Education Service Office Hours:

December 1 “Go-Live” Recap, Monthly Housing Allowance & DoD Rate Updates, Study Abroad and SCO Training Requirements

Target Audience: SCOs and SAAs
December 2019
December 1 “Go-Live” Recap
Monthly Housing Allowance and DoD Rate Updates
Study Abroad
Training Requirements for School Certifying Officials
Knowledge Check and Feedback Survey
Next Steps
December 1 “Go-Live” Recap
As of December 1, 2019, VA’s Education Processing Systems are now updated to calculate all MHA payments in accordance with sections 107 and 501 of the Colmery Act.

All impacted students will receive a letter informing them of whether they were underpaid, overpaid or not impacted by these updates.

IMPORTANT NOTE!
All debts will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. Any debts that are a result of the delay in implementation of Sections 107 and 501 will be waived for GI Bill Students.
As part of the 12/1 Go-Live, new letters were developed to adequately communicate how the implementation of changes to MHA – implementation of majority of classes provision and DoD rate provision – will impact beneficiaries.

| Underpaid | Paid Correctly | Overpaid | Overpaid
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<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>PAYMENT LETTER</strong></td>
<td><strong>NO CHANGE LETTER</strong></td>
<td><strong>OVERPAYMENT LETTER</strong></td>
<td><strong>COWC LETTER</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Which Indicates that VA has reviewed the beneficiary’s claim, determined they were underpaid, and VA will pay the student for the difference</td>
<td>Which Indicates that VA has reviewed the beneficiary’s claim and determined they were paid correctly</td>
<td>Which Indicates that VA has reviewed the beneficiary’s claim, determined they were overpaid, and that VA has submitted a request for waiver of the overpayment to the Committee of Waivers and Compromise (COWC)</td>
<td>Which indicates that the COWC has reviewed the claim and has granted a waiver of the overpayment. REMINDER: All debts will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. Any debts that are a result of the delay in implementation of Sections 107 and 501 will be waived for GI Bill Students</td>
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Samples of the letters that will be sent to your students are available on the [School Resources Page](#).
Monthly Housing Allowance and DoD Rate Updates: What’s Coming Up?
VA has developed a series of tools and resources to explain to students why their rate has changed:

- [GI Bill Comparison Tool](#)
- [Forever GI Bill: Communications Toolkit](#)
- [MHA Rate Change Infographic (Distributed to students)](#)
- [MHA Scenarios Overview Video](#)
- [Forever GI Bill Colmery Act Frequently Asked Questions](#)
What does the 12/1 “Go-Live” mean for you as an SCO?

- Continue to certify enrollments to the **physical location** that your students are attending classes.

- Continue to submit new campuses to your SAAs for approval.

- Continue to work with your ELR to identify and complete corrections to campus data.
  - **Note:** ELRS will begin working entry of new extension campuses and backlog of extension campus data updates on December 16th.

- For any questions about the implementation and its impact on you or your students, please contact your ELR.
What is Coming Up?

EXTENSION CAMPUS SYSTEM UPDATE - 12/16

On 12/16/2019, ELRs will begin entering approved extension campuses into WEAMS that were not included in the 11/04/19 load.

ELRs will input extension campuses using the same process for newly approved main or branch campuses.

RETRO 107 RECERTIFICATION REMINDER

For any enrollments at extension campuses beginning prior to 12/01/2019, certify the enrollment at the associated main or branch campus and track these enrollments for future recertification.

VA will work with institutions on the recertification process and distribute this guidance once available.

Further instruction on how to recertify enrollments for terms beginning after 12/01/2019 that were initially certified at the associated main or branch campus will be included in this guidance.

Even if your extension campus is made available after 12/16/2019, DO NOT recertify these enrollments.

PLEASE SUBMIT YOUR QUESTIONS IN MENTI!
Study Abroad
**FOREIGN UNIVERSITY DIRECT ENROLLMENT**

The student enrolls **directly into a foreign university** approved for GI Bill funding.

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**FOREIGN CAMPUS U.S. BASED SCHOOL ENROLLMENT**

The student enrolls in a **U.S. based school** approved for GI Bill funding but **attends a branch or extension campus in a foreign location**.

