

WELCOME

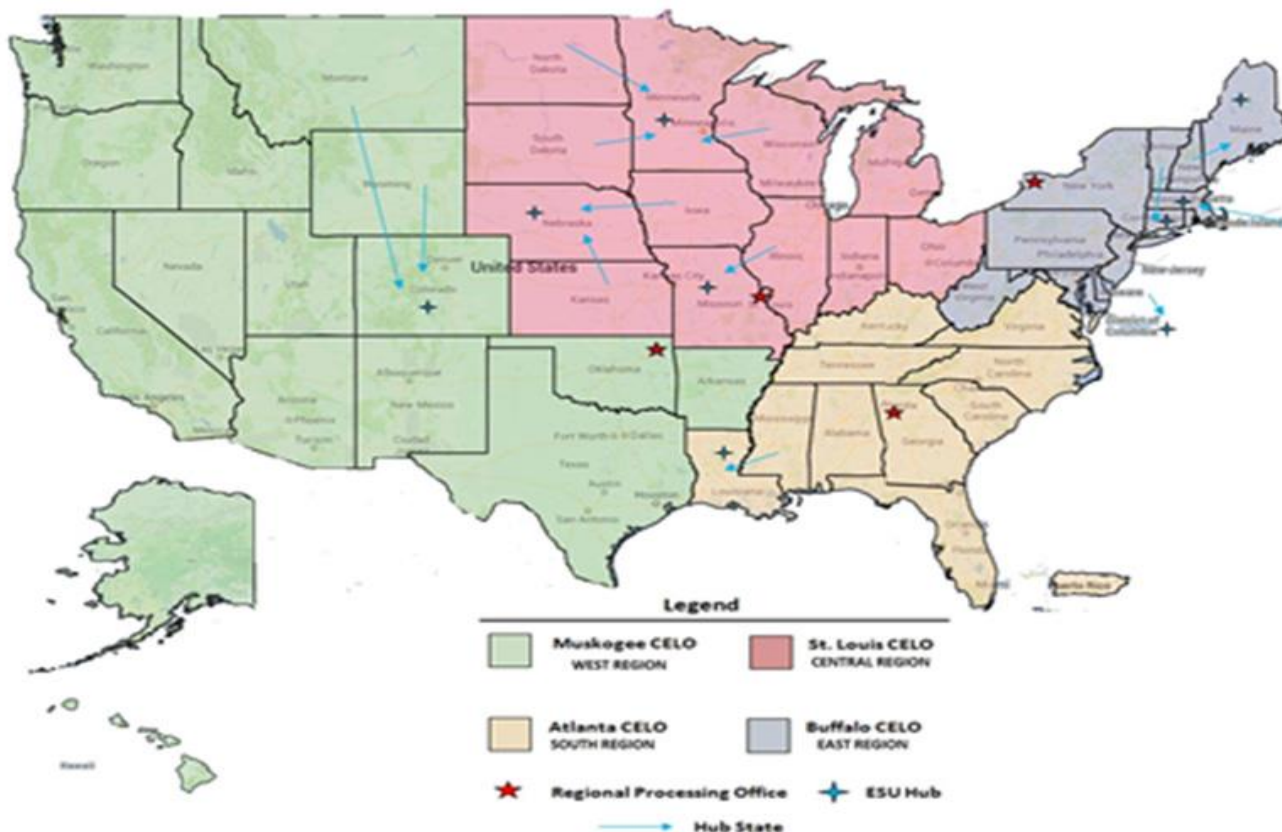
2019 NEW SCO TRAINING

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WHO TO CALL !!

Each CELO that has a jurisdiction over ELR and ECSS, approvals and compliance.



WHO TO CALL !!

VA Regional Processing Office (U.S. Dept. of Veteran Affairs)

Mail Certification to:

VA Regional Processing Office (22)

P.O. Box 8888

Muskogee, OK 74402-8888

direct fax# **(918) 781-7863**

School Official Hotline-1 **(855) 225-1159**

Right Now Web (VA's Internet Inquiry System in the "Ask a Question" section of the benefits website):

https://gibill.custhelp.com/app/utils/login_form/redirect/ask

Benefits Website

https://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/school_training_resources.asp

WHO TO CALL !!

United States Department of Veterans Affairs

David M. Lewis, Education Liaison Representative

Email (david.lewis3@va.gov)

LA-ELR.VBAATG@va.gov

MS-ELR.VBAATG@va.gov

Phone# (504) 619-4437

Mail Address:

David M Lewis ELR (LA-MS)

Department of Veterans Affairs

Approval, Compliance and Liaison (22)

1250 Poydras Street Suite 200

New Orleans, LA 70113

WHO TO CALL !!

