

**THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF  
VETERANS AFFAIRS**

**MUSKOGEE RPO AND WESTERN REGION  
EDUCATION SERVICE UNITS**

**WAVES**



**Handbook**



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# PREFACE

The *WAVES Handbook* (Western Association of Veteran Education Specialists, [www.uswaves.org](http://www.uswaves.org)) is written for colleges and universities, in VA parlance, for institutions of higher learning (IHLs). Apprenticeship, flight schools, correspondence schools, and nondegree vocational schools are not covered in this Handbook.

The *WAVES Handbook* is written for VA-ONCE, VA's Internet based application for certifying students. If you aren't using VA-ONCE, information about VA-ONCE and about accessing VA-ONCE is available at [www.gibill.va.gov/School\\_Info/once/index.htm](http://www.gibill.va.gov/School_Info/once/index.htm).

The Handbook is hyperlinked (blue, underlined text). Click on a heading in the Table of Contents and you will go to that topic. Click on an Internet address or a cross-reference and you'll go to that page. When you use hyperlinks recent versions of WORD open a web navigation toolbar. You can use the toolbar's arrows to move back and forth between the pages you've looked at.

The *WAVES Handbook* can be downloaded ([www.gibill.va.gov/School\\_Info/school\\_resources.htm](http://www.gibill.va.gov/School_Info/school_resources.htm)) as a PDF file.

The Handbook's revision date is on the bottom of this page and there is a chronological list of revisions on page iv. Periodically check the Handbook on the Internet. If there's an updated version, download and replace the Handbook on your PC. If you keep a printed copy, print and replace the revised duplex pages and you're up-to-date (print duplex and print page ranges starting with an odd numbered page and ending with an even numbered page).

If you have suggestions or if you find an error, report the suggestion or error to your Education Liaison Representative (ELR) or email the suggestion or error to [bob.craig@va.gov](mailto:bob.craig@va.gov).

If you have questions about VA policies and procedures or about completing VA forms, contact your ELR. If you have questions about program approval, contact your State Approving Agency (SAA). There's a list of [ELRs and SAAs](#) starting on page 63. If you have questions about a veteran's benefit status, call the number listed below.

**TOLL FREE EDUCATION NUMBER FOR  
MUSKOGEE REGIONAL PROCESSING OFFICE (RPO)**

**888-442-4551**

**ORIGINAL  
June 1, 1998**

**REVISED  
February 20, 2009**

## REVISIONS

DATE	CHANGE	DUPLEX PAGES AFFECTED
12/26/06	Revised <a href="#">Summer Term Rule</a> to more clearly define length of summer term. Renamed heading and edited <a href="#">Before Term and First Day of Term</a> . Revised <a href="#">Nonpunitive Grades-End of Term</a> , adding an exception in 2 <sup>nd</sup> paragraph for remedial courses.	13-14, 33-36
05/04/07	Rewrote <a href="#">Before Term and First Day of Term</a> .	33-34
07/02/07	Rewrote <a href="#">Licensing and Certification Tests</a> . Added <a href="#">National Tests</a> . Rewrote <a href="#">Prior Credit</a> based on new VA policy. Rewrote <a href="#">Course Applicability</a> . Added <a href="#">Termination for Unsatisfactory Progress</a> .	19-20, 24-27, 39-40
07/26/07	New education <a href="#">Monthly Rates</a> and <a href="#">Vocational Rehabilitation</a> rates effective 10/1/07.	7-10, 59
10/10/07	Added fourth eligibility bullet to <a href="#">Chapter 35</a> .	7-8
11/20/07	Rewrote <a href="#">Tuition and Fees</a> . Added Section on <a href="#">Military Education and Training</a> .	25-40
02/11/08	Revised 80% rate and added “buy-up” to <a href="#">chapter 1607</a> . Added chapter 1607 delimiting date to <a href="#">Comparison of Education Programs</a> . Revised <a href="#">Student Verification of Enrollment</a> to include chapter 1607 starting 4/1/08. Rewrote <a href="#">Licensing and Certification Tests</a> . Rewrote <a href="#">Change of Program</a> .	7-10, 17-20, 25-26
07/01/08	Edited application references to remove signature requirement. <a href="#">Comparison of Education Benefits</a> has been edited and updated, especially the chapter 1607 column. Added new <a href="#">Monthly Rates</a> effective 8/1/08 for chapters 30 and 1607.	7-12
08/12/08	Added new <a href="#">Monthly Rates</a> effective 10/1/08 for chapters 35 and 1606. Revised <a href="#">Applications</a> to emphasize online application.	7-9, 22-23
09/10/08	Added <a href="#">chapter 31</a> subsistence rates effective 10/1/08.	59-60
12/12/08	Changed chapter 1606 delimiting date in <a href="#">Comparison of Education Benefits</a> .	9-10
01/14/09	Revised Spouse delimiting date in <a href="#">Comparison of Education Benefits</a> and rewrote <a href="#">Prior Credit</a> (reporting requirement for nonaccredited schools rescinded).	9-10, 25-30 & i-ii
02/20/09	Rewrote <a href="#">Change of Program or Place of Training</a> and <a href="#">Change of Program</a> (no longer report change if remain in same school)	25-30

**EDUCATION BENEFIT  
PROGRAMS  
&  
BENEFIT  
PAYMENTS**





## EDUCATION BENEFIT PROGRAMS

The following program descriptions are up-to-date, thumbnail descriptions. General and detailed descriptions of each program are online at [www.gibill.va.gov/GI\\_Bill\\_Info/benefits.htm](http://www.gibill.va.gov/GI_Bill_Info/benefits.htm).

**NOTE:** All students who feel they may be eligible for education benefits should submit an application. Even if someone appears ineligible, VA should review his or her application and officially deny or grant benefits.

### Chapter 30: Montgomery G.I. Bill—Active Duty

Chapter 30 has four eligibility categories. Category I is by far the largest. It includes veterans who began active duty for the first time after June 30, 1985. Starting 8/1/08, the basic full-time monthly benefit is \$1,321.00 for three years obligated service (Category IB) or for 2 years active duty and 4 years in the Selected Reserve (Category IC). The basic full-time monthly benefit is \$1,073.00 for two years obligated service (Category IA).

Military retirees who entered the service (or agreed to delayed entry) before 1/1/77 **and** who were eligible to receive chapter 34 benefits (Vietnam era education program) on 12/31/89 comprise category II. The education benefit for these chapter 34/30 veterans is higher than the standard chapter 30 benefit and it pays an additional amount for dependents. The chapter 34/30 benefit is comparable to the old chapter 34 rate.

Additional veterans may be eligible if they were voluntarily or involuntarily separated from the service because of a reduction in personnel (Category III), or if they were able to convert their education benefit from chapter 32 to chapter 30 (Category IV).

#### 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’s often referred to by its Madison Avenue name; Army College Fund, Navy Sea College Fund, or whatever the newest recruitment ad calls it. If a contract has a \$12,000 kicker, for example, then the monthly kicker is \$333.33 ( $\$12,000 \div 36$  months), which increases the \$1,321.00 full-time chapter 30 benefit to \$1,654.33.

Servicepersons who participate in chapter 30 pay \$1,200.00 towards their chapter 30 benefit. The \$1,200.00 is withheld from their pay during their first 12 months of service and it’s **non-refundable**. Servicepersons may contribute up to \$600.00 more. The maximum \$600.00 additional contribution increases the basic full-time chapter 30 benefit \$150.00, to \$1,471.00 for categories IB, IC and some other categories, and to \$1,223.00 for category 1A.

### Chapter 35: Dependents Educational Assistance (DEA)

Educational Assistance paid to dependents of veterans. Starting 10/1/08, the full-time monthly rate is \$915.00. 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 servicemember who: 1) VA determines has a service-connected permanent and total disability, 2) at the time of VA's determination is a member of the Armed Forces who is hospitalized or receiving outpatient medical care, services, or treatment; and 3) is likely to be discharged or released from service for this service-connected disability.

## **Chapter 1606: Montgomery G.I. Bill—Selected Reserve**

Educational program for active members of 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.

Starting 10/1/08, members of the Selected Reserve are entitled to full-time education benefits of \$329.00 for a maximum of 36 months or the equivalent in part-time training.

**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.

## **Chapter 1607: Reserve Educational Assistance Program (REAP)**

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 response to a contingency operation 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 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, effective 1/28/08, an aggregate call-up service of three years or more.

**Chapter 1607 Kicker and Additional Contributions:** A servicemember eligible for chapter 1607 who's also eligible for the chapter 1606 kicker will be paid the chapter 1606 kicker. Beginning 1/28/08 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."

## EDUCATION PROGRAMS MONTHLY RATES

<b>CHAPTER 30 (BASIC RATES)</b>						
Starting	3 years or more service			Less than 3 years service		
	Full-time	3/4-time	1/2-time	Full-time	3/4-time	1/2-time
8/1/08	\$1,321.00	\$990.75	\$660.50	\$1,073.00	\$804.75	\$536.50
10/1/07	\$1,101.00	\$825.75	\$550.50	\$894.00	\$670.50	\$447.50
10/1/06	\$1,075.00	\$806.25	\$537.50	\$873.00	\$654.75	\$436.50
Less than 1/2-time: Reimburse tuition and fees, not to exceed 1/2-time rate. Quarter-time or less: Reimburse tuition and fees, not to exceed 1/4 of the full-time rate.						

<b>CHAPTER 34/30</b>						
Dependents	Starting 8/1/08			Starting 10/1/07		
	Full-time	3/4-time	1/2-time	Full-time	3/4-time	1/2-time
None	\$1,509.00	\$1,132.25	\$754.50	\$1,289.00	\$967.25	\$644.50
1	\$1,545.00	\$1,158.75	\$772.50	\$1,325.00	\$993.75	\$662.50
2	\$1,576.00	\$1,182.25	\$788.00	\$1,356.00	\$1,017.25	\$678.00
Each Additional	\$16.00	\$12.00	\$8.50	\$16.00	\$12.00	\$8.50
Less than 1/2-time: Reimburse tuition and fees, not to exceed 1/2-time rate with no dependents. Quarter-time or less: Reimburse tuition and fees, not to exceed 1/4 full-time rate with no dependents.						

**Servicepersons** are paid the veteran rate or a calculated rate that reimburses tuition and fees, whichever is **lower**. Servicepersons occasionally enroll for a term a few days or weeks before their discharge from active duty. Servicepersons on terminal leave before discharge are paid as servicepersons while on terminal leave and as veterans starting the day following discharge. Always report tuition and fees for servicepersons and for servicepersons on terminal leave.

<b>CHAPTER 35</b>				
Starting	Full-time	3/4-time	1/2-time	1/4-time
10/1/08	\$915.00	\$686.00	\$456.00	\$227.75
10/1/07	\$881.00	\$661.00	\$439.00	\$220.25
10/1/06	\$860.00	\$645.00	\$429.00	\$215.00
Less than 1/2-time: Reimburse tuition and fees, not to exceed 1/2-time rate. Quarter-time or less: Reimburse tuition and fees, not to exceed 1/4-time rate.				

