Education Service
July Office Hours
2021
Isakson & Roe Updates

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Verification of enrollment to receive Post-9/11 GI Bill® Benefits

As of August 1, 2021, Non-College Degree (NCD) students must verify their enrollment status each month to continue receiving their Monthly Housing Allowance (MHA) and/or kicker payments. This change will be implemented in phases, starting with students enrolled at a NCD facility, and extending to students at Institutes for Higher Learning (IHL) this fall.

**Note:** Monthly enrollment verification is applicable to only Chapter 33 students.

**NCD facility students can verify their enrollment status in one of two ways:**

- **Text Messaging** – NCD students who choose VA's “Opt-In” feature will receive a text message each month prompting them to verify their enrollment status.

- **Telephone** – NCD students who Do Not Opt-In for text may call the Education Call Center (ECC) at 888-442-4551 to verify their enrollment status.
Verification of enrollment to receive Post-9/11 GI Bill® Benefits

How MHA payments are altered from this process:

NCD students who reply ‘Yes’ to the verification text or confirm their enrollment status hasn’t changed by phone will have MHA payments released on the first of the month as usual.

NCD students who reply ‘No’ or report a change by phone will prompt the Veteran Claims Examiner (VCE) to review for updated enrollment information from the SCO. If no updated information is pending, the VCE will contact the SCO to request an update be submitted. MHA payments will be held in the meanwhile.

If a student fails to verify for two consecutive months, VA will withhold future MHA payments until they call the Educational Call Center (ECC) to verify.
Section 1010 requires that educational institutions submit an additional certification of enrollment after the last day when a student is able to withdraw from the course or program of education without penalty, known as the drop-add period.

**Note:** Two certification requirement is applicable to only chapter 33 students.

The second certification should be received no later than 30 days after the school’s drop-add period or 60 days from the first day of the enrollment period, whichever occurs first.

For schools that do not have a drop-add period, the second enrollment certification must be received within 60 days from the first day of the enrollment period.

The second enrollment certification will be submitted in the same form as the first certification (either through VA-ONCE or paper form).
Dual Certifications

Many schools use a practice of submitting initial enrollment certification with $0.00 in the tuition and fees field(s).

After the drop-add period, the tuition and fees are certified by amending the term to add the tuition and fees amount. This is called dual certification.

Following this common “dual certification” process is highly recommended because it has several significant benefits:

- It satisfies the new two certification requirement
- It dramatically reduces the creation of school T&F debts under section 1019
- Still allows GI Bill® students to receive their book and supply stipends on time
Enrollment Changes

If a beneficiary makes changes to their enrollment the process of certifying the change does not change under the new two certification rule. However, the timing of when you submit the change is something you should consider.

If the change is certified during the drop-add period, that change does not satisfy the “certification after drop/add” requirement. You are still required to certify again after the drop/add period.

However, if you wait until after the drop/add period to certify the change within the established the time limit, it will satisfy the “certification after drop/add” requirement.
If the school has no changes to make to the enrollment or tuition and fees for a term, they must still submit a second enrollment certification. This should be done by amending the enrollment, making no changes, and submitting the term through VA-ONCE. Comments or remarks should be avoided (unless necessary) on these “unchanged” amendments to allow the greatest likelihood of automation by VA.
Retroactive Certifications

When schools are submitting enrollment certifications for terms that are already completed, the two certification requirements remain.

An amended term should be submitted on the next day to maximize automation, as described for “unchanged” certifications above.
Section 1010 – Paper Certifications

Paper Certifications

If a school is unable to certify enrollments using VA-ONCE, the SCO should submit two enrollment certifications (VA Form 22-1999). The first should be sent to VA when the beneficiary enrolls.

If there are no changes, schools should submit a duplicate enrollment certification after the drop-add period with remarks stating: “No Change/Verification Only” within the time limits stated in section A, 2.

