

ASK VA (AVA)

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Last updated: January 14th, 2022

Purpose:

Ask VA replaces IRIS and the GI Bill Help Portal

We've replaced our Information Routing & Inquiry Service (IRIS) and the GI Bill Help Portal with Ask VA (AVA). This document will cover some FAQs about the new site.

FAQS

Question 1: What's Ask VA?

Ask VA—or AVA—is an online service that all Veterans and members of the Veteran community can use to submit questions, concerns, and recommendations to VA.

Questions 2: Why did VA replace IRIS and the GI Bill Help Portal?

We updated our systems to make it easier and faster for you to get the answers you need. When you submit a question through Ask VA, we route it directly to the appropriate benefit office so you can get an accurate, timely answer.

Question 3: Do I need to be signed in to VA.gov to use Ask VA?

No. But for some types of questions, you'll need to be signed in with an account that has verified your identity.

If you want to ask a question about GI Bill benefits, you'll need to sign in with one of these accounts that has verified your identity:

- A verified **ID.me** account, **or**
- A Premium **My HealtheVet** account, **or**
- A Premium **DS Logon** account

If you want to ask a question about any other VA benefits, you don't need to sign in, but you won't have access to all the features this new service offers

Question 4: What features are available in Ask VA if I'm signed in?

If you sign in to VA.gov with a verified ID.me account, Premium My HealtheVet account, or Premium DS Logon account, you can access these features:

- We'll fill in some of your information automatically each time you ask a new question.
- You can track the questions you submit to us.
- You can add more information to a question you already submitted—or ask a follow-up question.

Question 5: How do I get a verified account to access all the features in Ask VA?

- You can create a verified ID.me account or get a Premium My HealtheVet or Premium DS Logon account. Find out how to get one of these types of accounts:
- [Learn about verifying your identity and creating an ID.me account](#)
- [Find out how to get a Premium My HealtheVet account](#)
- [Find out how to get a Premium DS Logon account](#)
- When you're signed in with one of these verified accounts, you'll have access to all the features in Ask VA.

Question 6: Should we be setting up the ID.me as a business/business representative or personal/individual. I have an ID.me for my Global Entry, but that goes to my personal account.

Each individual may only have one ID.me account. ID.ME is used by more than just Department of Veterans Affairs. ID.me simplifies how individuals securely prove and share their identity online. That account is used by all ID.me customers whether that be Department of Veterans Affairs or another organization to verify the identity of that individual – not the role they have with Department of Veterans Affairs. John Doe is identified as John Doe and not John Doe a veteran or John a school certifying official. The identification of role is handled by the system that uses ID.me for identity management. In the case of AVA, once a user has passed through the ID.me verification, a user is able to set the contact information they wish to associate to a particular inquiry. We do not rely on the ID.me demographic information. AVA also allows the user to identify their role for each inquiry so that we can organize their inquiries by Personal and Business and keep them separate on the dashboard.

If a user wishes to manage the email associated to their ID.me account, the link below will guide them through the process of adding additional emails to the account and setting which email should be primary. Note that AVA will receive the primary email through the sign in process, but as stated above, the user is free to change that on any AVA inquiry.

<https://help.id.me/hc/en-us/articles/360011500573-How-do-I-change-the-primary-email-address-in-my-ID-me-account->

Question 7: How do I add multiple attachments?

The current process for uploading multiple attachments is to add each file separately, clicking the Add Attachment button for each file that needs to be added to the inquiry.

Question 8: What category of inquiry should SCOs select when submitting compliance survey files? Is there a specific/preferred format or identifying info they should use in the subject line of the inquiry?

HERE ARE THE RECOMMENDED SELECTIONS FOR SCO SUBMITTING COMPLIANCE DOCUMENTS TO ECSS:

The screenshot shows a web form titled "New Inquiry" with a progress indicator at 0%. The form is titled "Tell us about your question" and contains several required fields:

- Which category best describes your question? * (*Required)**: A dropdown menu with "GI Bill" selected.
- Which topic best describes your question? * (*Required)**: A dropdown menu with "Compliance Surveys" selected.
- Are you currently an employee of the VA? ***: Radio buttons for "No" and "Yes".
- I am a: (*Required)**: A dropdown menu with "School Certifying Official" selected.
- School Facility (*Required)**: A text input field.
- How should we get in touch with you? (*Required)**: A dropdown menu with "Email" selected.
- Subject (*Required)**: A text input field.
- What is your Question? (*Required)**: A large text area for the question text.

