

VA Education Benefits

Presented by:

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Veteran Affairs

FINANCIAL AID COMPLAINTS

SUPPOSE WE REFUND YOUR TUITION AND FEES, LET YOU KEEP YOUR PELL MONEY, CLOSE THE SCHOOL DOWN, AND HAVE THE DEAN SHOT. WOULD THAT BE SATISFACTORY?????



WE Need You

The success of VA educational programs depends largely on you, as a certifying official. Your work on behalf of your institution in assisting VA students is critical in the processing and payment of veterans educational benefits. We could not do our job without you.



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Dual Certification

- Schools are obligated to submit student's enrollment "without delay"

In the SCO handbook (page 44) this is expressed as, "Schools are requested to submit certifications as early as possible in order to ensure that students receive their benefit payments in a timely manner, but must be submitted 30 days of the beginning of the term."

- An effective way to minimize student debts and adjustments is for schools to submit an enrollment certification with \$0.00, and then amend the tuition and fees after the end of the drop-add period. This practice is often called "Dual Certification."
- However, before an adjustment or termination of the enrollment is made, an "amended" certification must be submitted with the tuition and fees that are charged at the beginning of the term.
- Reductions must show what the tuition and fees are for the reduced hours for the beginning of the term.



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Public Law 114-315 Section 404: Academic Progress and Outcome Measures

- Background: Department of Veterans Administration, Department of Education , and Department of Defense have collaborated for the last 3 years to develop and publish outcome measures. However, VA did not have the statutory authority to require schools to report this information. Mostly recently with the passage of the Blumenthal-Miller Act (Public Law 114-315), VA is authorized to make it a condition of approval for schools to submit information regarding academic progress for GI Bill students.
- Academic Progress includes:
 - Retention Rate
 - Persistence Rate
 - Transfer Rate
 - Graduation Rate - Institute of Higher Learning (IHL) Schools
 - Certificate Completion - Non College Degree (NCD) Schools

What does this mean?

It is mandatory by the law for educational institutions to report academic progress to VA

If educational institutions fail to report student academic progress they risk losing VA approval for training

Leveraging this data provides VA the ability to assist Veterans, Servicemembers and eligible dependents in making more informed educational decisions.



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School Certifying Official (SCO) Training Requirements

- Section 305 of the Harry W. Colmery Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2017, also referred to as the “Forever GI Bill,” authorizes VA to establish training requirements for SCOs at “covered institutions”.
- Training requirements will be developed in consultation with the State approving agencies (SAAs).
- VA may disapprove any course of education offered by the institution if training requirements are not met.
- A "covered educational institution" would refer to an educational institution that has enrolled 20 or more individuals using VA educational assistance.
- This section will be effective on August 1, 2018



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Implementation Plan

- Training will be deployed in phases, with specific requirements for new SCOs.
- First phase will be for new SCOs designated on or after August 1, 2018.
- New SCO training will be completed online and will include a basic overview of VA education benefits and SCO responsibilities.



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Understanding Section 107

- Requires VA to calculate the Monthly Housing Allowance (MHA) under the Post-9/11 GI Bill based on the location of the campus where the individual physically attends the majority of their classes
- MHA will no longer be based on the “Institution” location of the school where the individual is enrolled
- Applies to all new terms beginning on or after August 1, 2018



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Section 501: Remove Exemption from DoD Basic Allowance of Housing Reduction

- Creates two categories of individuals with separate rate tables –
- Individuals that begin using Post -9/11 GI Bill before January 1, 2018 (VA Rate –uncapped)
- Individuals that begin using Post-9/11 GI Bill on or after January 1, 2018 (DOD Rate – capped)



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Section 501: Remove Exemption from DoD

Sample: Ohio State University Main Campus



- Basic Housing Allowance
- Zip Code VA Rate * DOD Rate Difference
- 43210 \$1188 \$1119 \$69.00

- * DOD Rate applies to the Post 9/11 GI Bill students who had not previously used their benefits before 1/1/2018.



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“85/15” Reporting Waiver Request

The 85:15 percent ratio applied to all VA-eligible students under all education chapters, not just Chapter 33. The percentage of VA and Educational Institution supported students must be computed for each program separately. The results of the computation must be submitted to me no later than 30 days after the beginning of each term (quarter or semester, excluding summer sessions, or module). If your calendar is based on a school year instead of terms, these reports are required every 12 weeks. Sufficient records (by student, program, term) must be kept by the Educational Institution to allow the computation to be verified. Branches with separate administrative capability must compute and report the 85:15 percent ratio separately from the main campus. Compliance with the 85:15 ratio will be reviewed during compliance surveys.



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35 Percent Waivers

When 35 percent or less of a school's total enrollment receive VA benefits, the school and each branch with separate administrative capability may certify to that effect and receive a waiver of periodic reporting of the percentage of VA students enrolled in each program. The school must count all students receiving VA benefits on the VA side of the ratio. The certification is required only once. The waiver will remain in effect unless the school's percentage of VA students rises above 35 percent. If that occurs, the school must compute the 85-15 percent ratio for all courses and submit the results to the Education Liaison Representative.