If there are changes to the original enrollment, a Notice of Change in Student Status (VA Form 22-1999b) should be reported after the drop-add period which will suffice for the second certification.
Please remember, if a second certification comes in before the drop/add date, the school will need to submit a third certification after the drop/add date.
If there is no change in enrollment, you must submit an Amended Certification after the drop/add date in VA-ONCE.
Section 1015 – Additional Approval Requirement

Additional requirement for approval of educational institutions for purposes of the educational assistance programs of the Department of Veterans Affairs

VA advises accredited educational institutions that currently do not participate in Title IV to begin the process of interpreting and implementing all provisions of Public Law 116-315.

All waiver requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis and an institution should not assume a waiver will be granted.

For institutions that are accredited and currently have a Program Participation Agreement with the Department of Education, it is expected Title IV eligibility and participation will continue beginning **August 1, 2021**.

If eligibility is lost or participation ceases at any point after **August 1, 2021**, a waiver would need to be sought to continue GI Bill® eligibility.
Requirements for educational institutions participating in the educational assistance programs of the Department of Veterans Affairs

While the provisions take effect on **June 15, 2021**, they are not applicable to educational institutions until **August 1, 2021**.

As with Section 1015, there is no expectation of immediate disapproval on **August 1, 2021**. All waiver requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis and an institution should **not** assume a waiver will be granted.
Section 1015 & 1018 Waiver Request Process

- Dedicated email boxes have been set up for each section to receive waiver requests
- Schools that do not apply for a waiver are assumed to have claimed compliance; will be subject to routine compliance actions by SAAs and VA and adverse action if found to be out of compliance

Once a school submits a waiver request it is placed in “Pending Waiver Decision” status
- Adverse action under section 1015 or 1018 will not occur while decision is pending
- VA will make a decision within 60 to 90 days of August 1, 2021

Applications that provide inadequate information will be denied. Applicants that do not meet waiver criteria will result in:
- Caution flag in the Comparison Tool
- Further action by SAAs (program disapproval or suspension)
As with Section 1015, there is no expectation of immediate disapproval on August 1, 2021. All waiver requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis and an institution should not assume a waiver will be granted.
Section 1020 – Advertising, Sales, and Enrollment Practices

Improvements to limitation on certain advertising, sales, and enrollment practices

This section defines current limitations on advertising, sales and marketing tactics a school can utilize and remain eligible for GI Bill® funds

- Creates a tiered penalty system for institutions that do not comply with the law
- Sets up a mechanism for institutions to work with the State Approving Agencies and the VA on coming back into compliance
- It is advised that education institutions begin to review internal policies to ensure compliance with Section 1020 by August 1, 2021
Registration Process and Enrollment Certifications

Ellen Shaheed
Management & Program Analyst
National Training Team - Compliance
Learning Objectives

Upon completion of this presentation, you will be able to:

- Complete the registration process for VRRAP
- Complete VRRAP Enrollment Certifications
- Complete Adjustments, Amendments and Terminations for VRRAP
- Complete the Employment Certification Form
Registration Process
Education Institutions seeking to participate in VRRAP must:

- Submit the Participation Agreement & Acknowledgement Form to the VRRAP Processing Team at EDUVRRAP.VBAMUSK@VA.GOV

- The VRRAP Team will process the Agreement and send the institutions an approval letter and list of all approved programs

- Upon receipt of approval, the education institutions can submit enrollment certifications

Note: Education Institutions cannot submit enrollment certifications prior to receiving their approval
Enrollment Certifications
The use of VA-ONCE is mandatory when submitting enrollment certifications, amendments, adjustments or terminations for VRRAP
Initial Enrollment Submission

- The VA Enrollment Certification (VA Form 22-1999) can be submitted up to 14 calendar days prior to the start of the program.

- The remarks section for the initial enrollment certification must contain the entire length of the program (beginning and end date) and the tuition and fees for the entire program as well.

