

# VA Education Benefits FAQs



Many of your VA education benefit questions can be answered through the GI Bill® website at <http://gibill.va.gov>. You can also submit specific questions through their secure site: <https://gibill.custhelp.com>. A VA Education Specialist can be reached at 1 (888) 442-4551.

## How do I apply for VA education benefits?

Students who have not previously received benefits must complete and submit an initial application online at [www.va.gov](http://www.va.gov). The VA may also request a Member-4 copy of the DD-214 to verify dates of service. The VA estimates 30 days for the processing of initial applications.

After applying for education benefits, you will receive a Certificate of Eligibility (COE) stating your entitlement. You can upload a copy of your Certificate of Eligibility in your MySCC student portal, email a legible copy to the Veterans Coordinator, or bring it to Student Services in ADM 1204.

## Once I am receiving my VA education benefits through St. Charles Community College, what do I need to do for these to continue?

For each semester that you would like to use your educational benefits, you must complete a "Certify My VA Benefits" form in eForms. This must be completed one week prior to payment due date to prevent being dropped from courses for non-payment. If you make changes to your schedule after certification, you must report these changes immediately by completing a "VA Certification Adjustment" form in eForms.

You must be actively pursuing a degree or educational goal and maintain good academic standing. All courses must apply to your approved degree program to be covered by GI Bill® or other VA funding.

## I am a first time student. How do I get started?

Take a look at our New Veteran Checklist. This will help point you in the right direction. And of course you can always stop by the Student Services office, ADM 1204. You can also contact the Veterans Coordinator to make an appointment.

## How do I secure my enrollment if I am using VA education benefits?

Students receiving education benefits under Chapters 31 or 33 will be held in their classes upon receipt of their certification request. This needs to be done one week prior to the payment due date to secure your courses. Failure to submit this form prior to the [tuition payment deadline](#) may result in being dropped from courses unless the student pays out of pocket for the semester charges.

Students receiving education benefits under Chapters 30, 1606 or 35 are required to pay in advance by the tuition payment deadline for their courses to avoid being dropped for non-payment. Students have the option to select the Nelnet No Down Payment plan on the Certification Request form. They then must enroll in Nelnet in the student portal two (2) business days after selecting this option, but prior to the tuition deadline.

## How many hours must I be in each semester to receive BAH (Chapter 33)?

Your rate of pursuit must be greater than half-time (7+ hours for fall or spring; 4+ for summer) each term.

**FULL TIME STATUS:** To receive full-time BAH, you must be enrolled in at least 12 credit hours for the entire 16-week term, or at least 6 for the summer term.

## **How much will my education benefit checks be?**

This will vary, and is based on the type of GI Bill® or other education program you are using, as well as the number of credit hours that you are enrolled in each term. Enrolling in classes with various beginning and ending dates such as eight-week block classes may affect the monthly dollar amount. To find out the monthly payment amount for which you may be eligible, go to <http://gibill.va.gov> or call 1 (888) 442-4551.

The number of days you are in classes for a given month will also determine the amount of your benefit check. For example, if you are in class for two weeks in August, your benefit check will be reduced since you were not attending for a full month.

## **I am going to be changing my degree program. Do I need to report this to the Department of Veterans Affairs?**

No. Once you have changed your degree program, please inform the VA School Certifying Official in ADM 1204 (or contact info below) so that the change can be reported to the VA by the school.

## **What happens if I drop a class?**

You will need to report this change in your enrollment status immediately by submitting a “Veterans Certification Adjustment” form in eForms. The Coordinator of Veteran Services will report the change to the VA. You will be contacted by the VA about any changes in your benefits and any potential overpayments.

## **What happens if I stop attending a course?**

In certain cases, if a student is enrolled but reported as having never attended a course, the student will receive an AW grade and the VA will require the school to return all tuition funds. If a course receives a failing grade (F) with a last date of attendance that precedes the last week of class, this will be reported as a reduction to the VA and will lead to an overpayment of benefits. In most cases to avoid overpayment issues, it's best to continue attending your courses, even if you are at risk of failing.

## **Will I still receive Basic Allowances for Housing (BAH) if I enroll in all distance learning courses (Chapter 33 only)?**

If you enroll in all distance learning courses, you are eligible for BAH as long as your rate of pursuit is greater than half-time (7 or more hours for fall and spring). However, if you enroll in only distance learning courses your monthly housing allowance will be 50% of the national average of all Basic Allowances for Housing.

## **What is considered full-time in the summer?**

Full-time in the summer is 6 hours the entire 8 weeks. Full-time is 12 hours the entire 16 weeks of the fall and spring semesters. If you enroll in courses that start late or end early, your benefits may be affected.

## **What scholarship opportunities are available to my family and me?**

Information about SCC Scholarships can be found at [www.stchas.edu/scholarships](http://www.stchas.edu/scholarships)

Board of Trustees Honoring Military Families Scholarship: This award is specifically for dependent spouses and children of service members and veterans. See above link for academic eligibility requirements.

## **Who can I contact if I have other questions?**

Andrew Gates, SCC Coordinator of Veterans Services ... ADM 1204 ... (636) 922-8268 ... [agates@stchas.edu](mailto:agates@stchas.edu)