



DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
Veterans Benefits Administration
Education Service
Washington, D.C. 20420

March 25, 2019

Higher Education Executive
Institutions of Higher Learning

Dear Higher Education Executive:

VA is pleased to announce that the Post-9/11 GI Bill Yellow Ribbon Program open season for the 2019-2020 academic year will run from March 25 through May 15, 2019. During the open season, institutions can: (1) request participation in the program; (2) modify participation in the program; or (3) request withdrawal from the program. Additionally, participating institutions may indicate their commitment to adhere to the Principles of Excellence.

Institutions considering initial or continued participation in the Yellow Ribbon Program should review the Yellow Ribbon Program agreement form and Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) on the Yellow Ribbon Program website (http://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/yellow_ribbon/yellow_ribbon_info_schools.asp) to ensure compliance with all program requirements.

The Harry W. Colmery Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2017 (also known as the "Forever GI Bill") makes significant changes to VA education benefits. Please note changes that expand Yellow Ribbon benefits:

- Effective August 1, 2018, recipients of the Marine Gunnery Sergeant John David Fry Scholarship and Purple Heart recipients may participate in the Yellow Ribbon Program.
- Effective August 1, 2022, active duty service members may participate in the Yellow Ribbon Program.

Institutions with existing Yellow Ribbon Program agreements

Please review your current agreement to determine whether any modifications are required. You may view the terms of your current agreement by going to the Yellow Ribbon Program web page and selecting "2018 - 2019 Yellow Ribbon Participant List" or by using the following link: (https://www.benefits.va.gov/GIBILL/yellow_ribbon/yrp_list_2018.asp).

The Yellow Ribbon Program agreement is an open-ended agreement. Existing agreements will remain valid until modified or withdrawn. If neither are applicable, no further action or communication is required.

If your institution desires to change any elements of its agreement or withdraw from the program, then your institution must submit a signed agreement via email attachment to YellowRibbon.VBACO@va.gov by May 15, 2019.

Institutions without existing agreements

Institutions that do not have an existing Yellow Ribbon Program agreement may request approval for the Yellow Ribbon Program by submitting a signed agreement via email attachment to YellowRibbon.VBACO@va.gov by May 15, 2019.

As an institution approved for VA education benefits by your State Approving Agency, you are strongly encouraged to commit to the Principles of Excellence (PoE), publicly recognizing the importance of transparency and providing students with appropriate information as indicated in enclosure A. If you have a current PoE agreement with VA, your school will be acknowledged with a green check next to Principles of Excellence within your school's Veteran Program section of the GI Bill Comparison Tool website (<https://www.va.gov/gi-bill-comparison-tool>).

The PoE agreement is an open-ended agreement. Existing agreements will remain valid until modified or withdrawn. If neither are applicable, no further action or communication is required.

If your school has not yet submitted your PoE commitment letter, please utilize enclosure B. If you choose not to participate, the main campus should complete, sign, and return enclosure C indicating the reason for non-participation directly to principles.excellence@va.gov.

With your support, we can ensure that our nation's Veterans and dependents receive the education benefits they deserve.

Respectfully,



Charmain Bogue
Interim Executive Director
Education Service