<b>CHAPTER 1606</b>				
Starting	Full-time	3/4-time	1/2-time	<1/2-time
10/1/08	\$329.00	\$246.00	\$163.00	\$82.25
10/1/07	\$317.00	\$237.00	\$157.00	\$79.25
10/1/06	\$309.00	\$231.00	\$153.00	\$77.25

<b>CHAPTER 1607 (REAP)</b>						
Service	Starting 8/1/08			Starting 10/1/07		
	Full-time	3/4-time	1/2-time	Full-time	3/4-time	1/2-time
90+ days	\$528.40	\$396.30	\$264.20	\$440.40	\$330.30	\$220.20
1 year +	\$792.60	\$594.45	\$396.30	\$660.60	\$495.45	\$330.30
2 years +	\$1,056.80	\$792.60	\$528.40	\$880.80	\$660.60	\$440.40
Less than 1/2-time: Reimburse tuition and fees, not to exceed 1/2-time rate. Quarter-time or less: Reimburse tuition and fees, not to exceed 1/4 of the full-time rate.						

## COMPARISON OF EDUCATION PROGRAMS

	CH 30	CH 35	CH 1606	CH 1607
<b>ELIGIBILITY</b>	All students who feel they are eligible should submit an application. It is important that their application is reviewed and that the VA Regional Processing Office makes an official denial or grant of benefits.			
	Discharge must be honorable.  2 years active duty, 3 years active duty, <b>or</b> 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.
<b>BENEFITS FOR INSERVICE STUDENT</b>	<b>Servicepersons</b> are paid the veteran rate or a rate that will reimburse <a href="#">tuition and fees</a> , whichever is <b>lower</b> . Servicepersons often apply for benefits a few days or weeks before their discharge from active duty. Servicepersons on terminal leave before discharge do not have to obtain their education officer's signature on the <b>Application for VA Education Benefits</b> . Also, they are paid as servicepersons while on terminal leave and as veterans starting the day following discharge.			
	Payable after 2 years continuous active duty, not exceed tuition and fees.	No	Yes	Yes
<b>ENTITLEMENT</b>	<b>48 months maximum under two or more programs</b>			
	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.
<b>DELIMITING DATE</b>	10 years after discharge.  May extend for later period of active duty or disability that prevents completion of program.	<b>Child:</b> 8 years <b>Spouse:</b> 10 years. 20 years if vet rated permanent and total within 3 years of discharge. <b>Surviving Spouse:</b> 10 years. 20 years if death while on active.  Eligibility rules are complex. Claimant should carefully read eligibility letter and call VA if questions. Pamphlet is online: <a href="http://www.gibill.va.gov/pamphlets/CH35/CH35_Pamphlet_General.htm">www.gibill.va.gov/pamphlets/CH35/CH35_Pamphlet_General.htm</a>	Generally eligible until separated from the Selected Reserve, or until entitlement exhausted before separation.  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.
		May extend to end of term if delimiting date during term, but can't exceed maximum entitlement.		

	CH 30	CH 35	CH 1606	CH 1607
<b>PARTICIPANT PAYMENT</b>	Category I, III, & IV: \$1,200 Cat II: None Cat IV: \$2,700	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>PAYMENT REFUND</b>	Only as a death benefit to survivors in certain cases	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>DEPENDENTS ALLOWANCE</b>	Category II (34/30) only	No	No	No
<b><u>ACCELERATED PAYMENT</u></b>	Yes	No	For enrollment after <b>9/30/08</b> in a non degree program lasting 2 years or less	
<b><u>ADVANCE PAYMENT</u></b>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b><u>COOPERATIVE TRAINING</u></b>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b><u>LICENSING AND CERTIFICATION TESTS</u></b>	Yes	Yes	Yes,	Yes
<b><u>MONTHLY VERIFICATION</u></b>	IHL & NCD WAVE or IVR	NCD only VAF 22-8979	IHL & NCD WAVE or IVR	IHL & NCD WAVE or IVR (Starting 4/1/08)
<b><u>NATIONAL TESTS</u></b>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b><u>REMEDIAL, DEFICIENCY &amp; REFRESHER TRAINING</u></b>	Yes, with entitlement charge	Yes, entitlement charged after first 5 months of full-time training	Yes, with entitlement charge	Yes, with entitlement charge
<b><u>TUTORIAL ASSISTANCE</u></b>	Yes. Maximum \$1,200. Not more than \$100 per month. No entitlement charge for first \$600.	Yes. Maximum \$1,200. Not more than \$100 per month. No entitlement charge.	Yes. Maximum \$1,200. Not more than \$100 per month. No entitlement charge for first \$600.	Not authorized yet.
<b>BARS TO BENEFITS</b>	Cannot receive benefits: 1) Concurrently under two programs. 2) On active duty for any portion of course costs paid by the Armed Forces. 3) For course paid for by the Federal Government under the Government Employee' Training Act.  Not eligible if: Service Academy graduate or ROTC commissioned officer who received ROTC scholarship <b>unless</b> eligible before commissioned or the scholarship was \$3400 or less in any one year while under the ROTC program.	Not eligible if: On active duty <b>except</b> for brief periods of active duty for training.	Not eligible if: 1) Receive financial assistance as a member of the Senior ROTC Program, commonly known as the ROTC scholarship program. 2) <1/2-time and in receipt of military tuition assistance.	Not eligible if: Receiving Senior ROTC Scholarship.

## BENEFIT PAYMENTS

Benefit payments are made directly to students, unless [Advance Payment](#) (page 13) is paid. 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 1<sup>st</sup> through the 15<sup>th</sup>, 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 1/1/08 through 1/15/08, the student is entitled to \$50.00 (\$3.33 per day for 15 days). If the student is certified 1/16/08 through 1/31/08, the student is entitled to \$50.00 (\$3.33 per day for 15 days). If the student is certified 1/1/08 through 1/31/08, 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](#) (page 9). An additional kicker may be paid to some chapter 30 and chapter 1606 students. If a student paid for part of a month is subsequently certified for the next quarter or semester, VA will automatically pay the break between the quarters or semesters if [Break Pay](#) (page 14) can be paid.

### Retroactive Benefits

VA benefits can be paid for enrollments up to one year before the date VA receives a student's application. The date stamp put on the student's application determines the one-year date. 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.

Chapter 35 retroactive benefits may be handled differently and may exceed one year. If a chapter 35 student's eligibility date is more than one year before the date VA makes the eligibility decision, then the eligibility date may be considered to be the application date if the student applies for chapter 35 within one year of the eligibility decision. Under this circumstance, retroactive benefits may be more than one year.

### Change of Address and Direct Deposit

Address and direct deposit information must be kept current. 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 ([www.gibill.va.gov/wave/default.cfm](http://www.gibill.va.gov/wave/default.cfm)). Students can also call the direct deposit center at 1-877-838-2778 to begin and change direct deposit. If these avenues aren't available the student can always call the general education line at 1-888-442-4551.

If a student want to start (chapters 30, 1606, and 1607 only) or change a direct deposit, the student should have their 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.

## ADVANCE PAYMENT

Advance payment provides funds at the beginning of a school term to help the student meet expenses concentrated at the beginning of the term. Advance payment is the amount payable for the initial month or portion of a month the quarter or semester begins plus the amount payable for the following month.

Participation in advance payment is voluntary on the part of schools. If you aren't set up for advance payment and want to be, contact your ELR (see [ELRs](#), page 63). 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).

Advance payment is authorized for all chapters, but can't be processed for chapter 1607 yet due to system limitations. 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](#), page 14), **and**
- 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 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 9/22/08 through 06/12/09 would pay 9/22/08 through 10/31/08. 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, there are two things you can do.

- 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.
- In VA-ONCE, Amend the cert that requested advance payment. Enter "In lieu of COD-A/P check delivered" in remarks and submit the amended cert.

## BREAK PAY

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.

### Restrictions on Break Pay

- The break is more than 8 weeks (56 days).
- The term before or after the break is shorter than the break.
- Training time the last day of the preceding semester, quarter, or term is less than ½-time.
- The student withdrew from all courses during the preceding semester, quarter, or term.
- The student’s entitlement will exhaust and not paying the break is to the student’s advantage (chapter 30 only).
- The student requests no pay for a break before payment for the break is authorized.
- The student is on active duty.

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:

<b>Same School</b>	Break more than 8 weeks (56 days)		Don't pay
	Break doesn't exceed 8 weeks <b>and</b> the terms before and after the break are not shorter than the break		Pay, unless summer term rule applies
<b>Change School</b>	Change of program		Don't pay
	Same program	Break more than 30 days	Don't pay
		Break 30 days or less	Pay

### Summer Term Rule

Summer term is the period of instruction that takes place between ordinary school years. Summer term may be divided into several summer sessions. The length of summer term is the actual number of school days the student is certified, being careful not to count a day twice when sessions overlap. The following table summarizes summer term break pay for students who continue at the same school.

Break between spring and summer or between summer and fall doesn't exceed 8 weeks and the terms before and after the break (see length of summer term above) are not shorter than the break		Pay
• Break between two summer sessions is 30 days or less.	Pay break between sessions	
• Break between two summer sessions is more than 30 days.	Don't pay break between sessions	

Summer term may have multiple sessions. A quarter system school might have an 8-week (06/16/08–08/08/08) session, an 11-week (06/16/08–08/29/08) standard length quarter, and three 4-week (06/16/08–07/11/08, 07/14/08–08/08/08, and 08/11/08–09/05/08) sessions during its “summer term”.

- If a student only attends the 8-week session, VA will pay benefits for the 8-week session and will pay the spring-summer break and the summer-fall break following the basic restrictions on break pay.
- If a student attends the first and the third 4-week session, the student’s summer term is 12 weeks with a 4-week break between the first and third sessions. VA will pay each session and will pay the break between the first and third session because it’s 30 days or less. It’s exactly 30 days. If it were 31 days or more, the break between the first and third sessions wouldn’t be paid. VA will consider this student’s summer term to be 12 weeks and will pay the spring-summer break and the summer-fall break following the basic restrictions on break pay.
- If terms overlap, the basic rules apply and the break is paid using the combination of dates that pays the highest rate to the student. Using the same dates, a student is certified 8 credits for the 8-week session and 3 credits for the 11-week summer quarter. The student will be paid full-time for 8 weeks and <½-time for 3 weeks (see [Summer Terms and Nonstandard Enrollment Periods](#) on the next page). If the student is certified fall quarter starting 9/22/08, VA will adjust the break to pay the last three weeks of the 11 week term and the summer-fall break full-time, the higher combination. The logic: If the student didn’t take the 3 credit, 11-week term the student would be paid full-time for the summer-fall break. The “last day of the preceding term is less than ½-time” restriction is moot in this case.



## 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 generally 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.