Mississippi VA -State Approving Agency

Cathy McGruder-Jones Division Director

Cathy.Mcgruder@va.gov

Phone: 601-576-4867 Fax: 601-576-4868

Mississippi VA - State Approving Agency

660 North Street

Suite 200

Jackson, MS 39202

WHO TO CALL !!

Louisiana Department of Veterans Affairs (SAA)

Cleophus Wallace, Deputy Assistant Secretary

Cleophus.Wallace@va.gov

Phone: 225-219-5013 Fax: 225-219-5590

Louisiana Department of Veterans Affairs

State Approving Agency

602 North 5TH Street

P.O. Box 94095

Baton Rouge, LA 70804-9095

WHO TO CALL !!

Hotline for SCOs

- In August 2012, VA established a dedicated Hotline for SCOs to contact VA (1-855-225-1159). The purpose of this hotline is to give SCOs across the country direct and immediate access to a VA case manager for difficult questions or issues involving school payments as well as claims requiring expedited review.

- Examples of such inquiries are-
 - School debt questions
 - Eligibility percentage of enrolled veterans
 - Questions about tuition and fee or Yellow Ribbon payments

WHO TO CALL !!

- The toll-free hotline number is **1 (855) 225-1159**. The hotline is available from 7:00 am to 5:00 pm, Central Time.
- SCOs must provide the school's facility code and be listed as a designated VA school certifying official to receive assistance through the dedicated hotline.
- Calls received on the hotline from students and officials who have not been designated to provide enrollment information to VA will be routed to the GI Bill hotline (1-888-GI Bill – 1).

WHO TO CALL !!

***THESE NUMBERS AND EMAIL ADDRESS ARE FOR SCHOOL CERTIFYING
OFFICIALS ONLY;***

STUDENTS MUST USE THE 1-888-442-4551

eBenefits



eBenefits

My Gateway To Benefit Information

www.ebenefits.va.gov

SCO Handbook

School Certifying Official



Handbook

https://www.benefits.va.gov/GIBILL/docs/job_aids/SCO_Handbook.pdf

Designation of Certifying Official and Forms

- Designation of Certifying Official (22-8794)
- Benefit Application (22-1990)
- Application for Family Member to use Transfer Benefits (1990e)
- Enrollment Certification (22-1999)
- Notice of Change of Status (22-1999b)
- Request for Change of Program (22-1995)

Questions

QUESTIONS?

Executive Order 13607 and the Principles of Excellence

principles.excellence@va.gov

https://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/school_resources.asp

Principles of Excellence

- *The Principles encourage schools to:*
 - Prior to enrollment, provide students a personalized form covering the total cost of an educational program costs, student debt estimates, and Federal financial aid options upfront
- Provide educational plans for all military and veteran education beneficiaries
- End fraudulent and aggressive recruiting techniques and misrepresentation
- Provide accommodations for service members and reservists absent due to service requirements
- Designate a point of contact for academic and financial advising
- Ensure accreditation of all new programs prior to enrolling students
- Align institutional refund policies with those under Title IV

Questions

QUESTIONS?

VA Best Practices

Emails to ELR

- Your school facility code, 11000101.
- Phone #s, and Email address updates.
- Body of the email it can only contain the first letter of the last name and the last 4 of the SSN.

Example: John Veteran xxxxxx-3333

The way this could be shown in the body of the email is

JV 3333 or JV XXX-XX-3333

- Using Fwd. Email, to reply can be harmful , i.e.. may contain PII & loss of the original subject matter

VA Best Practices

VA File Numbers

- We are seeing several enrollments from the schools where they are certifying FRY & TOE students using the veteran's SSN. Schools should certify FRY & TOE students using their own SSN except where the student previously used ch35 benefits, then they should put the VA file number.
- Always double check to make sure you have entered the correct SSN before hitting save. This could take months to get an correction made to a SSN if you are not able to correct it on your own.

VA Best Practices

- You must input the full file number: Do not use 000001234
- Do not use the school's student ID number or school facility code in the file number field.
- For Chapter 33 TOE students both VA File Number and SSN are the student's SSN.
- For Chapter 35 students the VA File Number is the Veteran's File Number.
(can be the SSN or an 8 digit VA assigned number)
- Always double check all fees before certifying as not all fees are allowed, such as application fees.