**NOTE:** VA Payments to the education institutions will be based on the information listed in the remarks section of the initial enrollment certification. Therefore, you **must** enter the entire length of the program and the tuition and fees in the remarks section!
Verification of Attendance

- An “Amended Enrollment Certification” (VA Form 22-AM1999) **must** be submitted to verify attendance once the Veteran has started the term. This certification allows the VRRAP Processing Team to release VRRAP funds to the school for the certified Student Veteran.

- “Verification of Attendance” must be entered in the remarks section.

**Note:** When submitting in advance, a correction (VA Form 22-AM1999) to the original VA Form 22-1999 must be submitted to verify attendance.
Program Completion

- On or after the last day of the program, once the student has met all necessary requirements to receive a Certificate of Completion, the Certifying Official will submit a Notice of Change in Student Status (VA Form 22-1999b) reporting “End of Term or Course” effective the last day of the term.

- A prorated amount will be paid for the portion of the program pursued if an eligible Veteran withdraws, and provides notice to the educational institution that he/she no longer intends to pursue the program of education.
Amendments and Adjustments work the same as any other VA Benefit

- The School Certifying Official **must** submit a Notice of Change in Student Status (VA Form 22-1999b) to report any changes to the enrollment certification within 30 days of the change.

- Reductions – The amount paid to the educational institution will **not** be prorated due to a reduction in term.
Termination

Although VRRAP terminations are processed the same as any other benefit, the impact on the Veteran is **significantly different** than any other VA Benefit:

- The law states that once a student receives benefits for a program and then terminates, the student cannot re-enroll or enroll in any program under VRRAP.

- If a Veteran attends one or more days of class and terminates with the intent of re-enrolling later that year, the Veteran will not be able to re-enroll in VRRAP. Additionally, the Veteran will only receive MHA payment for the day or days he/she attended.

- If a Veteran enrolls and **terminates before the first day of term**, the Veteran can re-enroll in VRRAP.
When submitting a termination, the SCO must enter the number of days the Veteran attended the program.

If the termination occurs within 14 days of the first day of term, the VRRAP Processing Team will contact the SCO for attendance verification.

If the termination occurs 15 days or more from the first day of term, the VRRAP Processing Team will process the termination without requesting attendance verification.

A prorated amount will be paid for the portion of the program pursued if the eligible Veteran withdraws and provides notice to the Educational Institution that he/she no longer intends to pursue the program of education.
The Veteran Rapid Retraining Assistance Program (VRRAP) is focused on the successfully placing a Veteran into a related employment field upon the successful completion of the program of education:

What is Considered Employment for VRRAP?

- Traditional employment in a career in the program of study
- Self Employment – The Veteran owns their own business and can demonstrate utilization of the skills learned from the VRRAP program
- Paid internships, apprenticeships and contract employment
Employment Certifications Form

- VA must be notified when the Student Veteran has found program-related employment. This must be accomplished within the 180 days of completing the program by using the Employment Certification Form.

- A prorated amount will be paid for the portion of the program pursued, if the eligible Veteran does not complete the program, nonetheless finds employment in a field related to the program of education during the 180-day period.
How to Certify employment

- The Veteran must complete the applicable sections on Part 1 and Part II of the Employment Certification Form and return it to the School Certifying Official (SCO).

- The SCO must complete Part II of Section II of the form and send it via email to the VRRAP Processing Team at EDUVRRAP.VBAMUSK@VA.GOV once the Veteran Student finds employment.

