

VA



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

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



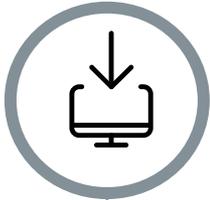
Agenda

- 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



December 1 “Go-Live” – Success!



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



12/1 “Go-Live” Letters Overview

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.

If a beneficiary was **UNDERPAID**, they will receive a:

If a beneficiary was **PAID CORRECTLY**, they will receive a:

If a beneficiary was **OVERPAID**, they will receive an:

If a beneficiary was **OVERPAID**, they will also receive a:

PAYMENT LETTER

NO CHANGE LETTER

OVERPAYMENT LETTER

COWC LETTER

Which Indicates that VA has reviewed the beneficiary’s claim, determined they were underpaid, and VA will pay the student for the difference

Which Indicates that VA has reviewed the beneficiary’s claim and determined they were paid correctly

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)

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

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?



Communicating MHA Rate Changes to Students

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](#)



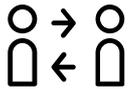
What does the 12/1 “Go-Live” mean for you as an SCO?



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

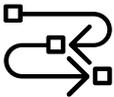


What is Coming Up?

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

PLEASE SUBMIT YOUR QUESTIONS IN MENTI!

 **Mentimeter**

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

Study Abroad



Introduction: Ways to Study in a Foreign Country

FOREIGN UNIVERSITY DIRECT ENROLLMENT



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

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.**

STUDY ABROAD PROGRAM

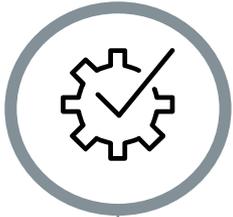


The student maintains enrollment in a **U.S. based school** and **attends majority** of their classes in a **foreign country**, may also occur at a foreign university; approved for GI Bill funding as a **guest student**. The student's credits will **transfer back** to the **home** institution



Using the GI Bill For Study Abroad

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

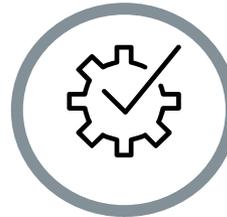


The student **must be enrolled** in courses that will apply to their degree program

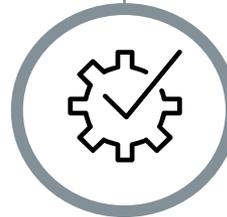


The courses at the host school in the foreign country **must be approved**

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

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 **1/2-time** to receive a monthly housing allowance



Policy Clarifications

WHAT IS CHANGING?



Sub-Facility Code: Moving forward, a foreign campus of a U.S. based school will be assigned or re-assigned 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



MHA - Foreign School Rate

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 certifies the enrollment to VA



Home Institution Main Campus Rate

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!**

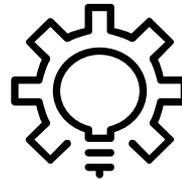
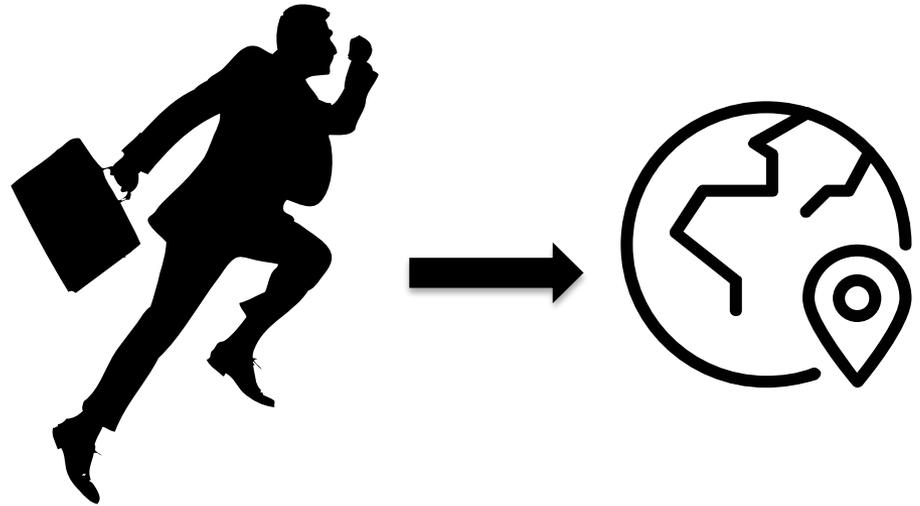
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Scenario #1

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:

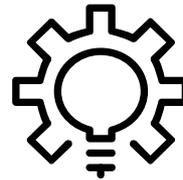
1. What is the T&F rate that VA will pay?
2. Who will certify the enrollment?
3. What will the VA NOT pay for?
4. Will VA cover airfare?



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?

NOTE: No longer payable after July 31, 2020

Training Requirements for School Certifying Officials



SCO Definitions and Training Requirements

TRAINING REQUIREMENTS FOR SCHOOL CERTIFYING OFFICIALS (SCOs)

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

TYPE OF SCO	DEFINITION	TRAINING REQUIREMENT
All New SCOs (IHL and NCD Only)	Individuals who begin work as a SCO on or after August 1, 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • no training requirements because they are not approved to submit enrollment information to VA.



