094)	Economics (171)
Liberal Arts, N.E.C. (095)	History (172)
Performing Arts (096)	Industrial Relations (173)
Philosophy (097)	Political Science (174)
Theology (098)	Psychology (175)
Law (except prelaw) (100)	Public Administration (176)
Agricultural Sciences (110)	Social and Welfare Work (177)
Biological Sciences (120)	Sociology (178)
Medicine and Surgery (131)	Other Social Sciences (179)
Dentistry (D.D.S. and D.D.M. only, Not pre-dental) (132)	Computer Science and Systems Analysis (191)
Nursing (133)	Home Economics (192)
Osteopathy (134)	Library Science (193)
Pharmacy (135)	Other Academic Fields, N.E.C. (194)
Veterinary Medicine (D.V.M. only, Not Pre-veterinary) (136)	Agricultural and related courses (911)
Optometry (137)	Marine engineering and navigation (912)
Chiropody or Podiatry (138)	Mortuary science (913)
Physical Therapy (139)	Stationary engineer (914)
Dental Hygiene (141)	Other institutional courses, N.E.C. (915)

**VA Course Codes – Non-College Degree at Institutions of Higher Learning (NAI):**

Applied, Fine and Graphic Arts Technology (201)	Miscellaneous Engineering-Related Technology (211)
Bible Study or Religious Work (Technology) (202)	Miscellaneous Science-Related Technology (212)
Building and Construction Technology (203)	Other Technologists, N.E.C. (213)
Business and Commerce Technology (204)	Automotive Technology (214)
Data Processing Technology (205)	Agricultural and related courses (911)*
Electrical Technology (206)	Marine engineering and navigation (912)*
Mechanical Technology (207)	Mortuary science (913)*
Medical or Related Technology (208)	Stationary engineer (914)*
Police, Criminology, or Fire Protection (Technology) (209)	Other institutional courses, N.E.C. (915)*

\* These 5 codes are listed under IHL, however they can be used for NCD and NCD at IHL, if applicable.

**VA Course Codes – Non-College Degree (NCD, not at an IHL):**

Electronic technicians (311)	Computer technology (424)
Engineering technicians (312)	Clerical (425)
Medical and related technicians (313)	Secretarial (426)
Other technical courses, N.E.C. (314)	Real Estate and insurance (427)
Legal technician, including Law Clerk (315)	Salesmanship (428)
Applied arts, N.E.C. (320)	Other business and commerce, N.E.C. (429)
Commercial art (321)	Barbering (431)
Decorating and window display (322)	Custodial service (432)
Drafting (323)	Hotel and motel training (433)
Photography (324)	Laundry and dry cleaning (434)
Design (325)	Hospital or medical services (435)
Ceramics design (not engineering) (328)	Protective services (436)
Surveying (329)	Airline services (437)
Actors (331)	Other services, N.E.C. (438)
Ballet dancing (332)	Elementary courses (451)
Musicians (333)	Secondary Courses- Includes High School completion and college preparation (452)
Radio and TV broadcasting (334)	Agricultural and related courses (911)*
Performing arts, N.E.C. (335)	Marine engineering and navigation (912)*
Accounting (421)	Mortuary science (913)*
Advertising (422)	Stationary engineer (914)*
Bookkeeping (423)	Other institutional courses, N.E.C. (915)*

\* These 5 codes are listed under IHL, however they can be used for NCD and NCD at IHL, if applicable.

**VA Course Codes – Flight:**

Advanced Flight or Commercial Pilot (341)	Instrument rating Course (345)
Airline Transport Pilot Training (342)	Multiengine Class Rating Course (346)
Flight Instructor Course (344)	Other Flight Training, N.E.C. (347)
Glider Training (343)	

**VA Course Codes – Other:**

Special Program (999)
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## APPENDIX B: STATEMENT OF ASSURANCE OF COMPLIANCE WITH 85/15 ENROLLMENT RATIOS

The Code of Federal Regulations ([38 CFR 21.4201](#)) states VA shall not approve the enrollment of any VA-eligible person, not already enrolled, in any course for any period during which more than 85 percent of the students enrolled in the course are having all or part of their tuition, fees, or other charges paid to or for them by an Educational Institution or VA. VA is requesting that you provide this information within 30 days of this request.

### **Instructions for completing this form:**

**Column #1 – Program Name:** List each program approved for VA education benefits. All concentrations (may also be identified by school as emphasis; specializations; etc.) must be listed and computed separately. If “**Undeclared**” is listed, those students counted within that program may have only taken general education coursework. Any undeclared student who has taken courses associated with a specific major’s curriculum must be calculated within that program, even if student has not officially declared that major.

If the program is offered at more than one location, i.e. main campus and a branch or extension location, the program must be listed and computed separately for each location.

**Column #2 – Number of (Full-time Equivalent) FTE VA Students:** Enter the number of FTE students in receipt of VA education benefits. (If the “VA student” elects to not use benefits or if eligibility for benefits has ended, the student should not be counted in column #2).