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**STUDY ABROAD PROGRAM**

The student maintains **enrollment in a U.S. based school** and **attends majority** of their classes in a **foreign country**, may also occur at a foreign university; approved for GI Bill funding as a **guest student**. The student’s credits will **transfer back** to the **home** institution.
Using the GI Bill For Study Abroad

IN ORDER TO USE THE GI BILL FOR A STUDY ABROAD PROGRAM:

- The student must be enrolled in courses that will apply to their degree program.
- The courses at the host school in the foreign country must be approved.

LIMITATIONS ON USING THE GI BILL FOR STUDY ABROAD:

- Must be at an institution of higher learning leading to a standard college degree, or the equivalent.
- The program of education at the foreign institution must have been approved by VA.
What the GI Bill Covers

THE POST-9/11 GI BILL WILL COVER THE FOLLOWING:

Tuition and Fees
- Direct Enrollment Foreign University (Up to per academic year, National Maximum)
- Study Abroad Program (All Tuition and Fee Payments for an in-State Student at Main Campus of Public School; Private or Foreign School (Up to per academic year, National Maximum)

Books and Supplies

Monthly Housing Allowance (MHA)
LIMITATIONS TO USING THE POST-9/11 GI BILL TO STUDY ABROAD AT A FOREIGN UNIVERSITY:

**Program or Third-Party Fees**
VA cannot pay for any fees directly related to a study abroad program or third party provider. Specialized study abroad programs that are separate from the home university will not be covered.
- Any extra fees charged by the home university will also not be covered.
- Room and board charges cannot be included in tuition costs.

**Airfare or Amenity Fees**
VA will not cover the price of airfare or amenity fees.

**MHA Qualification**
Students must be enrolled more than ½-time to receive a monthly housing allowance.
**WHAT IS CHANGING?**

**Sub-Facility Code:** Moving forward, a foreign campus of a U.S. based school will be assigned or reassigned a unique identifier, referred to as a sub-facility code.

**Study Abroad Monthly Housing Allowance Rate:** See next two slides for further detail.

**WHAT IS NOT CHANGING?**

**Approval Authorities:**
- The **Director, Education Service** will maintain responsibility for approving programs of education at **Institutions of higher learning (IHLs)** outside the United States.
- **SAAs (State Approving Agencies)** will maintain responsibility for approving programs offered by **foreign branches or extensions** of U.S. colleges and universities.
VA can pay Monthly Housing Allowance (MHA) as stated below only when the student is enrolled more than ½-time. VA will pay MHA at the foreign school rate (national average) in each of the following situations.

**FOREIGN UNIVERSITY DIRECT ENROLLMENT**

**Scenario:** The student enrolls directly into a foreign university approved for GI Bill funding

**Who Certifies:** The foreign university certifies the enrollment to VA

**FOREIGN CAMPUS U.S. BASED SCHOOL ENROLLMENT**

**Scenario:** The student enrolls in a U.S. based school approved for GI Bill funding but attends a branch or extension campus in a foreign location

**Who Certifies:** The main campus certifies the enrollment to VA

**STUDY ABROAD PROGRAM: GUEST STUDENT EXPERIENCE**

**Scenario:** The student maintains enrollment in a U.S. based school and attends majority of their classes at a foreign university approved for GI Bill funding as a guest student. The student’s credits will transfer back to the home institution

**Who Certifies:** The foreign university university certifies the enrollment to VA
VA can pay Monthly Housing Allowance (MHA) as stated below only when the student is enrolled more than ½-time. VA will pay MHA at the home institution’s main campus rate in the following situations:

**STUDY ABROAD PROGRAM: INSTRUCTOR-LED EXPERIENCE**

*Scenario:* The student enrolls in a course at the home institution that meets both domestically and internationally. These types of arrangements usually come in the form of culture immersion lead by an instructor of the home institution.

- In most cases, a student typically spends one week or several weeks at the domestic campus and then is immersed into a foreign land and studies either at a designated facility or some other foreign location.

*Who Certifies:* The main campus certifies the enrollment to VA.

**STUDY ABROAD PROGRAM: EXCHANGE STUDENT**

*Scenario:* The student enrolls in a course at the home institution and the school arranges for the student to study abroad.