Training Requirements for Existing SCOs at IHLs, NDCs & Vocational Flight

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)

Modules	Method	Training Credit Hours
IHL Only	Online	1.5
VA-ONCE for IHLs	Online	2
TOTAL CORE TRAINING CREDIT		3.5

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

Modules	Method	Training Credit Hours
IHL w/NCDs	Online	1.5
VA-ONCE for IHLs	Online	1
TOTAL CORE TRAINING CREDIT		2.5

Institutions of Higher Learning (IHLs) with Flight Programs

Modules	Method	Training Credit Hours
IHLs with Flight	Online	1.5
VA-ONCE for IHLs	Online	1
TOTAL CORE TRAINING CREDIT		2.5

Non-College Degree Programs (NCDs)

Modules	Method	Training Credit Hours
NCD Only	Online	1.5
VA-ONCE for NCDs	Online	1
TOTAL CORE TRAINING CREDIT		2.5

Vocational Flight

Modules	Method	Training Credit Hours
Vocational Flight	Online	1.5
TOTAL CORE TRAINING CREDIT		1.5

SECTION 305 – TRAINING ELECTIVES (MANDATORY)

Existing SCOs at IHLs, NCDs & Vocational Flight

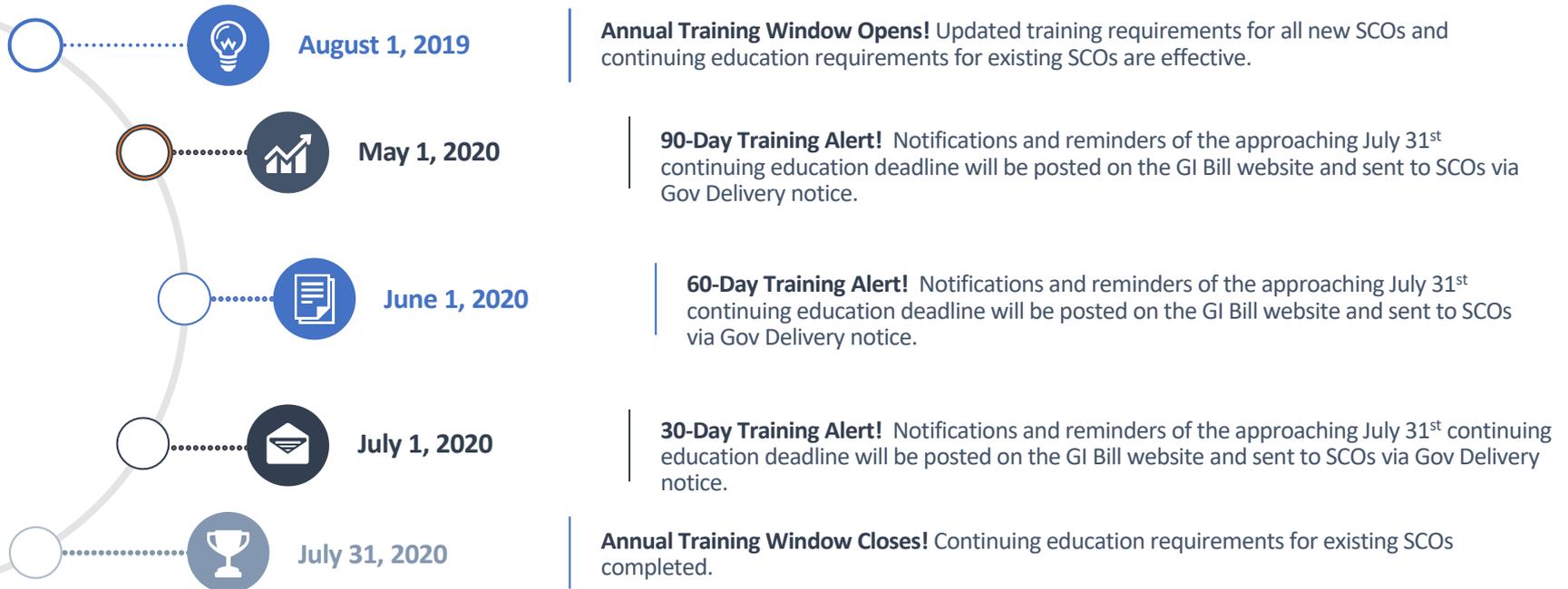
SCOs may select any elective from this list of VA approved modules to complete the 5-hour annual Section 305 training requirement. SCOs are also required to take a minimum of two online training modules specific to their facility type to meet their Section 305 annual training requirement. Instructor-Led 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.

Module	Method	Training Credit Hours
Compliance Surveys	Online	1
Compliance Surveys	Instructor-Led	1
New School Certifying Official Training	Instructor-Led	2
Advanced School Certifying Official Training	Instructor-Led	2
Flight School Program at IHLs	Instructor-Led	1
Certification Process for Non-College Degree (NCD) Programs	Instructor-Led	1



Key Dates: SCO Training Requirements

Here are important training dates for School Certifying Officials (SCOs).



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



- **GI Bill Webpage – Colmery Act** - <https://www.benefits.va.gov/GIBILL/forevergibill.asp>
- **School Certifying Official’s Handbook** - https://www.benefits.va.gov/GIBILL/docs/job_aids/SCO_Handbook.pdf
- **ELR of Jurisdiction** - https://www.benefits.va.gov/GIBILL/resources/education_resources/school_certifying_officials/elr.asp
- **School Certifying Official (SCO) Training 2019** - https://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/resources/education_resources/school_certifying_officials/online_sco_training.asp.
- **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/utills/login_form/redirect/ask
- **VA Facebook Page** - <https://www.facebook.com/VeteransAffairs>
- **Forever GI Bill Colmery Act Frequently Asked Questions** - https://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/docs/fgib/fgib_stakeholder_faqs.pdf