### **How are students counted using institutional aid?**

If VA students are excluded from the school's financial aid (i.e., grants, scholarships, or other financial assistance including the school disregarding nonpayment) because they are entitled to VA benefits, the school must count them on the VA side of the ratio even if they are not receiving VA benefits. This requirement does not apply to financial assistance from the school or federal agencies for graduate level training

### **Example:**

- XYZ Scholarship, an institutional tuition waiver is not available to Veterans due to the fact they receive VA education benefits. The number of non-VA students receiving XYZ Scholarship must be added with VA students in column#2.
- XYZ Scholarship, an institutional tuition waiver is available to ALL students who qualify regardless of receipt of any other educational assistance. The number of non-VA students receiving XYZ scholarship will not be counted in column #2.

### **How are part-time students counted?**

The FTE should be computed by multiplying the number of part-time students by their individual training time (non-chapter 33) or rate of pursuit (chapter 33) and then add that number to the full-time number.

### **Example:**

# Students	X	TT/RoP	=	FTE
20	x	.25	=	5
15	x	.5	=	7.5
<u>10</u>	x	.75	=	<u>7.5</u>
45				20

These 45 part-time students equate to a total of 20 FTE and should be added to the total full-time number.

**Column #3 – Number of FTE Non-VA Students:** Enter the number of FTE students not already counted in column #2.

**Column #4 – Total Enrollment:** Enter the total number of students enrolled in the program. (Column 4 should be the sum of column 2 and 3).

**Column #5 – VA Student Percentage:** Divide the number of FTE VA students entered in column #2 by the total number of students enrolled as listed in column #4. The result should be entered as a percentage.

**Example:**

6 total FTE VA students / 20 total enrollment = .3 or 30% (30% would be entered in Column 5).

**Column # 6–** Date of Calculation (self-explanatory)

*VA has identified the following programs as consisting of flight training. If you have any additional programs that are not listed here, you should include them and provide the requested information.*

COLUMN 1	COLUMN 2	COLUMN 3	COLUMN 4	COLUMN 5	COLUMN 6
Program Name	Number of FTE VA Students	Number of FTE Non-VA Students	Total Enrollment	VA Student Percentage	Date of Calculation
<b>Totals</b>					

I certify that this information is true and correct as of the date submitted.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Facility

\_\_\_\_\_  
Facility Code

\_\_\_\_\_  
School Official's Printed Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
School Official's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date Signed

## APPENDIX C: REFERENCES

### CFR LIST (Alphabetical)

Topic	United States Code and Code of Federal Regulations
85 percent enrollment restriction (85/15 Rule)	<a href="#">38 CFR 21.4201</a>
Advance Payment	<a href="#">38 CFR 21.4203</a> (a)(i)(ii) and <a href="#">21.9715</a>
Advertising – Federal Trade Commission	<a href="#">38 USC 3696</a> <a href="#">38 CFR 21.4252</a> (h)
Any course	<a href="#">38 CFR 21.4267</a> (d) and (e)
Approval – Accredited Courses	<a href="#">38 USC 3672</a> (B)(2) <a href="#">38 CFR 21.4253</a>
Approval – Accredited Programs	<a href="#">38 USC 3675</a>
Approval – Non-Accredited Programs	<a href="#">38 USC 3676</a> <a href="#">38 CFR 21.4254</a>
Approval- Branches and Extensions	<a href="#">38 CFR 21.4266</a>
Attendance Discontinuance: Unsatisfactory progress, conduct and attendance	<a href="#">38 CFR 21.4277</a>
Beginning Date Must A School Report To VA	<a href="#">38 CFR 21.4131</a> , <a href="#">21.7131</a> , and <a href="#">21.9625</a>
CH1606 Courses Precluded	<a href="#">38 CFR 21.7622</a>
CH1606 Progress, Conduct and Attendance	<a href="#">38 CFR 21.7653</a> (c)
CH1606 Pursuit and Absences	<a href="#">38 CFR 21.7654</a>
CH30 Courses Precluded	<a href="#">38 CFR 21.7122</a>
CH30 Pursuit and Absences	<a href="#">38 CFR 21.7154</a>
CH33 Distance Learning and Housing Allowance	<a href="#">38 CFR 21.9505</a> and <a href="#">38 CFR 21.4267</a>
CH33 Eligible Individuals	<a href="#">38 CFR 21.9520</a>
CH33 Length of Service Percentage	<a href="#">38 CFR 21.9640</a>
CH33 Licensing and Certification Tests	<a href="#">38 CFR 21.9665</a>
CH33 Period of Eligibility	<a href="#">38 CFR 21.9530</a>
CH33 Progress and Conduct	<a href="#">38 CFR 21.9725</a>
CH33 Yellow Ribbon Program	<a href="#">38 CFR 21.9700</a>
Change of Program	<a href="#">38 CFR 21.4234</a>
chapter 33 Benefit Payments	<a href="#">38 CFR 21.9640</a>
chapter 33 Entitlement	<a href="#">38 CFR 21.9550</a>
Combination Correspondence Courses	<a href="#">38 CFR 21.4279</a>
Contracted Programs/Courses	<a href="#">38 USC 3680A</a> (f) <a href="#">38 CFR 21.4233</a>
Cooperative Training	<a href="#">38 CFR 21.4233</a> (a)
Correspondence Courses	<a href="#">38 CFR 21.4256</a>
Courses Precluded	<a href="#">38 USC 3680A</a> <a href="#">38 CFR 21.4252</a>
Definitions	<a href="#">38 CFR 21.4200</a>
Definitions under the educational assistance and subsistence allowance program	<a href="#">38 CFR 21.5720</a>
Definitions under 10 U.S.C chapter 1606	<a href="#">38 CFR 21.7520</a>
Definitions under 38 U. S. C chapter 33	<a href="#">38 CFR 21.9505</a>
Definitions under 38 U.S.C chapter 30	<a href="#">38 CFR 21.7020</a>
Definitions under 38 U.S.C chapter 32	<a href="#">38 CFR 21.5021</a>