VA Best Practices

WRONG SSN AND HOW TO CHANGE IT IN VAONCE

- You will need to add this student back into VAONCE again as a new student the same way all new students are added.
- Use the correct SSN, once the term is over deactivate the wrong SSN, do not recertify the same term twice.
- You must make sure that the wrong SSN cert has been processed then after that term is over you will deactivate the wrong SSN and use the correct one for the new term. Any changes to the wrong SSN cert must be done using the wrong SSN.

VA Best Practices

Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT)

- Effective immediately, institutions that receive, or wish to receive, Post-9/11 GI Bill payments via direct deposit must submit a request, or any change in information, to VA on school letterhead.
- The letter should be forwarded to the Education Liaison Representative (ELR) for the state in which the school resides.

VA Best Practices

VA Debt Management Center (DMC)

- "Recently, VA Debt Management Center (DMC) began providing facilities debt notification via letter with a remittance slip to return with payment. Some facilities are photocopying the letter from DMC in lieu of returning the remittance slip with their payment. Unfortunately, the copy of the letter cannot be read correctly by the scanning equipment used for processing causing additional workload and delays in processing school payments. We ask that all facilities **please submit the original remittance slip with their payment** to expedite processing of these payments."
- We know there is a lot of confusion when a school is to return funds to the VA or DMC.

VA Best Practices

- The single largest reason for automation failure is the entry of free-text (non-standard) remarks. Because the “**Other Remarks**” field is a free-entry field, our claims processing system can’t determine what has been entered or what effect the information has on the current benefit award.
- Examples include
 - Submitting a remark stating the tuition and fees broken out separately.
 - Board of Governors (BOG) tuition waiver received: fees still apply.
 - Certifying \$0.00 T/F’s
 - Certifying Graduate training
 - Term Dates.
 - Correcting tuition and fees only.

Questions

QUESTIONS?

SCO Responsibilities

RESPONSIBLE FOR REPORTING:

- Keep VA informed of the enrollment status of veterans and other eligible persons
- Use basic forms to keep VA informed, such as:
- Enrollment Certification (VAF 22-1999) to report tuition, fees, enrollment dates, term dates, Yellow Ribbon
- Notice of Change in Student Status (VAF 22-1999B) to report all changes to enrollment information (including those that do not result in a training time change)
- May use paper forms or electronic enrollment (VA-ONCE)
- Report all enrollments and changes within 30 days.

SCO Responsibilities

- Report one term at a time (for schools on other than quarter or semester, report number of terms equal to a 15-week semester)
- Monitor the subjects pursued by a student to certify to VA only those subjects that apply to the student's program
- Monitor student's grades to ensure (s)he is making satisfactory progress; report unsatisfactory progress
- Monitor student's conduct and report when student is suspended or dismissed for unsatisfactory conduct.

SCO Responsibilities

- Keep the State Approving Agency (SAA) informed of:
 - New programs and changes in current programs
 - Changes in academic policies and procedures
 - Changes of address, phone numbers, certifying officials
 - Any other information required by the SAA.
- Keep up-to-date on current VA rules and benefits o Provide e-mail address to VA Education Liaison Representative (ELR) to be included on listserv
- Read and maintain VA bulletins
- Read and keep in a safe place a copy of the VA Benefits Handbook
- Attend VA and SAA training opportunities
- Enroll in VA on-line training.

SCO Responsibilities

- Responsibilities for maintaining records of VA students and making the records available for inspection:
- Retain file of VA papers submitted & records of academic progress, program pursuit, etc.
- Maintain records for at least three years following the student's last date of attendance
- Ensure that records are kept in a safe place and that the privacy of VA students is protected
- Make available all school records to representatives of the SAA and VA.

SCO Responsibilities

- A school's file for a VA student should contain:
- Copies of all VA paperwork
- The school's transcript, grade reports, drop slips, registration slips (for those courses dropped during drop/add), transcripts from previous schools with evaluations of same, student's school application, records of disciplinary action, program outline (to track proper courses taken), etc.
- Additional responsibilities required of a Yellow Ribbon school:
- Certify in accordance with the school's Yellow Ribbon agreement
 - Maintain these additional records:
 - Track the number of students enrolled under Yellow Ribbon
 - Track the annual Amount of Tuition and Fees
 - Develop and document a process for the first come-first serve enrollment of students into the Yellow Ribbon Program.

SCO Responsibilities

- **ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES THAT SCHOOLS ARE ENCOURAGED TO CARRY OUT, BUT ARE NOT REQUIRED BY VA:**
- Assist VA students in applying for education benefits
- Maintain copies of appropriate application forms
- When requested, help veterans and dependents fill out and send in applications
- If student cannot resolve pay problems, assist through VA channels designated for school officials
- Disseminate and/or post information on VA education benefits, programs, and contact points
- Ensure that VA students are fully aware of their responsibilities to the school and VA.