*Who Certifies:* The main campus certifies the enrollment to VA.

*Note:* No longer payable after July 31, 2020.

*PLEASE SUBMIT YOUR QUESTIONS IN MENTI!*
Scenario #1

Direct Enrollment at a Foreign University:

- **Steve**, an Army Veteran, currently resides in **Washington, D.C.**
- He decides to enroll directly at **Foreign University A**
- This University falls within VA's list of approved international colleges.
  - Including around **1,800 universities** or **training schools** in more than **100 countries**

**Questions:**
1. What is the T&F rate that VA will pay?
2. Who will certify the enrollment?
3. What will the VA NOT pay for?
4. Will VA cover airfare?
Scenario #2

Foreign Exchange Study Abroad
Program required by University:

• Jane, a Marine Corps Veteran, who currently resides in Philadelphia, PA and attends Public US-Based University A.

• She participates in a language and cultural study program, that requires all students to complete a study abroad experience as a prerequisite for graduation.

• Jane confirms that the courses at the Foreign University B in France are approved.

• François, a foreign student from Foreign University B, begins studying at Public US-Based University A.

Questions:
1. What is the T&F rate that VA will pay?
2. Who will certify the enrollment?
3. What will the VA NOT pay for?
4. Will VA cover airfare?

Training Requirements for School Certifying Officials
## SCO Definitions and Training Requirements

Section 305 of the Harry W. Colmery Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2017, authorizes VA to establish training requirements for SCOs at “covered institutions.” A “Covered Educational Institution” refers to an educational institution that enrolled 20 or more individuals using VA educational assistance during a calendar year.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TYPE OF SCO</th>
<th>DEFINITION</th>
<th>TRAINING REQUIREMENT</th>
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</table>
| All New SCOs (IHL and NCD Only) | Individuals who begin work as a SCO on or after August 1, 2019 | • 10 online training modules (5 hours of training)  
• Must complete the training prior to being authorized to certify enrollments to VA  
• Upon training completion must submit training certificates with the VA Form 22-8794, to the ELR of jurisdiction |
| All New SCOs (OJT/Apprenticeship and Vocational Flight Only) | Individuals who begin work as a SCO on or after August 1, 2019 | • 1 virtual training module (approximately 1.5 hours of training)  
• Must complete the training prior to being authorized to certify enrollments to VA  
• Upon training completion must submit training certificates with the VA Form 22-8794, to the ELR of jurisdiction |
| Existing SCOs (IIHL, NCD, and Vocational Flight) at Covered Institutions | Designated SCOs who began work prior to August 1, 2019 | • 1 year to complete the continuing education training requirement between August 1st and July 31st of each year  
• 5 hours of training (2 online modules specific to facility type and choice of electives presented at school conferences) |
| Existing SCO (OJT/Apprenticeship Only) at Covered Institutions | Designated SCOs who began work prior to August 1, 2019 | • 1 year to complete the annual training requirement  
• 1.5 hours of training consisting of 1 online training module specific to facility type |
| Read-only SCO | An individual at an institution with permission to access read-only or inquiry only information | • no training requirements because they are not approved to submit enrollment information to VA. |
### SECTION 305 – CORE TRAINING (MANDATORY)
#### Existing SCOs at IHLs, NCDs & Vocational Flight

SCOs are required to take a minimum of two online training modules specific to their facility type to meet their Section 305 annual training requirement. They may choose from the list of electives to complete the 5-hour annual requirement.

#### Institutions of Higher Learning (IHLs)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Modules</th>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Training Credit Hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IHL Only</td>
<td>Online</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VA-ONCE for IHLs</td>
<td>Online</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL CORE TRAINING CREDIT</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>3.5</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Institutions of Higher Learning (IHLs) with Non-College Degree Programs (NCDs)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Modules</th>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Training Credit Hours</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IHL w/NCDs</td>
<td>Online</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VA-ONCE for IHLs</td>
<td>Online</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL CORE TRAINING CREDIT</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>2.5</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