Definitions under 38 U.S.C. chapter 35	<a href="#">38 CFR 21.3021</a>
Discontinuance: Unsatisfactory progress, conduct and attendance	<a href="#">38 CFR 21.4277</a> , <a href="#">38 CFR 21.7154</a> , <a href="#">38 CFR 21.7653(c)</a> , <a href="#">38 CFR 21.7654</a> , and <a href="#">38 CFR 21.9725</a>
Distance Learning	<a href="#">20 U.S.C. 1003(7)</a> <a href="#">38 CFR 21.9505</a>
Enrollment Certifications	<a href="#">38 CFR 21.4203(b)</a>
Enrollment Periods	<a href="#">38 CFR 21.4200(p)</a>
Farm Cooperative Training	<a href="#">38 CFR 21.4264</a>
Graduate Resident Training	<a href="#">38 CFR 21.4267(e)</a>
Incarcerated Claimants (Felony Convictions)	<a href="#">38 CFR 21.4135(m)</a>
Independent Study	<a href="#">38 CFR 21.4267</a>
Independent Study	<a href="#">38 CFR 21.4267(b)</a>
Licensing and Certification Tests	<a href="#">38 CFR 21.4268</a>
National Tests	<a href="#">38 CFR 21.9665</a>
Non-matriculated Students	<a href="#">38 CFR 21.4252</a> (L) (2) and (3)
Non-Punitive Grades - End of Term	<a href="#">38 CFR 21.4203(c)</a>
Practical Training	<a href="#">38 CFR 21.4275</a>
Prior Credit	<a href="#">38 CFR 21.4253(d)(3)</a> and <a href="#">21.4254(c)(4)</a>
Reporting Fees to Institutions	<a href="#">38 U.S.C. 3684</a> (c ) <a href="#">21.4206</a>
Reports- Interruptions, terminations and changes in hrs. of credit or attendance	<a href="#">38 CFR 21.4203(d)</a>
Resident Training and Independent Study	<a href="#">38 CFR 21.4252(g)</a> , <a href="#">21.4267</a> , and <a href="#">21.9505</a>
Review Of School Records By VA And SAA (Compliance)	<a href="#">38 U.S.C. 3690(c)</a> and <a href="#">38 CFR 21.4209</a>
Rural benefit	<a href="#">38 CFR 21.9660</a>
SAA	<a href="#">38 U.S.C. 3670</a>
Suspension and discontinuance of education assistance payments, and of enrollments or re enrollments for pursuit of approved courses	<a href="#">38 CFR 21.4210</a>
Training Time- chapters 30, 32, 35, 1606, and 1607	<a href="#">38 CFR 21.4270</a>
Transfer of Entitlement	<a href="#">38 CFR 21.9570</a>
Tutorial Assistance	<a href="#">38 CFR 21.4236</a> and <a href="#">21.9685</a>
Undergraduate Resident Training	<a href="#">38 CFR 21.4267(d)</a>
Vocational Flight	<a href="#">38 CFR 21.4263</a>
Yellow Ribbon Program	<a href="#">38 CFR 21.9700</a>