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

- **Quarter:**  $\text{Credit} \times 12 \div \text{weeks} = \text{credit hour equivalents}$ . Four quarter credits earned in 4 weeks, for example, is the equivalent of 12 credits earned during a standard quarter ( $4 \times 12 \div 4 = 12$ ) and will pay full-time for 4 weeks.
- **Semester:**  $\text{Credit} \times 18 \div \text{weeks} = \text{credit hour equivalents}$ . Four semester credits earned in 4 weeks is the equivalent of 18 credits earned during a standard semester ( $4 \times 18 \div 4 = 18$ ) 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
06/16/08	07/11/08	3
06/16/08	08/08/08	3
06/16/08	08/29/08	3

⇒ Muskogee would calculate credit hour equivalents as follows

Credit Hour Equivalents
$3 \times 12 \div 4 = 9$
$3 \times 12 \div 8 = 4$ (round 3 days or less down and round 4 days or more up)
Standard length quarter

⇒ And the student would be paid as follows

06/16/08→	07/12/08→	08/09/08 through 08/29/08
Full-time ( $9 + 4 + 3 = 16$ )	½-time ( $4 + 3 = 7$ )	<½-time (3). Note: Tuition & Fees must be reported for this 3 credits since it's <½-time

**NOTE:** If the student is certified fall quarter 2008 starting 09/22/08, the break between summer and fall will pay ½-time because the term 06/16/08 to 08/08/08 is 8 weeks, the break 08/09/08 to 09/21/08 is less than 56 days, the break is not longer than the terms before or after it, and the rate paid at the end of the 8 week term is ½-time ([See Restrictions on Break Pay and Summer Term Rule](#), page 14).

## Credit Hour Equivalency

The credit hour equivalency tables show training time for nonstandard length quarters and semesters. To determine the number of weeks, count the number of days in the enrollment period (first day through the last day) and divide by 7. Disregard a remainder of 3 days or less and consider a remainder of 4 days or more a full week.

### Quarter Hour Equivalency Table

Quarter Hours Per Term	Number of Weeks Per Term									
	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 Hour Equivalency Table

Semester Hours Per Term	Number of Weeks Per Term														
	15 to 19	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

## TRAINING TIME

In a standard quarter or semester, training time is measured as follows:

### Undergraduate

- 12 credit hours is full-time
- 9-11 credit hours is  $\frac{3}{4}$ -time
- 6-8 credit hours is  $\frac{1}{2}$ -time
- 4-5 credit hours is less than  $\frac{1}{2}$ -time ( $<\frac{1}{2}$ -time)
- 1-3 credit hours is  $\frac{1}{4}$ -time or less ( $<\frac{1}{4}$ -time)

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

### Graduate

Accredited schools report graduate (IHL\_Grad) training time based on the school's academic regulations. Non-accredited schools must report graduate training time as undergraduate (IHL\_Undergrad).

### Clock Hours

Sometimes training time is based on clock hours. For example, [Cooperative Training](#) (page 49), [Practical Training](#) (page 29), advance professional training such as a medical residency, and some vocational/technical programs.

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).

Clock hour training time is measured as follows:

#### 18 Hours: Theory Predominates

18 hours or more is full-time  
13-17 hours is  $\frac{3}{4}$ -time  
9-12 hours is  $\frac{1}{2}$ -time  
5-8 hours is less than  $\frac{1}{2}$ -time  
1-4 hours is  $\frac{1}{4}$ -time or less

#### 22 Hours: Shop/Practice Predominates

22 hours or more is full-time  
16-21 hours is  $\frac{3}{4}$ -time  
11-15 hours is  $\frac{1}{2}$ -time  
6-10 hours is less than  $\frac{1}{2}$ -time  
1-5 hours is  $\frac{1}{4}$ -time or less

### Tuition and Fees

Tuition and fees must be reported for enrollment periods when training time is less than  $\frac{1}{2}$ -time, when accelerated payment is requested, and when the student is on active duty. The amount reported should be the **actual** amount charged. Report actual tuition and fee charge for the credit

certified. If the actual amount is \$0.00, then \$0.00 must be reported. The benefit paid the student will reimburse tuition and fees, but can't exceed what the student would receive if paid ½-time (4-5 standard semester or quarter credit) or ¼-time (1-3 standard credit).

**Example:** A student takes 4 credits for exactly 3 months. If the student's ½-time rate is \$500 the student would receive \$1500 over 3 months. If you report tuition and fees as \$1551 or more the student will be paid the ½-time rate. If you report tuition and fees as \$1500 or less the student will be paid a calculated rate that reimburses tuition and fees. If you report tuition and fees as \$1000 the calculated rate would be \$333.33 and the student be paid \$1000 over 3 months. Note: If you ever find you need to correct a tuition and fee amount you reported simply amend the cert that needs to be corrected.

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 credits for an 8-week summer session and 3 credits for an 11-week summer session that both begin 6/16/08 tuition and fees must be reported on the Cert for the 3 credit, 11-week term. Report the amount charged for the 3 credits, not the amount charged for all 12 credits.

## STUDENT VERIFICATION OF ENROLLMENT

Chapter 30, chapter 1606, and 1607 students must verify their enrollment monthly by Web Automated Verification of Enrollment (WAVE) or by Interactive Voice Response (IVR). The preferred method is WAVE, which includes features not in IVR. When chapter 30 and 1606 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 web site at [www.gibill.va.gov/wave/default.cfm](http://www.gibill.va.gov/wave/default.cfm).

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 their enrollment has not changed
- Report a change in their enrollment
- Change their mailing address
- Initiate or change their direct deposit information
- View their enrollment period and monthly benefit amount
- View their 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 use the WAVE system or speak with an Education Case Manager at 1-888-442-4551.

The monthly verification of enrollment procedure hasn't been adopted for chapter 35.

## ACCELERATED PAYMENT

The Veterans Education and Benefits Expansion Act of 2001 authorized accelerated payment for chapter 30 students enrolled “in certain high cost programs that lead to high technology employment in high technology industry.” The National Defense Authorization Act of 2008 authorizes accelerated payment for chapter 1606 and 1607 students who enroll in a non-degree program lasting two years or less after **9/30/08**.

Complete information about accelerated payment is available for students and schools on our Education Benefits website at [www.gibill.va.gov/pamphlets/acceleratedpayinfo.htm](http://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. 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 1/14/08–5/9/08 (17 weeks) and a typical quarter 3/24/08–6/6/08 (11 weeks). If chapter 30 pays \$1,101.00 per month full-time, it pays \$4,257.20 for the semester or \$2,679.10 for the quarter. In order to meet the “high cost” requirement, tuition and fees must be more than \$8,514.40 for the semester or more than \$5,358.20 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.

## LICENSING AND CERTIFICATION TESTS

VA can reimburse the cost of licensing and certification tests approved by the State Approving Agency. 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 aren't 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. 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.

Information about test fee reimbursement is at [www.gibill.va.gov/GI\\_Bill\\_Info/programs.htm#LAC](http://www.gibill.va.gov/GI_Bill_Info/programs.htm#LAC).

VA students can apply for test fee reimbursement by:

- Completing and submitting an *Application for Reimbursement of Licensing or Certification Test Fees* available at [www.vba.va.gov/pubs/forms/22-0803.pdf](http://www.vba.va.gov/pubs/forms/22-0803.pdf).
- Attaching a copy of their test results to the application. If test results aren't available they can attach a copy of their license or certification and a payment receipt. Test fee reimbursement can be paid for each test for which reimbursement is claimed and these documents are submitted.

**Example:** A student takes the Oregon State Bar Examination. The above link explains what the student needs to do and links to WEAMS Public to find the test as follows.

- 1) Select "Click here to go to the search feature".
- 2) Under Search for approved License and Certification Programs click "HERE".
- 3) Select Oregon from the Map.
- 4) Select License to Practice Law in Oregon (fees up to \$525 can be reimbursed).
- 5) Select Institution Profile for the Oregon State Board of Bar Examiners' name and address.

If the student takes the bar examination in other states, the student should check those states (Search for Tests) to see if the bar examination is approved for VA reimbursement in those states. There's no limit to the number of approved tests for which reimbursement can be made as long as the student has remaining entitlement to cover the cost of the test and the student isn't beyond his or her delimiting date.

## NATIONAL TESTS

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)

Complete information and directions for applying for reimbursement are available on the gibill website at [http://www.gibill.va.gov/GI\\_Bill\\_Info/programs.htm - Testing](http://www.gibill.va.gov/GI_Bill_Info/programs.htm - Testing).

# **ENROLLMENT CERTIFICATION**





## APPLICATIONS

VA students can submit applications online <http://vabenefits.vba.va.gov/vonapp/main.asp>. If the student doesn't have access to apply online the vet can call 1-888-442-4551 and ask that a form be mailed to them.

All VA students must file an application when they first start your school. Students who haven't received VA benefits before must file an original application (veterans VAF 22-1990; dependents VAF 22-5490). Students who have received VA benefits before must file a *Request for Change of Program or Place of Training* (veterans VAF 22-1995; dependents VAF 22-5495).

### 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. If the student completes and gives you an application, certify the student via VA-ONCE and mail the student's application to Muskogee. Either way, insert the VA Standard Remark “**Application Sent Via US Mail**”. Muskogee's address is:

Department of Veterans Affairs  
VA Regional Office  
PO Box 8888  
Muskogee, OK 74402-8888

### Change of Program or Place of Training

If a *Request for Change of Program or Place of Training* is needed for a VA student transferring to your school get the request from the student and keep it in the student's file at your school. The student can complete a 22-1995 or 22-5495, complete a form you create for change requests, or sign and date the Cert. Whichever method is used, keep the request in the student's file. 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 applied 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 new program on the student's VA-ONCE BIO page (See [Change of Program](#), page 26).

## TYPE OF TRAINING

Select 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 “IHL\_Undergrad” 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 “IHL\_Grad” for graduate degrees and programs.
- Select “NCD (Noncollege Degree)” for certificate programs.

## **NAME OF PROGRAM**

The [Program of Education](#) (page 72) certified must be a degree or certificate granted by your school and approved by the State Approving Agency (SAA). Approved programs are listed in the SAA approval letter and in WEAMS.

Enter approved programs listed in WEAMS into VA-ONCE. Select Admin/Maintenance/Standard Programs.

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.

### **Nonmatriculated 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 nonmatriculated 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 nonmatriculated students’ as “Bachelor (nonmatriculated)” or “Post-baccalaureate (nonmatriculated)” and certify for one quarter or semester. The student can only be certified one more quarter or semester as a nonmatriculated student. The only courses that can be certified are those required for admission and those required if admitted. When a nonmatriculated student is formally admitted change the program name on the student’s VA-ONCE BIO page.

NOTE: 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](#) (page 43).

## Leveling Courses

If a school requires a student with a bachelor's degree to pursue undergraduate courses to satisfy admission requirements for a graduate degree program (leveling), 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 must 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 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 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.

## PRIOR CREDIT

VA changed its prior credit policy for accredited schools (effective 10/15/07) and for nonaccredited schools (effective 10/10/08). Schools no longer have to report prior credit to VA. They still have to evaluate prior credit, grant credit as appropriate, notify the student, and shorten the program certified accordingly. The change simply means credit evaluations no longer have to be reported to VA. Prior credit still has to be considered and benefits can't be paid more than two semesters or three quarters if prior credit isn't evaluated. VA will review credit evaluations during compliance surveys and credit evaluation records must be kept and made available to VA and SAA upon request.

The VA policy with respect to [Change of Program](#) (page 26) did not change. An evaluation of prior credit should be completed for the change so you can accurately track the student's program, but you don't have to report the prior credit to VA.

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

## Military Education and Training

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 [www.militaryguides.acenet.edu](http://www.militaryguides.acenet.edu).

### *Military Transcripts*

Information about military transcripts and how to request the transcripts is available from each branch of the military.

