

Veterans Retraining Assistance Program (VRAP) Frequently Asked Questions for School Certifying Officials

Is my school eligible to offer training under VRAP?

Your school must be a two-year technical school and/or community college. Four-year institutions, even if they offer a two-year or Associate's Degree, are not eligible to participate.

Most Associate's degrees take longer than 12 months to complete. Why is the program limited to 12 months?

The program provides targeted re-training for unemployed Veterans. As such, Veterans who participate must attend school full-time. The plan includes not only training but job seeking assistance and counseling from the Department of Labor.

How will I know if the programs at my school lead towards a high demand occupation?

The Department of Labor provided a list of high demand occupations available [here](#). Review this list and determine if your program can lead to a job in that occupation.

Can Veterans pursue programs that cannot be completed in 12 months?

Yes, they may pursue a program that takes longer than 12 months to complete, but will only receive payments for 12 months.

How do schools certify VRAP enrollments to VA?

Schools must certify online using VA-Once, our online certification application. [Here](#) is a link to VA-Once and training on how to access and use it. School Certifying Officials must be sure to indicate the student's training time (must be full time) and objective and course code.

Do we have to report academic probation for VRAP students?

Yes, please report academic probation via the "Submit a Question" button on www.gibill.va.gov so Veterans may receive any needed educational counseling.

Can a student attend as a guest student or only at the school listed on the COE?

A student may attend a school not listed on the COE, as a guest student, provided that the credits earned from the secondary school are accepted by the

degree/certificate granting school and the credits count toward completion of the program of education at the primary location.

Why do some COEs not list a school or program at all? Does that mean any program at any school classified as a community college is acceptable?

A school or program may not be listed due to the student having not selected a school or program yet. The certificate of eligibility evidences the student's eligibility to receive VRAP. Any program at a community college is not acceptable. The program of education must be approved for VA education benefits and provide training towards a high-demand occupation. If the program the student is requesting is approved for VA education benefits, then the SCO may certify to VA. The student verifies that his/her program leads to a high-demand occupation during the application process and when verifying enrollment for payment.

Is it the SCO's responsibility to ensure the veteran is enrolled in a "high demand occupation" course of study if there is no program named on the COE?

No, the Veteran will self-certify that their chosen program of education will provide training for a high-demand occupation.

Does the veteran have to remain under the age limit through completion of the program? Through exhaustion of their benefit? Or just be under the age cap at the time of application?

The Veteran only needs to meet the age requirement at the time of application.

Do VRAP students have to verify monthly via WAVE?

VRAP students must verify their enrollment monthly. Verification may be completed via Web Automated Verification of Enrollment (WAVE) at www.GIBill.va.gov, Interactive Voice Response (IVR) at 1-877-823-2379, or by calling a GI Bill representative at 1-888-442-4551.

Can a VRAP student be currently serving in the National Guard or reserves if all other criteria are met?

A student must not be employed on the date of application to meet the requirements for VRAP. The Department of Labor defines unemployed as "People who are jobless, looking for jobs, and available for work."

What benefits are available for veterans to use to help fund completion of a program that takes more than 12 months to complete?

Generally, a Veteran who is eligible for VRAP has no remaining entitlement to other VA education benefits. However, there could be situations where a reserve or national guard member is not eligible for other VA benefits at the time they use VRAP, but later establish eligibility. In this instance, the Veteran may receive up to 36 months of benefits under VA's other educational assistance programs if they meet the eligibility criteria.

Veterans should also visit http://www.ed.gov/fund/grants_college.html and www.studentaid.ed.gov to research other ways to pay for school.

Does the veteran have to remain unemployed throughout their VRAP training? Or can they become employed after starting training and still remain eligible? Who is responsible to verify this?

The Veteran must be unemployed at the time of application. They retain eligibility if they become employed after that date.

Is VRAP excluded for Title IV eligibility and aid determination like other veteran educational assistance programs? Or will it have to be subtracted from need like other non-veteran resources?

VA does not make title IV eligibility and aid determinations. We defer to the Department of Education on this issue.

Can veterans be Ch 31 eligible and still use VRAP? Could a student start a program under VRAP and then complete it under CH 31 if they are eligible for both?