**Note:** If a Veteran Student is affirming employment via “Self Employment”, additional information may be required (Federal Tax ID Number and Corporation Papers). Additionally, VA may require a written explanation as to how the skills learned in their VRRAP program will assist in growing their business. For additional questions regarding related employment, please contact the VRRAP Processing Team.
VA-ONCE Updates
The following changes were made in version P062.4 of VA-ONCE:

- The addition of a new chapter, VRRAP, Veteran Rapid Retraining Assistance Program
- All VRRAP submissions will be automatically routed to the Muskogee RPO for processing
- VET TEC schools are permitted to submit VRRAP claims
- If the benefit type is VRRAP:
  - STEM is not allowed
  - Associates-IHL Undergrad & NCD are the only valid training types
  - Bachelors and Graduate training is prohibited
  - Advance Pay and Accelerated Pay are disabled
  - The begin date for enrollments must be on or after 3-11-21
  - Entire length of program (begin date and end date) as well as Tuition and Fees for the entire program must be in remarks section on initial enrollment certification
VRRAP terms cannot begin before 3/11/21, the date legislation was enacted, and Tuition and Fees are required for the entire program.

Tuition and fees are required for the entire program for all VRRAP Enrollments.
Enter the **entire length of the program** (Begin Date & End Date) as well as the Tuition and Fees for the **entire program** in the Remarks section.

**Note**: VA payments to the education institutions will be based on the information listed in the remarks section on the initial enrollment certification. Therefore, **you must enter the entire length of the program and the tuition and fees for the entire program** in the remarks section.
GI Bill® Status Updates

Justin Brown
Education Quality & Training Specialist
National Training Team - Compliance
Digital GI Bill® (DGIB) is a modernized digital platform that will transform VA technology systems, improve GI Bill® students' user experience, and optimize benefits processes for millions of beneficiaries. This platform will be a single interface across the education ecosystem.
DGIB will enable VA to go beyond the technical modernization of claims processing by transitioning to a holistic service that improves user experience across our entire ecosystem of partners while providing additional value to Veterans, Service members, and their families. The new digital platform and streamlined processes will provide direct, online, one-stop access to GI Bill® benefits for beneficiaries and external partners.
Focus groups are underway to understand the needs of stakeholders. This month, VA has been holding sessions with:

- GI Bill® Students
- School Certifying Officials
- Chief Education Liaison Officers/Supervisory Compliance and Liaison Specialists
- Veteran Claims Examiners/Education Quality and Training Specialists
- Education Call Center

These sessions will be used to create Stakeholder Journey Maps to inform training and communications.

Other Human Centered Design activities include:

**RESEARCH & USER FEEDBACK SESSIONS**
Conduct primary research through unstructured user feedback sessions and directed storytelling to understand the needs and pain points of participants.

**DESIGN CONCEPTING**
Design ideas to address pain points and opportunities identified from Research & User Feedback Sessions.

**USABILITY TESTING**
Test and validate prototypes with different users to measure success and feasibility.

Feedback from the HCD process is used to inform and tailor configuration updates.
More than 80 HCD user feedback sessions have informed the modernization efforts so far.

Modernizing the GI Bill®

Putting Veterans and their families at the center of the experience.
The DGIB team conducted focus groups with different stakeholder groups to understand user experience and develop stakeholder journey maps.

Journey maps will be leveraged to inform training and communications efforts.

**MAJOR THEMES**

- Personalization communications are preferred by GI Bill® beneficiaries.
- Digitalized communications with email, app and text as preferred methods.
- Self-sufficiency allows users to learn about a new system on their own time at their own pace.

**POTENTIAL OPPORTUNITIES**

- Segmenting communications based on the stakeholder, so students receive information on topics that affect them.
- Developing opportunities to push communications via text and/or an app.
- Producing videos and step-by-step guides along with setup wizards allowing students to have self-learning opportunities.

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“I prefer personalized emails, so I know it’s not spam. I don’t care what VA is doing [if it doesn’t relate to me].”

“I’m more interested in hearing how changes would affect my benefits.”