## APPENDIX D: CFR LIST (Numerical Order)

Topic	United States Code and Code of Federal Regulations
Distance Learning	<a href="#">20 U.S.C. 1003(7)</a> <a href="#">38 CFR 21.9505</a>
Definitions under 38 U.S.C. chapter 35	<a href="#">38 CFR 21.3021</a>
Beginning Date Must A School Report To VA	<a href="#">38 CFR 21.4131</a> , <a href="#">21.7131</a> , and <a href="#">21.9625</a>
Incarcerated Claimants (Felony Convictions)	<a href="#">38 CFR 21.4135(m)</a>
Definitions	<a href="#">38 CFR 21.4200</a>
Enrollment Periods	<a href="#">38 CFR 21.4200(p)</a>
85 percent enrollment restriction (85/15 Rule)	<a href="#">38 CFR 21.4201</a>
Advance Payment	<a href="#">38 CFR 21.4203</a> (a)(i)(ii) and <a href="#">21.9715</a>
Enrollment Certifications	<a href="#">38 CFR 21.4203(b)</a>
Non-Punitive Grades - End of Term	<a href="#">38 CFR 21.4203(c)</a>
Reports- Interruptions, terminations and changes in hrs. of credit or attendance	<a href="#">38 CFR 21.4203(d)</a>
Suspension and discontinuance of education assistance payments, and of enrollments or re enrollments for pursuit of approved courses	<a href="#">38 CFR 21.4210</a>
Cooperative Training	<a href="#">38 CFR 21.4233</a> (a)
Change of Program	<a href="#">38 CFR 21.4234</a>
Tutorial Assistance	<a href="#">38 CFR 21.4236</a> and <a href="#">21.9685</a>
Non-matriculated Students	<a href="#">38 CFR 21.4252</a> (L) (2) and (3)
Resident Training and Independent Study	<a href="#">38 CFR 21.4252(g)</a> , <a href="#">21.4267</a> , and <a href="#">21.9505</a>
Prior Credit	<a href="#">38 CFR 21.4253(d)(3)</a> and <a href="#">21.4254(c)(4)</a>
Correspondence Courses	<a href="#">38 CFR 21.4256</a>
Vocational Flight	<a href="#">38 CFR 21.4263</a>
Farm Cooperative Training	<a href="#">38 CFR 21.4264</a>
Approval- Branches and Extensions	<a href="#">38 CFR 21.4266</a>
Independent Study	<a href="#">38 CFR 21.4267</a>
Independent Study	<a href="#">38 CFR 21.4267(b)</a>
Undergraduate Resident Training	<a href="#">38 CFR 21.4267(d)</a>
Any course	<a href="#">38 CFR 21.4267(d)</a> and (e)
Graduate Resident Training	<a href="#">38 CFR 21.4267(e)</a>
Licensing and Certification Tests	<a href="#">38 CFR 21.4268</a>
Training Time- chapters 30, 32, 35, 1606, and 1607	<a href="#">38 CFR 21.4270</a>
Practical Training	<a href="#">38 CFR 21.4275</a>
Attendance Discontinuance: Unsatisfactory progress, conduct and attendance	<a href="#">38 CFR 21.4277</a>

Discontinuance: Unsatisfactory progress, conduct and attendance	<a href="#">38 CFR 21.4277</a> , <a href="#">38 CFR 21.7154</a> , <a href="#">38 CFR 21.7653(c)</a> , <a href="#">38 CFR 21.7654</a> , and <a href="#">38 CFR 21.9725</a>
Combination Correspondence Courses	<a href="#">38 CFR 21.4279</a>
Definitions under 38 U.S.C chapter 32	<a href="#">38 CFR 21.5021</a>
Definitions under the educational assistance and subsistence allowance program	<a href="#">38 CFR 21.5720</a>
Definitions under 38 U.S.C chapter 30	<a href="#">38 CFR 21.7020</a>
CH30 Courses Precluded	<a href="#">38 CFR 21.7122</a>
CH30 Pursuit and Absences	<a href="#">38 CFR 21.7154</a>
Definitions under 10 U.S.C chapter 1606	<a href="#">38 CFR 21.7520</a>
CH1606 Courses Precluded	<a href="#">38 CFR 21.7622</a>
CH1606 Progress, Conduct and Attendance	<a href="#">38 CFR 21.7653(c)</a>
CH1606 Pursuit and Absences	<a href="#">38 CFR 21.7654</a>
Definitions under 38 U. S. C chapter 33	<a href="#">38 CFR 21.9505</a>
CH33 Distance Learning and Housing Allowance	<a href="#">38 CFR 21.9505</a> and <a href="#">38 CFR 21.4267</a>
CH33 Eligible Individuals	<a href="#">38 CFR 21.9520</a>
CH33 Period of Eligibility	<a href="#">38 CFR 21.9530</a>
chapter 33 Entitlement	<a href="#">38 CFR 21.9550</a>
Transfer of Entitlement	<a href="#">38 CFR 21.9570</a>
CH33 Length of Service Percentage	<a href="#">38 CFR 21.9640</a>
chapter 33 Benefit Payments	<a href="#">38 CFR 21.9640</a>
Rural benefit	<a href="#">38 CFR 21.9660</a>
CH33 Licensing and Certification Tests	<a href="#">38 CFR 21.9665</a>
National Tests	<a href="#">38 CFR 21.9665</a>
CH33 Yellow Ribbon Program	<a href="#">38 CFR 21.9700</a>
Yellow Ribbon Program	<a href="#">38 CFR 21.9700</a>
CH33 Progress and Conduct	<a href="#">38 CFR 21.9725</a>
SAA	<a href="#">38 U.S.C. 3670</a>
Reporting Fees to Institutions	<a href="#">38 U.S.C. 3684 (c ) 21.4206</a>
Review of School Records by VA and SAA (Compliance)	<a href="#">38 U.S.C. 3690(c)</a> and <a href="#">38 CFR 21.4209</a>
Approval – Accredited Courses	<a href="#">38 USC 3672(B)(2)</a> <a href="#">38 CFR 21.4253</a>
Approval – Accredited Programs	<a href="#">38 USC 3675</a>
Approval – Non-Accredited Programs	<a href="#">38 USC 3676</a> <a href="#">38 CFR 21.4254</a>
Courses Precluded	<a href="#">38 USC 3680A</a> <a href="#">38 CFR 21.4252</a>
Contracted Programs/Courses	<a href="#">38 USC 3680A(f)</a> <a href="#">38 CFR 21.4233</a>
Advertising – Federal Trade Commission	<a href="#">38 USC 3696</a> <a href="#">38 CFR 21.4252(h)</a>