#### Institutions of Higher Learning (IHLs) with Flight Programs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Modules</th>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Training Credit Hours</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IHLs with Flight</td>
<td>Online</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VA-ONCE for IHLs</td>
<td>Online</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL CORE TRAINING CREDIT</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>2.5</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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### SECTION 305 – TRAINING ELECTIVES (MANDATORY)
#### Existing SCOs at IHLs, NCDs & Vocational Flight

SCOs may select any elective from this list of VA approved modules to complete the 5-hour annual Section 305 training requirement. SCOs are also required to take a minimum of two online training modules specific to their facility type to meet their Section 305 annual training requirement. Instructor-Led modules will be held at National/State Conferences or local VA workshops. Additional online and instructor-led modules will be added throughout the training year.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Module</th>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Training Credit Hours</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Compliance Surveys</td>
<td>Online</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compliance Surveys</td>
<td>Instructor-Led</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New School Certifying Official Training</td>
<td>Instructor-Led</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advanced School Certifying Official Training</td>
<td>Instructor-Led</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flight School Program at IHLs</td>
<td>Instructor-Led</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Certification Process for Non-College Degree (NCD) Programs</td>
<td>Instructor-Led</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
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</table>
Here are important training dates for School Certifying Officials (SCOs).

- **August 1, 2019** 
  Annual Training Window Opens! Updated training requirements for all new SCOs and continuing education requirements for existing SCOs are effective.

- **May 1, 2020** 
  90-Day Training Alert! Notifications and reminders of the approaching July 31st continuing education deadline will be posted on the GI Bill website and sent to SCOs via Gov Delivery notice.

- **June 1, 2020** 
  60-Day Training Alert! Notifications and reminders of the approaching July 31st continuing education deadline will be posted on the GI Bill website and sent to SCOs via Gov Delivery notice.

- **July 1, 2020** 
  30-Day Training Alert! Notifications and reminders of the approaching July 31st continuing education deadline will be posted on the GI Bill website and sent to SCOs via Gov Delivery notice.

- **July 31, 2020** 
  Annual Training Window Closes! Continuing education requirements for existing SCOs completed.

Please remember if you don’t complete your annual training requirements, VA has the authority to remove your access from VA-Once or disapprove your school’s programs.
FAQs: SCO Training Requirements

Q: If I attended a conference, how will I get credit toward my annual training requirement?
A: If you attended a qualifying VA session and submitted your attendance information on Menti.com; you will receive notification via Gov.Delivery with instructions on receiving training credit.

Q: When will I receive the Gov.Delivery email with instructions on receiving training credit?
A: The Gov.Delivery notifications with instructions will be sent to SCOs who attended qualifying sessions in the next 30-60 days.

Q: In the future will SCOs be able to self-certify their conference attendance directly on the SCO training portal?
A: Yes, VA is currently working on a solution that will allow SCOs to self-certify conference attendance directly on the SCO training portal. The solution is expected to be available early in 2020.

Q: What will SCOs need to do to self-certify their conference attendance?
A: To self-certify conference attendance, SCOs will need to register on the SCO training portal and complete their profile.

Q: Can SCOs register on the SCO training portal now?
A: Yes, SCOs can register by following the “Online Training” link on the SCO Training page on the GI-Bill website. https://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/resources/education_resources/school_certifying_officials/online_sco_training.asp

Q: Do SCOs have to wait for a conference to take training toward their annual training requirement?
A: No, the mandatory online training is currently available on the SCO Training page and should be taken prior to the July 31st deadline. SCOs can earn between 1.5 – 3.5 hours toward their annual requirement depending on facility type.

Q: How many days do SCOs have left before the 2020 Training window closes?
A: SCOs can check the countdown timer on the SCO training page to see how many days they have left to complete their annual training requirement.

PLEASE SUBMIT YOUR QUESTIONS IN MENTI!
Knowledge Check and Feedback Survey
Next Steps
Resources

- **NASAA Point of Contact By State** – http://nasaa-vetseducation.com/Contacts.aspx
- **Conferences and Events** – https://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/resources/education_resources/school_certifying_officials/conferences_and_events.asp
- **Ask A Question (Known as Right Now Web)** - https://gibill.custhelp.va.gov/app/utils/login_form/redirect/ask
- **VA Facebook Page** - https://www.facebook.com/VeteransAffairs