- **Army** (AARTS transcript): <http://aarts.army.mil>
- **Navy & Marine Corps** (SMART Transcript); <https://smart.navy.mil/smart/welcome.do>
- **Air Force** (CCAF Transcript): <http://www.maxwell.af.mil/au/ccaf/transcripts.asp>
- **Coast Guard** (CGI Transcript): [http://www.uscg.mil/hq/cgi/ve/official\\_transcript.asp](http://www.uscg.mil/hq/cgi/ve/official_transcript.asp)

## **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 program while enrolled at the same school. If a student changes their 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 page then click "Save".
- Evaluate all prior credit for applicability towards the new program.
- Only certify credit that applies to the new program.

## **ENROLLMENT DATES**

Select the quarter or semester you want to certify from the "Term Name" drop-down list when you create a new Cert. 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.

A standard quarter is 10-13 weeks 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. If a course doesn't follow this standard format, certify the actual begin date, end date, and credit for the course(s) on a new Cert (see [Summer Terms and Nonstandard Enrollment Periods](#), page 15).

Each quarter or semester is a new Cert. When you certify students you can certify them for one or more terms. If you prefer to certify more than one term and the student plans to attend through spring, then certify the student through spring. If a student will attend summer, certify summer as soon as you know the student's summer schedule. If a student's summer enrollment is at least half-time and eight weeks or longer, you have early fall registration, and you know the student will attend the next academic year, then you can certify the student summer through the following spring when you certify summer.

If a student is <1/2-time, is on active duty, or is certified for accelerated payment, the student can only be certified one quarter or semester at a time and tuition and fees must be reported.

## VA-ONCE Standard Terms

Store standard term dates in VA-ONCE (Admin/Maintenance/Standard Terms). Stored terms must have a "Term Name", "Begin Date", "End Date" and "Drop Date".

- Term names are limited to 10 characters. Use a uniform system that keeps within 10 characters (Example: Fall 08, Winter 09, Spring 09, and Sum 09). If you have multiple calendars, you can store more than one academic calendar. If you do, incorporate a character into the term name to differentiate the calendars (Example where undergraduate and graduate calendars differ: U Fall 08, G Fall 08, U Spr 09, G Spr 09).
- Begin and End dates for a quarter or semester are the first day of class and the last day of final exams.
- The drop date is the brief, officially designated period of time at the beginning of a term when students can drop courses without academic penalty. For VA purposes, the drop date cannot be more than 30 days from the start of the term.

The drop date field is used by VA-ONCE to ensure that dates used with reasons like "Reduction/Withdrawal During Drop Period" and "Reduction/Withdrawal After Drop Period" are appropriate. VA-ONCE automatically sets the drop date for a term to 30 days, unless an earlier date is entered. What does this mean?

- If the drop period for a term is less than 30 days from the begin date, you must enter the last date of the drop period in the 'Drop Date' field. VA-ONCE will store and use that drop date.
- If the drop period for a term ends 30 or more days after the term begins, you don't need to enter anything in the 'Drop Date' field. If you try to save a term with a drop date more than 30 days VA-ONCE says, "Drop Date must be less than 30 days from the first date of the term. Please Correct."

**NOTE:** If you certify a one time enrollment period that isn't in standard terms VA-ONCE will assume the drop period is 30 days from the start of the enrollment period and won't accept "Reduction After Drop Period – Nonpunitive Grades Assigned" during the first 30 days. If the drop date is actually during the first 30 days and you encounter this problem, use "Reduction During Drop Period" as the reason and put the following in remarks: "Drop is after drop period – nonpunitive grade (or punitive grade if it's punitive), but VA-ONCE won't accept after drop period as the reason."

## CREDIT

Enter the number of credits the student will earn each quarter or semester. If a student is certified less than  $<1/2$ -time or drops below  $1/2$ -time, tuition and fees must be reported.

**Undergraduate:** If the student will be full-time, but you don't know the exact number of credits that will be taken, enter 12. In a standard quarter or semester:

- 12 credits or more are full-time
- 9-11 credits are  $3/4$ -time
- 6-8 credits are  $1/2$ -time
- 4-5 credits are less than  $<1/2$ -time
- 1-3 credits are  $1/4$ -time or less

**Graduate:** Enter the training time according to your school's academic policy.

## Course Applicability

Only credits that apply toward completion of the student's program can be certified to VA. If 12 credit hours are certified, all 12 must apply. If a student enrolls for 12 credits, but only 9 credits satisfy a program requirement, then certify 9 credits.

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

There are two exceptions to the rule about course applicability:

- The last quarter or semester before graduation, all credit hours taken can be certified if 1 or more of the credits **satisfy a graduation requirement**. Last means **last**. There is only one last quarter or semester.
- 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.

## 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 students must take additional courses in order to raise their GPA to graduate, the courses must be courses that have not already been successfully completed by the student.

## 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. The State Approving Agency (SAA) must approve remedial and deficiency courses. If approved, 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 that support the need for remedial and deficiency courses in the student's file.

- Chapters 30, 32, 1606, and 1607: Entitlement is charged for remedial and deficiency training.
- Chapter 35: Entitlement is **not** charged for 5 months of full-time remedial and deficiency training. If a chapter 35 student is certified for 6 standard credits and 6 remedial credits, payment is full-time, but entitlement is charged ½-time.

## Practical Training

Practical training is academic training that includes actual job experience. Practical training courses must be approved by the SAA. Some practical training is only measured in clock hours—a medical residency, for example—and some practical training is measured in credit hours. When a practical training course is measured in credit hours by a school, the school can certify the course by credit hours or by clock hours, whichever is to the advantage of the student. Twelve credit hours or 18 clock hours per week is full-time.

### 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 hours, 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

Other courses may be approved by the SAA as practical training; for example, externship, internship, and practicum. Like student teaching, these courses can be certified in credit hours or by clock hours, whichever is to the student's advantage. Examples: (1) If a student takes a 6 credit hour externship that requires 24 clock hours attendance per week, certify the course in clock hours. (2) It's possible to certify credit hours and clock hours during the same quarter or semester. If a student takes a 3 credit lecture course and a 4 credit internship that requires 12 clock hours per week, certify 3 credit hours and 12 clock hours. Seven credits would be ½-time, but 3 credits and 12 clock hours would be ¾-time. In remarks enter, "Student taking a 3 credit lecture course and a 3 credit, 12 clock hour internship. Measure according to M22-4, Part IV, Paragraph 7.09."

## **Independent Study (Internet and Distance Learning)**

Independent study is a course or program offered without regularly scheduled, conventional classroom or laboratory sessions. The courses or programs must consist of a prescribed curriculum with provision for interaction by mail, telephone (toll-free to the student), computer, or personally between the student and a regularly employed faculty member of the school. Independent study courses are paid the same as resident courses. Independent study courses and programs must be accredited and must lead to a standard college degree or certificate at an Institution of Higher Learning (IHL). Further, they must be specifically approved for VA purposes by the SAA.

Credit for Internet and distance learning courses and programs can be certified. The courses must have a defined begin and end date. Usually these dates are standard quarter and semester dates.

## **SUBMITTING AND MAILING CERTIFICATIONS**

Certs can be submitted before the term begins, unless training time is less than ½-time, the veteran 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 Cert must be submitted on or after the first day of class and tuition and fees must be reported.

**NOTE:** VA eliminated the “confirmed enrollments” requirement that Muskogee call the school and confirm the first enrollment under chapter 35 if it is submitted before the first day of the term. There will be a small number of certifications VA’s computer systems can’t process before the term starts. When this happens, Muskogee will hold the certification and input it after the term begins.

Education claims are processed in Muskogee. The address is:

Department of Veterans Affairs  
VA Regional Office  
PO Box 8888  
Muskogee, OK 74402-8888



# **NOTICE OF CHANGE IN STUDENT STATUS**



## 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.

1. Amend is used to change begin date, end date, tuition and fees, remarks, and advance pay and accelerated pay requests on a certification already submitted (Status 4, 5M, or 5A). Example: If you forget to include the remark "Student's Request For Change Of Program/Place Of Training Is On File" on a cert for a new student, add the remark by amending the cert.
2. Adjust is used to report an increase or decrease in credit that affects training time. If training time drops to less than ½-time, tuition and fees must be reported.
3. Terminate is used to report a complete withdrawal for an enrollment period. This applies even when there are multiple enrollment periods. If the student completely withdraws from one of the enrollment periods it is considered a termination for that period. VA-ONCE will give you the option to terminate subsequent periods or to leave them as previously certified.

## DROPS AND WITHDRAWALS

All withdrawals must be reported. Changes in credit that do not change a student's training status during a standard quarter or standard semester unless the student is a serviceperson and there is a change in the amount of tuition and fees. This means you do not have to report changes from 12 to 15 hours or vice versa except for servicepersons who have a change in tuition and fees.

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.

### Before Term and First Day of Term

#### Adjustments

- If a student does not attend and withdraws from a course 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 attends and withdraws from a course 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 "Withdraw Before Beginning Of Term." VA-ONCE will enter the day before the term as the "LDA/EFF Date."

- If a student attends class and then terminates the first day of the term the student should be paid for the break and for the first day. 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 does not attend class and terminates on the first day, the student should not be paid for the break and for the first day. Report the termination reason as “Withdraw Before Beginning Of Term.” VA-ONCE will enter the day before the term as the “LDA/EFF Date.”

## **During Drop Period**

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.

NOTES: (1) Put the “Drop Date” in “Standard Terms” when you add terms. (2) For VA purposes the drop date cannot be more than 30 days from the beginning date of the term. (3) If there isn’t a designated drop date and the student drops during the term, report the drop as “After Drop Period” as described below.

## **After Drop Period**

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 nonpunitive or punitive. The action VA takes differs for nonpunitive and punitive grades. If the grade is nonpunitive [Mitigating Circumstances](#) (page 35) are an issue.

### **Nonpunitive Grades**

A nonpunitive 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 nonpunitive if it isn’t calculated into the student’s GPA or it isn’t considered in academic progress criteria like probation and suspension. Nonpunitive grades have the same effect as an audit. They don’t apply to the degree and they don’t affect academic progress.

### **Punitive Grades**

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”.

If students complete the term with punitive grades, the punitive grades do not have to be reported. If punitive grades lead to unsatisfactory progress, however, students must be terminated for [Unsatisfactory Progress](#) (page 39).

## **NOTES**

Some schools assign “W” or “WF” grades that are calculated into GPA. A “W” or “WF” assigned 0 points and calculated into GPA has the same effect as an “F” assigned 0 points. These “W” and “WF” grades are punitive, not nonpunitive.

California community colleges specifically calculate “W”, “NC”, and “I” grades into academic progress standards and these grades can result in probation and dismissal. A grade that affects progress and that can result in probation and dismissal is punitive, not nonpunitive.

Some schools have a “forgiveness” policy that allows students to repeat an “F” for a better grade. If a student receives a better grade, the original punitive “F” is “forgiven” and converted to a nonpunitive grade. This converted nonpunitive grade does not have to be reported to VA. If the student repeats and fails a second time, however, any “F” converted to a nonpunitive grade must be reported as a nonpunitive grade.

## 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 nonpunitive 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 or courses 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. If you don’t know the student’s circumstance or if you aren’t sure the student’s circumstance clearly meets a listed 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 nonpunitive 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.

## NONPUNITIVE GRADES—END OF TERM

A nonpunitive grade is a grade that doesn't count as earned credit and that doesn't affect progress standards for graduation. Nonpunitive grades have the same effect as an audit.

If a student completes the term and receives nonpunitive grades, the nonpunitive grades must be reported to VA if they change training time (see [Credit](#), page 27). There's one exception to this rule. Do not report end of term nonpunitive grades that students receive for courses that were certified as remedial courses. Examples of nonpunitive 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 nonpunitive grades is the end date of the term.

- If the change is an adjustment, the reason is "Student Completed Term But Nonpunitive Grades Assigned For One Or More Courses." If a student certified 12 credits receives a nonpunitive grade for a 3-credit class, report the nonpunitive grade as an adjustment from 12 to 9 credits.
- 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 nonpunitive credits. Example: "Student received 6 nonpunitive credits, reducing him from 12 to 6 credits."

### NOTES

Withdrawals and incompletes may be nonpunitive, but are described elsewhere (see [Drops and Withdrawals](#), page 33, and Incompletes, below). Grades like "P" (Pass) or "S" (Satisfactory) are not calculated into the student's grade point average, but do count as credit earned. Since these grades are earned credit, they are not nonpunitive grades that need to be reported to VA.

California community colleges specifically calculate "W", "NC", and "I" grades into academic progress standards and these grades can result in probation and dismissal. These three grades are punitive, not nonpunitive, at California community colleges.

## INCOMPLETES

There are two procedures for incomplete grades, one for incompletes that remain permanent nonpunitive grades and another for incompletes that convert to a letter grade.

## Incompletes Remain Permanent Nonpunitive Grades

Incomplete grades that will remain permanent nonpunitive grades must be reported to VA. Track incomplete grades you report to VA. If a student makes up an incomplete, report its completion to VA.

- Report incomplete(s) as an adjustment if the student receives incompletes and will continue in school as previously certified.

**Example 1:** A student certified 12 credits fall, winter, and spring completes winter term with 3 credits incomplete.

Adjust winter from 12 to 9 credits, select “Other (Explain in Remarks)” as the reason, and enter the winter end date as the “LDA/EFF Date”. In remarks enter “Student completed term with 3 credits incomplete. Diary the incomplete for one year.”

If the student completes the incomplete adjust winter term from 9 to 12 credits. The “LDA/EFF Date” is the end date of the term. In remarks enter “Student completed incomplete previously reported.” An “F” (punitive grade) is considered completion.

**Example 2:** A student certified 12 credits fall, winter, and spring completes winter term with 3 credits incomplete and 3 credits nonpunitive grade.

Adjust winter from 12 to 6 credits, select “Other (Explain in Remarks)” as the reason, and enter the winter end date as the “LDA/EFF Date”. In remarks enter “Student completed term with 3 credits incomplete. Diary the incomplete for one year. Student also completed the term with 3 credits nonpunitive grade.”

If the student completes the incomplete adjust winter term from 6 to 9 credits. The “LDA/EFF Date” is the end date of the term. In remarks enter “Student completed incomplete previously reported.” An “F” (punitive grade) is considered completion.

- Report incomplete(s) as a termination if the student doesn’t continue in school or is terminated for “Unsatisfactory Attendance, Conduct, or Progress”.

**Example 3:** A student certified 12 credits fall, winter, and spring completes winter term with 3 credits incomplete and did not register for spring.

Take two actions so VA-ONCE’s cert list and history make sense when you look at them. First, adjust winter for the incomplete as described in example 1. Second, terminate spring and report the termination reason as “Withdraw Before Beginning Of Term.” VA-ONCE will reduce winter from 12 to 9 credits, will terminate spring, and VA will not pay the break between winter and spring.

**Example 4:** A student certified 12 credits fall, winter, and spring completes winter term with 3 credits incomplete, 9 credits nonpunitive grades, and is terminated for unsatisfactory progress.

Terminate winter. VA-ONCE will reduce credit to 0 and will enter the end date of the term as the “LDA/EFF Date”. Select “Other (Explain in Remarks)” as the reason. In remarks enter “Student completed term with 3 credits incomplete. Diary the incomplete for one year. Student also completed the term with 9 credits nonpunitive grade and was terminated

for unsatisfactory progress. Tuition and fees for 3 credits is \$241.50.” (VA will reduce winter from 12 to 3 credits for the nonpunitive grades, will adjust the winter benefit for tuition and fees if required, will diary the incomplete, and will terminate the student for unsatisfactory progress. VA-ONCE will automatically terminate spring.)

If the student completes the incomplete submit a New Cert for winter. Certify 3 credits (the other 9 credits were a nonpunitive grade reduction). In remarks enter “Student completed 3 credits incomplete certified on 4/1/06 termination. Tuition and fees \$241.50.”

VA diaries incompletes for one year. Unless you report incompletes as made up, at the end of the one year diary VA will assume the incomplete wasn't made up, will reduce benefits retroactively, will retroactively create an overpayment, and will ask the student for evidence of mitigating circumstances.

The one-year diary is nothing more than a control date for VA to take the actions cited. VA regulations do not limit the length of time during which a course can be completed. If your school's academic policy allows a grade to be completed after one year and it is completed after one year, report the change to VA.

An incomplete doesn't need to be reported if training time isn't affected. Example: A student takes 15 credits, completes 12 credits, and receives 3 credits incomplete. Training time isn't affected because the incomplete doesn't reduce the student below full-time (see [Credit](#), page 27).

**CAUTIONS:** 1) If the 12 completed credit included nonpunitive grade credit, then the incomplete would affect training time. 2) Be careful with nonstandard enrollment period incompletes (see [Summer Terms and Nonstandard Enrollment Periods](#), page 15).

If your school has a short deadline for making up incompletes after which they become permanent, nonpunitive grades, wait and report the incompletes as end of the term nonpunitive grades if they aren't completed (see [Nonpunitive Grades—End of Term](#), page 36). At some schools, for instance, incompletes become permanent, nonpunitive grades if not completed by the fourth week of the following term. If this is the case, simply wait the four weeks and report the incompletes as end of the term nonpunitive grades if they aren't completed.

## **Incompletes Convert to a Letter Grade**

Incompletes at many schools convert to an “F” or to an alternate letter grade if they are not completed by a specific date. Incompletes do not need to be reported to VA if they convert to a letter grade (A, B, C, D, F, or Pass). Incompletes **do** need to be reported as nonpunitive grades if they convert to a nonpunitive grade (e.g., NP if NP is nonpunitive). If the converted grades result in unsatisfactory progress, the student may need to be terminated for unsatisfactory progress.

## **AUDIT**

Audited courses may not 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.



# UNSATISFACTORY PROGRESS

## Termination for Unsatisfactory Progress

Unsatisfactory Progress (Academic Suspension) must be reported to VA as a termination. Terminate the semester the student's suspended. If suspension follows 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 window will ask about subsequent terms if any are 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.

## Standards of Progress

Schools must have and enforce adequate standards of progress. Progress standards must be approved by the SAA.

1. Progress standards should clearly define when and under what conditions a lack of progress results in suspension or dismissal.
2. Progress standards should not allow an indefinite probationary period without improvement. Standards that allow a student to remain in a probationary status for more than two consecutive terms without defined improvement in academic standing do not meet minimum requirements for approval.
3. If a school's overall standards do not meet the requirements for approval, school officials may establish a different standard specifically for VA students. These standards will be used for reporting unsatisfactory progress to VA.
4. Progress standards must be in the school catalog or other appropriate documentation and they must define the following:
  - The school's grading system.
  - The minimum satisfactory grade level.
  - The grade level required for graduation.
  - The specific point at which progress is unsatisfactory and a student is subject to suspension or dismissal.
  - The probationary period, if any.
  - Conditions for dismissal due to unsatisfactory conduct.

- Conditions for a student’s reentrance following dismissal or suspension for either unsatisfactory progress or unsatisfactory conduct.

### Progress Records

All schools must maintain progress records (e.g., academic transcript) 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.

### Appeals

It’s not uncommon for schools to allow students to appeal suspensions to an academic dean or to an academic review committee. Such an appellate process must be equally available to all students. That a school allows a student to remain enrolled after successful appeal of an academic suspension does not make the standards unacceptable. In these cases the school must:

1. Report that the student was subject to suspension but allowed to remain enrolled by appeal.
2. Annotate the suspension on the student’s transcript or other permanent record.
3. Submit a Cert terminating the student effective the last day of the term in which progress was unsatisfactory.
4. Submit a Cert reenrolling the student effective the beginning of the term the student reenrolls.
  - If the student is re-enrolling in a program other than the one from which the student was just terminated because of unsatisfactory progress, then the school should include a statement in the Cert remarks that describes the conditions for the student's continued enrollment. The conditions must describe the minimum performance standards the student must achieve during a specified period of enrollment—for example, a 1.4 grade point average by the end of the first quarter, a 1.7 grade point average by the end of the second quarter, etc.
  - If the student is re-enrolling in the same program from which the student was just terminated for unsatisfactory progress, then the school does not have to submit a statement of conditions for continued enrollment.

# **POLICY & PROCEDURE**



## 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. Prepare a letter ("primary school letter") addressed to the VA Certifying Official at the secondary school. Email, snail mail, fax, or let the student hand carry the letter to the secondary school. Keep a copy of the letter in the student's file. The letter must:

1. Identify the student (name, social security number, and education chapter; file number and suffix for chapter 35) as a student at *<insert name and facility code of your school>* pursuing a *<insert name of your student's program>*.
2. State, "The courses listed below satisfy *<insert name of program>* requirements and will transfer at full value to *<insert name of your school>*."
3. 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.
4. State, "*<Student>* intends to take the above courses at *<Secondary School>* *<Identify term, e.g., fall quarter 2008>*. 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

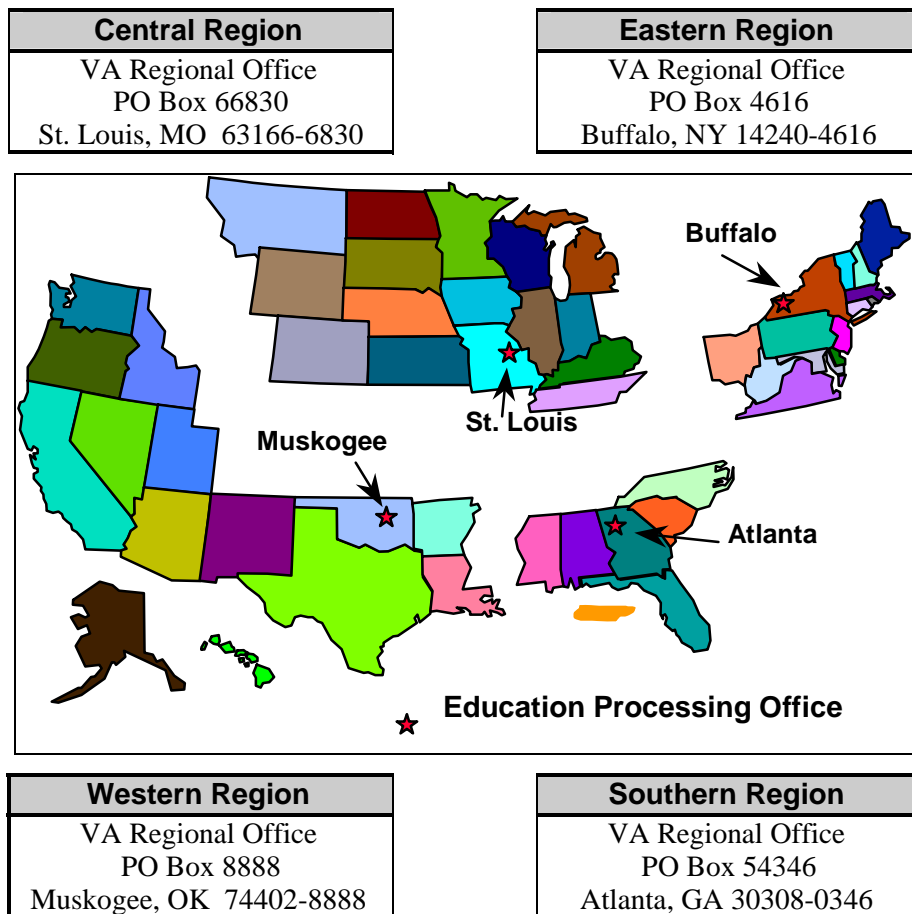
If a student takes courses at your school that will apply to a degree the student is pursuing elsewhere, you are the secondary school and the other school is the primary school. The student's primary school will send you a primary school letter. In VA-ONCE:

1. Adopt the student.
2. 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.
3. Only certify courses listed in the primary school letter. Remember tuition and fees if the student is less than ½-time.

Secondary schools must report all changes in enrollment for secondary students. Amend, adjust, and terminate Certs 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.

## Regional Processing

If the primary school is in the Muskogee region, transmit or mail supplemental and concurrent enrollment certifications and notices of changes to Muskogee like you usually do. If the primary school is not in the Muskogee region, **mail** the supplemental and concurrent enrollment certifications and notices of change in student status to the primary school's Regional Processing Office.



**SAMPLE PRIMARY SCHOOL LETTER  
(Suggested Format)**

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

**NOTE: Email** primary school letters are fine. The email 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.

## DUAL DEGREES AND DUAL MAJORS

A student may pursue a dual degree or dual major to accomplish a single objective. For example, a student might pursue a B.S. Business degree and a B.S. Computer Science degree to become an Information Resource Manager.

Dual degrees and dual majors must be approved by the SAA.

- If a dual degree or dual major is listed in your catalog or is pursued under an academic policy that defines the requirements for dual degrees or dual majors, then the dual degree or dual major may be certified to VA if the SAA has approved the dual degree or dual major, or the SAA has approved the policy under which the dual degree or dual major is pursued.
- If a dual degree or dual major is not listed in your catalog or is not defined by academic policy, then the dual degree or dual major must be approved by the SAA. This approval must be obtained even when the two separate degrees or two separate majors are approved by the SAA.

Different SAAs have different requirements, so check with your SAA about approval requirements. In general, however, a request for a dual degree or dual major approval should include:

- The name and claim number of the VA student for whom approval is requested.
- The exact title of the two degrees or the two majors for which approval is requested and the page numbers in the current, approved catalog where the degrees or majors can be found (e.g., B.S. Business and B.S. Computer Science).
- A description of the single career field to which the degrees or majors relate (e.g., Information Resource Manager).
- A three-part curriculum guide that lists the courses and credits required for the dual objective. Using the above example, the guide would list the courses and credits (1) unique to B.S. Business, (2) unique to B.S. Computer Science, and (3) common to both degrees. If approved, a copy of the curriculum guide must be given to the student and a copy must be kept in the student's VA file.

**NOTE:** The curriculum guide must reflect the minimum number of credits required to earn the dual objective. Free elective credit may not be included in the curriculum guide unless they are required to meet the minimum number of credit hours required to complete the dual objective.

- Using the curriculum guide, report the number of credits the veteran has already earned towards the dual objective and the number of credits the veteran must still complete. A responsible school official (e.g., Registrar or Degree Audit Specialist) must prepare the curriculum guide and complete the credit evaluation.

The approval request should be signed by the Certifying Official and by the responsible school official. Approval for the dual objective should be obtained from the SAA before certifying the student in the program. Identify the dual objective on the *Enrollment Certification* as it's approved by the SAA (e.g., B.S. Business & B.S. Computer Science). In remarks, enter "Dual objective approved by SAA. Approval in student's file."



## ROTC Programs

A student in an ROTC (Reserve Officer Training Corps) program is commissioned as an officer only if he or she receives a degree. Therefore, since a degree is one of the requirements to become a commissioned officer, the objective of commissioned officer is a professional objective.

A student in an ROTC scholarship program may show his or her objective to be commissioned officer. Students in a ROTC program may be certified for courses required for their degree (including electives) **and** for those required for the ROTC program.

### SAMPLE REQUEST FOR DUAL OBJECTIVE APPROVAL (Suggested Format)

Date	NAME AND ADDRESS OF SCHOOL
NAME AND ADDRESS OF SAA	
1. Student's Name: _____	
2. VA Claim Number: _____	
3. Name of dual degree or dual major (e.g., B.S. Business and B.S. Computer Science): _____	
4. Found on pages _____ of current catalog.	
5. Single career field to which this dual degree/major leads: _____ _____	
6. Credit hours already earned toward degree: _____	
7. Total <i>additional</i> credit hours need to achieve dual objective: _____	
8. Total credit hours required to achieve the dual objective: _____	
Curriculum guide attached.	
<b><u>APPROVED BY</u></b>	
Department Chair or Dean: _____	Date: _____
School Certifying Official: _____	Date: _____

**NOTE:** If the dual objective will enroll more than one student lines 1 and 2 aren't needed.

# TUTORIAL ASSISTANCE

Tutorial assistance may be paid to students under chapters 30, 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 chapters 30 and 1606. There is no entitlement charge under chapter 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 on a ½-time or more basis.
- The student must have a deficiency in a course that is part of his or her approved program.
- The student must be enrolled in a course during the same quarter in which tutoring is received for that 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.
- The tutoring is given on an individual basis.

## COOPERATIVE TRAINING

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](#), page 29 and [Training Time](#), page 17), can be certified by credit hours 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.

# **USEFUL INFORMATION**



## VA ON THE WEB

### GI Bill Website

VA Education Service maintains a “One Stop” website ([www.gibill.va.gov](http://www.gibill.va.gov)) that has or links to just about everything of interest to veterans and certifying officials. Give the site’s address to your students. On the home page and in the menu bar you’ll find:

The [home page](#) includes a menu:

- **Education Benefits** has a wealth of information. There’s a link to [VA education benefits](#) that describes education and education related programs in detail. There are also links for [Education Forms](#) (also see [VA Forms](#), page 65), [VA Payment Rates](#), [How to Apply for Benefits](#), and link to [WEAMS](#).

The How to Apply for Benefits link explains how to apply online and hardcopy. It includes a link to [VONAPP](#), the Veterans On-line Application website where veterans can complete and submit the Application for Education Benefits (22-1990), Request for Change of Program or Place or Training (22-1995), Application for Survivors’ and Dependents’ Educational Assistance (22-5490), Request for Change of Program or Place of Training (22-5495), and the application for Vocational Rehabilitation (28-1900) to VA via VONAPP.

Search for Approved Education Programs link will lead you to [WEAMS](#), a public application you can use to search for approved education programs.

- **Information for Benefit Recipients** includes a link to [WAVE](#) (Web Automated Verification of Enrollment) where Chapter 30, 1606, and 1607 students can certify their monthly enrollment (see [Student Verification of Enrollment](#), page 18).

Information for Benefit Recipients also has sections for returning Active Duty, National Guard and Reserve service members of Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom. This is also information for students who want attend [foreign schools](#) (not to be confused with study abroad programs you may offer at your school).

- **Information for Education Professionals** includes a link to the [VA-ONCE](#) website, a comprehensive site about VA-ONCE.

If you need to update your [Designation of Certifying Official\(s\)](#) (VA from 22-8794), you can print the form from the VA-ONCE website. The form is Adobe Acrobat Portable Document Format (PDF). You Adobe Acrobat Reader to access PDF files with your web browser. If you don’t have Acrobat Reader installed, a link to download the Reader is on the forms page.

There’s also an [Information Resources](#) link where, among other things, you can download the *WAVES Handbook*. The link identifies the revision date of the Handbook.

- **Questions & Answers** links to VA’s support and help site for both students and school officials. If school certifying officials email VA about a student the certifying official should use this secure site (see [Internet Inquiry System](#), page 54).

## CONTACTING MUSKOGEE

### Telephone

The toll-free number for the Education Call Center is **888-442-4551**. The Call Center is in Muskogee and Education Case Managers are available 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Central Time, Monday through Friday. The 888-442-4551 system, however, is available 24 hours a day. The system's automated functions can provide information about benefits, applications, etc. 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. **NOTE:** You can bypass the automated system's message by hitting 1 and then 0 after the recording starts (1 bypasses the national recording and 0 transfers you to Muskogee).

### When to call

Don't hesitate to call for:

- Non-receipt of benefits over 30 days from submission of enrollment certifications
- Non-receipt of Advance pay
- Notification of improper payment
- Overpayment clarification
- Hardship cases
- Problems resulting from DOD: kicker codes or Ch1606 eligibility

When you call as a certifying official identify yourself as "<name>, the School Certifying Official for <name of school>" and be prepared to answer who, what, and when questions.

### Internet

The Internet inquiry system provides a secure platform to communicate with VA available to both VA students and to certifying officials. The system uses 128 bit data encryption, the same encryption financial institutions use to encrypt online bank transactions.

The search feature allows you to find answers to questions by category. The VA-ONCE category is only available to certifying officials. To view VA-ONCE questions and answers you must be logged in as a School Official. We plan to add more categories and frequently asked questions pertinent to certifying officials. The inquiry system also allows users to ask VA questions not in the "Answers". If the answer isn't available, users can send an inquiry to VA using the "Ask a Question" tab.

#### ***Setting Up An Internet Inquiry System Account***

Certifying officials can create a school official account on the [Internet Inquiry System](#). Directions for setting one up are at [www.gibill.va.gov/School\\_Info/rpo\\_hbook/rightnowschoolofficials.pdf](http://www.gibill.va.gov/School_Info/rpo_hbook/rightnowschoolofficials.pdf).



### *Making Inquiries*

Go to [Questions and Answers](#) and click the “[Ask a Question](#)” tab to send an inquiry.

If you’re reporting a payment problem enter “Payment Problem” in the subject line. Do not use this phrase for any other kind of problem.

Be sure to provide the student’s full name and social security or claim number in the body of the message. This is a secure system, but **don’t** include the social security or claim number in the subject line because the system will send you a confirmation email using your subject line. You can enter the student’s last name and perhaps the first initial in the subject line, if it helps you keep track of the cases.

The Internet Inquiry System will also send you an email once we complete the inquiry. Our goal is to answer your payment inquiries within 1 workday. You will have to login to retrieve the answers to your inquiries. The email will provide you with a link back to your question and our answer when we complete the inquiry. Your questions and answers will be stored on the inquiry system.

## 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.
- 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 (VAF 22-1999).
- Copies of all notices of changes in student status (VAF 22-1999b).
- Any correspondence from the Department of Veterans Affairs, which you may have received for the student.

## 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 three 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)).

### NOTE

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.

## 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 30 Recipients

The Code of Federal Regulations states **active duty servicepersons** may not receive VA 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 "Top-Up"

Servicepersons and veterans eligible for chapter 30 and approved for TA are eligible for Top-up. A serviceperson must have at least 2 years active duty to be eligible for chapter 30. Top-up pays in tandem with TA, but Top-up is a VA benefit administered by VA.

What is Top-up? If TA doesn't pay the full cost of a course, Top-up will pay the difference between what TA pays and the cost of the course. Top-up can't exceed the amount a student would receive for the same course under chapter 30 and the combined amount paid by the military and VA can't be more than the total cost of the course.

Duplication of benefits isn't an issue because the student is receiving Top-up, not chapter 30. As noted above, active duty students may not receive regular chapter 30 benefits and TA for the same course. Top-up is the only VA program that will pay a student on active duty and receiving TA for the same course.

If a student receives Top-up, the student's chapter 30 entitlement is reduced. The reduction is determined by dividing the amount of Top-up paid by the student's full-time monthly chapter 30 rate. If the full-time chapter 30 rate is \$1,321 and the student is paid \$330 in Top-up benefits, then the student's chapter 30 entitlement will be reduced  $\frac{1}{4}$  of a month ( $\$330 \div \$1321 = .25$ ).

Top-up is available for **any** course that begins on or after October 30, 2000, and for which TA is paid. Students apply for Top-up directly to VA. Students who haven't applied for chapter 30 before must submit an *Application for Education Benefits* (VAF 22-1990) to establish chapter 30 eligibility and a copy of their TA authorization form. Students who have filed an application before simply need to submit a copy of their signed TA authorization form.

Detailed information about Tuition Assistance Top-up and about applying for Top-up is available on the VA Education Service website ([www.gibill.va.gov/pamphlets/tatu.htm](http://www.gibill.va.gov/pamphlets/tatu.htm)).

## Chapter 1606 and 1607 Recipients

VA regulations state active duty service members 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 benefits are considered 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. Also, keep in mind the VA regulation cited above prohibits chapter 1606 and TA 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 chapter 1606 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 is always federal funding, so duplication is always an issue.

## Chapter 32 Recipients

The Code of Federal Regulations states **active duty service members** may not receive VA benefits for the same courses for which they receive TA from the military. The prohibition ensures that two federal funding sources—VA education benefit and military TA—aren't used for the same courses. The phrase “for the same courses” means an active duty service member could receive VA benefits for some courses and TA for other courses. If a student takes 16 credits, for example, the student could receive VA benefits for 12 credits (full-time) and TA benefits for 4 credits.

Veterans eligible for chapter 32 education benefits may join the selective reserves—Army Reserve, Naval Reserve, Air Force Reserve, Marine Corps Reserve, Coast Guard Reserve, Army National Guard, and Air National Guard—and receive TA through the reserves. Since a reservist is not on active duty, the active duty prohibition described above does not apply.

## Certifying Students Receiving Tuition Assistance

Schools can't monitor what they don't know. 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 certify all courses that are part of a student's approved program unless the student asks you not to certify all the credit. Why would a student ask you not to certify all his or her credit? Maybe the student wants to be paid ½-time rather than full-time to conserve entitlement, or maybe the student doesn't want you to certify courses for which he or she will receive TA.

## VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION

A veteran may be eligible for Vocational Rehabilitation (chapter 31) benefits if he or she:

- Received, or will receive, a discharge under other than dishonorable conditions;
- Incurred or aggravated a service-connected disability which entitles him or her to VA disability compensation; and
- Is in need of vocational rehabilitation because his or her disability creates an employment handicap.

Vocational rehabilitation may be provided for up to 48 months. An eligible veteran generally has 12 years from the date he or she is notified of entitlement to VA compensation to use his or her chapter 31 benefits. VA may approve an extension of time and/or length of training in certain cases.

Entitlement for vocational rehabilitation services is determined on an individual basis following an evaluation of the veteran's interests, aptitudes, education, work experience, and vocational abilities. Each school is assigned a Vocational Rehabilitation Specialist to work with chapter 31 students and to assist school officials responsible for certifying chapter 31 students. Full tuition, fees, and books are paid by to the school by VA. In addition, the student gets a subsistence allowance depending on the training status.

<b>CHAPTER 31 SUBSTANCE ALLOWANCE</b>				
	No Dependents	One Dependent	Two Dependents	Each Additional
<b>10/1/2008</b>				
Full-time	\$541.05	\$671.13	\$790.87	\$57.65
3/4-time	\$406.53	\$504.07	\$591.28	\$44.33
1/2-time	\$272.02	\$337.03	\$396.17	\$29.58
<b>10/1/2007</b>				
Full-time	\$520.74	\$645.94	\$761.18	\$55.49
3/4-time	\$391.27	\$485.15	\$569.09	\$42.67
1/2-time	\$261.81	\$324.38	\$381.30	\$28.47
<b>10/01/2006</b>				
Full-time	\$508.04	\$630.19	\$742.61	\$54.14
3/4-time	\$381.73	\$473.32	\$555.21	\$41.63
1/2-time	\$255.42	\$316.47	\$372.00	\$27.78
<b>10/01/2005</b>				
Full-time	\$488.50	\$605.95	\$714.05	\$52.06
3/4-time	\$367.05	\$455.12	\$533.88	\$40.03
1/2-time	\$245.60	\$304.30	\$357.69	\$26.71
<b>10/1/2004</b>				
Full-time	\$474.27	\$588.30	\$693.25	\$50.54
3/4-time	\$356.36	\$441.86	\$518.31	\$38.86
1/2-time	\$238.45	\$295.44	\$347.27	\$25.93



# APPENDICES





## ELRs AND SAAs

	<b>Education Liaison Officers</b>	<b>State Approving Agencies</b>
<b>Alaska</b>	Rita Stewart Veterans Affairs Regional Office P O Box 8888 Muskogee, OK 74402-8888 (918) 781-7827	Mercedes Angerman State Approving Agency (Room C-211) Department of Military and Veterans Affairs P.O. Box 5800 Fort Richardson, Alaska 99505-5800 Voice: (907) 428-6513
<b>Arizona</b>	Randy Lazaro Veterans Affairs Regional Office 3333 N. Central Ave Phoenix, AZ 85012 602-627-3226	Arizona Department of Veterans Services State Approving Agency 3839 N. 3rd St., Suite 108 Phoenix, AZ 85012-2068 (602) 255-5395
<b>Arkansas</b>	Karen Frantz Veterans Affairs Regional Office 2200 Fort Roots Drive, Building 65 North Little Rock, AR 72114-1756 (501) 370-3776	State Approving Agency Three Capitol Mall Luther S. Hardin Bldg, 6 <sup>th</sup> Floor Little Rock, AR 72201-1083 (501) 324-9473
<b>California</b>	Ray Hawley Veterans Affairs Regional Office 8810 Rio San Diego Drive San Diego, CA 92108 619-400-1868	California State Approving Agency for Veterans Education 1625 North Market Blvd., Suite S-209 Sacramento, CA 95834 (916) 574-7778
<b>Hawaii</b>	Rusty Young Veterans Affairs Regional Office P O Box 8888 Muskogee, OK 74402-8888 (918) 781-7827	
<b>Idaho</b>	Rita Stewart Veterans Affairs Regional Office P O Box 8888 Muskogee, OK 74402-8888 (918) 781-7827	Idaho Division of Professional-Technical Education 650 W. State Street, PO Box 83720 Boise, ID 83720-0095 (208) 334-3216
<b>Louisiana</b>	Ellis Yeager VA Education Service 1429 Avenue E Marrero, LA 70072 504-347-1187	Louisiana Department of Veterans Affairs Veterans Education and Training P. O. Box 94095 Capital Station Baton Rouge, LA 70805-9095 (225) 922-0500 x206
<b>Nevada</b>	Rusty Young Veterans Affairs Regional Office P O Box 8888 Muskogee, OK 74402-8888 (918) 781-7827	Commission of Postsecondary Education Nevada Dept. of Education 3663 East Sunset Road Suite 202 Las Vegas, NV 89120 (702) 486-7330

## ELRs and SAAs

	<b>Education Liaison Officers</b>	<b>State Approving Agencies</b>
<b>New Mexico</b>	<p>Terry Cahill Veterans Affairs Regional Office 500 Gold Avenue SW Albuquerque, NM 87102 (505) 346-3999</p>	<p>NM Dept. of Veterans' Services 300 San Mateo NE, Suite 106 Albuquerque, NM 87108 (505) 841-5563 or 841-4783</p>
<b>Oklahoma</b>	<p>Judy Hernandez Veterans Affairs Regional Office P O Box 8888 Muskogee, OK 74402-8888 (918) 781-7827</p>	<p>State Accrediting Agency PO Box 53067 Oklahoma City, OK 73152 (405) 521-3807</p>
<b>Oregon</b>	<p>Robert Craig Veterans Affairs Regional Office 1220 SW Third Avenue Portland, OR 97204-2885 (503) 412-4669</p>	<p>Veterans Program Specialist Office of Education Support Services Oregon Department of Education 255 Capitol Street NE Salem, OR 97310-0203 (503) 378-3600 x2672</p>
<b>Texas</b>	<p>Michelle Nelson Department of Veterans Affairs Texas Education Service Center (22) 701 Clay Waco, TX 76799 (254) 299-9731</p>	<p>Texas Veterans Commission PO Box 12277 Austin, TX 78711-2277 (512) 463-3168</p>
<b>Utah</b>	<p>Paula Terry Veterans Affairs Regional Office 550 Foothill Drive PO Box 581900 Salt Lake City, UT 84158-1900 801-708-7330</p>	<p>Utah State Department of Veterans Affairs Utah State Approving Agency for Veterans Education 700 Foothill Drive Salt Lake City, UT 84108 801-584-1973</p>
<b>Washington</b>	<p>Susan Clark Veterans Affairs Regional Office (22) 915 Second Avenue Seattle, WA 98174 (206) 220-6186</p>	<p>Nontransfer Associate Degrees &amp; NCDs</p> <p>Workforce Training &amp; Education Coordinating Board 128 10th Ave. SW PO Box 43105 Olympia, WA 98504-3105 (360) 586-3321</p> <p>Associate Transfer Degrees &amp; Baccalaureate and Higher Degrees</p> <p>Higher Education Coordinating Board 917 Lakeridge Way PO Box 43430 Olympia, WA 98504-3430 (360) 753-7866</p>

## VA FORMS

The first six forms listed below are the primary forms used by schools. The forms marked with an asterisk \* are online at [www.va.gov/vaforms](http://www.va.gov/vaforms). There are links on the forms page for the different series of forms. Forms starting with 22 are Education, forms starting with 21 are Compensations and Pension, and forms starting with 28 are Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment. The *Request Pertaining to Military Records* (SF 180) is available online at the site listed in the form's description. You're welcome to download and print forms.

Applications (22-1990, 1995, 5490, 5495 and 28-1900) can be completed online and submitted through [VONAPP](#).

Benefit pamphlets can be read online at [www.gibill.va.gov/GI\\_Bill\\_Info/benefits.htm](http://www.gibill.va.gov/GI_Bill_Info/benefits.htm). Select "Detailed Information" for the benefit pamphlet you want. Students can print sections they want.