Questions

QUESTIONS?

CERTIFYING TUITION AND FEES

The actual net cost for tuition and fees assessed by the institution after the application of—

- (a) any waiver of, or reduction in, tuition and fees; and (b) any scholarship, or other Federal, State, institutional, or employer-based aid or assistance (other than federal loans and Pell grants) that is “provided directly to the institution and specifically designated for the sole purpose of defraying tuition and fees”

CERTIFYING TUITION AND FEES

Schools should report the amount of tuition and fees charged after deducting any amounts paid with Federal Funds (excluding title IV funds).

Examples of programs that provide educational assistance with non-Title IV Federal Funds include:

- •Reserve Officers Training Corps (ROTC)
- •Military Spouse Career Advancement Accounts (MyCAA)

CERTIFYING TUITION AND FEES

The term “Title IV Funds” refers to the Federal Financial Aid Programs authorized under the Higher Education Act of 1965 (as amended) and includes the following programs:

- Federal Pell Grants
- Federal Supplemental Education Opportunity Grant (FSEOG)
- Direct Stafford Loans (Subsidized and Unsubsidized)
- Federal Perkins Loans
- Parent (PLUS) Loans (for TOE child recipients)
- Grad (PLUS) Loans (typically for TOE spouse recipients)

CERTIFYING TUITION AND FEES

Scholarships:

Please know the purpose of the scholarship

- Is it a scholarship that will **apply toward tuition only**? Or **Tuition and fees**?
- Is it a scholarship to help with any costs outside tuition and fees?

NOTE:

If the purpose of the scholarship is to pay toward tuition and/or fees, then this amount must be subtracted from the original tuition and/or fees amount.

Questions

QUESTIONS?

CHANGE IN ENROLLMENT PROCESS, AMEND, ADJUST, AND TERMINATE

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

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

CHANGE IN ENROLLMENT PROCESS, AMEND, ADJUST, AND TERMINATE

Last Date of Attendance/Effective Date

- VA-ONCE asks for the “LDA/EFF Date” (Last Date of Attendance/Effective Date).
 - • If a student officially withdraws, the date the student withdrew is the effective date.
 - • If a student is administratively withdrawn or stops attending without officially withdrawing, the actual last date of attendance must be determined and reported.
- • If a student completes the term with all “F” and/or non-punitive grades, then determine and report the actual last date of attendance for each course and, if required, terminate the student for unsatisfactory progress.
- Use one of the following methods to determine the last actual date of attendance: (1) attendance records, (2) grading reports, (3) last date on which examination or other papers filed, or (4) last day of activity in the instructor's records.
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CHANGE IN ENROLLMENT PROCESS, AMEND, ADJUST, AND TERMINATE

- If a student has used up their 6 credit exclusion and has not provided VA with acceptable mitigating circumstances the debt is calculated from the first day of the term.
- VA gave CH33s a “pass” for a number of years (due to LTS system limitations) but eff 11/25/15 VA started treating CH33s in the same manner, that is (If a student has used up their 6 credit exclusion and has not provided VA with acceptable mitigating circumstances the debt is calculated from the first day of the term.)
- VA needs the LDA in cases where the 6crx is available and/or acceptable mitigating circumstances are provided, as the debt would then be calculated from the LDA.
- The LDA is only usable for punitive grades, A-F.

SO...“If students receive “W”s, the grade that doesn’t impact the GPA, it is treated as if they never attended the course. Debt for everything paid for those hours that the “W” is received.

Questions

QUESTIONS?

UNSATISFACTORY PROGRESS, CONDUCT AND ATTENDANCE

§ 21.9725 Progress and conduct.