No, the Veteran cannot receive VRAP if, at the time of application, he or she has been determined eligible for receipt of Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (chapter 31) benefits. The Veteran may use chapter 31 benefits upon completion of training under VRAP if he/she becomes eligible for chapter 31 after becoming eligible for VRAP.

Does every participant get a full 12 months of benefit under VRAP or does the 48 month rule apply?

Yes, each eligible Veteran will be entitled to 12 months of VRAP benefits even if they received 48 months of entitlement under two or more of VA's other educational assistance programs. However, if the Veteran subsequently becomes eligible to another educational assistance program after completing training under VRAP, the months used under VRAP will apply towards the 48 month limit allowed under two or more VA educational programs.

Can a student complete more than one certificate program under VRAP?

No change of programs are allowed under VRAP as the program is limited to 12 months. However, if a student completes a certificate program under VRAP and pursues a second certificate program that leads to the same educational, vocational, or professional objective (high-demand occupation) then VA may pay benefits for that second program.

If a student has a COE for VRAP at one institution, but then changes their mind and wants to attend a different school, how do they notify VA and DOL of this change? How do they notify these agencies of a change in education program at the same school the COE approved?

A student that wishes to change schools to pursue training towards the same program of education, should submit a new Application for VRAP Benefits (VA Form 22-1990R) listing the new school. No changes of program are allowed under VRAP. Once a student has received payment for training under VRAP, he or she must continue to train in the same program to continue receiving benefits. Any change that would result in a loss of credit is considered a change of program even if the new program leads to the same educational, vocational, or professional objective (high demand occupation). All credits earned under the initial program must transfer and be counted toward the completion of the new program in order for the individual to receive payment for training under the new program.

What can students do when the program they want to pursue is not offered on a full-time basis? This can happen when a school cannot offer all classes every term.

VRAP benefits can only be paid for training pursued on a full-time basis. Students should review the class schedules and availability prior to making a determination to pursue a program of education under VRAP.

What documentation is required in the school file for compliance and when will compliance start covering VRAP?

The same documentation that is required under the other VA education benefit programs. VA will continue to review enrollment certifications for all programs administered by the Department when completing a compliance survey. As such, any compliance surveys currently being conducted will include a review of VRAP claims.

Who verifies that the student is not enrolled in or receiving federal or state job training through another resource? This is not information a school would have access to.

The Department of Labor will make that determination based on responses provided in the individual's application.

Can VRAP students participate in work-study?

No. The work-study provisions were not amended to include VRAP. As such, VRAP participants will not be eligible to receive VA work-study benefits.

If a student starts at full-time status but then drops below full-time, will they lose all benefits and have an overpayment back to beginning of the program? Or will benefits simply cease as of the date of reduction?

If an individual drops below full-time while using VRAP, the retraining assistance will terminate effective the date on which the reduction occurred.

Does the COE clearly state how many months of VRAP entitlement the student has? Schools are concerned that students are starting programs that will last longer than their 12 months' (or less) of entitlement with no plan in place to pay to complete.

The COE will state the amount of VRAP entitlement available. All VRAP participants will be eligible for 12 months of entitlement.

Do SCOs process exactly like a CH 30 MGIB student except for choosing VRAP as the program in VA Once?

Yes. Please refer to Version P033 of VA-ONCE update located on the SCO page on the GI Bill website for more information on submitting VRAP certifications.

Are there written guidelines or regulations for VRAP yet? If not, when can we expect them?

Regulations are currently being drafted and will be made available as soon as possible. Notification will be sent when the regulations are available.

Schools have heard that veterans must apply in two places – VA and DoL. How do they do that?

VA and DOL created a joint application so that Veterans could apply and submit the application in a single setting. VRAP applications are only being accepted electronically via the VA's eBenefits page.

If an individual needs assistance in completing and submitting the online application, he or she may visit their Local Veterans Employment Representative (LVER)/Disabled Veterans Outreach Program (DVOP) specialist or One-Stop Career Shop. He or she may also receive assistance by visiting the nearest VA Regional Office.

School has a student with a COE and wants to know if that means the student can enroll in any of their certificate or AAS degree programs.