When initiating an Inquiry, the required fields are:

1. **Category** - The available categories to select from are:

- GI Bill**

- Compensation

- VA Health Care

- Veteran Affairs – Debt

- Home Loan Guaranty/All VA Mortgage Issues

- Pension (non-service-connected benefits)

- Burial & Memorial Benefits (NCA)

- Technical, Password & Access Problems

- Veteran Readiness & Employment

Benefit Issues Outside the US
Life Insurance
Fiduciary Program (Guardians/Custodians)
VA Center for Women Veterans
VA Center for Minority Veterans
Veteran Identification Card (VIC)

2. Which **topic** best describes your – the available choices are

- a. Colmery Section 110
- b. **Compliance Surveys**
- c. Counseling
- d. Licensing & Certification Tests
- e. MGIB CH30
- f. MGIB CH1606
- g. National Testing Programs
- h. OJT/Apprenticeship
- i. Post 9/11 CH33
- j. CH1607 REAP
- k. School Officials ONLY
- l. Survivors & Dependents
- m. Transfer of Benefits TEB
- n. Tuition Assistance TopUp
- o. VEAP CH32
- p. VR&E Counsleors
- q. WAVE
- r. Work Study

5. **Are you currently an employee of the VA?**

Select Yes or No

6. **I am a:**

1. GI Bill Beneficiary
2. **School Certifying Official**
3. Work Study Site Supervisor
4. OJT/Apprenticeship Supervisor
5. Other

7. **School Facility**

It is imperative the SCO input the facility code. When the SCO chooses 0000000 – Facility Code Unknown , this will route the inquiry directly to the Buffalo queue at the present time.

7. **Subject – free text**

Suggested entry: ECSS LName Compliance Survey Documents

8. **What is your question – free text**

Question 9: Who should I contact with questions about id.me?

If someone has a technical issue with ID. me, they should contact va.support@id.me .

Question 10: I would like to create an account for this new site, however I do not want to enter my personal SSN or a copy of my passport. The only reason I access this site is for work related reasons.

The VA is utilizing ID.me to verify your identity. Essentially, this is a one-time verification process similar to what you would go through to verify your identity with a new employer. Once you do it, you will have access to ASK VA and won't have to provide that every time. The use of ID.me is a new strategy the VA is utilizing to protect any potential security threats.

Question 11: Is there a time frame on how long before we should get an Ask VA response to an inquiry?

VA is committed to responding to a question submitted through AVA within 5 business days.

Question 12: If I don't see a differentiation between personal and business inquiries in AVA, is it because my account is only set up for business?

As soon as you submit an inquiry using the new GI Bill process and select one of the professional relationships (School Certifying Official, Work Study Site Supervisor, OJT/Apprenticeship Supervisor), you should see the two tabs for personal and business. If no tabs are showing, the account is personal only.

Question 13: I am a Work Study Site Supervisor, who has an assistant that does the Work Study administration for me. Can she set up an ID.me account and send inquiries even though she is not an SCO?

In order to submit on behalf of Work Study students, the assistant will need to become an approved supervisor as well. The Work Study site can submit a VA Form 22-10219 with the assistant's information to be added to the Work Study Management System. Once approved, the assistant can create their own AVA business account and make submissions.

Question 14: Can I ask VRRAP questions on the Ask VA website or should I only ask via the VRRAP email?

There is one team within Education Service dedicated to answering VRRAP questions and concerns. You are welcome to submit the questions through AVA, however, there may be a slight delay in response to ensure the correct team receives the message. For more direct answers on VRRAP, the original email address provided is still a valuable and efficient source.

Question 15: There is not a selection for VRE or Other VA employee. Does that mean that any “submit a question” inquiry will populate in the personal topic section and not business, if we select “Other”? If so, will there be changes in the future?

VA has received feedback on other types of business relationships that should be available and is working to add those to the next AVA release. The work-around is to select one of the other 3 business relationships (School Certifying Official, Work Study Site Supervisor, OJT/Apprenticeship Supervisor) to make sure the inquiry gets slotted to the business profile.

If you have further questions, please reach out to the National Training Team- Schools at EDUTRAINING.VBACO@va.gov .