- (a) *Satisfactory pursuit of program*. In order to receive payments of educational assistance under 38 U.S.C. chapter 33 for pursuit of a program of education, an individual must maintain satisfactory progress. VA will discontinue payments of educational assistance if the individual does not maintain satisfactory progress. **Progress is unsatisfactory if the individual does not satisfactorily progress according to the regularly prescribed standards of the institution of higher learning** he or she is attending.
- (Authority: 38 U.S.C. 3034(a), 3323(a), 3474)
- (b) *Satisfactory conduct*. In order to receive educational assistance for pursuit of a program of education, an individual must maintain satisfactory conduct according to the regularly prescribed standards and practices of the institution of higher learning in which he or she is enrolled. If the individual will no longer be retained as a student or will not be readmitted as a student by the institution of higher learning in which he or she is enrolled, VA will discontinue educational assistance, unless further development establishes that the institution of higher learning's action is wrongfully retaliatory in nature.
- (Authority: 38 U.S.C. 3034(a), 3323(a), 3474)
- (c) *Satisfactory attendance*. In order to receive educational assistance for pursuit of a program of education, an individual must maintain satisfactory attendance. VA will discontinue educational assistance if the individual does not maintain satisfactory attendance. Attendance is unsatisfactory if the individual does not attend according to the regularly prescribed standards of the institution of higher learning in which he or she is enrolled.
- (Authority: 38 U.S.C. 3034(a), 3323(a), 3474)
- (d) *Reentrance after discontinuance*. (1) An eligible individual may be reentered following discontinuance because of unsatisfactory attendance, conduct, or progress when either:
 - (i) The individual resumes enrollment at the same institution of higher learning in the same program of education and the institution of higher learning has both approved the individual's reenrollment and certified it to VA; or
 - (ii) VA determines that—
 - (A) The cause of the unsatisfactory attendance, conduct or progress has been removed, and
 - (B) The program that the individual now proposes to pursue is suitable to his or her aptitudes, interests, and abilities.
- (2) Reentrance may be for the same program, a revised program, or an entirely different program depending on the cause of the discontinuance and the removal of that cause.
- (Authority: 38 U.S.C. 3034(a), 3323(a), 3474)

UNSATISFACTORY PROGRESS, CONDUCT AND ATTENDANCE

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

UNSATISFACTORY PROGRESS, CONDUCT AND ATTENDANCE

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

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

UNSATISFACTORY PROGRESS, CONDUCT AND ATTENDANCE

All schools are required to **maintain an academic record** for each student which includes, for a veteran or eligible person, the credit allowed toward the student's current program due to previous training and experience.

The record must also show the results of each enrollment period, to include the unit courses or subjects undertaken and the final result (e.g., grade, passed, failed, withdrawn, test results).

The record must be cumulative and document the progress being made toward completion of the program. For those institutions that use a narrative grading system and/or unspecified academic terms, as opposed to the traditional grading system and specified terms, the academic record must contain sufficient information to permit the recipient of a transcript to make an informed evaluation of the student's educational experience.

For those institutions not operating on a term basis, the record must show the student's proficiency at the various stages in the training program.

UNSATISFACTORY PROGRESS, CONDUCT AND ATTENDANCE

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

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

UNSATISFACTORY PROGRESS, CONDUCT AND ATTENDANCE

When a student has failed to maintain prescribed standards of progress, VA must be informed promptly **WITHIN 30 DAYS** so that benefit payments can be discontinued in accordance with the law.

The termination date assigned by the school will be the **last day of the term** or other evaluation period in which the student's progress became unsatisfactory.

Schools that provide a period of academic probation may not continue to certify a veteran or eligible person (who remains in a probationary status) for an indefinite period of time. It is reasonable to expect that an institution will **report a termination due to unsatisfactory progress if a student remains on academic probation beyond 2 terms, quarters, or semesters.**

APPROVAL ISSUES -SAA

Notification Form for Modifications to Programs

- VA Form 22-8794? (Designation of School Certifying Official(s)) Online training certificate must be attached for all those that use VAONCE
- VA Form 22-1919? (Conflicting Interests Certification - **Proprietary Schools Only**)
- VA Form 20-8206? (Statement of Assurance of Compliance with EO Laws) (For proprietary vocational, trade, technical, or other institutions and such schools not a part of a public elementary or secondary school)
- An academic calendar?
- An indication that the catalog was certified as accurate?
- A statement of compliance with the 2-year period of operation law? (NCD at private facility only)
- A statement that the school does not use erroneous, deceptive, or misleading practices?
- A program outline (and class schedule if NCD)?

APPROVAL ISSUES -SAA

- A description of available space, facilities and equipment?
- Evidence that instructors have adequate educational and experience qualifications?
- A list of approved courses that includes practical training? (include training sites)
- A list of approved independent study courses?
- A list of approved off-campus sites? (Branch Locations)
- A list of approved remedial courses?
- Any other SAA criteria in accordance with regulations?

APPROVAL ISSUES -SAA

DOES THE REVIEW OF THE CATALOG INDICATE:

- Whether programs are educational, professional or vocational?
- That the catalog meets approval requirements?
- That practical training requirements are met?
- That independent study requirements are met?
- Satisfactory evidence of accreditation?
- Attendance standards?
- Established standards of conduct?
- A policy regarding prior credit awards?
- Established standards of progress?