The individual can only enroll in a program of education that is approved for VA education benefits; that leads to an Associate Degree, Non-College Degree, or a Certificate; and provides training towards a high demand occupation. Please see the following link for the list of high demand occupations:
http://benefits.va.gov/vow/docs/VRAP_High_Demand.pdf

How and when does DoL verify veteran's unemployment status and thus declare them eligible? Schools worry that students may start a program, incur costs, and then later be found ineligible for a variety of reasons.

Unemployment status is determined through self-attestation the day the Veteran applies for the program and they do not have to remain unemployed throughout the duration of the program.

Is the maximum number of participants determined by the total number that have applied? The total found eligible? The total number that begin drawing benefits? Some students want to wait (in this case, to establish residency in the state for tuition purposes) but worry that since this is first-come, they may be ineligible later even if they already have a COE for VRAP. Does possession of the COE confirm a spot among the 99,000?

Yes, the possession of a COE confirms a spot among the 99,000. A VRAP participant is a person who has been found eligible for the program and issued a Certificate of Eligibility (COE). Every individual issued a COE is counted towards the maximum allowable participants for the specified period. Once an individual is found eligible under the program, he or she will remain eligible until entitlement is exhausted (everyone gets 12 months of entitlement).

Many schools have NCD programs that were approved under the IHL facility code by VA – is there any way to have those considered for VRAP use?

Approved NCD programs that lead to a high demand occupation offered at a community college (IHL) or technical school will be eligible for the VRAP program.

Is there any way for a school to know which of their programs are approved/eligible for VRAP students? Or is this determination done only when an individual student requests to attend a specific program?

This determination can only be done when an individual provides their program of education during the application process. The program of education must lead to an Associate's degree or certificate and must lead to a high demand occupation. Veterans are required to notify VA of the high demand occupation for which their desired program will provide training towards and certify that they are pursuing their program with that goal in mind. The school and/or student may view programs approved for VA education benefits at http://gibill.va.gov/resources/education_resources/choosing_a_school.html and high demand occupations at http://benefits.va.gov/vow/docs/VRAP_High_Demand.pdf.

No change in programs are allowed under VRAP once a payment has been issued for training under VRAP. A change in program occurs when there is—

1. A change in the individual's high demand occupational objective; or
2. Is no change in the individual's high demand occupational objective, but there is a change that results in the loss of credit that was earned while pursuing training under VRAP.

A Veteran who was issued a COE for one program may change his or her mind and pursue a different program even if the new program leads to a different high demand occupational objective as long as he or she has not been issued a payment for training under VRAP.

If the student's first program choice is disapproved, how do they request to switch to a different program? Do they use a 22-1995? Some other process or form? Through which site?

If the student's first program choice is disapproved for VRAP, the student should submit another 1990R listing the new program. The application is available electronically on VA's eBenefits website.—

PLEASE NOTE: No changes of program are allowed under VRAP once VA issues a payment for training under VRAP. The student must continue to train in the same program to continue receiving benefits.

Is there an advance pay component for VRAP like there is for MGIB Ch 30?

BDN Advance Payment functionality is expected to be available late August 2012. A notification and instructions will be issued once Advance Payment functionality is available.

Can you create a checklist or step-by-step process for VRAP?

The SCO Handbook has been updated to include information on the VRAP certification process. You can access the handbook by [clicking here](#).

What should an SCO do when a student has an approved COE, but signs up for courses that count for a different program than the one approved? Is the school responsible to certify only classes for the program listed on the COE? What if the COE does not accurately match the name of the program at that school? This particular school has had 3 out of 4 students have COEs with approved programs that don't match what the student is actually doing at the school. Is this the SCOs responsibility to police?

VA can only pay VRAP benefits for certain programs. If the student was approved for a particular program but is pursuing a different one, the SCO should certify training for the program as long as it is approved for VA education benefits. If the SCO is unsure or needs confirmation that a program of education is approved for VRAP, he or she should request the student complete a new application (VA Form 22-1990R) to receive a Certificate of Eligibility for the desired program of education.