Form No.	Form Title and Description
22-1990 *	<i>Application for VA Education Benefits.</i> Application filed by a veteran who hasn't received education benefits in the past or who is applying for education benefits under a different VA education benefit. Can be completed online and submitted through <a href="#">VONAPP</a> .
22-1995 *	<i>Request for Change of Program or Place of Training.</i> Application filed by a veteran new to your school that has received benefits previously. Can be completed online and submitted through <a href="#">VONAPP</a> .
22-5490 *	<i>Application for Survivors' and Dependents' Educational Assistance (DEA).</i> Application filed by a dependent that has not received DEA in the past. Can be completed online and submitted through <a href="#">VONAPP</a> .
22-5495 *	<i>Request for Change of Program or Place of Training.</i> Application filed by a dependent new to your school who received DEA in the past. Can be completed online and submitted through <a href="#">VONAPP</a> .
22-1999	<i>Enrollment Certification.</i> Form filed by schools to certify a student's enrollment. Schools can submit the 1999 by the Internet using VA-ONCE.
22-1999b	<i>Notice of Change in Student Status.</i> Form filed by schools to report a change in enrollment status that affects a student's VA benefit. Schools can submit 1999bs by the Internet using VA-ONCE.
21-4138 *	<i>Statement in Support of Claim.</i>
21-674 *	<i>Request for Approval of School Attendance.</i>
21-686c *	<i>Declaration of Marital Status of Dependents</i> (Chapter 34/30).
22-0803 *	<i>Application for Reimbursement of Licensing and Test Fees.</i> See <a href="#">Licensing and Certifications Tests</a> .
22-1990t *	<i>Application and Enrollment Certification for Individualized Tutorial Assistance.</i>
22-8691 *	<i>Application for Work-Study Allowance.</i>
22-8794 *	<a href="#">Designation of Certifying Official(s)</a> . Form used to name the school personnel who can certify enrollment data to VA.
22-8873 *	<i>Supplemental Information for Change of Program or Reenrollment after Unsatisfactory Attendance, Conduct or Progress.</i>
28-1900 *	<i>Disabled Veterans Application for Vocational Rehabilitation.</i> Can be completed online and submitted through <a href="#">VONAPP</a> .
28-1905	<i>Authorization of Entrance Reentrance into Rehabilitation and Certification of Status.</i>
SF 180	<i>Request Pertaining to Military Records.</i> Form used to request military records, including discharge certificates (DD 214). Requests for copies of military records can be made online at the National Archives eVetRecs website at <a href="http://www.archives.gov/veterans/evetrecs">www.archives.gov/veterans/evetrecs</a> .

### Getting More Forms

If you have a procedure for ordering forms from your local Regional Office, you can use that procedure. If you want to order forms from Muskogee, you're welcome to use any of the following methods:

- Call Muskogee (888-442-4551) and request forms through the Education Call Center. When the recording starts hit 1 and then 0 to transfer directly to someone to request forms.
- Email Muskogee at [musropco@vba.va.gov](mailto:musropco@vba.va.gov)
- Mail request to:
 

VARO  
 Attn: Publications / 232  
 PO Box 8888  
 Muskogee, OK 74402-8888.

The request should list the forms and the number you want. It should also include your mailing address, email address, and phone number. Please don't order more forms than you will use in 1 year.

## 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 (See [Accelerated Payment](#), page 19).

### **Active Duty**

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 (See [Advance Payment](#), Page 13).

### **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.

### **Armed Forces**

This includes the United States Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force, and Coast Guard, including the reserve components thereof.

**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](#), page 38).

**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 in Service**

The term "break in service" means a period of more than 90 days between the date when an individual is released from active duty or otherwise receives a complete separation from active duty service and the date he or she reenters on active duty.

**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 (See [Break Pay](#), page 14).

**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 VAF 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 (See [Advance Payment](#), page 13).

### **Change of Program**

A change of program consists of a change in the educational, professional, or vocational objective for which the veteran or eligible person entered training and a like change in the type of courses required to attain a new objective. This includes any change in an eligible person's program or objective which will result in a material loss of credit or which will materially lengthen the training time necessary to complete an objective. A change of program is generally charged when there is a material loss of 12 credit hours for programs measured in quarter or semester hours, or the loss of more than 10 per cent of the training completed for other types of courses. A change of program is not charged if a claimant completes one program, then begins a totally different objective (See [Change of Program](#), Page **Error! Bookmark not defined.**).

### **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.

### **Character of Discharge**

All VA benefits (with the exceptions of some insurance programs and certain medical benefits) payable to veterans or their dependents require the period of service upon which entitlement is based be terminated under conditions other than dishonorable. However, under the Montgomery GI Bill veterans must have an **“Honorable”** discharge to receive benefits. Discharges “under honorable conditions” or “general” do not qualify veterans for benefits. Service personnel who complete six months or less of active military service are issued “uncharacterized” discharges. If an “uncharacterized” discharge is used for reasons of service-connected disability or hardship, they are considered to be “Honorable” for Montgomery GI Bill purposes.

### **Circular**

A publication issued by VA for distribution to regional offices and sometimes to schools as an expeditious way to provide directives on new procedures. A circular may also be used to disseminate information regarding issues that will be pertinent for only a limited period of time.

### **Claimant**

An individual in the process of claiming VA benefits who is potentially eligible for benefits but who has not completed all the necessary steps that will permit VA to determine individual eligibility and entitlement.

### **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 (See [Supplemental and Concurrent Enrollments](#), Page 43).

### **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 (e.g., 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 copy number 4 of their DD Form 214 with a claim for VA benefits. A certified copy may also be submitted. DD 214 can be requested online at the National Archives eVetRecs website ([www.archives.gov/veterans/evetrecs](http://www.archives.gov/veterans/evetrecs)).

**Delayed Enlistment Program (DEP)**

A Delayed Enlistment or Delayed Entry Program allows individuals to contract to go on active duty in the Armed Forces at a later date. The periods of time of the delayed entry onto active duty vary according to the specific program involved. For example, under DEP, the delay of entry onto active duty varies up to 270 days. In other programs, such as ROTC, the delay may be several years.

**Delimiting Date**

The first day after a claimant's period of eligibility expires. Benefits are not payable on or after the delimiting date. Generally, the delimiting date is ten years and one day from the veteran's last release from active duty date (RAD). The expiration date for those under Chapters 35 and 1606 is computed differently (See [Delimiting Date](#), Page 10).

**Dependents' Educational Assistance (DEA)**

Education benefits payable to eligible dependents or survivors of veterans. Commonly referred to as DEA or Chapter 35 (See [Chapter 35](#), Page 7).

**DOD Record**

The Department of Veterans Affairs accesses the Department of Defense's manpower database through a computer interface between the Defense Manpower Data Center (DMDC) in Monterey, California and the BDN System. This record contains information from the serviceperson's/veteran's military records which VA may use to determine eligibility for Chapters 30 and 1606.

**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](#), Page 33).

**Dual Eligibility**

Entitlement to education benefits under two or more programs administered by VA. If an individual qualifies for educational assistance under two or more such programs, the total assistance available may not exceed 48 months, or the equivalent in part-time benefits. A person having dual eligibility may not receive such benefits concurrently.

**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 (imaging system).



### **Education Services Officer (ESO)**

This includes civilian education services officers, military career counselors, and other employees of the military education offices who are assigned responsibility for advising servicepersons of the educational opportunities available to active duty personnel.

### **Educational Assistance**

This term is generally used interchangeably with the term “education benefit.” However, under the Montgomery GI Bill - Active Duty, the term “educational assistance” means basic educational assistance, supplemental educational assistance, and all additional amounts payable, commonly called “kickers.”

### **Eligible Person**

A child, spouse, or surviving spouse of a veteran who served on active duty and who died on active duty, or who died of a service-connected disability, or who has a total disability permanent in nature resulting from a service-connected disability, or who died from any cause while a total and permanent service-connected disability was in existence. Also includes a child or a spouse of a person who is on active duty as a member of the Armed Forces and who now is, and, for a period of more than 90 days, has been, listed by the Secretary concerned as missing in action, captured in line of duty by a hostile force, or forcibly detained or interned in line of duty by a foreign government or power.

### **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 (See list of [ELRs and SAAs](#), Page 63).

### **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; i.e., 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](#), page 10).

### **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 (See [Chapter 30 Kickers](#), Page 7, and [Chapter 1606 and 1607 Kickers](#), Page 8).

**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](#), Page 24).

**MGIB**

Refers to either the Montgomery GI Bill - Active Duty (Chapter 30 of title 38, U.S. Code) or the Montgomery GI Bill - Selected Reserve (Chapter 1606 of title 10, U.S. Code).

**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 nonpunitive 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](#), page 35).

**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 ([Chapter 1606](#)). 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.

### **Nonpunitive Grade**

A nonpunitive 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 nonpunitive if it isn't calculated into the student's GPA or it isn't considered in academic progress criteria like probation and suspension. Nonpunitive grades have the same effect as an audit. If a student withdraws after the drop period or completes the term with nonpunitive grades, the nonpunitive grades must be reported to VA if they change training time. Examples of nonpunitive 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 nonpunitive (Nonpunitive grades are mentioned or discussed several times in [Amend, Adjust, and Terminate](#) starting on page 33).

### **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** (See [Summer Terms and Nonstandard Enrollment Periods](#), Page 15).

### **Objective**

The final educational, professional, or vocational goal of a veteran, serviceperson, or eligible person (e.g., 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.

### **OLAF (See WEAMS)**

OLAF was replaced by WEAMS February 2007.

### **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 (See [Supplemental and Concurrent Enrollments](#), Page 43).

### **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 (e.g., 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 (See [Name of Program](#), page 24).

### **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 (See [Punitive Grades](#), Page 34). Nonpunitive Grade is defined above.

### **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 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 (See [Remedial and Deficiency Courses](#), page 29).

### **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 \$7 (\$11 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.

### **Research in Absentia**

A certifying official of a school may certify a program of research pursued by a veteran or eligible person in absentia, when the research activity is necessary for the preparation of the student's master's thesis, doctoral dissertation, or a similar treatise which is a prerequisite to the degree being pursued. The research activity must be defined and organized so as to enable the certifying official to evaluate the time required for its successful pursuit, and the time certified for the research activity is independent of the time devoted to any employment situation in which the veteran or eligible person might be engaged.

**SAA** (See State Approving Agency)

### **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 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.

### **Serviceperson**

An individual who is currently serving on active duty. Same as "servicemember."

### **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 (See [ELRs and SAAs](#), Page 63).

### **Summer Session**

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](#), Page 15).

**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 (See [Tuition and Fees](#), Page 17).

**VA-ONCE**

Internet based application used to submit enrollment certifications and notices of change in student status. Information about VA-ONCE is available at [www.gibill.va.gov/School%5FInfo/once](http://www.gibill.va.gov/School%5FInfo/once).

**WAVE (Web Automated Verification of Enrollment)**

[WAVE](#) is an Internet program used by chapter 30 and 1606 student 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. An abbreviated version of WEAMS is available on the Internet to everyone at <http://inquiry.vba.va.gov/weamspub/buildSearchLCCriteria.do>.

## NOTES

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