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Calendar Week

- Currently it is understood that the term “Calendar Week “is defined as Sunday to Saturday, therefore schools that have classes starting on different weeks must report the appropriate start date for those specific classes.
- Effective any (Standard) term, quarter, or semester with a start date after the date of notification. The term “calendar week” will be understood to mean “seven calendar days.”
- • If a student enrolls in a course and the actual first day that the student attends class is no later than the seventh calendar day of the term, then the beginning date of the certification will be the first day of the term, quarter, or semester in which the student is enrolled.
- • If a student enrolls in a course and the actual first day that the student attends class is after the seventh calendar day of the term, then the beginning date of the award will be the actual date of the first class scheduled for that particular course.



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What to do if a student repeats a course

- Classes that are successfully completed may not be certified for again for VA purposes if they are repeated. However, if a student fails a class, or if a program requires a higher grade than the one achieved in a particular class for successful completion, that course class may be repeated and certified to VA again.
- Example 1, if a Nursing program requires a “B” or better in Biology, then that class may be repeated if a “B” or better was not earned. That requirement must be in the school catalog.
- **If a course is required for graduation, a student may repeat the course and be certified for it until it is successfully completed. No further information needs to be provided to VA regarding those courses.**



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What to do with a walk away

- Schools with an established attendance policy must monitor compliance with that policy, enforce the policy, and report terminations due to violations of the policy to VA. However, absences that do not violate the established attendance policy don't need to be reported. Schools that don't have an established attendance policy are not required to report changes in attendance.



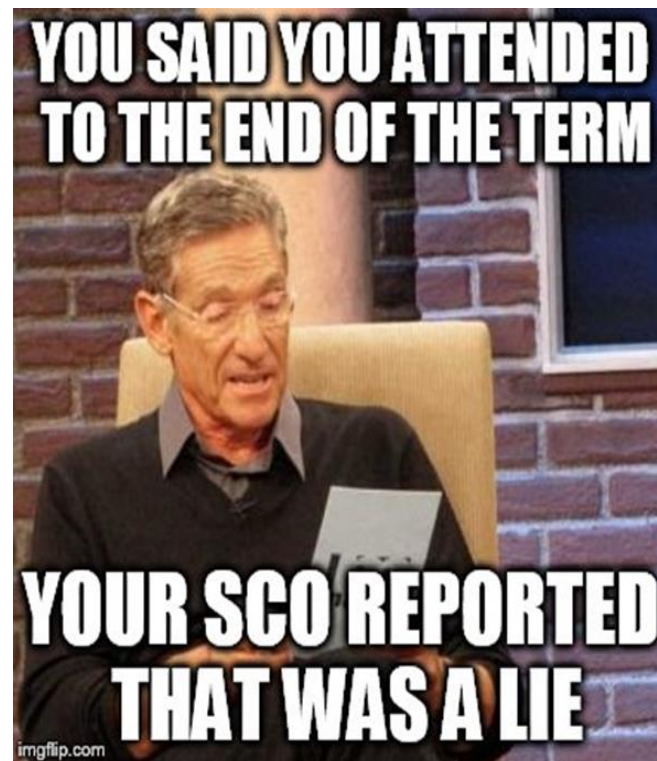
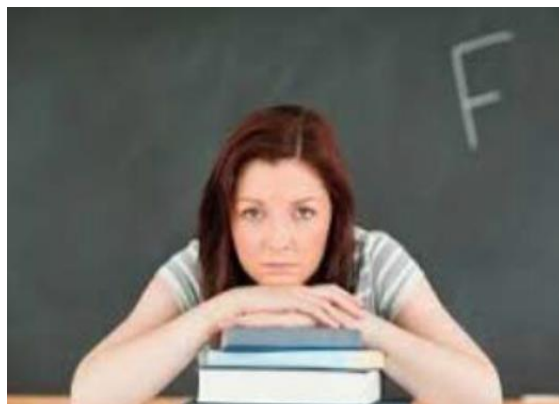
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What to do with a walk away

The last date of attendance during a period of enrollment does not need to be reported if a student completes the enrollment period with a punitive grade and does not violate the school's standards of conduct, progress, or attendance during that term.



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Section 304: Annual Reporting Fees Requirements

- Revises the requirements governing reporting fees payable to educational institutions
- and joint apprenticeship training committees
- Preparing Communications Plan to inform about increased fee and limitations



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Section 304: Annual Reporting Fees Requirements

- The surveyor will interview the primary School Certifying Official (SCO) and confirm how the school utilizes the Reporting Fee and document findings in the narrative report.
- Schools should document how they use the Reporting Fee (a formal ledger, receipts to/from a SCO training conference, invoices for equipment for the school's Veteran Center, formal documentation the school uses the Reporting Fees as part the SCOs salary, etc.). The surveyor should review these documents and ensure the school has not spent the Reporting Fee on unapproved expenses.



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Section 308: School View of Remaining GI Bill Months

- Requires VA to make available to education institutions information about the amount
- of educational assistance a Veteran can get under Chapter 30, 32, 33, or 35
- Developing processes and procedures to allow Veteran to opt-out



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Education Liaison Representatives

We now have two ELR's for Ohio to answer emails and phone calls. In the future, please use the email address:

OH.ELR.VBASTL@va.gov

Someone should be able to answer your questions now when one of the ELR's is not available.



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MGIB Benefits Briefing



Questions