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**STAKEHOLDER SESSIONS**

- **Education Call Center (ECC)**
- **GI Bill® Beneficiaries**
- **Veteran Claims Examiners (VCEs)**
- **Chief Education Liaison Officers (CELOs) & Supervisory Compliance and Liaison Specialists (SCLS)**
- **School Certifying Officials (SCOs)**

Scheduled for June 29 - July 1.
Upcoming Training for LTS Update

Victoria Evans
Chief
National Training Team - Schools
Upcoming training for LTS Update

Rules – Calculate Awards for Non-Standard IHL Graduate Enrollments

- When an IHL enrollment period has a Training Type of Graduate, and the length of the Enrollment Period is non-standard, LTS now calculates the Rate of Pursuit as the Payable Hours divided by the Fulltime Hours for the school.

- This change is effective with Enrollment Periods with a Begin Date on or after 8/1/21.

Note: Training is currently being developed and will be released in August Office Hours.
SCO Training Requirements

Victoria Evans
Chief
National Training Team - Schools
**New Training Cycle!**

- The new training cycle runs from October 1 thru August 31\(^{st}\) of the following year.
  - Existing SCOs have 11 months to meet their annual training requirement.
- September 1 - 30:
  - Training Window Closes for Existing SCO
  - New SCO training is continuous throughout the year

**Training Compliance**

- Compliance will be determined by the number of modules completed

**Centralized Certifications**

- Only designated SCOs are required to complete the annual training
- SCOs listed as points of contact are not required to complete the training because they are not authorized to submit enrollment certifications to VA
Training modality to complete annual training requirement:

- **Asynchronous Online training located on the SCO training portal**
  - Mandatory training topics specific to facility type
  - PowerPoint Presentations from virtual training events

- **Synchronous SCO Approved training events (virtual or in-person instructor led)** presented by or co-presented with a VA employee at:
  - Online Training Events
  - National or Regional Conferences
  - Local Workshops
  - One-On-One Training with the ELR of jurisdiction
FY21 SCO Annual Training Requirements

New SCOs

- 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

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<td>Non-College Degree (NCD) Programs</td>
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<td>High Schools and Residency Programs</td>
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<td>OJT/Apprenticeship Programs</td>
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<td>Vocational Flight</td>
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FY21 SCO Annual Training Requirements Cont.

Existing SCOs

- Must complete one (1) mandatory self-paced online training module specific to their facility type
- Must complete three (3) elective modules using the training modality of their choice

*Note: The three (3) electives are not required if only one (1) training module is needed to meet compliance

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

- October 1, 2020
- July 1, 2021
- August 15, 2021
- Sept 1-30, 2021

Please remember, if you don’t complete your annual training requirements:
VA has the authority to remove your access from VA-ONCE and the SAA has the authority to disapprove your school’s programs
Non-Compliance

- When covered institutions fail to complete the required training by the end of the training cycle, a notification via Gov.Delivery will be sent of the delinquency informing the institution of the impending loss of their ability to certify enrollments to VA.

- If covered institution remains non-compliant after the end of the training cycle the ELR will remove their ability to certify to VA and refer the institution to the SAA for review and determination on suspension or withdrawal actions in accordance with Colmery Act section 305.

- It will be a function of the National Training Team – Schools to generate training compliance reports at the 90, 60, and 30-day milestones, and at the end of the training cycle to determine compliant and non-compliant institution.
How To Self Certify!

1. Click on the URL Below or Copy and Paste it in your web browser
   https://vba-tpss.vbatraining.org/assess/trkSignIn?refid=XSC0
2. Enter your email address and eight (8) digit facility code and click Next
   (If you do not have a **User Profile**, click **New User Account** and follow the steps to set up your profile)
3. Scroll down and click the Conference/Workshop/Virtual Training tab
4. Select the applicable training session from the list of topics that appears on the right side of the screen by clicking Begin
5. To enter Conference/Workshop/Virtual Training Title, click the dropdown arrow, select SCO Virtual Training Session and click Submit
6. Enter the start date and the end date
7. Enter your Facility Name, City and State (Main Campus) and click Submit
8. Certify your attendance by clicking Agree and then submit
9. Print your training certificate and keep for your records
Thank You for Attending!

Approved Training

Thank you for your participation!

Choose VA

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs