U.S. DEPARTMENT OF
VETERANS AFFAIRS

School Certifying Official

Handbook

2nd Edition: 6/4/12 (see revisions page 7)

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PREFACE

This Handbook is written for VA Certifying Officials and anyone at a school involved with certification of beneficiaries of VA education benefits. This Handbook is a collaboration of the four Regional Processing Offices and Education Service and is intended to be the official source of information for VA Certifying Officials.

Certification instructions in this handbook are based on the use of VA-ONCE and include general information about the program. VA-ONCE is a VA Internet based application for certifying students. Detailed information about VA-ONCE is available at www.gibill.va.gov/school-certifying-officials.

As of August 1, 2012, VA-ONCE electronic certification will be required for all programs of education except on-the-job training, apprenticeship training, and correspondence training.

There are a number of additional resources that are also available on the School Certifying Officials webpage, including Online Training For New Certifying Officials. The web-based training course is ***strongly recommended*** for new VA Certifying Officials and is also useful as refresher training for existing VA Certifying Officials.

This Handbook is hyperlinked. You may click on any hyperlink or Table of Contents entry and you will go to that topic. Click on an Internet address or a cross-reference and you'll go to that page on the Internet or in the Handbook.

The Handbook can be downloaded at http://gibill.va.gov/school-certifying-officials/sco-training-resources/job-aids.html as a PDF file.

The Handbook's revision date is on the bottom of the cover page and there is a chronological list of revisions on page 6. Periodically check the Handbook on the Internet. If there's an updated version, download and replace the copy you have.

If you have questions about VA policies and procedures or about completing VA forms, contact your Education Liaison Representative (ELR). You can locate your ELR on the GI Bill Website at http://gibill.va.gov/school-certifying-officials/elr.html.

If you have questions about VA Education benefits, please visit our website (www.gibill.va.gov) or call the number listed below.

If you have a specific inquiry about a student, please call the number listed below or use the "Ask a Question" feature at the GI Bill website.

TOLL FREE EDUCATION NUMBER FOR THE EDUCATION CALL CENTER (THIS CALL CENTER HANDLES ALL EDUCATION CALLS)

1-888-442-4551

REVISIONS

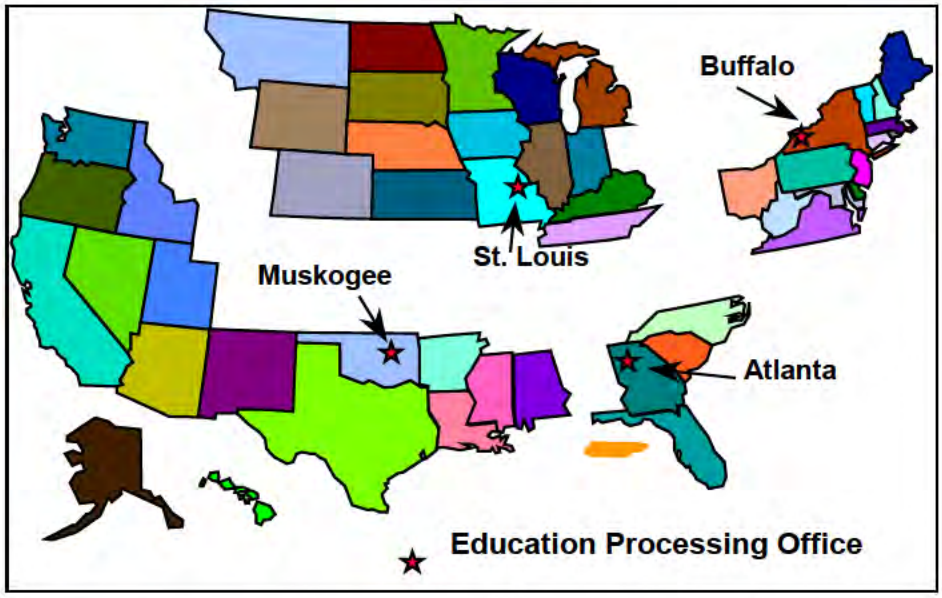
DATE	CHANGE	PAGE(S)
06/4/12	Update to Muskogee RPO Fax Number	9
06/4/12	Add Call Center Information for Students	11
06/4/12	Add Website for VOW to Hire Veterans/Veterans Retraining Assistance Program (VRAP)	12
06/4/12	Mandatory use of VA-ONCE effective August 1, 2012	6, 17
06/4/12	Addition of eBenefits information	19
06/4/12	Revision of Entitlement Charge information for Licensing and Certification Tests	21
06/4/12	Revision of Entitlement Charge information for National Tests	22
06/4/12	Add VRAP benefit information	25, 38, 43, 47, 52, 53, 57, 62, 67, 70
06/4/12	Requirement to associate a VA Objective Code and a VA Course Code with each program in VA-ONCE	45
06/4/12	Modification of VA-ONCE to include out-of-state field and Remark for certification of Tuition and Fees (chapter 33)	63/64
06/4/12	Modification of Academic Probation reporting requirements for multiple students in a single notification	71
06/4/12	Modification of Tuition Assistance information to separate chapter 30 and 33 information and procedures	80-82
06/4/12	Revised procedures for returning funds to VA due to a school debt (chapter 33)	88

CONTACT INFORMATION

REGIONAL PROCESSING OFFICES

Central Region
VA Regional Office PO Box 66830 St. Louis, MO 63166-6830 FAX (314) 552-9741

Eastern Region
VA Regional Office PO Box 4616 Buffalo, NY 14240-4616 FAX (716) 551-3241



Western Region
VA Regional Office PO Box 8888 Muskogee, OK 74402-8888 FAX (918) 781-7863

Southern Region
VA Regional Office PO Box 100022 Atlanta, GA 30031-4032 FAX (404) 929-3009

IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS

Education Benefits	1-888-442-4551
Other VA Benefits (Local Regional Office)	1-800-827-1000
Monthly Verification of Enrollment & IVR (Interactive Voice Response System)	1-877-823-2378
Direct Deposit Enrollment (students)	1-877-838-2778
Overseas Schools and Students Living Overseas	1-918-781-4379
Foreign Schools (Buffalo RPO)	1-716-857-3196
VA Debt Management Center	1-800-827-0648

EDUCATION CALL CENTER

The toll-free number for the Education Call Center is **1-888-442-4551**. The Call Center is in Muskogee, OK, and Education Case Managers are available 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. Central Time, Monday through Friday. The system's automated functions can provide information about benefits, applications, etc., and are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Individual Veterans can access their own record to obtain date of last benefit payment, check amounts, etc. Please utilize the automated system as much as possible.

Call the toll-free line for:

- Hardship cases
- Status of claim questions
- Questions on individual student payment issues

Call your ELR for:

- Approval issues
- Certification questions
- VA-Once technical questions

When you call as a certifying official, identify yourself as "<name>, the School Certifying Official for <name of school>" and have the social security number and certification information available for the student.

CALL CENTER INFORMATION FOR STUDENTS

Depending upon the volume of incoming telephone calls, a VA representative may not be available to answer a student's questions without delay. Please brief your students on the following two programs offered by the Call Center as part of its Virtual Hold feature, which become active when the call volume is high and there are extended hold times. Virtual Hold has two options, as follows:

1. As Soon As Possible (ASAP) Call Back

The ASAP call back feature offers students the option of a return call instead of waiting for the next available agent, without losing their place in queue. The program will make three attempts to call back. The caller will hear the following:

> "Rather than wait in line, The Department of Veteran's Affairs can call you back when it is your turn. You will not lose your place in line if you choose to use this service. To receive a callback please press or say 1, to continue to hold for an agent please press or say 2. To hear a brief description of this service please press or say 3."

Once the ASAP call back feature is chosen, the program will ask for the student's telephone number and name. When the callback is made, a recording will play stating that this is the requested call back for [the name recorded in the enrollment process]. The call back provides the opportunity to speak with an Agent, postpone the call back, or cancel the call back completely.

2. Scheduled Call Back (SCB)

The second feature is Scheduled Call Back (SCB). This feature allows callers to schedule an appointment with the VA. For example, upon caller request, we will call a Veteran back on Thursday between 2:00pm-2:15pm. A SCB can be scheduled up to 7 days in the future. Callers that reach the Call Center after normal operating hours can also request a SCB. Students will hear the following when calling during business hours:

> "We apologize. We are currently experiencing long wait times. For your convenience, we would like to offer you the opportunity to schedule a callback for a later time. To schedule an appointment, please press or say 1. To decline the appointment and call us back at another time, please press or say 2 or hang up. To hear a brief description of this service press/say 3."

Students calling after business hours will hear the following:

> "You have reached the Department of Veteran Affairs (line of business name). Our offices are now closed. For you convenience, we would like to offer you the opportunity to schedule a call back for a later time. To schedule an appointment please press or say 1. To decline the appointment and call us back at another time please press or say 2 or hang up. To hear a brief description of this service press or say 3."

Once the SCB option is selected, the student can schedule a call back from Monday through Friday, 8am to 8pm. SCBs are scheduled on Eastern Time and are not available on Federal holidays. The program will ask for the student's telephone number and name. When the callback is made, a recording will play stating that this is the requested call back for [the name recorded in the enrollment process]. The call back provides the opportunity to speak with an Agent, postpone the call back, or cancel the call back completely.

INTERNET RESOURCES

Web Site	Address	Description
GIBILL Home	http://www.gibill.va.gov/	Official benefit website includes general information on education benefits and special section for school certifying officials
GI Bill Training & Training Resources	http://www.gibill.va.gov/training	A valuable resource to help you increase your knowledge, skills, and abilities.
VA-ONCE	http://www.gibill.va.gov/school_info/once	Everything you want to know about electronic enrollment certification
Web Automated Verification of Enrollment (WAVE)	https://www.gibill.va.gov/wave	This site allows students to submit their monthly verification of enrollment over the Internet
VA Forms	http://www.va.gov/vaforms	VA Forms available on the internet
Web Automated Reference Management System (WARMS)	http://www.warms.vba.va.gov/	On-line access to VBA Manuals, Directives, Circulars, Letters, Title 38 Code of Federal Regulations, and other materials necessary to support our nation's Veterans
VA Debt Management Center (DMC)	http://www.va.gov/debtman	DMC has collection jurisdiction for all education benefit debts. DMC e-mail address: dmc.ops@va.gov
E-Benefits	http://www.ebenefits.va.gov/	eBenefits is a one-stop shop for online benefits-related tools and information.
Army Transcript Service (AARTS)	http://aartstranscript.army.mil/	Get a transcript translating army formal military education and job experience into civilian language; also includes college equivalent credit
Sailor/Marine American Council on Education Registry Transcript (SMART)	https://smart.navy.mil/smart	Get transcripts translating Navy and Marine formal military education and job experience into civilian language; also includes college equivalent credit recommendations
American Council on Education Military Guide	http://militaryguides.acenet.edu/	Guide to evaluation of educational experiences in the Armed Services
DOD Transferability	http://www.defense.gov/home/features/2009/0409_gibill/	DOD transferability documents, policies, and procedures
VOW/VRAP	http://www.benefits.va.gov/VOW/	VOW to Hire Heroes Act information, including the Veterans Retraining Assistance Program

INTERNET INQUIRIES

What does the Internet Inquiry System do?

The Internet Inquiry System allows you to find answers to Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) without calling the toll free number. The Search FAQ feature, in the Support Section, allows you to find answers to questions by category. The inquiry system also allows users to ask VA questions not in the "Answers" area. If the answer is not available, users can send an inquiry to VA using the "Submit a Question" tab. It may be beneficial to search the FAQ's before submitting an inquiry.

How to register in the VA inquiry system

Go to the "My Stuff" tab. **Click on "Create a New Account"**

- **Password:** Make up a strong password- something you can remember but not too easy
- **Verify Password:** Just type it again to make sure you have it right
- **First Name:** Your first name
- **Last Name:** You've got it- your last name
- **State:** The State where your school is located. This is important because the questions are routed initially to the appropriate RPO based on this field
- **Soc Sec / Claim Number:** Just leave it blank or you can put in your school's facility code
- **Suffix:** Leave it blank
- **Phone Number:** Provide a phone number where you can be reached

On the GIBILL website, www.gibill.va.gov, click on the Submit a Question link. You will see a tab labeled "Ask a Question."

Complete the page providing the following information:

- **E-mail address** -- Self explanatory
- **Subject** – "School Official" – This is important since we use it to route this Inquiry to someone who can set-up your account
- **Question** -- Provide the name of your school and the VA Facility Code
- **Product** – Select "GI Bill" from the drop-down menu
- **Category** – Select "School Officials ONLY" from the drop-down menu

This information is important because we use it to establish your account as a school official, and some of the information gives your inquiries priority routing once they enter our system.

How do I send an Inquiry?

Once you have registered, go to the "My Stuff" tab, enter your e-mail address and password, and click login. Once you are logged in, click on "Ask a Question" and fill out the form. If you have a problem case where payment is due, enter "School Certifying Official Hardship Case" in the subject line. Your inquiry will be handled on a priority basis (24 to 48 hours). If you have a general inquiry such as delimiting date or remaining entitlement, please do not identify it as a hardship case. You should receive a reply to your general inquiry in 3 to 5 working days. **NOTE:** You will receive a system-generated message when you submit your question advising you to expect an answer in 8 to 10 days.

IMPORTANT: Responses to your inquiries are not e-mailed to you. However, you will be notified by e-mail that a response has been submitted. You must go to the website, click on "Ask a Question and Answers" and login in order to view the answers. Responses to your inquiries will be in the area, "My Questions and Answers." Click on the "Questions" button to see a listing of your inquiries.

Who do I contact if I have question?

If you have any questions about the inquiry system please call us toll free at 1-888-442-4551 or contact your ELR.

Use this link to go to Internet Inquiry System to submit an inquiry.
[https://gibill.custhelp.com/app/utils/login_form/redirect/ask]

SCHOOL AND STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

SCHOOL RESPONSIBILITIES

The following information provides the basic responsibilities of an educational institution and VA Certifying Official. Each school will designate at least one VA Certifying Official to carry out reporting requirements. The designation will be made on VA Form 22-8794, Designation of School Certifying Official. It is important that a new VA Form 22-8794 be submitted any time there is a change in certifying officials. Each 8794 submitted must include all names, since the new form supersedes the old one. The form may be obtained from your ELR.

Responsibilities for Reporting

Keep VA informed of the enrollment status of Veterans and other eligible persons. Use basic forms to keep VA informed, such as:

- Enrollment Certification (VA Form 22-1999) to report required enrollment information
- Notice of Change in Student Status (VA Form 22-1999b) to report changes to enrollment information
- May use paper forms or electronic enrollment (VA-ONCE)
- Monitor the subjects pursued by a student to certify to VA only those subjects that apply to the student's program
- Monitor student's grades to ensure s/he is making satisfactory progress; report when a
- student was terminated due to unsatisfactory progress
- Monitor student's conduct and report when student is suspended or dismissed for unsatisfactory conduct

Keep up-to-date on current VA rules and benefits

- Provide e-mail address to VA Education Liaison Representative (ELR)
- Read and maintain VA bulletins provided by your ELR
- Attend VA training opportunities

Maintain records of VA students and make all records available for inspection:

- Retain file of VA papers submitted & records of academic progress, program pursuit, etc.
- Maintain records for at least three years following the student's last date of attendance
- Ensure that records are kept in a safe place and that the privacy of VA students is protected

A school's file for a VA student should contain:

- Copies of all VA paperwork
- The school's transcript, grade reports, drop slips, registration slips (for those courses dropped during drop/add), tuition and fee charges, transcripts from previous schools with evaluations of same, student's school application, records of disciplinary action, program outline, a curriculum guide or graduation evaluation form, and any other pertinent forms

Additional responsibilities required of a Yellow Ribbon school:

- Certify in accordance with the school's Yellow Ribbon agreement
- Maintain these additional records
- Track the number of students enrolled under Yellow Ribbon

- Track the annual amount of tuition and fees
- Develop and document a process for the first come-first served enrollment of students into the Yellow Ribbon Program

These are additional activities that schools are encouraged to carry out, but are not required by VA.

- Assist VA students in applying for education benefits
- Maintain copies of appropriate application forms
- When requested, help Veterans and dependents fill out and send in applications
- If the student cannot resolve payment problems, assist through VA channels designated for school officials
- Disseminate and/or post information on VA education benefits, programs, and contact points
- Ensure that VA students are fully aware of their responsibilities to the school

Apprise supervisors of any internal problems that may affect service to VA students, such as:

- Failure of records office to provide information on a student's grades, grade changes, academic problems
- Failure of instructors to provide information on attendance/attendance problems
- Failure of other offices to provide information on new programs, changes in current programs
- Failure of mail distribution center to forward appropriate mail

VA-ONCE

VA-ONCE is VA's Web-based system for certifying the enrollment and changes in enrollment of VA students. VAONCE is the preferred method of enrollment submission to VA. Access is accomplished through the Internet and is available to all schools approved for Veterans' training. VAONCE functions best with Microsoft Internet Explorer, IE 5.5 SP2 or higher, or Netscape Navigator NV Version 6.02 or higher browsers.

VA-ONCE usage will be mandatory for all enrollments and changes in enrollments submitted on or after August 1, 2012 (except for On-the-Job Training, Apprenticeship Training, and Correspondence Training). VA-ONCE enrollment procedures are below.

The first step to participate in VA-ONCE is to go to the VA Web site, complete, and print the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), which is accessible through the following link: http://gibill.va.gov/school_info/once/mou.htm

Once it has been completed and signed, mail or fax it to your ELR (not to the RPO).

Once we receive your completed MOU, we will activate your school in the system, enter the names of the certifying officials listed on the MOU, and will then provide a logon name and password to those individuals. The instructions for using VA-ONCE can be located at the GIBILL Website under **QUICK REFERENCE FLIP BOOK**. It can be found by going to the School Resource Page on the GI Bill Website and clicking on VA-ONCE Guidance. [http://www.gibill.va.gov/documents/vaonce/VA-Once_Flip_Book.pdf]

If you need further assistance, please contact your ELR.

Important items to note:

- Be sure to complete all items on the MOU and make sure an official of the school who has the authority to execute contracts on behalf of the institution signs it. The MOU only needs to be submitted once
- Be sure that each person listed as a certifying official on the MOU has already been designated as such to our office on VA Form 22-8794, Designation of Certifying Officials, and be sure to show their e-mail addresses. It is important that a new VA form 22-8974 be submitted any time that there is a change in certifying officials. Be sure to include all names as a new VA form 22-8974 supersedes the old one

Reporting Fees to Institutions

At the beginning of each calendar year, a listing of students who were receiving assistance during the previous calendar year is printed by VA for each institution. Based on the number of students who were certified to VA at least once during the year and who received VA educational benefits, institutions are compensated at the rate of $12 for each student. If the institution delivers an advance payment check, compensation is increased to the rate of $15 for that student.

PL 111-377 requires that reporting fees must be used for the purpose of certification. This money is to help schools cover the cost of administering their VA programs, including, but not limited to attendance at VA sponsored training conferences. Errors in the reporting fees amounts should be addressed to the ELR of jurisdiction.

School Certifying Official Training

All personnel who are involved with certifying VA education beneficiaries are highly encouraged to enroll and participate in the VA Training and Performance Support System (TPSS) School Certifying Official Course. Through this course you will learn how to:

- Identify your ELR and when / how to contact him/her
- How to reset your password or post-test if locked out
- Learn VA-Once capabilities and how to use it for certifying enrollments
- Print a certificate showing your completion of the SCO Course

Enroll today and get a jump-start on helping your students!

http://www.gibill.va.gov/school-certifying-officials/sco-training-resources/online-sco-training.html

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

Applications

VA students can submit applications online http://vabenefits.vba.va.gov/vonapp/main.asp. If students don't have access to apply online they can call 1-888-442-4551 and ask that an application be mailed to them.

All VA students must file an application when they first start school. Students who haven't received VA benefits before must file an original application (Veterans VA Form 22-1990; dependents VA Form 22-5490; ToE students VA-Form 22-1990e). Students who have received VA benefits before must file a Request for Change of Program or Place of Training (Veterans and ToE students VA Form 22-1995; dependents VA Form 22-5495). Students applying for CH 33 in lieu of (or relinquishing) another benefit should complete a VA Form 22-1990.

Change of Address and Direct Deposit

Address and direct deposit information must be kept current. Chapter 30,1606, & 1607 students can use the WAVE system to update address and financial institution information. Links to do so are on the "Main Menu" available after you log onto WAVE.

If a student wants to start (Chapter 30, 33, 35, 1606, and 1607) or change a direct deposit, the student should have his or her account information handy. The following information is needed to set up direct deposit and can be found on checks and bank statements:

- Account number
- 9 digit bank routing number
- Type of account (checking or savings)

If a student has direct deposit the student still needs to keep his or her address current because all other correspondence including award letters are mailed to the student's address.

All other students can call 1-877-838-2778 to begin and change direct deposit.

*****Effective February 3, 2012, DEA (Ch35) is now eligible to use Direct Deposit as a means of payment (with the exception of Work Study programs or Tutorial Assistance).

eBenefits

[http://www.ebenefits.va.gov/]

Students are encouraged to register and utilize eBenefits to assist them in the following:

- Obtaining up to date information on their educational entitlement
- Updating their Direct Deposit and personal contact information
- Downloading VA letters and personal documents
- Viewing the current status of their payments (both education and disability)

Students can register for either a Basic or Premium account, but must be enrolled in the Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System (DEERS) to obtain either account type.

Note: An "in person" authentication will be required for Premium accounts.

Student Verification of Enrollment

Students receiving Chapter 30, 1606, and 1607 must verify their enrollment monthly by Web Automated Verification of Enrollment (WAVE) or by Interactive Voice Response (IVR). The monthly verification of enrollment has not been added for Chapter 33 and Chapter 35, with one exception. Chapter 35 NCD students are mailed a monthly verification form (VA Form 22-8979).

The preferred verification method is WAVE, which includes features not in IVR. When students are awarded benefits, the award letter they receive describes WAVE and IVR. The earliest students can verify their enrollment is the last calendar day of each month.

WAVE allows students to verify their enrollment on the Internet. WAVE is on the Education Service website at www.gibill.va.gov/wave/index.do.

Students must be currently enrolled in an approved educational program and must have a current benefit award to use WAVE. The WAVE system permits students to perform a multitude of functions. For instance, students may:

- Verify that enrollment has not changed
- Report a change in enrollment
- Change mailing address
- Initiate or change direct deposit information
- View the enrollment period and monthly benefit amount
- View the remaining entitlement
- Sign up for a monthly e-mail reminder

IVR allows students to "phone in" (1-877-823-2378) their monthly verification if there are no changes to the enrollment during the previous month. If there were changes in the enrollment, the student must contact the VA Certifying Official to submit a change in status and the payment may be delayed until the reduction is processed.

Licensing and Certification Tests

Chapter 30, 32, 33, 35, 1606, 1607

VA can reimburse the cost of approved licensing and certification tests. Students are reimbursed the cost of the test, not to exceed the approved cost of the test or $2,000. Benefits can be paid for tests that are not passed, for tests retaken if not passed, and for tests required to be recertified or to renew a license.

Students must be eligible for benefits to receive test reimbursement. They must have remaining entitlement and their delimiting date must not have passed.

Information about test fee reimbursement can be found on our website at http://gibill.va.gov/resources/education_resources/programs/licensing_and_certification.html. The page includes a Search for Tests link where you can find all approved licensing and certification tests.

VA students can apply for test fee reimbursement by completing and submitting an Application for Reimbursement of Licensing or Certification Test Fees available at http://www.vba.va.gov/pubs/forms/VBA-22-0803-ARE.pdf.

Attach a copy of the test results to the application. If test results are not available, attach a copy of the license or certification and a payment receipt. Test fee reimbursement can be paid for each test for which reimbursement is claimed and the required documents are submitted.

Entitlement is prorated based on the amount reimbursed. If a student's full-time benefit is $1000 per month and the student is reimbursed $500 for a test, then the student's remaining entitlement will be reduced by ½ month.

Entitlement Charge

Under the Post-9/11 GI Bill, individuals are charged one month of entitlement for each $1,460 reimbursed (for Academic Year 2011-2012) rounded to the nearest non-zero whole month. This amount is subject to an annual cost of living allowance.

Example: A Chapter 33 Veteran who receives reimbursement for a certification test (taken in Academic Year 2011-2012) in the amount of $2,150 will be charged 1 month of entitlement, as the amount reimbursed is less than 150% of $1,460.

Under the other benefit programs, entitlement is charged by dividing the amount paid by the full-time monthly institutional rate payable during the fiscal year in which the test was taken. The amount charged is not rounded to the nearest month.

Example: A Chapter 30 Veteran who receives reimbursement for a certification test in the amount of $2,150 will be charged 1 month and 14 days of entitlment in FY 2012, as
$2,150 ÷ $1,473 ≈ 1.46 months.

National Tests

Chapters 30, 33, 35, 1606, 1607

VA students can be reimbursed the fee charged for national admission tests and national tests for college credit. Currently the only approved tests are:

- SAT (Scholastic Assessment Test)
- LSAT (Law School Admission Test)
- GRE (Graduate Record Exam)
- GMAT (Graduate Management Admission Test)
- AP (Advanced Placement Exam)
- CLEP (College-Level Examination Program)
- ACT (American College Testing Program)
- DAT (Dental Admissions Test)
- MAT (Miller Analogies Test)
- MCAT (Medical College Admissions Test)
- OAT (Optometry Admissions Testing)
- PCAT (Pharmacy College Admissions Test)
- TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language)
- DSST (DANTES Subject Standardized Tests)
- ECE (Excelsior College Examinations)
- TECEP (Thomas Edison College Examination Program)

Complete information and directions for applying for reimbursement is available at http://gibill.va.gov/resources/education_resources/programs/national_testing_program.html.

A list of all approved national tests and approved charges can be found through the following link: http://inquiry.vba.va.gov/weamspub/buildSearchNE.do.

Entitlement Charge

Under the Post-9/11 GI Bill, individuals are charged one month of entitlement for each $1,460 reimbursed (for Academic Year 2011-2012) rounded to the nearest non-zero whole month. This amount is subject to an annual cost of living allowance.

Example: A Chapter 33 Veteran who receives reimbursement for a certification test (taken in Academic Year 2011-2012) in the amount of $2,150 will be charged 1 month of entitlement, as the amount reimbursed is less than 150% of $1,460.

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EDUCATION BENEFIT PROGRAMS

EDUCATION BENEFIT PROGRAMS

General and detailed descriptions for each program are online at http://gibill.va.gov/post-911/

Note: Students who may be eligible for education benefits should submit an application. Students should not delay submission while waiting on additional information or supporting documentation (DD214, NOBE, etc.) Even if someone appears ineligible, VA will review his or her application and officially deny or grant benefits.

COMPARISON OF EDUCATION PROGRAMS

A comprehensive comparison can be found on the GI Bill website at the following link: www.gibill.va.gov/GI_Bill_Info/CH33/Benefit_Comparison_Chart.htm

	CH 33	CH 30	CH 35	CH 1606	CH 1607
ELIGIBILITY	Eligibility criteria are complex. The following statements are general snippets about eligibility criteria. Students should file an application so the Regional Processing Office can determine if they are eligible and the conditions of their eligibility.				
	Servicepersons who served on active duty for at least 90 aggregate days after 9/10/01.	2 years active duty, 3 years active duty, **or** 2 years active duty plus 4 years reserves.	Veteran's death or permanent and total disability result of service.	Completion of initial active duty for training. Must be active reservist with 6-year obligation.	90 days or more active duty support of contingency operation or full-time National Guard duty responding to national emergency.
BENEFITS FOR INSERVICE STUDENT	***Refer to the specific benefit for detailed information***				
	Eligible after completing 90 days of aggregate service.	Payable after 2 years continuous active duty.	No	Yes	Yes
ENTITLEMENT	**48 months maximum under two or more programs**				
	36 months. May extend to end of term if expires during term. Note: If there's a kicker, the kicker doesn't extend.	36 months. May extend to end of term if expires during term. Note: If there's a kicker, the kicker doesn't extend.	45 months. No extensions except for child in special restorative training.	36 months. No extensions.	36 months. No extensions.
DELIMITING DATE	15 years from last discharge or separation.	10 years from last discharge or separation. May extend for later period of active duty or disability that prevents completion of program.	**Child**: 8 years **Spouse**: 10 years. 20 years if vet rated permanent and total within 3 years of discharge. **Surviving Spouse**: 10 years. 20 years if death while on active. Eligibility rules are complex. Claimant should carefully read eligibility letter and call VA if questions and see online pamphlet: www.gibill.va.gov/pamphlets/CH35/CH35_Pamphlet_General.htm.	14 years from your beginning date of eligibility, or on the day you leave the Selected Reserve. May extend if disability incurred or aggravated by service in selected reserve prevents completion of program.	10 years from the separation date if separated after completing service contract and discharge isn't dishonorable. 10 years from Chapter 1607 eligibility date if separated for disability.

EDUCATION RATES

CHAPTER 33

Monthly Housing Allowance payment amounts are based on the Department of Defense's Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH) rates for an "E-5 with dependents" for the zip code of the school. BAH rates can be found at the following website: www.defensetravel.dod.mil/perdiem/bah.html

Monthly Housing Allowance amounts are prorated based on a student's benefit level and may be further reduced based on the rate of pursuit rounded to nearest multiple of 10. Benefits are only payable when the rate of pursuit is more than 50%, and the student is not on active duty.

CHAPTERS 30, 33, 1606, 1607, and 35

The most current education pay rates for each benefit can be found on the GI Bill Website.

http://www.gibill.va.gov/resources/benefits_resources/rate_tables.html

Veterans Retraining Assistance Program (VRAP)

VRAP benefits are based on the Montgomery GI Bill Active Duty (Chapter 30) full-time 3-year rate. The most current education pay rate can be found on the GI Bill Website.

http://www.gibill.va.gov/resources/benefits_resources/rate_tables.html

POST-9/11 GI BILL
CHAPTER 33, TITLE 38 U.S. CODE

For additional information about CH 33, visit the GI BILL website:

http://gibill.va.gov/post-911/post-911-gi-bill-summary/

Eligible individuals. Generally, an individual who served a minimum of 90 days on active duty after September 10, 2001, will be eligible for educational assistance under the Post-9/11 GI Bill. Active duty served as a member of the Armed Forces or as a result of a call or order to active duty from a reserve component under section 688, 12301(a), 12301(d), 12303(g), 12302, or 12304 of Title 10 is qualifying active duty service.

On October 1, 2011, VA will begin paying benefits to members of the Army National Guard and Air National Guard for qualifying service under title 32. The following service may qualify:

- Full time service in the National Guard for the purpose of organizing, administering, recruiting, instructing or training.
- Activations in support of a national emergency under section 502(f) of title 32.

Benefits can be paid retroactively to August 1, 2009, the effective date of the Post-9/11 GI Bill program.

The following periods of active duty service are excluded:

- ROTC under 10 U.S.C. 2107(b)
- Service academy contract period
- Service terminated due to defective enlistment agreement
- Service used for loan repayment

Period of Eligibility. In general an individual's eligibility to use Chapter 33 benefits expires 15 years from the date of the last discharge or release from active duty of at least 90 consecutive days.

In order to retain eligibility, after meeting the service requirements, an individual must:

- Be honorably discharged from Armed Forces; or
- Be released from Armed Forces with service characterized as honorable and placed on the retired list, temporary disability retired list, or transferred to the Fleet Reserve or the Fleet Marine Corps Reserve
- Be released from Armed Forces with service characterized as honorable for further service in a reserve component.

Chapter 33 Entitlement. Individuals eligible under Chapter 33 are generally entitled to 36 months of educational assistance. Individuals are limited to a maximum of 48 months of entitlement when using benefits under two or more programs.

Individuals eligible for benefits under the national call to service program and Chapter 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, or 36 of title 38; or Chapter 107, 1606, 1607, or section 903 of title 10; or the hostage relief act of 1980; or the omnibus diplomatic security and antiterrorism act of 1986 may not receive assistance under two or more such programs concurrently.

Election. Students eligible for Chapter 30, 1606, or 1607, on August 1, 209, and on their election date, must relinquish a benefit to receive Chapter 33. Students eligible for more than one benefit only have to relinquish one benefit to receive Chapter 33.

Chapter 33 elections are irrevocable. However:

- Election requests can be **withdrawn** if the Regional Processing Office receives the withdrawal request before a certificate of eligibility is issued or a payment processed.
- Election requests can be **changed** if the Regional Processing Office receives the change request before a certificate of eligibility is issued or a payment processed. The student must request the change in writing.

Length of Service Percentage. Eligible students receive a percentage of the Chapter 33 benefit for tuition and fees, monthly housing allowance, and book stipend based on their length of service. The percentage is determined by the student's aggregate active duty service after September 10, 2001. All creditable active duty and qualifying call-up service are combined to determine the aggregate service.

Length of service percentages are described in the following table:

Service Requirements (Aggregate active duty after 9/10/01)	% Of Maximum Benefit Payable
At least 36 months	100
At least 30 continuous days on active duty (Must be discharged due to service-connected disability)	100
At least 30 months, but less than 36 months (1)	90
At least 24 months, but less than 30 months (1)	80 (3)
At least 18 months, but less than 24 months (2)	70 (3)
At least 12 months, but less than 18 months (2)	60
At least 06 months, but less than 12 months (2)	50
At least 90 days, but less than 06 months (2)	40

(1) Includes entry level and skill training. (2) Excludes entry level and skill training.
(3) If the service requirements are met at both the 80 and 70 percentage level, the maximum percentage of 70 must be applied too amounts payable.

Education and Training Available Under Chapter 33

Effective August 1, 2009. All programs must be offered by a degree-granting institution of higher learning (IHL) and approved for Chapter 30. Approved programs include undergraduate degrees, graduate degrees, professional degrees, and non-degree programs approved at the IHL. Additionally, tutorial assistance and reimbursement for one licensing or certification test are available under Chapter 33.

Students who elect Chapter 33 and relinquish Chapter 30, 1606, or 1607 may receive benefits for approved programs not offered by an IHL (non degree programs, flight training, correspondence courses, apprenticeship/on-the-job training, preparatory courses, and national tests). These students will be paid for these programs as if they were still receiving benefits under the relinquished benefit, but their entitlement will be charged under Chapter 33.

Effective October 1, 2011. VA will begin paying Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits to individuals pursuing the following approved non-IHL non-degree programs.

- Non-College Degree (NCD) schools
- On-the Job Training (OJT) and Apprenticeship programs
- Flight Programs
- Correspondence courses

Effective October 1, 2011. Individuals pursuing an approved program at an NCD school will receive the lesser of the following:

- The actual net cost for in-state tuition and fees after the application of any waiver, scholarship, aid, or assistance [other than loans and funds provided under section 401(b) of the Higher Education Act of 1965], or $17,500 for the academic year beginning on August 1, 2011.
- The amount of the yearly cap will be adjusted each year based upon a COLA and is subject to proration based upon benefit level.

Chapter 33 Benefit Payments

Depending on the student's situation, Chapter 33 benefits can include payment of tuition and fees, a monthly housing allowance, a stipend for books and supplies, college fund ("kicker") payments, a rural benefit payment, and a Yellow Ribbon Program benefit. Chapter 33 differs from other education Chapters in that each type of payment is issued separately, with some payments made directly to the school and others directly to the student.

Tuition and Fees

The tuition and fees payment is paid directly to the school on behalf of the student when the school's enrollment certification is processed. The tuition and fees payment is prorated by the student's benefit level.

Effective August 1, 2009. It is also limited to the highest per credit hour tuition and the maximum fees charged by a public institution for undergraduate training in the state where the student is enrolled. State caps for tuition and fees are at http://www.gibill.va.gov/GI_Bill_info/ch33/tuition_and_fees_2010.htm.
Students on active duty may receive the total amount of tuition and fees, not limited to the state maximum, or the amount of charges that exceed the amount paid by the military's federal tuition assistance.

Effective August 1, 2011. The amount of tuition and fees payable for programs offered by Institutions of Higher Learning will change. The in-state, undergraduate state maximum amounts for tuition and fees will no longer apply.

- **U.S. Public Schools:** The actual net cost for in-state tuition and fees after the application of any waiver, scholarship, aid, or assistance [other than loans and funds provided under section 401(b) of the Higher Education Act of 1965], provided directly to the institution and specifically designated for the sole purpose of defraying tuition and fees.
- **Private and Foreign Schools:** The lesser of the actual net cost for tuition and fees after the application of any waiver, scholarship, aid, or assistance [other than loans and funds provided under section 401(b) of the Higher Education Act of 1965], provided directly to

the institution and specifically designated for the sole purpose of defraying tuition and fees, or $17,500 for the academic year beginning on August 1, 2011.

The amount of the yearly cap will be adjusted each year based upon a Cost Of Living Allowance (COLA) and is subject to proration based upon benefit level.

Monthly Housing Allowance

Effective August 1, 2009. A monthly housing allowance is paid directly to the student at the beginning of each month for the previous month. The housing allowance is prorated by the student's length of service percentage. The monthly housing allowance paid equals the Department of Defense's Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH) for an "E-5 with dependents" and the zip code of the school. The BAH rates are at the following link http://www.defensetravel.dod.mil/perdiem/bah.html.

Active duty personnel (including those on terminal leave) and their spouses utilizing transferred entitlement are not eligible for the housing allowance. Once separated from active duty, students (and their spouses) will become eligible to receive the monthly housing allowance on the first day of the month following separation.

The monthly housing allowance is subject to "Grandfathering Rules". A student will be paid the same monthly housing allowance rate for as long as he or she remains continuously enrolled at the same school (same facility code). Continuously enrolled means no more than a 6-month break in training in enrollment.

Rate of Pursuit and the Housing Allowance

Rate of pursuit applies specifically to Chapter 33. It differs from training time, which is used for all other Chapters. Schools certify actual credit. VA calculates rate of pursuit by dividing the number of credit (or credit hour equivalents) being pursued by the number of credit considered to be full-time by the school. The resulting percentage is the student's rate of pursuit.

Examples: If full-time is 12 credits, then rate of pursuit for:

- 6 credits (or credit equivalents) is 50% (6 ÷ 12 = 50%)
- 7 credits (or credit equivalents) is 58% (7 ÷ 12 = 58%)

The housing allowance is paid if the student's rate of pursuit is more than 50%. Rate of pursuit determines whether a student receives or doesn't receive the housing allowance. If pursuit is more than 50% the student receives the housing allowance. If the rate of pursuit is 50% or less, then the student doesn't receive the housing allowance. (Active duty personnel receiving chapter 33 benefits or spouses of active duty personnel receiving Transfer of Entitlement (ToE) benefits are not eligible for the housing allowance.)

Effective August 1, 2011. The amount payable for the Monthly Housing Allowance will change as follows:

U.S. In-Residence: The applicable Basic Allowance for Housing rate will be multiplied by the rate of pursuit rounded to the nearest multiple of 10.

Foreign In-Residence: The national average of all Basic Allowance for Housing rates will be multiplied by the rate of pursuit rounded to the nearest multiple of 10.

Example 1: An individual at a rate of pursuit of .54 will receive 50% of the applicable BAH rate (subject to the eligibility tier level)

Example 2: An individual at a rate of pursuit of .85 will receive 90% (subject to the eligibility tier level)

NOTE: Basic eligibility requirements for Monthly Housing Allowance benefits (e.g. Veterans with a rate of pursuit >.50) remain unchanged

The amount payable for the Monthly Housing Allowance for any academic year (beginning on August 1) will be based upon the BAH rates effective on January 1 of that year. This means that Monthly Housing Allowance rates for Chapter 33 awards will change effective August 1 of each year, and not on January 1.

Effective August 1, 2011. Interval pay is eliminated except for periods where a school is closed due to an Executive Order of the President or due to an emergency situation.

- These payments are limited to 4 weeks in any 12 month period
- This applies to ***all*** VA education benefit programs

Distance Learning and the Housing Allowance

Effective August 1, 2009. Students whose enrollment is exclusively distance learning training are not eligible for the monthly housing allowance. If a student's enrollment is both distance learning and resident training (standard classroom instruction) and pursuit is more than 50%, then the monthly housing allowance can be paid for the period of residence training and any break periods that meet break pay rules.

Effective October 1, 2011. Individuals only enrolled in distance learning courses will be eligible for a monthly housing allowance equal to 50% of the national average of all Basic Allowances for Housing. Rates will be multiplied by the rate of pursuit rounded to the nearest multiple of 10. **NOTE:** Basic eligibility requirements for Monthly Housing Allowance benefits (e.g. students with a rate of pursuit >.50) remain unchanged.

Books and Supplies Stipend

Effective August 1, 2009. The books and supplies stipend is a lump sum payment (each quarter, semester or term attended) paid directly to the student when the school's enrollment certification is processed. The stipend is prorated by the student's length of service percentage. Active duty students are not eligible for the stipend.

The books and supplies stipend pays $41.67 per credit certified, up to 24 credits for the academic year (08/01/YY-07/31/YY). The start date of an enrollment period determines the academic year the enrollment period belongs to. The maximum stipend is $1,000 per academic year.

Effective October 1, 2011. Individuals enrolled in a degree program while on active duty will be eligible for the Books & Supplies stipend of up to $1,000.00 per academic year. The rules for calculating Books and Supplies payments are the same as those for Veterans.

Effective October 1, 2011. For NCD Schools, Apprenticeship, and OJT Programs a lump-sum Books & Supplies stipend in an amount equal to $83 for each month (prorated for partial months and benefit level).

Yellow Ribbon Program

The Yellow Ribbon Program payment is paid directly to the school on behalf of the student when the school's enrollment certification is processed.

- Only individuals entitled at the 100% benefit level may receive Yellow Ribbon funding
- Students who served at least 36 months or more on active duty, and
- Students who served at least 30 continuous days on active duty, and were discharged due to service-connected disability

The following are not eligible for the Yellow Ribbon Program

- Active Duty personnel
- Spouses of Active Duty personnel using Transferred Entitlement
- Fry Scholarship recipients

The Yellow Ribbon Program allows schools to enter into an agreement with VA to fund the tuition and fees cost that exceeds the basic tuition and fees amount payable by VA. The Yellow Ribbon Program can provide additional funding to students whose tuition and fees charge exceeds the in-state, undergraduate cap (before August 1, 2011); or charges for out-of-state tuition, or charges in excess of the yearly cap for students enrolled in private or foreign institutions (after August 1, 2011).

If a school participates in the Yellow Ribbon Program, VA will match each dollar the school contributes up to 50% of the difference between the basic tuition and fees amount payable by VA and the tuition and fee amount charged the student. The combined school and VA contribution can't exceed the tuition and fee amount charged the student.

A comprehensive explanation of the Yellow Ribbon Program is available on VA's website at: www.gibill.va.gov/GI_Bill_Info/CH33/Yellow_ribbon.htm.

Kickers and Additional Contributions

Effective August 1, 2009. Students eligible for a kicker under Chapter 30 or 1606 may receive the kicker under Chapter 33. The kicker will be prorated by the student's rate of pursuit percentage and paid as a lump sum payment to the student when the school's enrollment certification is processed.

The Chapter 30 and 1607 additional contribution ($600 Buy-up) is **not** payable under Chapter 33.

Effective October 1, 2011. Eligible individuals will receive payments for ch30 and ch1606 kicker payments on a monthly, rather than a lump sum, basis.

Kickers will be paid regardless of rate of pursuit or eligibility for the Monthly Housing Allowance. The applicable full time kicker rate will be multiplied by the rate of pursuit rounded to the nearest multiple of 10.

Licensing and Certification Tests

Effective August 1, 2009. Chapter 33 students may be reimbursed for one licensing or certification test. The reimbursement cannot exceed $2,000. The test must be approved for VA benefits.

Effective October 1, 2011. Individuals may be reimbursed for multiple licensing and certification exams. One month of entitlement (rounded to the nearest whole month) will be charged for each $1,460 paid. The test must be approved for VA benefits.

The amount equivalent to one month of entitlement will be adjusted each year based upon a COLA.

National Tests

Effective October 1, 2011. Individuals may be reimbursed for multiple national tests (e.g. SAT, GRE, LSAT, etc). One month of entitlement (rounded to the nearest whole month) will be charged for each $1,460 paid. The test must be approved for VA benefits.

The amount equivalent to one month of entitlement will be adjusted each year based upon a COLA.

Rural benefit

The rural benefit is a one-time, lump-sum payment of $500. The rural benefit is issued directly to students who reside in a county with six persons or fewer per square mile who physically relocate at least 500 miles to attend a school, or relocate by air (any distance) when no other land-based transportation exists.

Vocational Flight

Effective October 1, 2011. Individuals pursuing an approved flight program (not offered at an IHL) will receive the lesser of the following:

- The actual net cost for in-state tuition and fees after the application of any waiver, scholarship, aid, or assistance [other than loans and funds provided under section 401(b) of the Higher Education Act of 1965], or
- $10,000 for the academic year beginning on August 1, 2011.

Transfer of Entitlement

The Department of Defense (DoD) offers members of the Armed Forces the opportunity to transfer Chapter 33 benefits to their spouse or dependent children. If a member of the Armed Forces (active duty or Selected Reserve) serves six years and reenlists for 4 more years or has at least 10 years of service, then transfer of entitlement (ToE) is possible.

While in the Armed Forces, members use the ToE website to designate, modify, and revoke a ToE request. After leaving the Armed Forces, members can provide a future effective date for use of ToE, modify the number of months transferred, or revoke entitlement transferred by submitting a written request to VA.

NOTE: After separating from the Armed Forces individuals cannot designate new dependents to receive transferred entitlement or amend the effective date of the initial transfer of entitlement to an earlier date.

Refer students to the Transfer of Entitlement link on the www.gibill.va.gov homepage. The link explains what the member must do, what the child or spouse must do, and gives all the needed links. There are two basic steps:

Step 1: The service member (transferor) must transfer the entitlement. If approved, transfer data is put into a secure online database DoD shares with VA. That database, in addition to providing VA qualifying periods of Chapter 33 service, also provides ToE data.

Step 2: The spouse or child (transferee) must apply. The application VA Form 22-1990e; Application for Family Member to Use Transferred Benefits can be completed online.

When certifying a ToE student, use the student's social security number as the student's file number and identify the student as a Chapter 33 student. Certify ToE students like you would any other Chapter 33 student.

Information and requirements about transferability can be found on DoD's website at: www.defenselink.mil/home/features/2009/0409%5Fgibill.

Effective October 1, 2011. Individuals eligible for ToE from multiple transferors may not receive benefits from multiple sources concurrently.

Members of the Public Health Service (PHS) and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) can be eligible to transfer unused ch33 entitlement.

The rules for basic eligibility for Transfer of Entitlement (ToE) remain unchanged.

Fry Scholarship

Effective August 1, 2009. The Fry Scholarship added a new eligibility criterion to Chapter 33. It provides benefit eligibility for children of active duty members of the Armed Forces who died in the line of duty after September 10, 2001.

An information sheet about the Fry Scholarship is available at http://www.gibill.va.gov/documents/factsheets/fry_scholarship.pdf

Eligible children:

- May be married or over 23 and still be eligible
- Are entitled to 36 months of benefits at the 100% level
- Have 15 years to use the benefit beginning on their 18th birthday
- May use the benefit until their 33rd birthday
- Are not eligible for the Yellow Ribbon Program

Identify Fry students as Chapter 33 and use their social security number as their file number. Certify Fry students like any other Chapter 33 student, except for Yellow Ribbon. Students who

are not eligible will be mailed a disallowance letter that explains the reason for their disallowance and that explains the appeal process.

MONTGOMERY GI BILL - ACTIVE DUTY (MGIB)

CHAPTER 30, TITLE 38 U.S. CODE

Chapter 30 has four eligibility categories. The benefits generally apply to Veterans who began active duty service for the first time after June 30, 1985, had their pay reduced $100 a month for 12 months, and received an honorable discharge. For further information on the four eligibility categories, visit http://www.gibill.va.gov/benefits/montgomery_gibill/active_duty.html.

To be eligible for education payments under MGIB, Veterans must possess an Honorable discharge. This would exclude those Veterans with a General Discharge Under Honorable Conditions or any other discharge other than Honorable. Also excluded are officers who obtained their commission after 12/31/76, through a military academy (Annapolis, West Point, Air Force Academy, or Coast Guard Academy), or through an ROTC scholarship program (payments exceeding $3,400/yr)

Individuals released from active duty with an Honorable character of service by reason of Convenience of the Government (COG) with 20 months of service on a two-year contract, or 30 months on a three-year contract, are eligible even if they did not complete their full contract period. They will receive one month of Chapter 30 benefits for each month of active duty.

Chapter 30 benefits are paid on a monthly basis directly to the veteran. Rates can be found at the following link
http://www.gibill.va.gov/resources/benefits_resources/rate_tables.html.

Chapter 30 Kickers and Additional Contributions

Higher monthly benefits are paid to Chapter 30 participants with “kickers” and to Chapter 30 participants who make additional Chapter 30 payments. Veterans may have a kicker, additional contributions, or both. The higher benefit rates are paid automatically when benefits are paid. If Veterans don’t receive the benefit they believe they are entitled to receive, they should call VA about the discrepancy so that VA can resolve the discrepancy with the Department of Defense. A kicker is part of the enlistment contract. It might be referred to as; Army College Fund, Navy Sea College Fund. If a contract has a $12,000 kicker, for example, then the monthly kicker is $333.33 ($12,000 ÷ 36 months), which increases the $1,426.00 full-time Chapter 30 benefit to $1,759.33.

Servicepersons who participate in Chapter 30 contribute $1,200.00 towards Chapter 30. The contribution is non-refundable, with one exception. Chapter 30 (category 1 only) students who elect and then exhaust their Chapter 33 entitlement and are receiving a monthly housing allowance will receive a refund of the $1,200.00 contribution proportional to the amount of unused chapter 30 entitlement at the time of election for chapter 33. The refund is included in their last monthly housing allowance payment.

Servicepersons may contribute up to $600.00 more into the program. The maximum $600.00 additional contribution will increase the basic full-time Chapter 30 benefit by $150.00 per month. Additional contributions are not refundable for those who elect Chapter 33.

DEPENDENTS' EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE (DEA)

CHAPTER 35, TITLE 38 U.S. CODE

Educational Assistance paid to dependents of Veterans who have a service connected permanent and total disability or died as a result of service connection. Persons who may be eligible are:

- A child (between ages 18 and 26, with some exceptions) of a veteran who is permanently and totally disabled due to a service-related condition; or who died in service; or who died of a service-connected disability; or who died while evaluated as having total and permanent service-connected disability; or who is listed as a POW or MIA.
- The surviving spouse of a veteran who died of a service-connected disability, or died in service, or died while evaluated as having total and permanent disability resulting from a service-connected disability. Surviving spouses whose benefits stopped when they remarried can receive DEA benefits again if their remarriage ends by death or divorce, or they cease to live with the person to whom they presented themselves in public as married.
- A spouse of a veteran or serviceperson who has a total and permanent disability resulting from a service-connected disability; or who is listed as a POW or MIA.
- The spouse or child of a service member who is hospitalized or receiving outpatient treatment for a service connected permanent and total disability and is likely to be discharged for that disability.

More information on Dependents Educational Assistance can be found on our website at http://www.gibill.va.gov/benefits/other_programs/dea.html

MONTGOMERY GI BILL - SELECTED RESERVE (MGIB-SR)

CHAPTER 1606, TITLE 10 U.S. CODE

Chapter 1606 is an educational program for members who are actively participating in the Selected Reserve. Selected Reserve components include the Army Reserve, Naval Reserve, Air Force Reserve, Marine Corps Reserve, Coast Guard Reserve, Army National Guard, and Air National Guard. The Department of Defense and the Department of Homeland Security (Coast Guard) determine who's eligible for Chapter 1606. The Department of Veterans Affairs administers the program and pays benefits.

Basic eligibility requires a 6-year obligation to serve in the Selected Reserve and satisfactory participation in required Selected Reserve training. Chapter 1606 benefits are paid on a monthly basis directly to the reservist. Rates can be found at the following link:
http://www.gibill.va.gov/resources/benefits_resources/rate_tables.html.

Chapter 1606 Kickers: An additional amount, called a kicker, may be added to the benefit of some Chapter 1606 students. The possible monthly kicker levels are $100, $200, and $350. A Chapter 1606 kicker may be a part of the original enlistment contract or part of a re-enlistment contract.

RESERVE EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (REAP)

CHAPTER 1607, TITLE 10 U.S. CODE

This is an educational program for active members of the Selected Reserve called to active duty and members of the Individual Ready Reserve (Army IRR, Air Force IRR, Navy IRR and Marine Corps IRR) called to active duty in support of a contingency operation or a national emergency declared by the President or Congress. The Department of Defense and the Department of Homeland Security (Coast Guard) determine who's eligible for Chapter 1607. The Department of Veterans Affairs administers the program and pays benefits.

Members of the Selective Reserve may be eligible for Chapter 1607 and Chapter 33 after serving 90 consecutive days on active duty for a contingency operation. The Chapter 1607 benefit pays a percentage of the Chapter 30 three-year or more rate based on the number of continuous service days on active duty: 90 days but less than 1 year pays 40%, 1 year but less than 2 years pays 60%, and service of two continuous years or of an aggregate of three years or more pays 80% payment of the three-year rate. The 80% rate can be paid for two continuous years or an aggregate call-up service of three years or more. Chapter 1607 benefits are paid on a monthly basis directly to the veteran. Rates can be found at the following link http://www.gibill.va.gov/resources/benefits_resources/rate_tables.html.

Chapter 1607 Kicker and Additional Contributions: A service member eligible for Chapter 1607 who's also eligible for the Chapter 1606 kicker will be paid the Chapter 1606 kicker. Chapter 1607 reservists can participate in the "Buy-up" program. They can pay up to $600.00 to increase their monthly benefit by as much as $150.00 per month. The reservist must be a member of a Ready Reserve component to pay the "Buy-up". More information on REAP can be found on the GI Bill website through the following link:
http://www.gibill.va.gov/benefits/other_programs/reap.html

VETERANS' EDUCATION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (VEAP)
CHAPTER 32, TITLE 38 U.S. CODE

VEAP is available if you first entered active duty between January 1, 1977 and June 30, 1985 and you elected to make contributions from your military pay to participate in this education benefit program. Contributions are matched on a $2 for $1 basis by the Department of Defense. This benefit may be used for degree and certificate programs, flight training, apprenticeship/on-the-job training and correspondence courses. Remedial, deficiency, and refresher courses may be approved under certain circumstances.

For more information on CH 32, visit http://www.gibill.va.gov/benefits/other_programs/veap.html

VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION FOR VETERANS WITH SERVICE-CONNECTED DISABILITIES
CHAPTER 31, TITLE 38 U.S. CODE

A veteran may be eligible for Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (VR&E) benefits if he or she:

- Has received, or will receive, a discharge that is other than dishonorable
- Has a service-connected disability rating of at least 10%, or a memorandum rating of 20% or more from the Department of Veteran Affairs (VA)
- Applies for Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (VR&E) VetSuccess services

The basic period of eligibility in which VR&E's VetSuccess services may be used is 12 years from the latter of:

- The date of separation from active military service, or
- The date the veteran was first notified by VA of a service-connected disability rating

For additional information about VR&E contact the Regional Office in the state of the veteran. (RPOs do not process VR&E claims).

Effective August 1, 2011. An individual eligible for Chapter 33 who is receiving benefits under Chapter 31 may elect to receive the applicable Chapter 33 Monthly Housing Allowance in lieu of the monthly subsistence allowance. Students should contact their Vocational Rehabilitation counselors for additional information.

VETERANS RETRAINING ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (VRAP)
PUBLIC LAW 112-56

Congress passed, and the President has signed into law, the VOW to Hire Heroes Act of 2011. Included in this new law is the Veterans Retraining Assistance Program (VRAP) for unemployed Veterans. To qualify, a Veteran must:

- Be at least 35 but no more than 60 years old, at the time of application;
- Be unemployed (as determined by DoL) on the date of application;
- Have an other than dishonorable discharge from the last period of service in the Armed Forces;
- Not be eligible for any other VA education benefit program (e.g.: the Post-9/11 GI Bill, Montgomery GI Bill, Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Assistance) at the time of application;
- Not be in receipt of VA compensation due to Individual Unemployability; and
- Not be enrolled in a federal or state job training program at any time during the previous 180-day period as of the application date.

The program is limited to 45,000 participants during fiscal year 2012, and to 54,000 participants from October 1, 2012, through March 31, 2014. Participants may receive up to 12 months of assistance at the full-time payment rate under the Montgomery GI Bill–Active Duty program (currently $1,473 per month). Applications will be submitted through DoL and benefits paid by VA. DoL will provide employment assistance to every Veteran who participates upon completion of their program.

Benefits can be paid for full-time training in an approved program of education leading to employment in a high demand occupation beginning on or after July 1, 2012. The program of education must be offered by a community college or technical school, and lead to an Associate Degree, Non-College Degree, or a Certificate. More information (including a benefit fact sheet, questions and answers, a list of high demand jobs, and access to the required electronic application) can be found online at http://benefits.va.gov/vow/education.htm

Points to Remember about VRAP:

- Benefits can only be paid for programs offered by a *community college* or *technical school* (programs at four-year institutions don't qualify)
- Benefits can only be paid for approved programs leading to an *Associate Degree*, *Non-College Degree*, or a *Certificate*
- Benefits can only be paid for *full-time* Training

BENEFIT PAYMENTS

Monthly benefit payments (or Monthly Housing Allowance for CH 33) are made directly to students. The payment is made to the student for the number of days the student is certified for the month. If a student is certified for a whole month, the full monthly benefit is paid. If the student is only certified for part of the month, the benefit is prorated as follows:

VA uses a 30-day month. Divide the monthly rate by 30 to get the daily rate. If a student is certified from the 1st through the 15th, the student is certified 15 days and is entitled to 15/30ths of the full monthly benefit.

Example: If the monthly benefit is $100.00 and the student is certified 1/1/12 through 1/15/12, the student is entitled to $50.00 ($3.33 per day for 15 days). If the student is certified 1/16/12 through 1/31/12, the student is entitled to $50.00 ($3.33 per day for 15 days). If the student is certified 1/1/12 through 1/31/12, the student is entitled to $100.00 (a full months benefit). Remember, VA uses a 30-day month: 1/16 through 1/30 (or 1/31) is 15 days and 2/16 through 2/28 (or 2/29) is 15 days. The month rounds out to 30 days.

Standard benefits are described in the monthly rate tables. An additional kicker may be paid to some Chapter 30, 33, 1606, and 1607 students.

Retroactive Benefits (certify as requested for all benefit Chapters)

If a student asks to be certified retroactively for enrollment periods you haven't certified previously, certify the previous periods the student asks you to certify. VA will determine the date of eligibility and the beginning date from which benefits can be paid.

ENTITLEMENT CHARGES

Generally, a student's entitlement is charged one day for every day of full-time training. The entitlement amounts in the table below reflect charges for less than full-time training unless specifically annotated as full-time.

	Post 9/11 (Ch33)	MGIB (Ch30)	MGIB-SR (1606)	REAP (1607)	DEA (Ch35)
Education Program	IHL: Rate of Pursuit x days of training Stand Alone NCD: T&F ÷ Annual amount payable for program type ÷ 360	Training Time x days of training. (< ½ time is charged at ¼ time rate)	Training Time x days of training.	Training Time x days of training. (< ½ time is charged at ¼ time rate)	Training Time x days of training. (< ½ time is charged at ¼ time rate) No charge for 1st 5 months worth of R/D courses
OJT/APP	Hours worked (rounded to nearest 8 hours) ÷ 120	Full-time: .75 months for 1st six months .55 months for 2nd six months .35 months thereafter < Full-time: Assistance paid ÷ amount payable	Full-time: .75 months for 1st six months .55 months for 2nd six months .35 months thereafter < Full-time: Assistance paid ÷ amount payable	Full-time: .75 months for 1st six months .55 months for 2nd six months .35 months thereafter < Full-time: Assistance paid ÷ amount payable	Amount paid ÷ full-time rate**
Vocational Flight	T&F ÷ Annual amount payable for program type ÷ 360	Amount paid ÷ full-time rate**	Amount paid ÷ full-time rate**	Amount paid ÷ full-time rate**	N/A
Accelerated Payments	N/A	Accelerated payment ÷ full-time rate**	Accelerated payment ÷ full-time rate**	Accelerated payment ÷ full-time rate**	N/A

License and Certification Tests	1 month for each $1460 charged	Amount paid ÷ full-time rate**	Amount paid ÷ full-time rate**	Amount paid ÷ full-time rate**	Amount paid ÷ full-time rate**
Tutorial Assistance	No Charge	No Charge 1st $600. > $600: (Assistance paid - $600) ÷ full-time rate**	No Charge 1st $600. > $600: (Assistance paid - $600) ÷ full-time rate**	No Charge 1st $600. > $600: (Assistance paid - $600) ÷ full-time rate**	No Charge
TA Top Up	1 day for every day enrolled in Education Program	Amount paid ÷ full-time rate**	N/A	N/A	N/A

**Monthly amount payable for full-time institutional training

THE CERTIFICATION PROCESS

SUBMITTING ENROLLMENT CERTIFICATIONS

Original Applications

If an original application is needed, do one of the following:

- If a student applied online certify the student via VA-ONCE and insert the "**Student Applied Using VONAPP**" VA Standard Remark.
- If the student already mailed the application we don't need another. Insert the VA Standard Remark **"Application Sent Via US Mail."**
- If the student completes and gives you an application, certify the student via VA-ONCE and mail the student's application to RPO of jurisdiction. Either way, insert the VA Standard Remark "**Application Sent Via US Mail**."

Change of Program or Place of Training

A Request for Change of Program or Place of Training is needed for a VA student transferring to your school who has used benefits elsewhere. Get the request from the student and keep it in the student's file at your school. The student can complete a VA Form 22-1995 or VA Form 22-5495 and submit to the SCO to retain in VA student record. Certify the student and insert the VA Standard Remark "**Student's Request For Change Of Program/Place Of Training Is On File**." If the student completed a 22-1995 online, insert the VA Standard Remark "**Student Applied Using VONAPP**."

If a student changes his or her program while enrolled at your school the change does not have to be reported to VA. You should, however, keep a record of the change in the student's file and change and save the new program on the student's VA-ONCE BIO screen.

Chapter 30, 32, 35, 1606, 1607, and VRAP Enrollment Certifications

Certifications can be submitted 120 days before the term begins, unless training time is less than ½-time, the student is on active duty, or accelerated payment is requested. If a student is less than ½-time, on active duty, or certified for accelerated payment the Certification must be submitted on or after the first day of class and tuition and fees must be reported.

Students must be Veterans and be enrolled full-time in order to receive VRAP benefits.

Chapter 33 Enrollment Certifications

Schools are requested to submit certifications as early as possible in order to ensure that students receive their benefit payments in a timely manner.

- If Tuition and Fees are known, submit the actual net cost for in-state tuition and fees for each term
- If Tuition and Fees are unknown, submit the term dates, credits and enter $0.00 for these charges

- Once Tuition and Fees are determined (less any applicable waivers) submit an amended enrollment certification of the actual net costs if the number of credit hours you certified has not changed

Effective August 1, 2011 – Tuition & Fees

Public Law 111-377 changes the amount of tuition and fee charges that should be reported to VA. For periods of enrollment beginning on or after August 1, 2011, you should report the following charges:

The actual net cost for in-state tuition and fees assessed by the institution for the program of education after the application of any waiver of, or reduction in, tuition and fees; and any scholarship, or other Federal, State, institutional or employer-based aid or assistance (excluding loans and title IV funds) that is provided directly to the institution and specifically designated for the sole purpose of defraying tuition and fees.

Example:	Student gross in-state charges	$4,000
	Veteran Discount	- 400
	Tuition Scholarship	-2,000
	Title IV (ex. Pell Grant) *	2,500
	General Scholarship*	1,000
	Net In-State Charges	$1,600

* Denotes to exclude calculating net cost

Aid or assistance that is not designated for the sole purpose of reducing a student's tuition and fee cost should be deducted from the net in-state charges reported to VA.

In the above example the student also has a $1,000 scholarship from a local Veterans Service Organization. The scholarship is general in nature and may be used to defray school costs such as food, housing, books, etc. Since it's not "specifically designated for the sole purpose of defraying tuition and fees," it is not deducted from the charges submitted to VA.

Only in-state charges should be reported in the Tuition Amount and Fee Amount fields. Any additional out-of-state net charges should be reported in the Out of State Charges field if a contribution is being made under the Yellow Ribbon Program.

An academic year is defined as August 1,YY through July 31,YY for Chapter 33 purposes. Any enrollment period that begins before August 1, 2012, is a 2011-2012 academic year term. Any enrollment period that begins on or after August 1, 2012, is a 2012-2013 academic year term. Consequently, these changes apply to terms that begin on or after August 1, 2011.

The following information pertains to all Chapters

Type of Training

Indicate the appropriate "Training Type" for the student's program. The types of training available at your school are preset on your VA-ONCE site by your ELR.

- Select "IHLUndergrad" for undergraduate degree programs, post-baccalaureate programs required to obtain a teacher certification or endorsement, and post-baccalaureate courses required to gain admission to a graduate degree program

- Select “IHLGrad” for graduate degrees
- Select “NCD (Non-College Degree)” for diplomas and certificate programs

Name of Program

The Program of Education certified must be a program offered by your school and approved for VA benefits. Select the approved program in VA-ONCE. Refer to VA-ONCE instructions for adding approved programs. As of June 15, 2012, you must associate a VA Objective Code and a VA Course Code with each program.
[http://gibill.va.gov/documents/vaonce/VA-ONCE_P033_Training.pdf]

On the Bio screen, enter the name of the student's “Program” from the drop down list.

Undeclared Major

Students pursuing a bachelor’s degree may not have to declare a major before their junior year at some schools. If a freshman or sophomore hasn’t declared a major, report the student’s program as “Bachelor (undeclared)”. The student cannot be certified beyond his or her sophomore year unless a major is declared. Only “General Education” courses can be certified prior to the declaration of a major.

Non-matriculated Students

- VA defines matriculated as having been formally admitted to a college or university as a degree-seeking student. VA educational benefits cannot be paid to non-matriculated college or university students unless they are pending admission to your school. In that case they can be certified for two quarters or semesters. The student can be certified beyond this two-term limit only if the student is admitted to your school as a degree-seeking student, irrespective of the number of credits taken.
- Certify a non-matriculated student as “Bachelor (non-matriculated)” or “Post-baccalaureate (non-matriculated).” The only courses that can be certified are those required for admission and those required if admitted. When a non-matriculated student is formally admitted, change and save the program name on the student’s VA-ONCE Bio screen.

Guest Student

A student who isn’t matriculated at your school may be pursuing a degree at another college or university. The two-quarter or two-semester limit doesn’t apply to a Guest Student taking courses at your school that apply to a program at another school. The procedure for certifying a guest student matriculated elsewhere is described under Supplemental and Concurrent Enrollments.

Course Applicability

Only courses that satisfy requirements outlined by the curriculum guide or graduation evaluation form can be certified for VA purposes. A curriculum guide or graduation evaluation form should be kept in the student’s file and courses certified should be checked. If a student takes a course that does not fulfill a program requirement, it cannot be certified for VA purposes. Excessive free electives, for example, cannot be certified.

Audited Courses

Audited courses cannot be certified. If the school's grading policy allows a student who registers for credit to later change to audit, report the change from credit to audit as a withdrawal, effective the day the student changed from credit to audit. Report the withdrawal as you would other withdrawals.

Repeating Courses

Courses that are failed or for which the grade does not meet minimum requirements for graduation may be certified for VA purposes if they are repeated.

Courses that are successfully completed may not be certified for VA purposes if they are repeated. If a program requires a higher grade than achieved, that course may be repeated. For example, if Nursing requires a "B" or better in Biology, then that course may be repeated if a "B" was not earned.

Many schools have a "forgiveness" policy that allows students to repeat a failed or unacceptable course. If the student receives a passing grade, the original grade is "forgiven" and becomes a non-punitive grade. This non-punitive grade does not have to be reported to VA.

Example: A student takes an English course twice and receives "F" and "C". The "F" is forgiven and becomes non-punitive. This non-punitive grade does not have to be reported to VA.

However, if one of the following situations occurs the non-punitive grade must be reported to VA:

- If the second grade is failing or unacceptable, **doesn't replace** the original grade, and is non-punitive; then the second grade must be reported as non-punitive.
- If the second grade is failing or unacceptable, **replaces** the original grade, and the original grade is non-punitive; then the original grade must be reported as non-punitive.

Example: A student takes a math course three times and receives F, F, and C grades. The first F was punitive and not reported; the second F was non-punitive (first bullet) and reported to VA. If the C converts the first F to a non-punitive grade that non-punitive grade doesn't have to be reported.

Courses Required for Admission to the Next Level of Training

Courses required for admission to the next level of training may be approved in two situations. The first is when an IHL requires a student to pursue courses at an educational level for which he or she already holds a diploma or degree. The second is when an IHL requires a student to pursue courses at an educational level for which he or she appears qualified by reason of previous training. For example, a college may require a student with a B.A. degree to take some undergraduate subjects for admission to a graduate degree program, or to gain teacher certification for specific subjects. A statement from the school as to requirements of any specific courses for the student must accompany the claimant's application.

If a graduate school requires a student with a bachelor's degree to pursue undergraduate courses to satisfy admission requirements for a graduate degree program, then the courses required for admission may be certified as part of that graduate degree program. In order to certify the courses, however, the following requirements must be met:

- The student should apply to the school as a graduate degree-seeking student and the student must furnish the school transcripts of all previous education and training.
- The graduate school must determine whether the student meets its matriculation criteria. This process includes evaluation of prior credit. If the student cannot matriculate immediately upon enrollment, then the requirements the student must meet in order to matriculate must be identified and documented.
- If undergraduate courses are required to matriculate, the graduate school must prepare a statement on the school's letterhead, signed by a responsible school official–the department head, for example–that outlines the required undergraduate courses (identified by course number and name). This statement must be kept in the student's file.
- If the student is only certified for undergraduate courses, report training time according to undergraduate credit measurement.
- If both graduate and undergraduate course work is certified, report training time according to undergraduate or graduate measurement, whichever is greater.

Remedial and Deficiency Courses

Remedial and deficiency credit should be put in the R/D column, rather than the credit column. When students have both credit and R/D credit, VA combines the credit to determine training time. R/D credit is used to correctly charge entitlement for Chapter 35 students. Deficiency courses do not need to be listed in remarks.

Remedial and deficiency courses are courses designed to correct deficiencies in basic mathematics, English, and reading at the elementary or secondary level. These courses can be certified as part of an approved program, but only for students for whom a verifiable need has been established. Keep test results and other documents in the student's file that support the student's need for remedial and deficiency courses.

Chapter 30, 33, 1606, 1607, and VRAP: Entitlement is charged for remedial and deficiency training.

Chapter 35: Entitlement is not charged up to 5 months of full-time remedial and deficiency training. If you certify a Chapter 35 student for 6 standard credits and 6 remedial credits the student is paid at the full-time rate, but entitlement is charged at the ½-time rate.

Remedial and deficiency courses offered as independent study (online) cannot be approved and cannot be certified to VA.

Practical Training

Practical training is academic training that includes actual job experience. Practical training courses are considered to be resident training. Some practical training is measured in clock hours (medical residency, for example) and some practical training is measured in credit hours. When practical training is measured in credit by a school, the school can certify the course as credit or as clock hours, whichever is to the student's advantage.

Student Teaching

If a student takes a 6-credit student teaching course that requires 30-clock hours attendance a week, certify the course in clock hours. The student is ½-time by credit, but full-time by clock hours. If you certify clock hours, in remarks enter: "Student teaching course measured in clock hours according to M22-4, Part IV, Paragraph 7.09."

Other Practical Training

Examples are externship, internship, and practicum. Like student teaching, these courses can be certified in credit or in clock hours, whichever is to the student's advantage. Example: A student takes a 6-credit externship that requires 22-clock hours practical training per week. If 12 credits are considered full-time for credit based training, and 22 clock hours is considered full-time for clock hour based training, you should certify the course in clock hours.

It's possible to certify both credit and clock hours during the same quarter or semester. Example: If a student takes a 3-credit lecture course and a 4-credit internship that requires 12 clock hours per week (where 18 clock hours is full-time), certify 3 credit and 12 clock hours. Seven credits would be ½-time, but 3 credits and 12 clock hours would be ¾-time. In VA-ONCE remarks enter, "Student taking a 3 credit lecture course and a 4 credit, 12 clock hours per week internship.

Rounding Out

A VA student can round out a schedule with non-required courses to bring his/her course load up to a full-time schedule in his/her last term only. This allows students to continue to receive benefits at the full-time rate in their last term of enrollment, even though fewer credits are required to complete the program.

This procedure can be done only once per program.

In rounding out a full-time schedule, VA students may use any credit hour unit subject, including a subject that has previously been successfully completed (received a passing grade).

Course Substitutions

If the college allows substitutions for program requirements, VA will allow course substitutions if the school approves them and they are documented in the student's file.

PRIOR CREDIT

One of the criteria for approval of any school for Veterans' training is that it review prior credit and grant credit as appropriate to a VA student's current program. This is found in Title 38, Code of Federal Regulations, Sections 21.4253(d)(3) and 21.4254(C)(4). In essence, this requires every approved school to have and enforce a policy with regard to transfer courses, credits, and previous experience.

Effective October 15, 2007, for accredited schools and effective October 10, 2008, for non-accredited schools, schools no longer have to report prior credit to VA. Schools must evaluate prior credit, grant credit as appropriate, notify the student of the evaluation, and shorten the

program certified accordingly. The change simply means credit evaluations no longer have to be reported to VA. Whenever a student initially enrolls in your school or changes programs at your school a credit evaluation must be completed. VA will review credit evaluations during compliance surveys and credit evaluation records must be kept and made available to VA upon request.

The Prior Training Credit box in VA-ONCE is now NA (Not Applicable) by default and is locked (grayed out).

Military Education and Training Resources

Military education and training should be evaluated for prior credit. Information needed to evaluate military education and training is available online.

The ACE Military Guide

The ACE (American Council on Education) Military Guide (Guide to Evaluation of Educational Experiences in the Armed Services) is on the web at: http://militaryguides.acenet.edu/.

Military Transcripts

Information about military transcripts and how to request the transcripts is available from the Army and Navy as shown below:

- Army (AARTS transcript): http://aarts.army.mil
- Navy & Marine Corps (SMART Transcript): https://smart.navy.mil/smart/welcome.do

CHANGE OF PROGRAM

Schools no longer have to certify a change of program and students no longer have to file a Request for Change of Program or Place of Training **if a student changes a degree program while enrolled at the same school.**

If a student changes his or her program from BA Psychology to BS Biology, for example, the change does not have to be reported by the school or the student. However, the change of program remains a compliance survey issue. When a student changes his or her program the change must be made according to your school's academic regulations, a credit evaluation (all previous credit, including your school's credit) for the new program should be completed, and all credit certified following the change must apply to the new program.

When a student changes programs at your school:

- Change the program on the student's VA-ONCE BIO screen then click "Save".
- Evaluate all prior credit for applicability towards the new program.
- Only certify credit that applies to the new program.

ENROLLMENT PERIODS

Academic years are divided into enrollment periods. VA defines those enrollment divisions as:

Ordinary School Year: Generally a period of 2 semesters or 3 quarters which is not less than 30 nor more than 39 weeks in total length.

Term: Any regularly established division of the ordinary school year under which the school operates.

Quarter: A division of the ordinary school year from 10 to 13 weeks long.

Semester: A division of the ordinary school year from 15 to 19 weeks long.

Summer term: The whole of the period of instruction at a school which takes place between ordinary school years. A summer term may be divided into several summer sessions.

Summer session: Any division of a summer term.

Certifying Enrollment Periods in VA-ONCE

Each quarter, semester, term, or session requires a new cert in VA-ONCE. If you have loaded your term dates in the maintenance section, you can select from a drop down box. When you select the enrollment period you want to certify from the drop-down list, VA-ONCE will enter the Term Name, Begin Date, and End Date. Enrollment periods that aren't stored in "Standard Terms" can be typed directly into a new Cert. (VA-ONCE will combine multiple periods when submitted to the RPO.)

A standard quarter is 10 to 13 weeks in length and a standard semester is 15 to 19 weeks in length with courses beginning the first week and ending the last week, the last day of final examinations. The school should report the official begin date of the academic term or the date all students were required to report in advance of the start of the term (if not more than 14 days prior to the beginning of classes) as well as the official ending date of the term.

If a school offers training on a nonstandard term basis, or if there are nonstandard formats or sessions within standard terms, the beginning and ending dates of each term, session or course must be shown separately from the standard semester or quarter. (See Summer Terms and Nonstandard Enrollment Periods).

CERTIFYING CREDIT

Chapter 33

Chapter 33 tuition and fees, monthly housing allowance (rate of pursuit), book stipend, and Yellow Ribbon benefits are based in whole or in part on the number of credit hours certified.

Certify the number of resident credit (Res) and distance learning credit (Dist). Do not include distance credit in "Res" or resident credit in "Dist". If all credit taken is resident credit enter 0 in "Dist" (a numeric entry is required). If all credit taken is distance leave enter "0" in credit

(numeric entry is required). When combined, “Credit” and “Dist” should equal the total credit taken.

Example: If a student is enrolled in 15 credits, 6 of which are online, you would certify 9 “Res” and 6 “Dist”. Do not combine the credit anywhere. VA will combine “Res” and “Dist”.
(Non-33 – Distance hour field is disabled, so enter total credit in the credit. (Combine distance and resident hours.)

Undergraduate

Certify the number of credit hours the student takes that apply to his or her program
(see Course Applicability).

VA will divide the number of credit hours certified by the number of credit hours required to be full-time to determine rate of pursuit.

Effective August 1, 2011: The amount payable for the Monthly Housing Allowance will change as follows: “The applicable Basic Allowance for Housing rate will be multiplied by the rate of pursuit rounded to the nearest multiple of 10.”

Graduate

If Training Type is IHL Grad on the student’s Bio screen there will be a TT/FT box on the certification page. Enter the number of credit hours your academic regulations require to be considered full-time for a normal semester or quarter. The number of credit hours can vary by program or enrollment period. VA will divide the number of credit hours certified by the number of credit hours required to be full-time to determine rate of pursuit.

Example 1: If a student takes 6 credit hours in the fall semester certify 6 credit hours. If your academic regulations state 9 credits or more is full-time enter 9 in the TT/FT box. VA will divide credit taken by credit considered full-time (FT) to determine the student’s rate of pursuit (6 ÷ 9 equals .66). The student’s rate of pursuit is 66%.

Example 2: If a student takes 3-quarter credits in a 4-week term and your school considers 6 credits or more to be full-time for a normal quarter, then certify 3-quarter hours and enter 6 in the TT/FT box. VA will calculate the equivalent number of credits (in this case 9) in order to determine the rate of pursuit (which is 100% in this example).

Effective August 1, 2011: The amount payable for the Monthly Housing Allowance will change as follows: The applicable Basic Allowance for Housing rate will be multiplied by the rate of pursuit rounded to the nearest multiple of 10.

Resident Training and Distance Learning

NOTE: Non-accredited schools cannot certify distance learning (independent study) courses. Courses offered in whole or part by independent study cannot be approved at non-accredited schools.) Remedial courses cannot be certified if they are on-line or hybrid courses.

On the enrollment certification, resident training should be identified as “res”. Independent study, on-line and hybrid courses should be identified as “dist”. Do not add these hours together on the 1999.

Undergraduate Resident Training

In-residence training for undergraduate students consists of regularly scheduled standard class sessions (at least once every two weeks). The total number of hours of classroom instruction (based on 50 minutes of instruction per hour) must equal, or be greater than, the number of credit hours awarded for the course multiplied by the number of weeks in the term.

EXAMPLE: A student is enrolled in a 3-credit course over a 16-week semester. The course must be scheduled for a total of 48 hours of class sessions and meet at least every other week.

EXAMPLE: A student is enrolled in a 3-credit course over a 5-week term. The course must be scheduled for a total of 15 hours of class sessions and meet at least every other week.

Courses approved as practical training or cooperative training are considered resident training. A student teaching course is considered resident.

Flight training that is part of a standard undergraduate degree is considered resident training.

Open and Closed-circuit TV courses are treated the same as any other in-resident courses.

Graduate Resident Training

In-residence training for graduate students consists of at least two regularly scheduled standard class sessions per term, research (either on or off campus), or a combination of both.

Independent Study (Includes Internet & Distance Learning)

Independent study consists of interaction between the student and the instructor (who is physically separated from the student) through the use of communications technology instead of regularly scheduled, conventional classroom or laboratory sessions. Communications technology includes mail, telephone, audio or videoconferencing, computer technology (on-line internet courses or e-mail), or other electronic means such as one-way and two-way transmissions through open broadcast, cable, microwave, broadband lines, fiber optics, satellite, or wireless communications devices.

Any courses that consist of some interaction using communications technology and some weeks of standard class sessions, but that do not meet the requirements to be classified as in-residence training, are considered distance learning.

Any course (including a hybrid or blended)

VA regulations defining residence training can be found at 38 CFR 21.4267(d). If a course does not meet the definition of residence training it must be considered distance training.

Certifying Credit (Chapters 30, 32, 35, 1606, 1607, and VRAP)

The Distance Learning field (Dist) in VA-ONCE is only enabled for Chapter 33. Resident credit and distance learning credit is reported separately only for Chapter 33.

Undergraduate

Enter the number of credit hours the student will take each quarter, semester, or term. If the student will be full-time, but you don't know the exact number of credits the student will take, enter 12. In a standard quarter or semester VA defines training time as follows:

12 credits or more are full-time
9-11 credits are ¾-time
6-8 credits are ½-time
4-5 credits are less than <½-time
1-3 credits are ¼-time or less

NOTE: Full-time is 13 or 14 credit at some schools. These schools should contact their ELR about measuring their training time.

Graduate

Enter the training time (full, ¾, etc) in the TT/FT box for the enrollment period based on your school's academic policy. The institution determines what is considered full-time

Only credit that applies to the student's program can be certified (see Course Applicability)

If a student asks to be certified for fewer applicable credits than he or she takes to conserve entitlement, you can certify fewer credits than actually taken. For Chapter 33, tuition and fees would be reported for the number of credit hours certified, not the number of credit hours taken. You can certify fewer credits to conserve entitlement, but you cannot change quarter, semester, term, or session dates to conserve entitlement. Actual dates must always be certified. Retain a copy of the student's request in the VA file.

RATE OF PURSUIT AND TRAINING TIME

Undergraduate

Rate of Pursuit (Chapter 33)

VA calculates rate of pursuit by dividing the credit hours (or credit hour equivalents) being pursued by the number of credit considered to be full-time by the school. The resulting percentage is the student's rate of pursuit.

The Chapter 33 housing allowance is paid if rate of pursuit is more than 50%.

Training Time (Chapters 30, 32, 35, 1606, 1607, and VRAP)

VA benefits are paid based on training time. In a standard quarter or semester, VA measures training time as follows:

12 credits are full-time
9-11 credits are ¾-time
6-8 credits are ½-time
4-5 credits are less than ½-time (<½-time)
1-3 credits are ¼-time or less (<¼-time)

NOTE: Full-time is 13 or 14 credit at some schools. These schools should contact their ELR about measuring training time.

Graduate

Rate of Pursuit (Chapter 33)

VA calculates rate of pursuit based on the number of credits the school reports it considers full-time for the period certified. The monthly housing allowance is paid if rate of pursuit is more than 50%, and the student is neither on active duty nor the Ch33 spouse of a person on active duty.

Training Time (Chapters 30, 32, 35, 1606, and 1607)

VA benefits are paid based on the training time certified by the school.

Non-College Degree Institutions

If a program is measured in clock hours, benefits are paid based on clock hours of attendance per week. The beginning date, ending date, and number of clock hours a student is scheduled to attend each week must be reported. If clock hours per week vary **and** the benefit amount is affected, the variance must be reported for calendar weeks, Sunday through Saturday, between the beginning and ending dates.

Full-time measurement is 18 clock hours if classroom instruction predominates and 22 clock hours if shop practice predominates. The clock hour measurement for all approved programs measured and paid by clock hours is listed in WEAMS (Web Enabled Approval Management System).

Rate of Pursuit (Chapter 33)

VA will convert clock hours to credit and then calculate rate of pursuit. The monthly housing allowance is paid if rate of pursuit is more than 50%.

Training Time (Chapters 30, 32, 35, 1606, and 1607)

Clock hour training time is measured as follows:

18 Hours: Theory Predominates	**22 Hours: Shop/Practice Predominates**
18 hours or more are full-time	22 hours or more are full-time
13-17 hours are ¾-time	16-21 hours are ¾-time
9-12 hours are ½-time	11-15 hours are ½-time
5-8 hours are less than ½-time	6-10 hours are less than ½-time
1-4 hours are ¼-time or less	1-5 hours are ¼-time or less

SUMMER TERMS AND NONSTANDARD ENROLLMENT PERIODS

Standard quarters are 10 to 13 weeks in length and standard semesters are 15 to 19 weeks in length. Standard quarters and semesters adhere to the school's academic calendar. When a session or course doesn't follow this standard format, certify the actual begin date, end date, and credit for the session or course. Courses taken during a defined session–an eight week summer session, for example–should be certified from the beginning date to the ending date of the session if the courses start the first week and end the last week of the session.

Equivalent credit hours (Non-33 Undergraduate)

VA converts credit earned during nonstandard quarters or semesters to equivalent credit hours. **VA makes the conversion, not schools. Schools must report actual credit.** Refer to credit hour equivalency tables. The formula for converting quarters or semesters to credit equivalents is the same, except for the multiplier. The formulas are:

- **Quarter:** Credit × 12 ÷ weeks = credit hour equivalents. Four quarter credits earned in 4 weeks, for example, is the equivalent of 12 credits earned during a standard quarter (4 × 12 ÷ 4 = 12) and will pay full-time for 4 weeks.
- **Semester:** Credit × 18 ÷ weeks = credit hour equivalents. Four semester credits earned in 4 weeks is the equivalent of 18 credits earned during a standard semester (4 × 18 ÷ 4 = 18) and will pay full-time for 4 weeks.

VA pays education benefits for nonstandard enrollment periods based on credit equivalents. Remember, schools report actual number of credits; VA makes the conversion. When enrollment periods overlap, credit hour equivalents for the period of overlap are combined.

Example: A student enrolls for 9 credits summer term; 3 credits in a four-week session, 3 credits in an eight-week session, and 3 credits in a 10-week summer quarter.

⇒ If a quarter system school certified summer sessions as follows

Start	End	Credit
06/14/12	07/09/12	3
06/14/12	08/06/12	3
06/14/12	08/27/12	3

⇒ VA would calculate credit hour equivalents as follows

Credit Hour Equivalents
3 × 12 ÷ 4 = 9
3 × 12 ÷ 8 = 4 (round 3 days or less down and round 4 days or more up)
Standard length quarter

⇒ And the student would be paid as follows:

From 06/14/12 to 07/09/12 student is training full-time pursuing 9 credit hours. On 07/10/12, student is enrolled in 6 credit hours and training half time. On 08/07/12, the student is pursuing 3 credit hours and equivalent training time is less than ½ time through the end of term.

	Credit Hours	**EQH**	**Training Time**
06/14/2012	9	16	FT
07/10/2012	6	7	1/2
08/07/2012	3	3	>1/2
08/27/2012 End of Term			

Rate of Pursuit (Chapter 33 Non-Standard terms)

Always certify actual credit for all enrollment periods. If you certify a nonstandard length term VA will convert the credit you certify to credit equivalents.

- Calculate number of weeks by counting the number of days in the enrollment period (first day through the last day) and dividing by 7. Disregard a remainder of 3 days or less and consider a remainder of 4 days or more a full week.

- In a standard quarter or semester for Chapter 33 students the rate of pursuit is determined by dividing the credit hours pursued by the full-time equivalent (normally 12). For instance, 7 credit hours divided by 12 would be 58%. Chapter 33 students' rate of pursuit must be more than 50% to receive the monthly housing allowance.

- For non-standard terms, the equivalent credit hours will be determined prior to computing rate of pursuit. For instance, 4 credit hours in a 4-week term would be the equivalent or 12 hours or 100% rate of pursuit.

Equivalency Tables (Chapter 30, 32, 35, 1606, 1607, and VRAP)

The training time credit hour equivalency tables for Chapters 30, 32, 35, 1606, 1607, and VRAP show undergraduate training time for nonstandard length quarters and semesters at schools where 12 credits is full-time. Training time for nonstandard length terms is paid based on credit equivalents.

Calculate number of weeks by counting the number of days in the enrollment period (first day through the last day) and dividing by 7. Disregard a remainder of 3 days or less and consider a remainder of 4 days or more a full week.

Quarter Credit Equivalency Table (non-CH33)

Weeks → ← **Credit**	10 to 13	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
12 or more	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT
11	3/4	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT
10	3/4	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT
9	3/4	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT
8	1/2	3/4	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT
7	1/2	3/4	3/4	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT
6	1/2	1/2	3/4	3/4	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT
5	<1/2	1/2	1/2	1/2	3/4	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT
4	<1/2	<1/2	1/2	1/2	1/2	3/4	FT	FT	FT	FT
3	1/4	<1/2	<1/2	<1/2	1/2	1/2	3/4	FT	FT	FT
2	1/4	1/4	1/4	1/4	<1/2	<1/2	1/2	1/2	FT	FT
1	1/4	1/4	1/4	1/4	1/4	1/4	1/4	<1/2	1/2	FT

Semester Credit Equivalency Table (non – CH33)

Weeks → ← **Credit**	15 to19	14	13	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
12 or more	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT
11	3/4	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT
10	3/4	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT
9	3/4	3/4	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT
8	1/2	3/4	3/4	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT
7	1/2	3/4	3/4	3/4	3/4	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT
6	1/2	1/2	1/2	3/4	3/4	3/4	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT
5	<1/2	1/2	1/2	1/2	1/2	3/4	3/4	3/4	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT

4	<1/2	<1/2	<1/2	1/2	1/2	1/2	1/2	3/4	3/4	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT
3	1/4	1/4	<1/2	<1/2	<1/2	<1/2	1/2	1/2	1/2	3/4	3/4	FT	FT	FT	FT
2	1/4	1/4	1/4	1/4	1/4	1/4	<1/2	<1/2	<1/2	1/2	1/2	3/4	FT	FT	FT
1	1/4	1/4	1/4	1/4	1/4	1/4	1/4	1/4	1/4	1/4	1/4	<1/2	1/2	3/4	FT

SUPPLEMENTAL AND CONCURRENT ENROLLMENTS

A student may take courses at more than one school that apply to his or her degree. The school that will grant the degree is the student's "primary" school. All other schools are "secondary" schools.

VA can pay benefits for courses taken at secondary schools. If the student is only enrolled at the secondary school (supplemental enrollment), VA will pay for the credits taken at the secondary school. If the student is enrolled at the primary school and the secondary school at the same time (concurrent enrollment), VA will pay for the combined credit, taking overlapping enrollment dates into account.

If You're the "Primary" School

If a student takes courses elsewhere that satisfy requirements for his or her degree at your school, then you're the primary school and the student is a "Guest Student" at the secondary school. The primary school provides a letter ("primary school letter") addressed to the VA Certifying Official at the secondary school. Keep a copy of the letter in the student's file. The letter should:

- Identify the student (name, as a student at <*insert name and facility code of your school*> pursuing a <*insert name of your student's program*>.
- State, "The courses listed below satisfy <*insert name of program*> requirements and will transfer at full value to <*insert name of your school*>."
- List the courses the student is taking or will take at the secondary school that your school will accept as transfer credit that apply to the student's program.
- State, "<*Student*> intends to take the above courses at <*Secondary School*> <*Identify term, for example, fall quarter 2010*>. Please certify the course(s) to VA as the secondary school. VA data and history for both primary and secondary schools will be in VA-ONCE.

Ensure a transcript is obtained from the secondary school and that transfer credit is granted, grade permitting. When a compliance survey is conducted, your records will be reviewed to see if the course applied to the student's program and to see if transfer credit was granted, grade permitting.

If You're the "Secondary" School

- If a student takes courses at your school that will apply to a degree the student is pursuing elsewhere, you are the secondary school and the other school is the primary school. The student's primary school will send you a primary school letter. In VA-ONCE:
- Add the student.
- Certify the student as a "Guest Student". VA-ONCE will have you enter the name of the primary school. VA-ONCE will insert "Guest Student" for program and insert "Courses Confirmed To Be Applied To A Degree Program At <Name of primary school you entered>" in remarks.

Only certify courses listed in the primary school letter. Remember tuition and fees if the student is less than ½-time, active duty, or Chapter 33.

Secondary schools must report all changes in enrollment for guest students. Amend, adjust, and terminate as you would for any VA student. VA data and history for both primary and secondary schools will be in VA-ONCE. The data and history can be seen by both the primary and the secondary school.

NAME AND
ADDRESS OF PRIMARY SCHOOL

Date

NAME AND
ADDRESS OF SECONDARY SCHOOL

<*Student's Name (Claim Number)*> is a chapter <e.g., 30> student at <*Name of School (facility code)*> pursuing a <*Name of Program, e.g. B.S. History degree*>.

The course(s) listed below satisfy <*Name of Program*> requirements and will transfer at full value to <*Name of School*>.

List course(s) by title and number

Student intends to take the above course(s) at <*Secondary School*> <*Identify term, e.g., spring term 2004*> as a guest student. Please certify the courses to VA as the secondary school.

SIGNED BY THE CERTIFYING OFFICIAL
TELEPHONE NUMBER

Sample Primary School Letter
(Suggested Format)

NOTE: An e-mail containing the required information can be accepted in lieu of a formal letter. The e-mail message simply needs to convey the facts outlined in the primary school instructions and a copy must be kept in the student's file by the primary school.

YELLOW RIBBON PROGRAM

The Yellow Ribbon GI Education Enhancement Program (Yellow Ribbon Program - YRP) is a provision of the Post-9/11 Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2008. This program allows institutions of higher learning in the United States to voluntarily enter into an annual agreement with VA to fund tuition expenses that exceed the highest public in-state undergraduate tuition rate. The institution can contribute up to 50% of those expenses and VA will match the same amount as the institution.

The Institution of Higher Learning (IHL) must agree to:

- Provide contributions to eligible individuals who apply for the Yellow Ribbon Program on a first-come first-served basis, regardless of the rate at which the individual is pursuing training in any given academic year
- Provide contributions during the current academic year and all subsequent academic years in which the student maintains satisfactory progress, conduct, and attendance;
- Make contributions toward the program on behalf of the individual in the form of a grant, scholarship, etc;
- State the dollar amount that will be contributed for each participant during the academic year;
- State the maximum number of individuals for whom contributions will be made in any given academic year.

NOTE: Funds used by the institution for the YRP must be available for unrestricted use by the institution. Funds provided by third parties that are restricted in their use for specific programs, students or groups, or internal institution funds that are restricted to specific programs, students, or groups may not be used as all or part of the institution's contribution for the YRP.

How Does the Yellow Ribbon Program Benefit The Veteran?

Effective August 1, 2009. The Post-9/11 GI Bill pays the highest public in-state undergraduate tuition and fees. Veterans may have tuition and fees that exceed that amount if they are attending a private institution, graduate school or attending in an out-of-state status. If they are enrolled at a Yellow Ribbon participating institution and the tuition and fees exceed the highest public in-state undergraduate tuition or fees, additional funds may be available for their education program without an additional charge to their entitlement.

Effective August 1, 2011. U.S. Public Schools. The actual net cost for in-state tuition and fees after the application of any waiver, scholarship, aid, or assistance [other than loans and funds provided under section 401(b) of the Higher Education Act of 1965] provided directly to the institution and specifically designated for the sole purpose of defraying tuition and fees.

Effective August 1, 2011. **Private and Foreign Schools:** The lesser of the *actual net cost* for tuition and fees after the application of any waiver, scholarship, aid, or assistance [other than loans and funds provided under section 401(b) of the Higher Education Act of 1965] provided

directly to the institution and specifically designated for the sole purpose of defraying tuition and fees, or $17,500 for the academic year beginning on August 1, 2011.

Veterans may have tuition and fees that exceed that amount if they are attending a private institution or attending in an out-of-state status. If they are enrolled at a Yellow Ribbon participating institution and the tuition and fees exceed the amount payable by VA, the Yellow Ribbon Program may provide additional funds for their education program without an additional charge to their entitlement.

Institutions that voluntarily enter into a Yellow Ribbon Agreement with VA choose the amount of tuition and fees that will be contributed. VA will match that amount and issue payment directly to the institution. These amounts are considered maximums that the school will contribute.

Regardless of the agreement, VA will match a school's contribution up to 50% of the uncovered tuition and fees. If a school submits an amount that is more than 50% of the uncovered tuition and fees, VA will pay 50% of the uncovered tuition and fee costs under the Yellow Ribbon Program.

Who is Eligible?

- Only Veterans, and their spouses using transferred entitlement, eligible at the 100% benefit level (based on service requirements) may receive this funding.
- ToE children are eligible for Yellow Ribbon if the sponsor is eligible at the 100% benefit level, regardless of the sponsor's active duty status.

Who Is Not Eligible?

- Active duty members are not eligible for Yellow Ribbon.
- Spouses of active duty service members are not eligible for Yellow Ribbon.

Effective August 1, 2009. Example: The student enrolled in 12 credit hours during the Fall term and the institution charged the student $5,000 for tuition and $1,200 in fees. The Maximum Charge Per Credit Hour for the State = $250 and the Maximum Fees for a single term = $1,000:

> 12 credit hours x $250 = $3,000 - VA will pay $3,000 of the $5,000 tuition charged
>
> VA will pay $1,000 of the $1,200 fees charged
>
> VA has paid $4,000 of the $6,200 charged the student. $2,200 could be applied to the Yellow Ribbon Program
>
> Your institution can choose to contribute up to $1,100 of this amount and VA will match that contribution.

If your institution contributes more than 50% VA will still pay 50% the remaining uncovered charges. For example, in this case if the school contributes $1,200, VA will pay $1,100.

August 1, 2011. Example: The student enrolled in a private school for 12 credit hours during the Spring term and the institution charged the student $25,000 for tuition and $1,200 in fees. (The $17,500 cap has already been met.)

- The school contributes $10,000 towards Yellow Ribbon.

- VA will match $10,000 towards tuition
- The student will be $6,200 out of pocket.

Yellow Ribbon and VA-Once

The Chapter drop down menu on a student's VA-ONCE BIO screen includes 33 and 33Yellow selections. If your school participates in the Chapter 33 Yellow Ribbon Program and the student will be a Yellow Ribbon participant select 33Yellow (select 33 if the student will not participate in the Yellow Ribbon Program). Enter the amount the school will contribute. The amount entered must be greater than zero.

ADVANCE PAYMENT

Chapters 30, 32, 35, and 1606. Advance payment is not available under Chapters 33, 1607. Advance payment will not be available for VRAP until August 2012 (you will be notified when advance payment is available).

An advance payment provides a student with benefit payments at the beginning of a school term to help the student meet expenses concentrated at the beginning of the term. An advance payment pays the student's monthly benefit for the first and second month of the quarter or semester in advance. The first month will only pay from the start date through the end of the month.

If you are interested in participating in advance payment, contact your ELR. Schools must certify they can carry out the provisions of advance payment: Schools must handle advance paychecks securely and they must give the advance paycheck to the student when he or she registers (or not more than 30 days before the beginning of school if registration is earlier). Participation in advance payment is voluntary on the part of schools.

If a school participates in advance payment, it can be paid if:

- The student requests advance pay, **and**
- There's more than 30 days between terms and break pay won't be paid (see Break Pay),
- The student is enrolled at least half-time, **and**
- VA receives the advance payment request at least 30 days but not more than 120 days before the enrollment period.

Create a form that students can sign and date to request advance pay. If a student wants advance pay, have the student complete the form and staple it to the file copy of the Cert. If you have a signed request, check the "Advance Pay" box when you create the student's Cert for the quarter for which he or she is requesting advance pay. The Cert will be annotated "Advance Payment Requested and Signature of Student on Record."

Advance pay requests should be submitted 30 to 120 days before the begin date. The check will be sent to the school, payable to the student. A separate, Certification of Delivery (VA Form 22-1999V) will be sent to the school. When the check is given to the student, immediately complete and return the Certification of Delivery.

An advance will pay the first and second month. The first month may be a partial month, with payment prorated for the number of days attended that month. Advance pay for a student certified September 20,2010 through June 10, 2011 would pay September 20, 2010 through October 30, 2010. Since VA normally pays after a month is completed, the student wouldn't receive another check until December when payment for November is made.

When an advance paycheck is issued, the next check won't issue unless the Certification of Delivery (or the Chapter 1606 generated letter with the same information) mailed to the school is received and processed by VA. If VA sends a letter that says a Certification of Delivery you returned wasn't received, do the following:

- Call VA (1-888-442-4551) and explain the problem to the Education Case Manager who answers the phone. If the Certification of Delivery has not been input, ask the Education Case Manager to input the certification of delivery.

CERTIFYING TUITION AND FEES

Tuition and Fees (Chapter 33)

Tuition

Tuition is the actual established charges for tuition the student is required to pay. Tuition is defined in the school's catalog or supplement and listed as tuition on the school's billing statement or invoice.

Fees

Fees are mandatory charges (other than tuition, room, and board) applied by the school for pursuit of an approved program of education. Fees include, but are not limited to, health premiums, freshman fees, graduation fees, and lab fees. Fees do not include study abroad course(s) unless the course(s) is a mandatory requirement for completion of the approved program of education. Fees are defined in the school's catalog or supplement and listed on the school's billing statement or invoice.

Examples of fees that are not allowed include, but are not limited to:

- Penalty fees (i.e. late registration, late course changes, returned checks, repeated courses)
- Add/drop course fees
- Parking fees
- Fees for any food or lodging expenses, meal ticket fees
- Overload fees for course loads that require special permission
- Transportation/transit system fees that are not required of every student
- Graduation fees

Application for admission fees cannot be certified to VA.

For specific information about other fees, contact your ELR.

Report the tuition and fees charged to the student after deducting any amounts paid with Federal Funds, excluding Federal Financial Aid Programs (Title IV). Examples of non-title IV Federal funds include Reserve officers Training Corps (ROTC), Military Spouse Career Advancement Accounts (MyCAA), Health Professionals Scholarship Program (HPSP), and Government Employees' Training Act (GETA).

If the student is charged out-of-state tuition, the school will report the in-state tuition on the enrollment certification. If the school is participating in Yellow Ribbon to cover the out of state rate, indicate the school contribution amount in the Yellow Ribbon Box. Insert the VA Standard Remark, "Student is Not A Resident And is Being Charged Out-Of-State Tuition And Fees."

Effective August 1, 2009. The Post-9/11 GI Bill pays the highest public in-state undergraduate tuition and fees. Report the tuition and fees charged to the student after deducting any amounts paid with Federal Funds, excluding Federal Financial Aid Programs (Title IV).

Effective August 1, 2011. US Public Schools. The actual net cost for in-state tuition and fees after the application of any waiver, scholarship, aid, or assistance [other than loans and funds provided under section 401(b) of the Higher Education Act of 1965] provided directly to the institution and specifically designated for the sole purpose of defraying tuition and fees.

Only in-state charges should be reported in the Tuition and Fee field. I f a contribution is being made under the Yellow Ribbon Program, any additional out-of-state net charges should be reported in the out-of-state field of the Enrollment Certification.

Effective August 1, 2011. **Private and Foreign Schools:** The lesser of the actual net cost for tuition and fees after the application of any waiver, scholarship, aid, or assistance [other than loans and funds provided under section 401(b) of the Higher Education Act of 1965] provided directly to the institution and specifically designated for the sole purpose of defraying tuition and fees, or $17,500 for the academic year beginning on August 1, 2011.

Tuition and fees shall be reported for all Chapter 33 students for each enrollment period. If a contribution is being made under the Yellow Ribbon Program, the school should report their contribution within the Yellow Ribbon Field. Private schools should always report the total net tuition charges regardless of whether the designated cap has been attained. ($17,500 or most current applicable maximum as determined by law.).

Tuition and Fees (Chapters 30, 32, 35, 1606, and 1607)

Tuition and fees must be reported for enrollment periods when training time is less than ½-time, when the student is on active duty, and when accelerated payment is requested. If none of these conditions apply, tuition and fees do not have to be reported and you can enter 0 in tuition and in fees.

If you certify overlapping enrollment periods report tuition and fees for any enrollment period that's less than ½-time by itself.

Example: If you certify 9 quarter credits for an 8-week summer session and 3 credits for an 11-week summer quarter that both begin 6/15/09, then tuition and fees must be reported for the 3 credit, 11 week quarter. Report the amount charged for the 3 credits, not the amount charged for all 12 credits.

CHANGE IN ENROLLMENT PROCESS

AMEND, ADJUST, AND TERMINATE

A copy of the *Notice of* Change in Student Status should be printed and put in the student's school file.

A Notice of Change in Student Status reports one of three distinct actions.

- **Amend** is used to change begin date, end date, tuition and fees, Yellow Ribbon, add a remark, and advance pay and accelerated pay requests on a certification already submitted.
- **Adjust** is used to report an increase or decrease in credit hours. If tuition, fees, or Yellow Ribbon were reported, they must also be changed to correspond to the adjusted number of credit hours.
- **Terminate** is used to report a complete withdrawal from an enrollment period, or to report graduation or program completion. If a student certified for multiple enrollment periods completely withdraws from one enrollment period, then terminate the enrollment period from which he withdrew. VA-ONCE will give you the option to terminate any subsequent enrollment periods or to leave those periods as certified.

Last Date of Attendance/Effective Date

VA-ONCE asks for the "LDA/EFF Date" (Last Date of Attendance/Effective Date).

- If a student officially withdraws, the date the student withdrew is the effective date.
- If a student is administratively withdrawn or stops attending without officially withdrawing, the actual last date of attendance must be determined and reported.
- If a student completes the term with all "F" and/or non-punitive grades, then determine and report the actual last date of attendance for each course and, if required, terminate the student for unsatisfactory progress.

Use one of the following methods to determine the last actual date of attendance: (1) attendance records, (2) grading reports, (3) last date on which examination or other papers filed, (4) last day of activity in the instructor's records, or (5) a statement from the student as to the last day of his or her attendance.

REDUCTIONS AND WITHDRAWALS

Reduction and Withdrawals (Chapter 33)

All changes in credit must be reported, generally within 30 days of the change in enrollment [38CFR 21.4203]. Keep in mind that credit may be divided between resident credit (Res) and distance learning credit (Dist) for Chapter 33. Adjust resident credit and distance hours separately based on how the adjustment affects one, the other, or both.

Whenever credit hours change, prepare and submit an adjustment. **Adjust credit hours, and tuition and fees (if necessary)**. If a student certified for 12 credit hours drops to 9 credit hours:

- Change resident credit hours from 12 to 9 credits. Remember, the 12 credits hours may be divided between Resident and Distance. Adjust the credit where appropriate.
- Change the tuition amount reported for the 12 credits hours to the tuition amount **that would have been reported** for the 9 remaining credit hours.
- Change the fees amount reported for 12 credit hours to the fees amount that would have been reported for the 9 remaining credit hours. Some courses have lab fees, etc. Make sure the fees reported are specific to the 9 credit hours that remain as if those were the only courses taken during the entire enrollment period.

Reductions and Withdrawals (Chapters 30, 32, 35, 1606, and 1607)

Changes in credit hours that do not change the student's training time do not need to be reported unless the student is a serviceperson and there is a change in tuition and fees. Example: You do not have to report a change from 12 to 15 hour hours or vice versa because both are full-time for a standard quarter or semester.

If a reduction drops a student to <½-time, tuition and fees must be reported. Changes in tuition and fees should always be reported for students on active duty and students training at <½-time even if there is no change in the training time.

Reductions and Withdrawals (VRAP)

Changes in credit hours that do not change the student's training time do not need to be reported. Only changes in training time that cross the full-time threshold should be reported. Tuition and fees do not need to be reported regardless of the student's training time.

Adjustment and Terminations On or Before the First Day of Term (CH 33)

Adjustments

If a change in credit hours is reported, the corresponding change in tuition, fees, and Yellow Ribbon for the remaining credit hours must also be reported.

- If a student does not attend and withdraws from a course before the first day of the term, report the adjustment as "Preregistered But Never Attended" and report the "LDA/EFF Date" as the first day of the term.
- If a student withdraws from a course on the first day of the term, report the adjustment as a "Reduction On First Day of Term". VA-ONCE will enter first day of the term as the "LDA/EFF Date".

Terminations

- If a student does not start the term, report the termination reason as "Preregistered But Never Attended". You **must** enter the first date of the term as the date of termination. If the student terminates before the first date of the term select "Withdraw Before Beginning of Term," VA-ONCE will automatically populate the date before the first day of the term.

- If a student attends class and then terminates the first day of the term, report the termination reason as “Withdrawal During Drop Period” and report the “LDA/EFF Date” as the first day of the term.
- If a student attends classes and terminates later in term, report the termination reason as accordingly and indicate the “LDA/EFF Date”.

Adjustments During Drop Period

- If a change in credit hours is certified for Chapter 33 the corresponding change in tuition, fees, and Yellow Ribbon for the remaining credit must also be reported.
- If a student withdraws during the school’s drop period, identify the adjustment or termination as “During Drop Period”. The drop period is the designated period at the beginning of a term when students can add and drop classes without a grade being recorded on their transcript.

Adjustments After Drop Period

- When a change in credit is certified for Chapter 33 the corresponding change in tuition, fees, and Yellow Ribbon for the remaining credit must also be reported.
- If a student withdraws after the drop period, report the adjustment or termination as “After Drop Period – Non-punitive Grades Assigned” or “After Drop Period – Punitive Grades Assigned” as appropriate. Accurately identify whether the grade assigned is non-punitive or punitive. The action VA takes differs for non-punitive and punitive grades. If the grade is non-punitive Mitigating Circumstances are an issue.

Non-punitive Grades

- A non-punitive grade is a grade that doesn’t count as earned credit and isn’t considered in progress standards for graduation. A withdrawal after the drop period is non-punitive if it isn’t calculated into the student’s GPA or it isn’t considered in academic progress criteria like probation and suspension. Non-punitive grades have the same effect as an audit. They don’t apply to the degree and they don’t affect academic progress.
- Non-punitive repeat grades do not have to be reported under some circumstance. Review the forgiveness policy under Repeating Courses.

Punitive Grades

- A punitive grade is a grade assigned for pursuit of a course which is used in determining the student's overall progress toward completion of the school's requirements for graduation, e.g., a failing grade.
- Unlike the non-punitive grade, the punitive grade does affect the criteria to be met by the student for graduation, i.e., it is a factor in computing the student's grade average or grade point average.

Mitigating Circumstances

Mitigating circumstances are circumstances beyond the student's control that prevent the student from continuing in school or that cause the student to reduce credits. Examples are:

- An illness or death in the student's immediate family.
- An illness or injury afflicting the student during the enrollment period.
- An unavoidable change in the student's conditions of employment.
- An unavoidable geographical transfer resulting from the student's employment.
- Immediate family or financial obligations beyond the control of the claimant that require him or her to suspend pursuit of the program of education to obtain employment.
- Discontinuance of the course by the school.
- Unanticipated active military service, including active duty for training.
- Unanticipated difficulties with childcare arrangements the student has made for the period during which he or she is attending classes.

When a student terminates or reduces **after** the drop period and a non-punitive grade is assigned, mitigating circumstances are an issue. If mitigating circumstances are needed and adequate evidence of mitigating circumstances isn't received, VA will not pay for the course(s) in question. If the student has already been paid for the course or courses, VA will create an overpayment (subject to the 6-Credit Hour Exclusion described below) from the beginning of the term.

If mitigating circumstances are an issue for the adjustment or termination reason you select, VA-ONCE will display a Mitigating Circumstances box. The drop down arrow for the box will display the above list of mitigating circumstances. If you know the circumstance and it's clearly one of the circumstances listed, then select that circumstance. Documentation of mitigating circumstances provided by the student should be retained within the student's file.

If you don't have documentation of the student's circumstance, then leave the mitigating circumstance box blank. If you leave the mitigating circumstance box blank, VA will ask the student to provide evidence of a mitigating circumstance.

6-Credit Hour Exclusion

VA automatically grants mitigating circumstances for up to 6 credits the first time a student reduces or terminates and mitigating circumstances must be considered. This automatic grant is called the 6-Credit Hour Exclusion. The exclusion is a **one-time grant** made the first time mitigating circumstances must be considered for the student. Up to 6 credits can be excluded if the student has been awarded benefits for the credit. The 6-Credit Hour Exclusion cannot be granted if the student **completes** the term and receives non-punitive grades.

- If the student withdraws from 3 credits, the exclusion will be granted for 3 credits and the student's one time exclusion is used.
- If the student withdraws from 12 credits, the exclusion will be granted for 6 credits, the student's one time exclusion is used, and the student must provide mitigating circumstances for the other 6 credits.

NON-PUNITIVE GRADES- END OF TERM

A non-punitive grade is a grade that does not count as earned credit and that does not affect progress standards for graduation.

If a student completes the term and receives non-punitive grades, the non-punitive grades must be reported to VA. Do not report end of term non-punitive grades that students receive for courses that were certified as remedial courses. Examples of non-punitive grades are an “X” (no basis for grade), a “NP” (no pass), a “NC” (no credit) or a “U” (unsatisfactory) that do not count as earned credit and that are not calculated into the grade point average.

The “LDA/EFF Date” for end of term non-punitive grades is the end date of the term. If a change in credit is certified for Chapter 33 the corresponding change in tuition, fees, and Yellow Ribbon for the remaining credit must also be reported.

If the change is an adjustment, the reason is “Student Completed Term But Non-punitive Grades Assigned For One Or More Courses”. If a student certified 12 credits receives a non-punitive grade for a 3-credit class, report the non-punitive grade as an adjustment from 12 to 9 credits hours.

If the change is a termination, select “Other” or “Unsatisfactory Attendance, Conduct, or Progress” as the reason as appropriate. In remarks, report the number of non-punitive credits hours. Example: “Student received 6 non-punitive credits, reducing him from 12 to 6 credit hours.”

INCOMPLETE GRADES

Some institutions allow the assignment of an "I" (incomplete) grade on a provisional basis only. These institutions require a student to remove the "I" grade within a specified time (e.g., by the end of the term following the term for which the "I" grade was assigned). If the student does not replace the "I" grade within the prescribed time period, a punitive failing grade will be assigned and recorded in the student's academic record. Institutions that have and enforce such a policy, and prescribe a maximum time period for grade replacement of less than one year, are not required to report the assignment of an "I" grade as an NP grade.

Many institutions have a grading policy that permits an "I" grade to be replaced with a NP grade, or which allows a NP "I" grade to remain in a student's record indefinitely. In such cases the school must report the incomplete grade as nonpunitive at the time the grades are assigned.

When a report is received that an “I” grade has been assigned (which is subject to replacement within a prescribed time period), VA will adjust the student's payment and set up a control to track the grade. If it is resolved into a punitive grade (passing or failing) within one year of the date it was originally assigned, the school should report the change to VA. Such reports should clearly indicate that the change in enrollment status being reported is the replacement of an "I" grade previously reported. If at the end of the 1-year control period no report has been received from the institution to indicate that the "I" grade has been replaced, the VA will assume that the "I" grade has not been changed.

Chapter 33: All incomplete grades must be reported for Chapter 33 per the rules above.

Chapters 30, 32, 35, 1606, 1607, and VRAP: An incomplete grade doesn't need to be reported if training time isn't affected. Example: A student takes 15 credit hours, completes 12 credit hours, and receives 3 credit hours incomplete. Training time isn't affected because the incomplete doesn't change the student's full-time training time.

ACADEMIC PROBATION

Schools that have an academic progress policy allowing for a period of academic probation prior to termination for Unsatisfactory Progress (Academic Suspension) should notify VA promptly when a student receiving VA education benefits is placed on academic probation. Notifications should be sent using VA's "Ask a Question" via the Internet Inquiry System. Notifications should include the student's name and file number in the text. If multiple students are placed on academic probation (e.g., end of term, semester, quarter) schools may submit a single notification to VA by indicating that multiple students were placed on academic probation in the text and attaching an Academic Probation Spreadsheet listing each student.

All notifications must include "Academic Probation" in the subject line.

School Official Completes							
Benefit Chapter	**SSN/File Number**	Payee	Last Name	First Name	Facility Code	Start Date Academic Probation	Zip Code Current Address

Students should be advised of any counseling services available to them at the school in order to resolve academic or other problems and to establish a meaningful plan for successful completion of their education or training. Schools and training establishments are asked to remind students of the counseling services and tutorial assistance benefits available through VA.

UNSATISFACTORY PROGRESS, CONDUCT AND ATTENDANCE

The law requires that educational assistance benefits to Veterans and other eligible persons be discontinued when the student ceases to make satisfactory progress toward completion of his or her training objective. Benefits can be resumed if the student reenrolls in the same educational institution and in the same program. In other cases, benefits cannot be resumed unless VA finds that the cause of the unsatisfactory attendance, conduct or progress has been removed and the program of education or training to be pursued by the student is suitable to his or her aptitudes, interests, and abilities.

Both accredited and non-accredited schools are required by law to have and to enforce standards of progress and conduct in order for their programs to be approved for VA benefits. Only non-accredited schools are required by federal law to have attendance standards. These standards should be stated plainly in the school's catalog or bulletin. A school's policy and regulations for standards of progress, conduct and attendance must define:

- The school's grading system
- The minimum satisfactory grade level
- Conditions for interruption of training due to unsatisfactory grades or progress
- A description of any probationary period
- Conditions for a student's reentrance/ readmission following dismissal/suspension for unsatisfactory progress
- Conditions for dismissal due to unsatisfactory conduct
- The school's attendance policy

All schools are required to maintain an academic record for each student which includes, for a veteran or eligible person, the credit allowed toward the student's current program due to previous training and experience. The record must also show the results of each enrollment period, to include the unit courses or subjects undertaken and the final result (e.g., grade, passed, failed, withdrawn, test results). The record must be cumulative and document the progress being made toward completion of the program. For those institutions that use a narrative grading system and/or unspecified academic terms, as opposed to the traditional grading system and specified terms, the academic record must contain sufficient information to permit the recipient of a transcript to make an informed evaluation of the student's educational experience. For those institutions not operating on a term basis, the record must show the student's proficiency at the various stages in the training program.

School officials are responsible for enforcing their established standards of progress. This will require that the school specify intervals between enrollment and graduation (i.e., completion) when each student's progress will be evaluated. Each such evaluation must compare the student's progress with clearly defined progress standards such as:

- For programs offered on a term basis, a minimum grade average or credit level which should bear a reasonable relationship to final attainment of graduation requirements. It is frequently appropriate that separate evaluations be made for overall grade point average and the grade point average attained in courses from the student's major field of study.
- For programs not offered on a term basis, a minimum proficiency level expected of a student if he or she is to successfully complete the program within the number of hours of training that has been approved by the SAA. Measurement of a student's proficiency should be based on instruction appraisals, graded course work, periodic testing, or other

techniques that will permit an evaluation of student's progress toward satisfactory completion of the program.

When a student has failed to maintain prescribed standards of progress, VA must be informed promptly so that benefit payments can be discontinued in accordance with the law. The termination date assigned by the school will be the last day of the term or other evaluation period in which the student's progress became unsatisfactory. Schools that provide a period of academic probation may not continue to certify a veteran or eligible person (who remains in a probationary status) for an indefinite period of time. It is reasonable to expect that an institution will report a termination due to unsatisfactory progress if a student remains on academic probation beyond 2 terms, quarters, or semesters.

Termination for Unsatisfactory Progress

Unsatisfactory Progress (Academic Suspension) must be reported to VA as a termination. Terminate the semester the student is suspended. If suspension follows the fall semester, for example, terminate fall semester. Choose “Unsatisfactory Attendance, Conduct, or Progress” as the reason. VA-ONCE will insert the end date of the term as the default “LDA/EFF Date”. You can change the default end of term date if it isn’t the correct date.

If a student successfully petitions the dismissal, is readmitted, and is already certified the subsequent term, don’t terminate the student. Instead, annotate the student’s file that the student was dismissed and readmitted following a successful appeal. If enrollment status changed the subsequent term, be sure to adjust the credit for the term. When you submit the termination, a pop-up window will appear asking about subsequent terms if any are to be certified. Consider this window carefully:

- If the student won’t attend the subsequent term select “Cancel”. VA-ONCE will terminate the following terms.
- If you terminate a student and the student is readmitted after your termination, certify the student as you normally would. If VA-ONCE terminated the term as described in the previous bullet, the term will have to be certified again.

Recertification of VA Claimant

A school's standards of progress must include specific conditions a veteran or eligible person is required to satisfy to permit recertification for VA benefits after being terminated (for benefit purposes) because of unsatisfactory progress or conduct. When a school recertifies a student's enrollment to VA after a termination due to unsatisfactory progress or conduct, it is presumed the school has established that there is a reasonable likelihood that the student will be able to maintain satisfactory progress and conduct in the future.

Upon recertification to VA the school's certifying official should maintain in the student’s file a statement that describes the conditions for the student's continued certification to VA. These conditions should prescribe the minimum performance standards to be achieved by the student during the next enrollment/evaluation period.

To initiate action by VA to determine whether further payments of VA educational assistance allowance should be authorized, the student must submit a specific request for resumption of VA benefits following an interruption due to unsatisfactory progress or conduct. Requests may be submitted on VA Form 22-1995 or VA Form 22-5495.

Progress Records

All schools must maintain progress records (academic transcript, for example) that clearly illustrate students' progress towards the completion of their program.

Courses organized on a term basis must have records that show the subjects taken each term and the grade assigned at the end of the term.

For courses not organized on a term basis, the school must establish standards that define a minimum proficiency level necessary for successful completion at given periods of time. The school must establish specific points within the course for evaluation of a student's progress toward completion.

GRADUATION

Schools are required to report graduation or program completion information to VA. Once a student graduates from a degree program or completes a Non-College Degree program, you should submit a Notice of Change in Student Status. If the student is graduating from a degree program, "Graduation" should be selected as the termination reason. If the student is completing a Non-College Degree program, "End of Term or Course" should be selected as the termination reason. The last date of the term selected will be pre-populated as the date of termination. If subsequent terms were previously certified, VA-ONCE will prompt you to terminate those enrollments, or to leave them as previously certified. Ensure that the program information is accurate.

MISCELLANEOUS PAYMENT ISSUES

ACCELERATED PAYMENT

Chapters 30, 1606, and 1607

Complete information about accelerated payment is available for students and schools on our Education Benefits website at www.gibill.va.gov/pamphlets/acceleratedpayinfo.htm.

Acceleration Basics

Accelerated payment is a lump sum payment of 60% of tuition and fees for certain high cost, high tech programs. For 1606 & 1607 it applies to non-college degree programs that are less than two years, but does not specify that they must be "high tech programs." If there isn't enough entitlement to cover 60% of tuition and fees, VA will pay based on actual remaining entitlement. Accelerated payments are paid one semester, quarter, or term at a time. If a program isn't offered on a semester, quarter, or term basis, the accelerated payment is paid for the entire program.

High cost means tuition and fees must be more than double the benefit the student would otherwise receive. Example: A typical semester is 1/11/10–5/7/10 (17 weeks) and a typical quarter 3/22/10–6/4/10 (11 weeks). If Chapter 30 pays $1,368.00 per month full-time, it pays $5,335.20 for the semester or $3,328.80 for the quarter. In order to meet the "high cost" requirement, tuition and fees must be more than $10,640.70 for the semester or more than $6,657.60 for the quarter before a student could receive an accelerated payment.

High technology means students must enroll in a high tech program and they must certify their intent to seek employment in a high tech industry as defined by VA. VA maintains a list of high tech programs and high tech industries on the Internet as noted in the second paragraph above.

Certifying Accelerated Payment

If students request accelerated payment, make sure they understand the basics described above and, if they haven't already been there, direct them to the accelerated payment link on VA's website.

Certify accelerated payment as you normally do, except:

- All accelerated payment certifications must be confirmed certifications. That means they cannot be signed, dated, and submitted until on or after the beginning date of the enrollment period certified.
- Check the "Accelerated Pay (high-tech courses only)" box on a new Cert. When this box is checked, VA-ONCE enters "Student has requested Accelerated Pay" in remarks. To make this certification, you must have the student's written request for accelerated payment in your files for each term that accelerated payment was requested.
- The student's written requests are simple. "I request accelerated payment", followed by the student's signature and the date. Obtain the request from the student, print a copy of the Cert, attach the student's request to the Cert, and keep the copy in the student's file. On the student's very first request for accelerated payment, the written request must also contain the following: "I certify that I intend to seek employment in a high technology industry as defined by VA. I have read VA's approved list of high technology industries."

- Certify one term at a time and include the total charges (tuition and fees) for the courses certified. The student must request accelerated payment separately for each term.
- If the student's enrollment status changes, adjust or terminate the Cert in the usual manner. Be sure to include tuition and fees. Mitigating circumstances may be an issue.

COOPERATIVE TRAINING

Chapters 30, 32, 33, 35, 1606, and 1607

Colleges and universities are increasingly offering work experience or work internship programs. VA uses the term **cooperative training** (co-op) to denote school-sponsored programs that consist of school instruction and on-the-job (OJT) training. For example, a community college may offer an A.A.S. Automotive Technology degree with course work at the college and OJT at a car dealership. Like all programs, co-op programs must be specifically approved by the SAA.

Cooperative training, like some forms of practical training (see Practical Training, and Training Time), can be certified by credit or by clock hours, whichever is to the student's advantage. Examples: A student takes 12 credits at the college one quarter and 6 credits OJT (40 clock hours) at a place of business the next quarter. The student is certified 12 credits the first quarter and 40 clock hours the second quarter. The student is full-time both quarters.

Co-op training may occur in two formats: alternating co-op or parallel co-op.

Alternating Co-op

The student alternates full-time school attendance with full-time OJT training. For example, a student may alternate one term of full-time school attendance with one term of full-time OJT, or a student may take a 4 term of classroom instruction phase and then finish a program with a one term OJT phase (internship or externship). The school and the OJT phases must be full-time.

The school and OJT phases may alternate on a weekly, monthly, or term basis. However they alternate, the school phase must be at least as long as the OJT phase. If a school phase is certified for one month, then the subsequent OJT phase cannot be more than one month. A school phase can be longer than an OJT phase, but an OJT phase can never be longer than the school phase.

Parallel Co-op

The student attends school half-time and works (OJT) half-time. For example, a student takes 6 classroom credits in the morning and 3 OJT credits (20 clock hours) in the afternoon. The combination of school and OJT must equal full-time. In this case, the student is full-time because the 6 classroom credits is ½-time and 20 clock hours is ½-time.

The school phase of training must be at least as long as the OJT phase of training. The student must be attending school at least half-time each day the student works OJT, but the student can't work more than 4 hours per day. A student could be attending school three-quarter time each day and working half-time or less, but not the other way around.

Rules for Cooperative Training

Cooperative training must be a **full-time** program. The school phase and the OJT phase together constitute one co-op cycle. The OJT phase must be an integral part of the school's approved program. The OJT must be supervised by school instructors, the school must arrange the OJT phases with employers, the school must arrange for the placement of individual students in the OJT, and the school must grant credit for the OJT.

A VA student must elect co-op in writing. The best method is for the student to write an election statement in the "Remarks" block of the Enrollment Certification that the student signs and dates. With VA-ONCE, the school should obtain a written election statement, keep the statement in the student's school file, and enter in the Cert's remarks, "Student's written election for co-op training on file." Once a student elects co-op training, the student must complete both phases (school and OJT) of each co-op cycle. If the student finishes the first phase, starts the second phase, and drops out; an overpayment may be created back to the beginning of the first phase, to the start of the cycle.

Although VA regulations require certain procedures and a specific minimum ratio of school and OJT, local and state requirements always take precedence and Veterans are expected to follow the same rules and internal procedures as all other students. Sometimes this means a particular co-op program cannot be approved for veteran training because state or school rules conflict with VA regulation.

DUAL MAJORS, MINORS, AND DUAL OBJECTIVES

Students may pursue a dual major or a minor as part of a single objective.

Dual Major

Dual majors pursued under an academic policy that defines the dual major's requirements can be certified if both majors are approved. Only courses required to complete the dual major can be certified. During VA site visits, or during compliance surveys, if VA reviews a case for a student who is pursuing dual majors, we should ensure the student is not enrolled in courses outside either major and that the courses are approved.

Minor

A minor pursued as part of an approved major can be certified, even if the minor will require additional credit to graduate. Only courses required to complete the degree, including the minor, can be certified.

ROTC Programs

A student in a ROTC (Reserve Officer Training Corps) program is commissioned as an officer if he or she receives a degree. The objective of commissioned officer is a professional objective. Students in a ROTC program can be certified for courses required for their degree (including electives) **and** for courses required for the ROTC program.

Dual Objectives

A student may want to pursue a dual objective. For example, a student may want to concurrently pursue two different degrees or pursue a degree and a certificate. A program of education may lead to more than one educational, professional, or vocational objective if all objectives pursued are generally recognized as being reasonably related to a single career field. The objectives do not necessarily have to be on the same professional or technical level.

Specific approval procedures vary between SAAs. Check with your SAA about dual objective approvals. A combination of two approved degree programs at the same school does not need to be approved by the SAA.

INCARCERATED CLAIMANTS (FELONY CONVICTIONS)

Certification from Schools (applies to all chapters):

- Schools should show the incarceration of a claimant in the "Remarks" section of VA Form 22-1999, Enrollment Certification, or VA Form 22-1999b, Notice of Change in Student Status
- Schools should show the charges for books, equipment, and supplies in the "Remarks" section
- Schools should show the charges for tuition and fees in the designated area of the certification form

The school should state whether the federal, state, or local government is paying all or part of the cost for tuition, fees, books, equipment, or supplies and the amounts paid.

INTERVAL PAY (BREAK PAY)

This only applies to enrollments prior to August 1, 2011. No break pay will be authorized after July 31, 2011

Break (interval) pay between semesters, quarters, and terms is paid according to the rules outlined below. Breaks are paid at the rate paid on the ending date of the term preceding the break. VA pays breaks automatically unless one of the following restrictions precludes payment for the break.

Keeping these restrictions in mind, the following tables summarize break pay for students who continue at the same school and for students who transfer from one school to another:

Same School	Break more than 8 weeks (56 days)	Don't pay
	Break doesn't exceed 8 weeks **and** the term before or after the break is not shorter than the break	Pay, unless summer term rule applies

Change School	Change of program		Don't pay
	Same program	Break more than 30 days	Don't pay
		Break 30 days or less	Pay

STUDY ABROAD

Study abroad can be certified if it meets the following criteria:

- For Chapter 33, study abroad *must* be required for graduation (not an option or elective). For the other benefit programs, the courses must count toward graduation.
- Both schools have programs approved for VA benefits.
- The school under which the study abroad program is approved certifies the enrollment.

Under Chapter 33, VA will pay:
- Home school's tuition and fees
- Books and supplies
- Monthly housing allowance based on the home school's address

VA will not pay:
- Costs related to travel (airfare, lodging & meals)
- Third party charges

Additional information about study abroad can be found on the GI Bill website.

Other Benefit Programs
- Benefits are paid on a monthly basis directly to the veteran just like attendance at U.S. schools

TUITION ASSISTANCE

Tuition Assistance (TA) is a Department of Defense (DoD) program. VA does not administer TA. TA rules vary by branch of service and can even vary between units depending on whether the unit is active, reserve, or National Guard.

If a student receives education benefits from VA and receives TA benefits from the military, duplication of benefits may be an issue. The issue might involve VA regulations, DoD regulations, or both since VA and DoD both have regulations about receiving VA benefits and TA at the same time. Potential duplication issues are outlined below.

Chapter 33 Recipients

Active duty service-members may receive Chapter 33 benefits for the same courses for which they receive TA from the military. Schools must deduct TA benefits from the net tuition and fees submitted to VA, and Chapter 33 is used to pay toward the remaining out-of-pocket costs. Chapter 33 students receiving TA should be certified the same as other Chapter 33 students.

Chapter 30 Recipients

Active duty service-members may not receive standard Chapter 30 benefits for the same courses for which they receive TA from the military. If a student takes several courses, the student can't receive Chapter 30 benefits for the courses for which TA is paid, but the student can receive Chapter 30 benefits for the courses for which TA isn't paid.

Chapter 30 and "Top-up"

Servicepersons eligible for Chapters 30 and approved for TA are eligible for Top-up. What is Top-up? Top-up allows VA to pay the difference between what TA pays and the cost of the course. The law prohibits active duty students from receiving regular Chapter 30 benefits and TA for the same course; however, VA students in receipt of TA may receive the Chapter 30 Top-up benefit. Servicepersons apply for Top-up by sending a TA authorization form directly to VA. SCOs should not certify courses for which a service-member will receive TA under Chapter 30.

Detailed information about Tuition Assistance Top-up and about applying for Top-up is available on the GI Bill website (http://gibill.va.gov/documents/pamphlets/tuition-assistance-top-up.pdf).

Chapter 1606 and 1607 Recipients

VA regulations state active duty servicepersons may not receive VA benefits for the same courses for which they receive TA from the military. Some Active Guard Reserve (AGR) members receiving Chapter 1606 or Chapter 1607 benefits are considered to be on active duty. The active duty prohibition would apply to these AGR members.

DoD regulations state service members may not receive Chapter 1606 and TA for the same courses if they are less than ½-time. Although DoD regulations permit Chapter 1606 and TA for service-members training ½-time or more, the military generally does not provide TA to members who receive VA benefits because TA funding is limited. Chapter 1607 benefits can never be paid for the same courses as TA regardless of training time. Also, keep in mind that Chapter 1606, Chapter 1607, and TA cannot be paid for the same courses for service members on active duty.

Army National Guard and Air National Guard TA is complex because Guard TA may be **federal or state** funded. Most National Guard units use federal money for TA. When federal funding is used, some Guard units will ask students to get a letter from their school that says they're not receiving VA benefits for the same credits for which they applied for TA. If you certified a student for 12 credits (full-time) and he or she is taking 16 credits, you can report 4 credits to the Guard as credits for which the student is not receiving VA benefits.

Some states have appropriated state money for TA for their National Guard units. When state funding is used for TA, duplication (subject to state regulations) is not an issue because the funding is not "federal" funding; the funding is not from two (duplicate) federal sources.

Reserve TA—Army Reserve, Naval Reserve, Air Force Reserve, Marine Corps Reserve, and Coast Guard Reserve—and Chapter 1606 or Chapter 1607 is always federal funding, so duplication is always an issue.

Certifying Students Receiving Tuition Assistance

Chapter 33 students receiving TA should be certified as any other Chapter 33 student, with the TA benefits deducted from the net tuition and fee charges submitted to VA.

For the other benefit programs, generally speaking, it's the student's responsibility to ensure there isn't a duplication of benefits. The Application for Education Benefits asks about TA (question 16A) and the National Guard watches for duplicate payment. Schools should not certify courses for which a service-member will receive TA under Chapter 30.

TUTORIAL ASSISTANCE

Chapter 30, 32, 33, 35, and 1606

Tutorial assistance may be paid to students under Chapters 30, 33, 35 and 1606. Tutorial assistance is not authorized for Chapter 1607 at this time. Tutorial assistance helps the student pay for necessary tutoring and is a supplement to the student's regular education benefit.

Overview

VA may pay tutorial assistance to a student receiving education benefits.

The monthly rate may not exceed the cost of tutoring or $100. The maximum amount payable is $1200. There is no entitlement charge for the first $600 under Chapter 30 and 1606. There is no entitlement charge under Chapter 33 or 35.

The student, tutor, and certifying official must complete an Application and Enrollment Certification for Individualized Tutorial Assistance (VA Form 22-1990t). The application may be submitted at the end of each month or combination of months. The application must be signed and dated on or after the date of the last tutoring session certified. VA can pay for tutorial assistance during the one-year period before the date VA receives the application.

Eligibility

All of the following criterion must be met for a student to be eligible for tutorial assistance.

- The student must be in a post secondary program ½-time or more. For Chapter 33, rate of pursuit must be "at least 50%."
- The student must have a deficiency in a course that is part of his or her approved program.
- The student must be enrolled in the course during the quarter, semester, or term in which the tutoring is received for the course. Tutoring may not occur between quarters or semesters.

School Certification

When a certifying official signs an Application and Enrollment Certification for Individualized Tutorial Assistance, he or she certifies that:

- Tutoring is essential to correct a deficiency. A letter from the course instructor should be put in the student's VA file. The letter must state that the student is deficient in the course and that individual tutoring is required to correct the deficiency.
- The tutor meets the college's qualifications. Ideally, the school maintains a list of approved tutors. The list should indicate the subjects a tutor is qualified to tutor and the hourly charge. Students should be assigned a tutor from the approved list. A tutor may not be a close relative of the student.
- The charges do not exceed the usual charges for tutoring.

VET REP LISTING

VA will mail your School Certifying Official a report known as the Vet Rep Listing Report. This report may be issued weekly if payments were made during the previous week. Only those payments made directly to the schools will be shown on the listing. Chapter 33 payments issued to the claimant are not associated with any facility code, therefore these payments are not on the Vet Rep Listing. The Vet Rep Listing will reflect the student's name, the term dates, the amount and whether payment was for tuition, fees or yellow ribbon. Below is a sample Vet Rep Listing.

```
VARO, ATTN:EDUC. LIASON REP.
PO BOX 4616
BUFFALO NY 14240



VA CERTIFYING OFFICAL

HULL COLLEGE                                          SCHOOL CODE 11105674
QUEENS GARDENS, HU1
3 DG
HULL, EAST YORKSHIRE   800



                                   MAY 28, 2009

                    POST 9/11 G.I. BILL (CHAPTER 33)
                   TUITION AND YELLOW RIBBON PAYMENTS

                 ****************************************
                 *     L - E - G - E - N - D            *
                 * ****************************************
                 * CHAPTER-SUFFIX  DESCRIPTION          *
                 * --------------- --------------       *
                 *      33Y        YELLOW RIBBON         *
                 *      33T        TUITION & FEES        *
                 ****************************************

              ***********************************************
              *        REPORT BEGINS ON REVERSE SIDE        *
              ***********************************************
*DJDE  FORM=HOGBAR,MODIFY=CMEV2, END;
```

```
                                                  MAY 28, 2009
FACILITY   11105674   HULL COLLEGE              HULL, EAST YORKSHIRE   PAGE  1

    FILE                                TRNG        FIRST TWO       ZIP        BENEFIT
RO  NUMBER      AMT PAID  PERIOD FOR    TIME        ADDRESS LINES   CODE       PAID

31 1457841387    8600.00  081509-121509              IKE T DOG                  33T
                                                     86 DOGGY LANE  85007

31 234481486    13333.00  081509-121509              MOLLY S BOXER              33T
                                                     9842 DESERT AVE  87501

31 514077087    7808.82   100510-031510              SKID D ROWE                33Y
                                                     1122 FELINE PL   87501
*DJDE SIDE=(NUFRONT,NOFFSET), FORM=NONE, MODIFY=CMEVI,END;
```

WORK-STUDY

Who is Eligible for the Work Study Program?

- A student receiving VA education benefits under Title 38 USC, Chapters 33, 30, 31, 32, or 35; or Title 10 USC, Chapter 1606, Chapter 1607; and
- Attending school at the ¾ time or full time rate.

What Type of Work Does a Work Study Student Do?

Students must be assigned to work sites that will permit them to perform VA related activities. These work sites include, but are not limited to: Regional Offices, VA Medical Centers, Vet Centers, VA Outpatient Clinics, National Cemeteries, and local education institutions.

If assigned to a non-VA work site, the student's primary employment responsibilities must be to perform VA related outreach assignments under the supervision of a VA employee.

NOTE: In the case of a student receiving education assistance under Title 10 USC, Chapter 1606, activities relating to the administration of the Chapter 1606 program at Department of Defense facilities are authorized.

How Much Does VA Pay?

Pay is based on the higher of the Federal minimum wage or the State/Local minimum wage. Work performed on or after the effective date of any minimum wage increase will be paid at the higher rate even though the contract may show a lower rate.

How Do Students Apply for the Work Study Program?

Students can apply by completing VA Form 22-8691, "Application for Work-Study Allowance" and submit to the appropriate Regional Processing Office.

How Many Students Can Work at a Work-Study Job Site?

The number of work-study students allowed at any approved work site is determined by the VA and is based on the type of work site (VA Regional Office, VA hospital, School, Military base) and the amount of VA related work available based on the position description provided by the work-site.

SCHOOL FISCAL ISSUES, STUDENT OVERPAYMENTS, AND DEBT COLLECTION

CHAPTER 33 FISCAL ISSUES

Generally overpayments of VA benefits are the responsibility of the student. However, there are instances under the Post 9/11 GIBILL when an over-payment is created on a school and funds need to be refunded to VA.

Debts and Over-Payments

A debt is established on a school when:

- The student never attended classes for which he/she was certified regardless of the reason for non-attendance
- The student completely withdraws **on** or before the first day of the term. If student reduces, the debt is a student debt
- The school received payment for the wrong student
- The school received a duplicate payment
- The school submitted an amended enrollment certification and reported reduced tuition and fee charges, reduced Yellow Ribbon amount, or reduced both. (Reductions based on student's action should be reported on a 1999B with the changes in the enrollment and will result in a debt to the student.)
- The student died during the term, or before start of the term
- VA issued payment above the amount certified on the enrollment certification that was used to process the payment (VA data entry error)

A debt is established on the student for tuition/fees/yellow ribbon when:

- The student withdrew after the first day of the term (FDOT)
- If the student completely withdrew on the FDOT, treat as if student never attended
- The student reduced hours whether the reduction occurred before or during the term
- If the student attended at least one day of any of the classes certified and a payment has been issued, any debt created by the reduction/withdrawal should be charged to the student
- The school submitted a change in enrollment (1999b) and reported a reduction in tuition, fees, and/or Yellow Ribbon due to student action reducing or terminating training.
- If a student drops a course and adds a course so that there is no net change in training time, any change to tuition, fees, and/or Yellow Ribbon is a student debt

Schools must refund tuition and fee payments to students in accordance with their established refund policies, so that the students can resolve over-payments.

If a school debt has been established and your school believes that it is not appropriate, please notify VA through the Internet Inquiry System or by letter to the RPO (not the Agent Cashier).

Returning Funds to VA

Schools should wait to refund payments to VA until a collection notice from the VA Debt Management Center (DMC) is received. In those instances where schools are responsible for making a remittance to VA for excess Tuition, Fees, or Yellow Ribbon payments, schools may make a refund to VA in one of five options.

Note: If making a payment directly to VA (see options 1, 2, & 3 below).

1. Schools may send a check, payable to the **US Department of Veterans Affairs**, to the VA Debt Management Center. It is essential that schools include the student's name and VA file number when making a payment to VA. If you have received a collection notice from DMC, VA requests the tear off sheet from the collection notice be included with the payment. The address to the VA Debt Management Center is:

   VA Debt Management Center
   Bishop Henry Whipple Federal Building
   P.O. Box 11930
   St Paul, MN 55111-0930

2. Schools may make a payment using a major credit card, debit card, or by electronic funds transfer from a checking or savings account. You may do this on-line by visiting the DMC website www.pay.va.gov, or by calling the DMC toll free number at 1-800-827-0648. Schools paying on-line or by phone will be required to provide details from the DMC collection notice.

3. Schools may also send a payment to VA from any Western Union Agent location, or by visiting www.westernunion.com. The Western Union Agent or the website will require a host city code, which is "VADMC". You will need the code to complete the transaction.

4. Should the school receive payment in the form of a paper check, the school may return the **uncashed Treasury check** to:

   U.S. Department of the Treasury
   Financial Management Service
   P.O. Box 51318
   Philadelphia, PA 19115-6316.

5. Should the school receive payment via Electronic Funds Transfer, schools may refund VA electronically via Automated Clearing House (ACH). To do so, schools shall request their banks return the full payment amount using an R31 ACH return code. Each bank has its own procedures and time constraints for returning direct deposit payments. Please speak with your bank's representative to obtain specific instructions on this process.

Refunds to VA not submitted in one of the approved methodologies may result in delays in debt processing. These delays may result in erroneous collection notices to students and/or schools and possibly referral of the debt to private collection agencies and the credit reporting bureaus.

LOST CHECKS

If a student does not receive a VA education check or EFT deposit that he/she believes was issued, the VA should be called immediately on our toll-free number at 1-888-442-4551**.** Education Case Managers can check the date and amount of any VA education check issued to a student and whether or not it has been returned. If a check or EFT payment was issued, but not received within three business days from the date of the check, then we can initiate tracer action with the U.S. Treasury Department (VA education checks are issued by the U.S. Treasury Disbursement Office in Philadelphia, PA). Once Treasury has completed its review, the following action will be taken, as appropriate:

If the check is not cashed, a courtesy disbursement check will be issued to the student.

If Treasury finds the check to have been negotiated (cashed), they will send a photocopy (front and back), a claim form and instructions on how to complete the form. The student will return the completed form to the address provided (in Hyattsville, Maryland). A Treasury claim form review could take over six weeks. The results of their review will determine if Treasury replaces the check. If the student claims non-receipt of a benefit check, is issued a courtesy disbursement check, and the original check is received, only one of the checks should be cashed. The other check should be marked "VOID" and returned to the U.S. Treasury in Austin, Texas, immediately. If both checks are negotiated, VA will then be responsible for collecting this dual payment from future benefits.

STUDENT OVERPAYMENTS

When an overpayment is created, a first demand letter is sent notifying the student of the overpayment. When the letter is received, the student should immediately contact VA regarding the debt. The response should be sent (in writing) directly to the office sending the letter, unless otherwise stated. Responding immediately and reaching a valid repayment agreement in a timely manner could prevent future benefits from being withheld. Due process (rights to appeal or waiver) as well as time limits for each step in the process is given in the first demand letter.

Time limits - A request for waiver must be received no later than 180 days (6 months) from the date of the initial notification of the overpayment. If a waiver request is received within 30 days of the first demand (notification) letter, no benefits will be withheld until the decision is made. If benefits were withheld and the waiver request was found to be timely, a refund will be issued. If a waiver is granted, any funds that have been applied will be refunded. Note: If a waiver is requested after the first 30 days, but within 180 days, offset of benefits will continue. If a waiver is granted, the amount collected will be refunded.

- Compromise offers can be made any time. The offer must be a lump sum offer, in writing, and accompanied by a current Financial Status Report (form available through our toll-free telephone number).
- If a waiver is denied, the student will receive a written notification of the decision that will also indicate when future benefits will start being withheld. An appeal to a waiver denial must be made within one year from the date of the denial letter. Withholding of benefits will continue while this issue is pending.

- Second and third demand letters and one warning letter are sent before referrals are made to nationwide credit bureaus.
- Second and third demand letters and two warning letters are sent before referral to the Internal Revenue Service to offset the debt from any federal payments being made to the claimant.

DEBT MANAGEMENT CENTER (DMC)

P.O. Box 11930
St. Paul, MN 55111-0930
1-800-827-0648
www.va.gov/debtman
Business hours are 7:30 am to 12:15 pm and 12:45 pm to 6:00 pm, Central Time. Mondays and the first business day of the month are always the busiest. The best times to call on those days are10:30 am to 12:15 pm and 1:15 pm to 3:00 pm, Central Time.

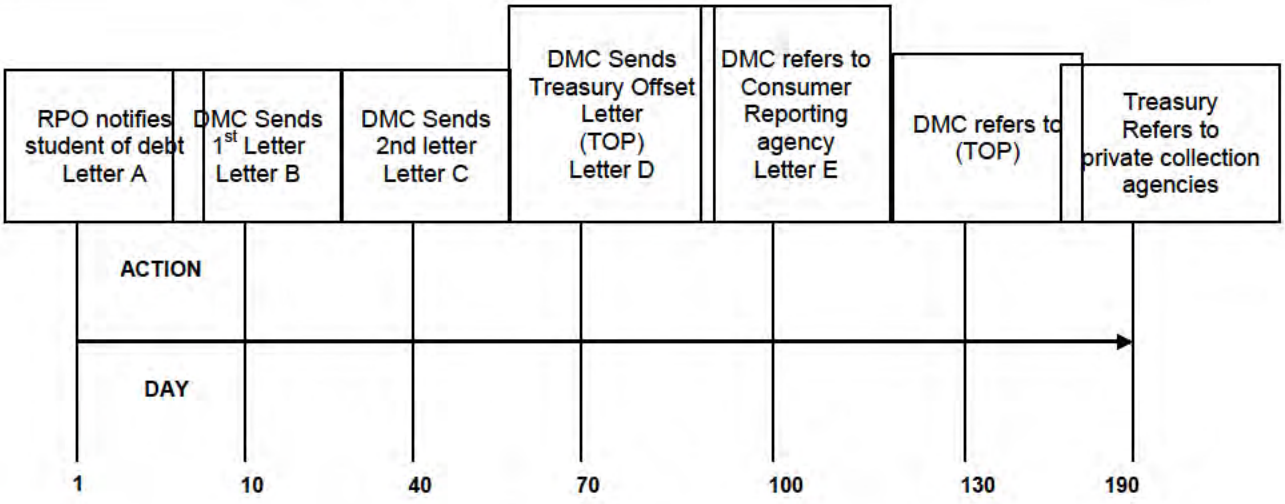
If you cannot reach the DMC by phone, try later in the day or consider e-mailing: dmc.ops@va.gov.
There is specifc information about debt resolution on the DMC web-site.

Committee on Waivers and Compromises

The Committee on Waivers and Compromises (COWC) at each RPO has the authority to consider waiver of all student benefit overpayments.

Should a veteran/claimant have an overpayment and desire waiver consideration, a request must be received at VA no later than six (6) months from the date of initial notification of the overpayment. When an overpayment is established, written notification is sent to the veteran/claimant detailing the information needed to be considered for waiver. Briefly, the request must be in writing, specifically stating the reasons for the waiver request, accompanied with a financial status report listing all income, living expenses, installment contracts, assets, etc. The request should be sent to the Regional Office having jurisdiction for collection; the address can be found on the indebtedness notification letter.

DEBT COLLECTION TIMELINE



This timeline reflects letters sent by VA and Debt Management Center reference A-F.

*Treasury Offset Program (TOP) http://fms.treas.gov/debt/top.html

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
810 VERMONT AVE. NW
WASHINGTON DC 20420

JANUARY 28, 2011

Letter A

MR. CHARLES M. NEW
4346 MAIN STREET
SUITE 50
FAIRFAX, VA 22030

101/22
CFNEW
XXX-XX-6666

Dear Mr. New:

We reduced your benefits for the term(s) that began on the date(s) below. We did this because you or your school sent us a noticed that you reduced your training.

- September 9, 2009 at George Mason University

What You Need to Know About Your Overpayment

You were overpaid for the following enrollment(s):

- Beginning September 1, 2009, and ending December 1, 2009 at George Mason University

This is a debt you must repay.

Our Debt Management Center will send you information about the amount of the debt, how to repay it, and your rights regarding your debt. If you have questions about your debt, please call our Debt Management Center toll-free at 1-800-827-0648, or write to:

Debt Management Center (389)
Bishop Henry Whipple Federal Building
P. O. Box 11930
St. Paul, MN 55111-1930

How Much Do You Owe

Your total overpayment of **$8,500** for George Mason University during the term that began on **May 5, 2010** was determined as follows.

- **Tuition and Fees:** We paid your school $15,000.00 for 12 credit hours on your behalf; however, you are only due $7,000.00 based on your current course load. Your Tuition and Fees overpayment is $8,000.00.

LTSver5.0 SR1

- **Yellow Ribbon Program:** We paid your school $1,000.00 for 12 credit hours on your behalf; however, you are only due $500.00 based on your current course load. Your Yellow Ribbon Program overpayment is $500.00.

If You Have Questions or Need Assistance

If you have questions or need assistance, contact us. See the "If You Need Help" enclosure for contact information. If you disagree with us, you have the right to appeal our decision. You must write and tell us why you disagree. The enclosed VA Form 4107 explains your rights.

Sincerely,

Education Officer

Enclosures: VA Form 4107
If You Need Help

cc: American Legion

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
Debt Management Center
Bishop Henry Whipple Federal Building
P.O. Box 11930
St. Paul, MN 55111-0930

File Number:
Payee Number:
Person Entitled:
Deduction Code:
E-Mail Address: dmc.ops@va.gov
(Please provide the information above on any e-mail correspondence)

Letter B

The Department of Veterans Affairs recently sent you a letter explaining that your entitlement to benefits had changed. As a result, you were paid $ more than you were entitled to receive.

WHAT ARE YOUR OPTIONS?

- You can pay the debt in full, by check or money order. Payment instructions are on the back of this letter. We also accept VISA, MasterCard, American Express, Discover, and Western Union "Quick Collect". Please call our toll-free number for more information.
- If you cannot make payment in full, we will work with you to establish a monthly payment schedule to clear the debt within a reasonable time frame.

WHAT ARE YOUR RIGHTS?

You have the right to dispute the debt and the right to request waiver. If you request waiver, you also have the right to request an oral hearing. **Information regarding these options is on the enclosed document entitled, Notice of Rights and Obligations. Read it carefully.**

WHERE DO YOU CALL IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS?

You can contact this office by calling toll-free, 1-800-827-0648. Our office hours are 7:30 AM to 6:00 PM Central Time. Your call may be monitored to ensure quality information.

FOR PROPER CREDIT TO YOUR ACCOUNT, PLEASE DETACH AND RETURN WITH YOUR PAYMENT

Department of Veterans Affairs — PAYMENT REMITTANCE

* FILE NO. ▶		AMOUNT ENCLOSED	ENTER YOUR CURRENT ADDRESS BELOW ONLY IF THE ONE ABOVE IS INCORRECT. PLEASE INCLUDE YOUR ZIP CODE.
PAYEE NO. ▶		$	
PERSON ENTITLED ▶		YOUR TELEPHONE NO. (Include Area Code)	
DEDUCTION CODE ▶			

* *Please include this number on your check or money order.*

VA 134, OCT 2010

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
Debt Management Center
Bishop Henry Whipple Federal Building
P.O. Box 11930
St. Paul, MN 55111-0930

Letter C

File Number:
Payee Number:
Person Entitled:
Deduction Code:
E-Mail Address: dmc.obs@va.gov
(Please provide the information above on any e-mail correspondence)

The Department of Veterans Affairs paid you benefits to which you were not entitled. We asked you to pay the debt in full or contact this office to establish a repayment plan. The balance on your account is $ which may include interest and administrative costs, if applicable.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN IF YOU IGNORE THIS LETTER?
We will report your delinquent balance to credit reporting agencies within 60 days from the date of this letter. This will affect your ability to obtain credit in the future. We will also refer your delinquent balance to the Department of Treasury for further collection, which will include offset of any federal payment to which you are entitled. This includes tax refunds, social security benefits, and salary or retirement benefits. Any future VA benefits to which you may become entitled will be withheld to satisfy this debt.

HOW CAN YOU AVOID THIS ACTION?
You can pay the debt in full or make arrangements to pay the debt in monthly installments. To be considered for monthly installments, you will need to complete and return the enclosed Financial Status Report in the envelope provided. Make sure you fill in Item 24B. To pay your debt, make your check or money order payable to the U. S. Department of Veterans Affairs and write your VA file number or social security number on the check to ensure proper credit. Include the remittance slip from the bottom of this letter with your payment and mail it in the enclosed envelope. We also accept VISA, MasterCard, American Express, Discover and Western Union "Quick Collect". Call us for information regarding payment by credit card or "Quick Collect". Our toll-free telephone number is 1-800-827-0648.

Other options for eliminating your debt are explained on the back of this letter.

FOR PROPER CREDIT TO YOUR ACCOUNT, PLEASE DETACH AND RETURN WITH YOUR PAYMENT

Department of Veterans Affairs — PAYMENT REMITTANCE

* FILE NO. ▶		AMOUNT ENCLOSED $	ENTER YOUR CURRENT ADDRESS BELOW ONLY IF THE ONE ABOVE IS INCORRECT. PLEASE INCLUDE YOUR ZIP CODE.
PAYEE NO. ▶			
PERSON ENTITLED ▶		YOUR TELEPHONE NO. (Include Area Code)	
DEDUCTION CODE ▶			

** Please include this number on your check or money order.*

6-415b, JE 2010

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
Debt Management Center
Bishop Henry Whipple Federal Building
P.O. Box 11930
St. Paul, MN 55111-0930

File Number:
Payee Number:
Person Entitled:
Deduction Code:
E-Mail Address: dmc.ops@va.gov
(Please provide the information above on any e-mail correspondence)

Letter D

You have a delinquent **debt with the Department of Veterans Affairs.** The balance is $ plus interest and administrative costs, if applicable. We have tried to contact you on numerous occasions to satisfy this debt. If you do not pay the balance in full or establish a satisfactory payment agreement within 60 days, we will refer your debt to the Department of the Treasury for offset under the Treasury Offset Program (TOP).

Under TOP, the Department of the Treasury will collect this debt by reducing or withholding Federal and State payment(s) to which you are entitled. This offset process is authorized by the Debt Collection Improvement Act of 1996.

Before we refer your debt to TOP, we are required to tell you that you have the right to inspect and copy records related to your debt. When your debt was first established, you were notified of your right to dispute the existence or amount of the debt and your right to request waiver of collection. You were also advised of the time frame allowed for pursuing these actions. If you have questions about the appellate process or your status within that process, call this office immediately on the toll-free number shown below.

You must pay the debt in full or establish a satisfactory payment plan with this office within 60 days of the date of this letter to avoid referral to TOP. You have the option of submitting a compromise offer if you cannot pay the total debt. We have the authority to accept a lesser amount in full settlement of the debt but we normally require a lump sum payment. A compromise offer must be submitted in writing and include a completed Financial Status Report which is enclosed with this letter. Please include the remittance stub at the bottom of this letter with any payments you send to this office. If you have any questions regarding your debt or actions you need to take to prevent referral, **please call us toll-free at 1-800-827-0648.**

Chief, Operations Division
Enclosure

FOR PROPER CREDIT TO YOUR ACCOUNT, PLEASE DETACH AND RETURN WITH YOUR PAYMENT

Department of Veterans Affairs — PAYMENT REMITTANCE

* FILE NO. ▶		AMOUNT ENCLOSED	ENTER YOUR CURRENT ADDRESS BELOW ONLY IF THE ONE ABOVE IS INCORRECT. PLEASE INCLUDE YOUR ZIP CODE.
PAYEE NO. ▶		$	
PERSON ENTITLED ▶		YOUR TELEPHONE NO. (Include Area Code)	
DEDUCTION CODE ▶			

** Please include this number on your check or money order.*

FL 4-5073, JUL 2016

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
Debt Management Center
Bishop Henry Whipple Federal Building
P.O. Box 11930
St. Paul, MN 55111-0930

File Number:
Payee Number:
Person Entitled:
Deduction Code:
E-Mail Address: dmc.ops@va.gov

Letter E

The following information on your delinquent indebtedness, along with your name and address, was reported to a number of consumer reporting agencies.

VA File No.:
Type of Debt:
Date of Debt:
Original Amount of Debt:
Co-Obligor Name and Address (If applicable):

Social Security No.:
Date of Last Payment:
Current Total Balance:

In order to protect your credit rating, you should contact us to make arrangements to repay this debt as soon as possible. You may contact us at the following toll-free telephone number (1-800-827-0648) to make arrangements to repay your debt.

Please make your check or money order payable to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and return it in the enclosed envelope along with the bottom portion of this letter. Please include your name and file number on your check or money order to insure proper credit.

If you have any questions concerning this letter, please contact this office for assistance. However, if you have already been contacted by a VA District Counsel or U.S. Attorney, any inquiries should be made to that office.

Chief, Operations Division

FOR PROPER CREDIT TO YOUR ACCOUNT, PLEASE DETACH AND RETURN WITH YOUR PAYMENT

Department of Veterans Affairs | PAYMENT REMITTANCE

FILE NO. ▶		AMOUNT ENCLOSED	ENTER YOUR CURRENT ADDRESS BELOW ONLY IF THE ONE ABOVE IS INCORRECT. PLEASE INCLUDE YOUR ZIP CODE.
PAYEE NO. ▶		$	
PERSON ENTITLED ▶		YOUR TELEPHONE NO. (Include Area Code)	
DEDUCTION CODE ▶			

* *Please include this number on your check or money order.*

FL 4-501, SEP 2007

MISCELLANEOUS INFORMATION

COMPLIANCE SURVEYS

The law requires that periodic surveys be conducted at educational institutions. The two main purposes of these surveys are to (1) ensure that VA payments going to the school and students enrolled at the school are based upon proper and correct enrollment information as furnished by the school to VA; and, (2) assist school and training officials and students in understanding the requirements of the law in order to prevent deficiencies or violations which could develop because of misunderstandings or misinterpretations of the law.

REVIEW OF SCHOOL RECORDS BY VA AND SAA

Schools that have sought and obtained approval to provide training under 38 U.S.C. are required by law (38 U.S.C. 3690(c) and 38 C.F.R. 21.4209) to maintain certain records and to make these records available for examination by authorized representatives of the government. All records and accounts of schools pertaining to Veterans and eligible persons, as well as the records of other students that are necessary to determine compliance with the law, must be available for examination.