Does VRAP pay only for training that BEGINS on or after July 1, 2012? Or can they already be enrolled (many are!) and simply begin receiving benefits as of 7/1/12? Many summer terms began well before July 1. Some schools have recommended that students wait until their fall term to start since this point is unclear, but this causes problems due to the short nature of VRAP.

Per PL 112-56, VRAP benefits can only be paid for enrollment periods that BEGIN on or after July 1, 2012.

VA processors are calling schools with their own questions about how VRAP works.

VA has provided training on VRAP to VA processors. VA processors should not be calling schools with questions regarding the program; however, if this occurs, please instruct the processor to speak with their management staff for clarification.

Schools have received conflicting guidance about the start date question – one VA processor stated that the student wouldn't receive pay till the end of July because although the term started in June, VRAP didn't start until

July 1 -- while another stated the entire claim would be denied because term began before the VRAP start date. Which is correct?

VA may issue payments for VRAP training for enrollment periods that begin on or after July 1, 2012. Enrollment periods that begin prior to July 1, 2012 are not eligible for VRAP payments. Payments are made in arrears, which mean they will be issued at the beginning of each month for training pursued the previous month. For example, VA will issue payments at the beginning of August 2012 for training pursued in July 2012.

An SCO has a COE approving veteran for an “Associate of Arts” at another school, but wants to attend here. The SCO looked at the website for that school, HCC, for this “ART” program and it is a generic associate’s degree, very similar to his own Associate of Arts and Science”. Also, the SCO is not aware of any prior credit that would apply towards the degree at his college. So, the questions are:

- 1. Can the student switch schools?**
 - a. School must evaluate prior credit. If there is no loss of credit then the student may switch schools but must continue training towards the same program of education. The student should submit a new VA Form 22-1990R notifying VA of change in school.

- 2. How can a generic associates degree be considered “high demand”?**
 - a. Several of the high demand occupations only require an associate’s degree for entry-level positions. For example, an individual with a generic associate degree may qualify for a general or operational manager position. Individuals applying for benefits under VRAP must notify VA of the program they wish to pursue and the high demand occupation the program will train them for.

- 3. How can they approve a two-year degree if the veteran has no prior credit?**
 - a. VRAP provides 12 months of training towards an associate degree, non-college degree, or certificate. There is no requirement that the Veteran be able to complete the program in 12 months.

Scenarios from emails submitted by schools:

“No sooner had I sent this email to you when a VRAP applicant walked in with some questions. He wants to take a computer related certificate and an organizational leadership certificate to make him more employable. I see the congruency between the two for an outcome that the spirit of VRAP seems to support. Could we certify these two different programs? He

apparently applied to the VA and used a slash to name both certificates so it will be interesting to see what the VA does with such a request!”

VRAP pays for training in the same manner as chapter 30. As such, VA cannot pay for two different certificate programs at the same time.

“Students may choose the name of the program from the VA list e.g. Substance Abuse Counselor. At our school we call this program Chemical Dependency Counselor. One student named the school program and received an approval letter. Another student with the same intent named the VA listed program and his letter stated Program not approved. We will certify him under the correct program, with a remark, and it should be okay but this is just a heads up to SCOs about what may occur.

“A veteran just came in with his COE. It does not specify any program whatsoever. So, does he simply pick a program that meets the criteria and I am then responsible to verify he will be issued a degree? Certificate? He told me the VA rep told him he was approved for “Music” – using the high demand list I assume that to be musician which is a performing skill we do not teach.”

If the SCO is unsure or needs confirmation that a program of education is approved for VRAP, he or she should request the student complete a new application (VA Form 22-1990R) to receive a Certificate of Eligibility for the desired program of education.

“I've now had 4 schools tell me a vet's brought in a COE showing the school and program are approved, yet the school doesn't offer the program on the COE. We've also been told the benefit can only be paid for full-time training, and one vet's in a 12 credit certificate program where 2 of the (3 credit) courses are only offered in the fall, and the other 2 are only offered in the spring. What do we do?”

The SCO should request the student complete a 1990R for an allowable program of education at the chosen school. VRAP cannot be paid for any training that is less than full-time. Students should review the class schedules and availability prior to making a determination to pursue a program of education under VRAP.