## **GLOSSARY AND ABBREVIATIONS**

### **Accrediting Agency**

A nationally recognized agency or association which the U.S. Secretary of Education determines to be a reliable authority as to the quality of training offered by an educational institution. The Secretary publishes a list of these agencies and associations which the state approving agencies utilize for establishing that a program of instruction may be approved under the provisions of 38 USC 3675 as an accredited program.

### **Accelerated Payment**

An accelerated payment is a 60% lump sum payment of tuition and fees for high cost, high technology programs. The payment is in lieu of regular chapter 30 benefits and is payable only if tuition and fees exceed 200% of what would normally be payable under chapter 30 for a given enrollment period.

### **Active Duty**

Active duty is full-time duty in the Armed Forces. This also includes full-time duty performed by commissioned officers of the Public Health Service and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (not including active duty for training).

### **Active Duty for Training (ACDUTRA)**

Active duty for training in the Reserves or National Guard. This includes reservists on full-time duty for training purposes in the Armed Forces; members of the National Guard or Air National Guard of any state, performing full-time training duty under title 32, U.S. Code, sections 316, 502, 503, 504, or 505.

### **Advance Payment**

The monetary allowance which may be payable to eligible individuals for the first (fractional or full) and second full month of enrollment. Advance payment must be requested by eligible individuals and is mailed to schools before the beginning of classes for release to eligible individuals who have completed registration.

### **Already Qualified**

An eligible individual is considered "already qualified" if he or she has previously completed a program at the same level and in the same field of study for which application is now being made. This will not preclude the pursuit of a program leading to a degree at the same level with a different major or in an entirely different field. It also does not preclude the pursuit of subjects that may be necessary to qualify for admission into a program leading to a higher degree or to qualify for a vocational or professional objective. An individual will be considered already qualified if he or she was previously employed in a job for which the course now being requested is designed to qualify the individual who completes it. For example, if the applicant is employed in sales, he or she is already qualified and not eligible for enrollment in a general sales course. VA benefits are not payable for pursuit of any program for which the eligible individual is already qualified. This includes courses required for relicensing or a continuation of licensing in a professional field.

### **Assignment of Benefits**

Any arrangement by a school that denies the eligible individuals the opportunity to control the proceeds of a check is prohibited. Section 5301(a) of title 38, U.S. Code, provides that payments of benefits due under the laws administered by VA shall not be assigned except as specifically authorized by law. There are no laws that authorize assignment of VA educational checks, either directly or indirectly.

**Audited Course**

The term means any credit course that an eligible individual attend as a listener only with a prior understanding between school officials and the eligible individual that such attendance will not result in credit being granted toward graduation. VA education benefits are not payable for pursuit of such courses.

**Award Letter**

The official written notice from the Department of Veterans Affairs to an eligible individual of his or her monthly rate of payment, the inclusive dates of payment, and remaining entitlement at the end of the award period. An award letter is sent to the eligible individual whenever VA awards or changes the eligible individual's education benefit. The award letter is a good source of information for financial aid purposes.

**Benefits Delivery Network (BDN)**

The Benefits Delivery Network (BDN) is composed of various components. It is VA's main processing system for all benefit awards and related actions. BDN generates the payment information sent to the Treasury for producing the benefits checks. BDN contains the master record files for eligible individual.

**Branch Campus**

A location of an educational institution that

- (i) Is geographically apart from and operationally independent of the main campus of the educational institution;
- (ii) Has its own faculty, administration and supervisory organization; and
- (iii) Offers courses in education programs leading to a degree, certificate, or other recognized education credential.

**Certificate of Eligibility (COE)**

Letter issued to an eligible individual showing approval to pursue a stated program of education at an institution, the remaining entitlement of the eligible individual, and the ending date of the eligible individual's eligibility.

**Certifying Official**

The individual(s) designated to sign enrollment certifications and other documents relating to VA benefits. The designation is made on VA Form 22-8794, Designation of Certifying Official(s).

**Certification of Delivery (COD)**

A Certification of Delivery (VA Form 22-1999v) is mailed to the school in a separate envelope from the advance payment check. When the advance payment check is given to the eligible individual by the school, the COD, which contains preprinted enrollment information, must be completed by the certifying official and immediately returned. Failure to do so will result in the eligible individual's VA education benefits being suspended.

**Change of Program**

A change of program is a change in an eligible individual's program and curriculum. This includes any change that results in a loss of credit or lengthens the time necessary to complete the eligible individual's program. A change of program is generally charged when there is a loss of 12 credits. A change of program is not charged if an eligible individual completes one program and then begins a totally different program.

**Change of School**

There is no limit or restriction on change of schools for continued pursuit of the same course or

program provided the eligible individual is making satisfactory progress and there is no material loss of credit.

### **Compliance Surveys**

Law requires that periodic surveys be conducted at approved educational institutions to ensure VA payments to schools and eligible individuals are correct as furnished by the school to VA and assist schools and training officials and eligible individuals in understanding requirements of the law to prevent deficiencies or violations which could develop because of misunderstanding or misinterpretation of the law.

### **Concurrent Enrollment**

An eligible individual pursuing a degree at a school may take a course at another school because it's at a more convenient time; it's less expensive, etc. The school that will grant the degree is the eligible individual's primary school. All other schools are secondary schools. If the primary school will accept the secondary school's course as a transfer credit that applies towards completion of the eligible individual's degree, then both the primary school and the secondary school can certify the eligible individual to VA. The eligible individual may pursue courses at a secondary school at the same time, concurrent, or at a different time, supplemental.

### **Confirmed Enrollment**

An enrollment certification that is dated, signed, and mailed by the school's certifying official on or after the first day of a certified enrollment period.

### **Course**

As used in this Handbook, "course" means a specific class or subject of instruction (for example, English 110).

### **DD Form 214**

The Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty that is prepared at the time an individual completes a period of active duty in one of the Armed Forces. Former members of the Public Health Service (PHS) and of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) do not receive a DD Form 214, but they do receive comparable documents that provide necessary information concerning their active duty service. Eligible individuals should be advised to submit Member-4 copy of their DD Form 214 with a claim for VA benefits. A certified copy may also be submitted. Request a DD 214 from the National Archives.

### **Delimiting Date**

The first day after an eligible individual's period of eligibility expires. Benefits are not payable on or after the delimiting date.

### **Drop Period**

The brief period at the beginning of a term officially designated for dropping courses without academic penalty. The school's last day to drop a course will be the end of the drop period, providing it does not exceed 30 days from the first day of the term.

### **Electronic Certification Automated Program (ECAP)**

ECAP is a computer program that processes VA-ONCE submissions. ECAP can set up claim, propose education awards, and process education awards. ECAP will go as far as possible on this continuum. ECAP copies all documents into TIMS-C (VA's imaging system).

### **Education Liaison Representative (ELR)**

The individual at a VA Regional Office or Regional Processing Office responsible for education liaison and program approval functions. Among other things, the ELR is responsible for promptly

informing schools of changes in policies and procedures.

### **Enrollment Period**

This term means an interval of time during which an eligible individual is enrolled in an educational institution and is pursuing his or her program of education. This term applies to each unit course or subject in the eligible individual's program of education; that is, quarter, semester, or full school year.

### **Entitlement**

The number of months the eligible individual will be eligible for VA education benefits. This is usually expressed in the numbers of months and days the eligible individual will be eligible for full-time benefits, or the equivalent in part-time training, but also may be expressed in a dollar amount. Entitlement will vary depending on the education law the individual qualifies under. In no event will entitlement exceed 48 months under any combination of laws.

### **Extension Campus**

A location of an educational institution that is geographically apart from and is operationally dependent on the main campus or a branch campus of the educational institution.

### **Facility Code**

The numerical code assigned by VA to an institution specifically identifying it or one of its subdivisions.

### **File Number**

A seven, eight, or nine-digit number assigned by VA to identify an eligible individual's records. The Social Security Number (SSN) is the VA file number for most Veterans. If a Veteran was assigned an old seven- or eight-digit file number, the Veteran's SSN will cross reference the seven- or eight-digit file number. VA assigns a suffix *to the Veteran's file number* ("10" or "W", spouse or surviving spouse, "41" or "A", first child to apply, "42" or "B", second child to apply, "43" or "C" third child . . .) to identify the records of an individual eligible for chapter 35 benefits. A dependent's SSN **will not** cross-reference a Veteran's record in BDN. To access a dependent's record in BDN, the **file number of the Veteran** must be provided. The dependent's SSN is put in TIMS-C, but the TIMS-C record isn't created until the dependent applies for chapter 35.

### **General Educational Development (GED)**

A certificate issued by a state-level department of education. The credentials issued by state-level departments of education are official documents that are acceptable as the equivalent of high school graduation diplomas. In addition, Department of Defense certificates of GED equivalency are acceptable evidence of completion of high school educational requirements.

### **Independent Study**

A course or subject offered without any regularly scheduled, conventional classroom or laboratory sessions. A provision for interaction exists which may be either by mail, telephone, videoconferencing, computer technology (to include electronic mail), or personally between the eligible individual and the regularly employed faculty of the university or college. For VA purposes, such courses or subjects must be accredited and lead to a standard college degree; a certificate that reflects educational attainment offered by an institution of higher learning; or a certificate that reflects completion of a course of study offered by an area career and technical education school or a postsecondary vocational institution. A specific approval of these courses by the State Approving Agency is required for VA benefits to be authorized.

**Institution of Higher Learning (IHL)**

A college, university, technical or business school offering instruction at the postsecondary level that leads to an associate or higher degree. The institution must be empowered by the appropriate state education authority (under state law) or accredited by a recognized accrediting agency to grant such degrees. This designation also includes hospitals offering medical-dental internships or residencies without regard to whether the hospital grants a postsecondary degree.

**Kicker**

Additional money added to an individual's education fund by the Department of Defense to encourage enlistment or retention in the Armed Forces. The kicker is added to the individual's normal education benefit. Kickers are used for chapters 30 and 1606.

**Main Campus**

A location where the primary teaching facilities of an educational institution are located.

**Matriculated Student**

An eligible individual who satisfied formal admission requirements and is recognized by the college or university as a degree-seeking student. This does not mean that an undergraduate student must have formally been accepted into a specific major curricular field of study before he or she may be classified as "matriculated".

**Mitigating Circumstances**

Unanticipated and unavoidable events beyond an eligible individual's control which are responsible for the eligible individual's inability to complete a course or courses or which result in the eligible individual's receipt of a non-punitive grade for a course the eligible individual did complete. Generally, an eligible individual will be required to submit corroborative evidence to substantiate his or her reasons for being unable to complete a course with a creditable grade.

**Notice of Basic Eligibility (NOBE)**

Members of the Selected Reserve are given a Notice of Basic Eligibility (DD Form 2384, commonly referred to as a NOBE, pronounced *no-be*) by their National Guard or Reserve unit stating they are eligible for the Montgomery GI Bill —Selected Reserve (chapter 1606). The primary source VA uses to establish chapter 1606 eligibility is a Department of Defense (DOD) computer link, the chapter 1606 DoD Data Record. The NOBE is a supplemental document VA will verify when DoD has not reported eligibility. If you receive a NOBE from the student filing an original application for chapter 1606 send VA a copy of the NOBE when you certify the eligible individual.

**Non-College Degree (NCD)**

A course or program of education, or any other institutional vocational/educational training, which does not lead to a standard college degree.

**Non-punitive Grade**

A non-punitive grade is a grade that doesn't count as earned credit and isn't considered in progress standards for graduation. A withdrawal after the drop period is non-punitive if it isn't calculated into the eligible individual's GPA or it isn't considered in academic progress criteria like probation and suspension. Non-punitive grades have the same effect as an audit. If an eligible individual withdraws after the drop period or completes the term with non-punitive grades, the non-punitive grades must be reported to VA if they change training time. Examples of non-punitive grades are an "X" (no basis for grade), "NP" (no pass), or "U" (unsatisfactory) that doesn't count as earned credit and isn't calculated progress standards. Grades such as P (Pass) or S (Satisfactory) aren't calculated into an eligible individual's grade point average, **but** they are

counted as earned credit for graduation requirements. Since these grades count as earned credit towards graduation, they aren't non-punitive.

### **Nonstandard Term**

A term that is shorter or longer than a standard quarter or semester. The number of instructor-student contact hours is increased proportionately each week to compensate for the difference in length. VA will compute equivalent undergraduate credits to measure courses pursued during nonstandard terms. Terms of shorter than standard length are referred to as **accelerated terms**.

### **Objective**

The final educational, professional, or vocational goal of an eligible individual (that is, degree, diploma, certificate, occupation). An educational objective is one that leads to the awarding of a diploma, degree, or postdoctoral certificate that reflects educational attainment. Graduate certificate programs generally do not lead to an educational objective. A professional or vocational objective is one that leads to an occupation. It may include educational courses essential to prepare for the chosen occupation.

### **Primary School (Parent School)**

The primary school is the school that will grant the degree an eligible individual is pursuing.

### **Program of Education**

A combination of subjects, unit courses, or training activities pursued at a school or training establishment which is generally accepted as necessary to meet requirements for a predetermined educational, professional, or vocational objective (that is, diploma, degree, certificate, occupation). An "approved program" is a course of study or program of training that the appropriate State Approving Agency has determined meets the legal requirements for payment of VA educational assistance benefits to eligible individuals.

### **Punitive Grade**

A punitive grade is a grade that doesn't count as earned credit but is used in determining an eligible individual's progress toward graduation requirements. The common punitive grade is "F". Punitive grades, unlike non-punitive grades, factor into the progress standards (for example, GPA or earned/attempted credit standard).

### **Pursuit**

The term "pursuit" means to work, while enrolled, toward the objective of a program of education. This work must be in accordance with approved institutional policy and regulations, and applicable criteria of title 38, United States Code; must be necessary to reach the program's objective; and must be accomplished through resident courses (including teacher training courses and similar courses which VA considers to be resident training), independent study courses, a graduate program of research in absentia, or medical/dental internships and residencies, nursing courses and other medical/dental specialty courses. VA considers an individual who qualifies for payment during an interval between terms or school closing, or who qualifies for payment during a holiday vacation to be in pursuit of a program of education during the interval, school closing, or holiday vacation.

### **Quarter**

A quarter is a division of the academic year at institutions that operate on a quarter system. Credits are earned and measured in quarter hours. A "standard quarter" is a period of instruction usually 10 to 13 weeks long.

**Refresher Training**

Refresher training is a course at the elementary or secondary level to review or update material previously covered in a course that has been satisfactorily completed. Under some education programs, the term also means training in a program of education in which the eligible individual is already qualified, provided that the program pursued is training to permit the eligible individual to update knowledge and skills and to be instructed in the technological advances which have occurred in the eligible individual's field of employment during their period of service. It may be used to update skills learned either during or prior to service but not for skills first acquired after discharge from service. Eligible individuals pursuing "refresher training" are not limited to "refresher courses" at the elementary or secondary level.

**Remedial/Deficiency Courses**

These terms refer to noncredit training at the secondary level that is required for entrance to or preparatory to the successful pursuit of a postsecondary educational program. If secondary level training is needed for the eligible individual to reach a certain mastery level necessary for pursuit of a postsecondary program of education, the courses must be listed separately on the Enrollment Certification. Upon entrance each student's academic background should be evaluated and, as warranted, a required noncredit program established. These secondary level courses may include, for example, basic English skills, fundamental math, reading, or other special academic assistance necessary for the eligible individual to qualify for admission. These courses may also include noncredit secondary level training to overcome a handicap such as in speech and may be offered at a high school, college, or other educational institution. It is the institution's responsibility to determine if remedial/deficiency courses are necessary.

**Reporting Fee**

VA pays an annual reporting fee to schools. This fee is intended to help defray the cost of processing VA certifications. The annual reporting fee is based on the number of VA eligible individuals, including chapter 31 (Vocational Rehabilitation), certified by the school during the calendar year. The reporting fee is paid as soon as possible after the end of the calendar year.

**Restored Entitlement Program for Survivors (REPS)**

Certain survivors of deceased Veterans who died on active duty, or of service-connected causes incurred or aggravated prior to August 13, 1981, are eligible for benefits. The benefits are similar to the benefits for eligible individuals to include surviving spouses with children between ages 16 and 18 that were eliminated from the Social Security Act. The benefits are payable in addition to any other benefits to which the family may also be entitled. The amount of benefits is based on information from the Social Security Administration.

**Selected Reserve**

The term means, with respect to the Armed Forces, the Army Reserve, the Naval Reserve, the Marine Corps Reserve, the Air Force Reserve, the Coast Guard Reserve, the Army National Guard of the United States, and the Air National Guard of the United States. The Public Health Service and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration do not have Selected Reserve units.

**Semester**

A semester is a division of the academic year at institutions that operate on a semester system. Credits are earned and measured in semester hours. A "standard semester" is a period of instruction usually 15 to 19 weeks long.

**Standard College Degree**

The term means an associate or higher degree awarded by an institution of higher learning that is accredited as a collegiate institution by a recognized regional or national accrediting agency or an institution of higher learning that is a “candidate” for accreditation, or an institution which is accredited by an agency recognized to accredit specialized degree-level programs.

**State Approving Agency (SAA)**

An agency appointed by the Chief Executive of a state to approve institutional programs of education and training for payment of benefits under the various laws administered by VA.

**Summer Session**

A summer session is a division of the summer term designated in a school catalog as a distinct period of instruction. These sessions vary in length and are often only 3-8 weeks long.

**Summer Term**

The total instruction offered by a school between the end of the spring term and the beginning of the fall term. A summer term may consist of several summer sessions.

**The Image Management System (TIMS)**

TIMS is the scanning system used by VA. All education paper work is scanned into TIMS. Paper is scanned manually. Digital files, like VA-ONCE Certs, are copied directly into TIMS.

**Tuition and Fees**

The term “tuition and fees” means the total cost for tuition and fees for a course a school charges all students whose circumstances are similar to VA benefit-eligible individuals enrolled in the same course. “Tuition and fees” will **not** include the cost of supplies or books that the eligible individual is required to purchase at his or her own expense.

**VA Online Certification of Enrollment (VA-ONCE)**

Internet based application used to submit enrollment certifications and notices of change in student status. Certifications submitted through VA-ONCE are the electronic versions of VA Forms 22-1999, 22-1999b, and 22-6553c.

**Web Automated Verification of Enrollment (WAVE)**

WAVE is an Internet program used by chapter 30, 1606, and 1607 students to verify their enrollment. Verification is required monthly. Students can also use WAVE to change their address and direct deposit information.

**Web Enabled Approval Management System (WEAMS)**

WEAMS is the central application VA uses to store school, organization, and program approval information. ELRs and VA Central Office personnel enter the approval information. VA personnel use the approval information to verify schools and programs are approved.