The law (38 U.S.C. 3690(c)) provides that records and accounts must be made available for review by authorized representatives of the government "NOTWITHSTANDING ANY OTHER PROVISION OF LAW." The effect of this provision is to allow VA to examine necessary records that may be restricted under laws regarding privacy of student records such as PL 93-380 (Buckley Amendment) or other provisions of the law. Failure to make records available may result in discontinuance of educational assistance benefits.

Records of an institution or establishment must be retained for a period of at least **THREE YEARS** following the termination of the enrollment of an eligible individual, or longer if requested by VA or GAO (Government Accountability Office). Any institution offering courses approved for the enrollment of eligible individuals must maintain a complete record and copies of all advertising, sales, or enrollment materials utilized by or on behalf of the institution during the preceding 12-month period.

A school's records, such as applications, transcripts, grade reports, and school enrollment records, will be reviewed during a compliance visit to ensure:

- Prior credit has been reviewed and granted, as appropriate, and for non-accredited schools, has been reported. The school must maintain a written record of the student's previous education and training, grant appropriate credit and shorten the course proportionately. The amount of credit granted should have been reported by the non accredited school on the student's Enrollment Certification
- Specific curriculum in which a student is enrolled was correctly reported
- Changes in credit hours correctly and promptly reported
- Last date of attendance correctly and promptly reported
- Unsatisfactory progress (based upon grades or grade point average required or other approved progress criteria, and approved length of course) correctly and promptly reported
- Certifications of 85 percent enrollment restriction (38 C.F.R. 21.4201) verified

- Certifications of two-year period of operation for branch locations verified.

A school's finance records will be reviewed to determine:

- Tuition and fees paid by the VA to schools (CH33) and by VA students (all other GI Bill programs) are accurate and not more than those paid by non-VA students. The charges to VA students for tuition and fees may not be more than the charges to non-VA students in the same program. Any discount or payment plan which is available to non-VA students but not available to VA students, and which reduces the tuition and fees for non-VA students is, in effect, an overcharge to VA students
- Refunds in accordance with school policy were given students who discontinued courses
- School procedures for care and delivery of advance payment checks meet requirements of the law
- Procedures for delivery of other education assistance checks, mailed to a school address do not violate power-of-attorney restrictions

In addition, work-study records may be examined to ensure that student services are related to the preparation of VA paperwork and the hours worked have been properly reported; tutorial assistance records to ensure recipients of tutorial assistance have academic deficiencies, tutors are known by the school to be qualified, and charges for tutoring are reasonable and customary.

If a compliance survey identifies serious discrepancies in reporting or record keeping requirements, payments of educational assistance allowance benefits to students may be discontinued. (38 C.F.R. 21.4210)

COMMON REPORTING ERRORS AND PITFALLS

I. General Issues

- New Certifying Officials –Ensure that an 8794, Designation of Certifying Official is submitted to VA and training provided.
- Lack of internal controls by SCO for monitoring pursuit during terms to meet the 30 day reporting timeliness
- Lack of relationship between SCO and Business Office regarding CH 33 tuition and fee evidence necessary for certifications and changes.
- SCO has no institution access to student financial records in Business Office.
- SCO concerns on providing institutional records (academic and financial) for VA and non-VA students due to FERPA.

II. Enrollment certification issues

- Blended/hybrid subjects incorrectly certified as resident credits
- Non-standard terms scheduled with quarter or semester are not separately certified when student is also enrolled in other credits for the full term
- Certifying remedial or deficiency credits when pursuit is on-line

- Certifying subjects that do not apply to the degree or diploma program.
- Tuition and fees are not confirmed or verified (sources must be student account ledger) with Business Office before certifying enrollment to VA.
- Insufficient or no academic evaluation for prior credit transfer
- Concurrent enrollment issue – no documentation at parent institution to grant secondary institution subject; parent institution not obtaining grade reports from secondary institution.

III. Changes in enrollment issues

- Failure to report credit load reduction (withdrawals) within 30 days.
- Failure to report end of term non-punitive grades
- Failure to report unearned F grades and effective dates
- Failure to report when student cancels registration or completely withdraws during a term.

Content and Organization of VA Student Folders

We recommend the following format for VA student folders. This format isn't mandatory, but it does cover everything necessary for accurate certification. Contents should be in chronological order. This order will make it more convenient for anyone working with the folder.

Left Side

- Copy of student's application for admission to the school.
- Copies of transcripts from all schools previously attended and your school's transfer evaluations.
- A summary grade report of the student's progress at your facility
- Copies of degree plans for all certified objectives with all credit posted
- Tuition and fee schedule and student billing statements
- Copy of remedial and deficiency test scores and justification for any remedial and deficiency courses certified to VA
- Course substitution form(s)
- Course elective approval(s) when applicable
- Copies of drop slips and withdrawal forms when applicable
- Other school documentation

Right Side

- Copies of VA Form 22-1990 or 22-5490 if available.
- Copies of VA Form 22-1995 or 22-5495 if available.
- Copies of all enrollment certifications (VA FORM 22-1999).
- Copies of all notices of changes in student status (VA FORM 22-1999b).
- Any correspondence from the Department of Veterans Affairs, which you may have received for the student

FORMS

Use VA ForM 20-8800 to order any needed forms.

The request should list the forms and the number you want. It should also include your mailing address, e-mail address, and phone number. Mail or fax the Publications form to the RPO of jurisdiction.

RETENTION OF VA RECORDS

VA students' records must be kept for 3 years following the ending date of the last period certified to VA. Records need to be kept longer than 3 years only if a written request to keep the records longer is received from the Department of Veterans Affairs or the General Accounting Office 30 or more days before the end of the 3-year period. This requirement is in the Code of Federal Regulations (38 CFR 21.4209(f)).

Although VA requires that records be kept for 3 years, record retention regulations for individual states may require that VA records be kept more than 3 years.

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GLOSSARY AND ABBREVIATIONS

Accrediting Agency
A nationally recognized agency or association which the U.S. Secretary of Education determines to be a reliable authority as to the quality of training offered by an educational institution. The Secretary publishes a list of these agencies and associations which the state approving agencies utilize for establishing that a program of instruction may be approved under the provisions of 38 USC 3675 as an accredited program.

Accelerated Payment
An accelerated payment is a 60% lump sum payment of tuition and fees for high cost, high technology programs. The payment is in lieu of regular Chapter 30 benefits and is payable only if tuition and fees exceed 200% of what would normally be payable under Chapter 30 for a given enrollment period.

Active Duty
Active duty is full-time duty in the Armed Forces. This also includes full-time duty performed by commissioned officers of the Public Health Service and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (not including active duty for training).

Active Duty for Training (ACDUTRA)
Active duty for training in the Reserves or National Guard. This includes reservists on full-time duty for training purposes in the Armed Forces; members of the National Guard or Air National Guard of any state, performing full-time training duty under title 32, U.S. Code, sections 316, 502, 503, 504, or 505.

Advance Payment
The monetary allowance which may be payable to students for the first (fractional or full) and second full month of enrollment. Advance payment must be requested by students and is mailed to schools before the beginning of classes for release to students who have completed registration.

Already Qualified
A student is considered “already qualified” if he or she has previously completed a program at the same level and in the same field of study for which application is now being made. This will not preclude the pursuit of a program leading to a degree at the same level with a different major or in an entirely different field. It also does not preclude the pursuit of subjects that may be necessary to qualify for admission into a program leading to a higher degree or to qualify for a vocational or professional objective. A person will be considered already qualified if he or she was previously employed in a job for which the course now being requested is designed to qualify the individual who completes it. For example, if the applicant is employed in sales, he or she is already qualified and not eligible for enrollment in a general sales course. VA benefits are not payable for pursuit of any program for which the student is already qualified. This includes courses required for relicensing or a continuation of licensing in a professional field.

Assignment of Benefits
Any arrangement by a school that denies the student the opportunity to control the proceeds of a check is prohibited. Section 5301(a) of title 38, U.S. Code, provides that payments of benefits due under the laws administered by VA shall not be assigned except as specifically authorized by law. There are no laws that authorize assignment of VA educational checks, either directly or indirectly.

Audited Course
The term means any credit course that a student attends as a listener only with a prior understanding between school officials and the student that such attendance will not result in credit being granted toward graduation. VA education benefits are not payable for pursuit of such courses (See Audit.

Award Letter
The official written notice from the Department of Veterans Affairs to a student of his or her monthly rate of payment, the inclusive dates of payment, and remaining entitlement at the end of the award period. **An award letter is sent to a VA student whenever VA awards or changes the student's education benefit.** The award letter is a good source of information for financial aid purposes.

BDN
The Benefits Delivery Network (BDN) is composed of various components. It is VA's main processing system for all benefit awards and related actions. BDN generates the payment information sent to the Treasury for producing the benefits checks. BDN contains the master record files for Veterans and beneficiaries.

Break Pay
Educational assistance benefits may be paid during the intervals between terms at a school or between terms when transferring from one school to another while remaining in the same program. Exceptions apply, as well as certain other restrictions in certain situations. Persons on active duty or training at less than half-time are not entitled to interval payments.

Certificate of Eligibility (COE)
Letter issued to an applicant showing approval to pursue a stated program of education at a particular institution, the remaining entitlement of the student, and the ending date of the student's eligibility.

Certifying Official
The person(s) designated to sign enrollment certifications and other documents relating to VA benefits. The designation is made on VA Form 22-8794, Designation of Certifying Official(s).

Certification of Delivery (COD)
A Certification of Delivery (VA Form 22-1999v) is mailed to the school in a separate envelope from the advance payment check. When the advance payment check is given to the student by the school, the COD, which contains preprinted enrollment information, must be completed by the certifying official and immediately returned. Failure to do so will result in the student's VA education benefits being suspended.

Change of Program
A change of program is a change in a student's program and curriculum. This includes any change that results in a loss of credit or lengthens the time necessary to complete the student's program. A change of program is generally charged when there is a loss of 12 credits. A change of program is not charged if a student completes one program and then begins a totally different program.

Change of School
There is no limit or restriction on change of schools for continued pursuit of the same course or program provided the veteran or eligible person is making satisfactory progress and there is no material loss of credit.

Concurrent Enrollment
A student pursuing a degree at a school may take a course at another school because it's at a more convenient time, it's less expensive, or whatever. The school that will grant the degree is the student's primary school. All other schools are secondary schools. If the primary school will accept the secondary school's course as a transfer credit that applies towards completion of the student's degree, then both the primary school and the secondary school can certify the student to VA. The student may pursue courses at a secondary school at the same time, concurrent, or at a different time, supplemental.

Confirmed Enrollment
An enrollment certification that is dated, signed, and mailed by the school's certifying official on or after the first day of a certified enrollment period.

Course
As used in this Handbook, "course" means a specific class or subject of instruction (for example, English 110).

DD Form 214
The Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty that is prepared at the time an individual completes a period of active duty in one of the Armed Forces. Former members of the Public Health Service (PHS) and of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) do not receive a DD Form 214, but they do receive comparable documents that provide necessary information concerning their active duty service. Veterans should be advised to submit Member-4 copy of their DD Form 214 with a claim for VA benefits. A certified copy may also be submitted. A DD 214 can be requested from the National Archives eVetRecs website (http://www.archives.gov/Veterans/military-service-records/).

Delimiting Date
The first day after a claimant's period of eligibility expires. Benefits are not payable on or after the delimiting date (See Delimiting Date)

Distance Learning (see Independent Study)

Drop Period
The brief period at the beginning of a term officially designated for dropping courses without **academic** penalty. The school's last day to drop a course will be the end of the drop period, providing it does not exceed 30 days from the first day of the term (See Drops and Withdrawals)

ECAP (Electronic Certification Automated Program)
ECAP is a computer program that processes VA-ONCE submissions. ECAP can set up claim, propose education awards, and process education awards. ECAP will go as far as possible on this continuum. ECAP copies all documents into TIMS (VA's imaging system).

ELR (Education Liaison Representative)
The individual at a VA Regional Office or Regional Processing Office responsible for education liaison and program approval functions. Among other things, the ELR is responsible for promptly informing schools of changes in policies and procedures.

Enrollment Period
This term means an interval of time during which a veteran or eligible person is enrolled in an educational institution and is pursuing his or her program of education. This term applies to each unit course or subject in the veteran's or eligible person's program of education; that is, quarter, semester, or full school year.

Entitlement
The number of months the student will be eligible for VA education benefits. This is usually expressed in the numbers of months and days the student will be eligible for full-time benefits, or the equivalent in part-time training, but also may be expressed in a dollar amount. Entitlement will vary depending on the education law the individual qualifies under. In no event will entitlement exceed 48 months under any combination of laws (See Entitlement)

Facility Code
The numerical code assigned by VA to an institution specifically identifying it or one of its subdivisions.

File Number
A seven, eight or nine-digit number assigned by VA to identify a claimant's records. The Social Security Number (SSN) is the VA file number for most Veterans. If a veteran was assigned an old seven or eight digit file number, the veteran's SSN will cross reference the seven or eight digit file number. VA assigns a suffix *to the veteran's file number* ("10" or "W", spouse or surviving spouse, "41" or "A", first child to apply, "42" or "B", second child to apply, "43" or "C" third child . . .) to identify the records of an individual eligible for Chapter 35 benefits. A dependent's SSN **will not** cross-reference a veteran's record in BDN. To access a dependent's record in BDN, the **file number of the veteran** must be provided. The dependent's SSN is put in TIMS, but the TIMS record isn't created until the dependent applies for Chapter 35.

GED
General Educational Development (GED) certificate issued by a state-level department of education. The credentials issued by state-level departments of education are official documents that are acceptable as the equivalent of high school graduation diplomas. In addition, Department of Defense certificates of GED equivalency are acceptable evidence of completion of high school educational requirements.

Independent Study
A course or subject offered without any regularly scheduled, conventional classroom or laboratory sessions. For VA purposes, such courses or subjects must be accredited and lead to a standard college degree and consist of a prescribed program of study with provision for interaction either by mail, telephone, computer/Internet, or personally between the student and the regularly employed faculty of the university or college. A specific approval of these courses by the State Approving Agency is required in order for VA benefits to be authorized.

Institution of Higher Learning (IHL)
A college, university, technical or business school offering instruction at the postsecondary level that leads to an associate or higher degree. The institution must be empowered by the

appropriate state education authority (under state law) or accredited by a recognized accrediting agency to grant such degrees. This designation also includes hospitals offering medical-dental internships or residencies without regard to whether the hospital grants a postsecondary degree.

Interval Payment (See Break Pay)

Kicker
Additional money added to an individual's education fund by the Department of Defense to encourage enlistment or retention in the Armed Forces. The kicker is added to the individual's normal education benefit. Kickers are used for Chapters 30 and 1606.

Matriculated Student
A student who satisfied formal admission requirements and is recognized by the college or university as a degree-seeking student. This does not mean that an undergraduate student must have formally been accepted into a specific major curricular field of study before he or she may be classified as "matriculated" (See Nonmatriculated Students)

Mitigating Circumstances
Unanticipated and unavoidable events beyond a student's control which are responsible for the student's inability to complete a course or courses or which result in the student's receipt of a non-punitive grade for a course the student did complete. Generally, a student will be required to submit corroborative evidence to substantiate his or her reasons for being unable to complete a course with a creditable grade (See Mitigating Circumstances and 6-Credit Hour Exclusion)

NOBE
Members of the Selected Reserve are given a Notice of Basic Eligibility (DD Form 2384, commonly referred to as a NOBE, pronounced *no-be*) by their National Guard or Reserve unit stating they are eligible for the Montgomery GI Bill—Selected Reserve. The primary source VA uses to establish Chapter 1606 eligibility is a Department of Defense (DoD) computer link, the Chapter 1606 DoD Data Record. The NOBE is an alternative or supplemental document for establishing eligibility that's primarily used to verify eligibility for 120 days after the date it's issued. If you receive a NOBE from the student filing an original application for Chapter 1606 send VA a copy of the NOBE when you certify the student.

Non-College Degree (NCD)
The designation "NCD" is used to refer to a course or program of education or any other institutional vocational/educational training which does not lead to a standard college degree.

Non-punitive Grade
A non-punitive grade is a grade that doesn't count as earned credit and isn't considered in progress standards for graduation. A withdrawal after the drop period is non-punitive if it isn't calculated into the student's GPA or it isn't considered in academic progress criteria like probation and suspension. Non-punitive grades have the same effect as an audit. If a student withdraws after the drop period or completes the term with non-punitive grades, the non-punitive grades must be reported to VA if they change training time. Examples of non-punitive grades are an "X" (no basis for grade), "NP" (no pass), or "U" (unsatisfactory) that doesn't count as earned credit and isn't calculated progress standards.

Grades such as P (Pass) or S (Satisfactory) aren't calculated into a student's grade point average, **but** they are counted as earned credit for graduation requirements. Since these grades count as earned credit towards graduation, they aren't non-punitive.

Nonstandard Term
A term that is shorter or longer than a standard quarter or semester. The number of instructor-student contact hours is increased proportionately each week to compensate for the difference in length. VA will compute equivalent undergraduate credits to measure courses pursued during nonstandard terms. Terms of shorter than standard length are referred to as **accelerated terms.**

Objective
The final educational, professional, or vocational goal of a veteran, serviceperson, or eligible person (that is, degree, diploma, certificate, occupation). An educational objective is one that leads to the awarding of a diploma, degree, or postdoctoral certificate that reflects educational attainment. Graduate certificate programs generally do not lead to an educational objective. A professional or vocational objective is one that leads to an occupation. It may include educational courses essential to prepare for the chosen occupation.

Primary School (Parent School)
The primary school is the school that will grant the degree a student is pursuing. Generally, the student will be enrolled at the primary school for the majority of the program of education.

Program of Education
A combination of subjects, unit courses, or training activities pursued at a school or training establishment which is generally accepted as necessary to meet requirements for a predetermined educational, professional, or vocational objective (that is, diploma, degree, certificate, occupation). An "approved program" is a course of study or program of training that the appropriate State Approving Agency has determined meets the legal requirements for payment of VA educational assistance benefits to Veterans and other eligible persons

Punitive Grade
A punitive grade is a grade that doesn't count as earned credit, but is used in determining a student's progress toward graduation requirements. The common punitive grade is "F". Punitive grades, unlike non-punitive grades, factor into the progress standards (for example, GPA or earned/attempted credit standard).

Pursuit
The term "pursuit" means to work, while enrolled, toward the objective of a program of education. This work must be in accordance with approved institutional policy and regulations, and applicable criteria of title 38, United States Code; must be necessary to reach the program's objective; and must be accomplished through resident courses (including teacher training courses and similar courses which VA considers to be resident training), independent study courses, a graduate program of research in absentia, or medical/dental internships and residencies, nursing courses and other medical/dental specialty courses. VA considers a person who qualifies for payment during an interval between terms or school closing, or who qualifies for payment during a holiday vacation to be in pursuit of a program of education during the interval, school closing, or holiday vacation.

Quarter
A quarter is a division of the academic year at institutions that operate on a quarter system. Credits are earned and measured in quarter hours. A “standard quarter” is a period of instruction usually 10 to 13 weeks long.

Refresher Training
Refresher training is a course at the elementary or secondary level to review or update material previously covered in a course that has been satisfactorily completed. Under some education programs, the term also means training in a program of education in which the veteran is already qualified, provided that the program pursued is training to permit the veteran to update knowledge and skills and to be instructed in the technological advances which have occurred in the veteran's field of employment during the veteran's period of service. It may be used to update skills learned either during or prior to service but not for skills first acquired after discharge from service. Veterans pursuing “refresher training” are not limited to “refresher courses” at the elementary or secondary level.

Remedial/Deficiency Courses
These terms refer to noncredit training at the secondary level that is required for entrance to or preparatory to the successful pursuit of a postsecondary educational program. If secondary level training is needed for the student to reach a certain mastery level necessary for pursuit of a postsecondary program of education, the courses must be listed separately on the Enrollment Certification. Upon entrance each student's academic background should be evaluated and, as warranted, a required noncredit program established. These secondary level courses may include, for example, basic English skills, fundamental math, reading, or other special academic assistance necessary for the student to qualify for admission. These courses may also include noncredit secondary level training to overcome a handicap such as in speech and may be offered at a high school, college, or other educational institution. It is the institution’s responsibility to determine if remedial/deficiency courses are necessary.

Reporting Fee
VA pays an annual reporting fee to schools. This fee is intended to help defray the cost of processing VA certifications. The annual reporting fee is based on the number of VA students, including Chapter 31 (Vocational Rehabilitation), certified by the school during the calendar year. The fee is $12 ($15 if advance pay request was processed) for each student. The reporting fee is paid as soon as possible after the end of the calendar year.

REPS
Restored Entitlement Program for Survivors. Certain survivors of deceased Veterans who died on active duty, or of service-connected causes incurred or aggravated prior to August 13, 1981, are eligible for benefits. The benefits are similar to the benefits for students and surviving spouses with children between ages 16 and 18 that were eliminated from the Social Security Act. The benefits are payable in addition to any other benefits to which the family may also be entitled. The amount of benefits is based on information from the Social Security Administration.

Selected Reserve
The term means, with respect to the Armed Forces, the Army Reserve, the Naval Reserve, the Marine Corps Reserve, the Air Force Reserve, the Coast Guard Reserve, the Army National Guard of the United States, and the Air National Guard of the United States. The Public Health Service and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration do not have Selected Reserve units.

Semester
A semester is a division of the academic year at institutions that operate on a semester system. Credits are earned and measured in semester hours. A "standard semester" is a period of instruction usually 15 to 19 weeks long.

Standard College Degree
The term means an associate or higher degree awarded by an institution of higher learning that is accredited as a collegiate institution by a recognized regional or national accrediting agency or an institution of higher learning that is a "candidate" for accreditation, or an institution which is accredited by an agency recognized to accredit specialized degree-level programs.

State Approving Agency (SAA)
An agency appointed by the Chief Executive of a state to approve institutional programs of education and training for payment of benefits under the various laws administered by VA.

Summer Session
A summer session is a division of the summer term designated in a school catalog as a distinct period of instruction. These sessions vary in length, and are often only 3-8 weeks long.

Summer Term
The total instruction offered by a school between the end of the spring term and the beginning of the fall term. A summer term may consist of several summer sessions (See Summer Terms and Nonstandard Enrollment Periods).

TIMS
TIMS (The Image Management System) is the scanning system used by Muskogee. All education paper work is scanned into TIMS. Paper is scanned manually. Digital files like VA-ONCE Certs are copied directly into TIMS.

Tuition and Fees
The term "tuition and fees" means the total cost for tuition and fees for a course a school charges all students whose circumstances are similar to Veterans enrolled in the same course. "Tuition and fees" does **not** include the cost of supplies or books that the student is required to purchase at his or her own expense.

VA-ONCE
Internet based application used to submit enrollment certifications and notices of change in student status. Information about VA-ONCE is available at http://www.gibill.va.gov/school-certifying-officials/va-once-faq/index.html.

WAVE (Web Automated Verification of Enrollment)
WAVE is an Internet program used by Chapter 30, 1606, and 1607 students to verify their enrollment. Verification is required monthly. Students can also use WAVE to change their address and direct deposit information.

WEAMS
WEAMS (Web Enabled Approval Management System) is the central application VA uses to store school, organization, and program approval information. Education Liaison Representatives (ELRs) and VACO personnel enter the approval information. VA personnel use the approval information to verify schools and programs are approved.

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