

Veterans Affairs (VA) Educational Benefits Guide

By the

The Florida State University

Veterans Affairs

Forward

Veterans Affairs (VA) Educational Benefits are designed to provide eligible individuals with an opportunity for educational and career growth. It is certainly one of the most valuable benefits afforded to veterans and qualifying dependents, and should be wisely utilized. Veterans have earned the right to use their educational benefits for the purpose it was intended for, and we at The Florida State University are both pleased and honored to assist you in utilizing it to your best advantage. We welcome you to our campus and hope you will significantly benefit through your training.

Veterans Affairs Coordinator

Cheryl Goodson

(850) 644-1252 fax (850) 644-1597

cgoodson@admin.fsu.edu

8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
Monday through Friday

The Veterans Affairs Coordinator is not part of the Department of Veterans Affairs. The VA Coordinator's responsibility is to interpret, explain, and administer VA regulations as they apply to you at FSU.

Before applying for VA Educational Benefits

Applications for VA educational benefits are designed to obtain the data necessary to determine eligibility for educational assistance benefits for particular educational, professional, or vocational objectives. Since the forms do not include enrollment certification data, you are encouraged to bring your supporting documentation to the Veterans Affairs Coordinator. The documents can be submitted as a package enrollment with Form 22-1999, Enrollment Certification. This can be accomplished once you have registered for classes. All forms necessary for application for educational benefits are available at the Veterans Affairs Office.

Note

All forms required by Veterans Affairs start with VA.

Example: the form, Application for Education Benefits is VA Form 22-1990.

Benefit Programs and Requirement

Application requirements for educational benefits vary from program to program. Your application must be complete. Partial applications will not be accepted. Therefore, prior to visiting the Veterans Affairs office, be sure to have your schedule complete. If you should have any questions regarding your package, please do not hesitate to call.

Requirements for each program's initial application follow:

Chapter 30 – Montgomery GI Bill

This benefit is for those veterans who served on active duty after June 30, 1985 (Category I), those who had remaining entitlement under the Vietnam Era GI Bill (Category II), and those who switched from VEAP before being involuntarily separated after February 2, 1991 (Category III).

Category I & III – application package includes:

1. Form 22-1990 Application for Educational Benefits
2. DD214 – Member 4 copy. These can be obtained through the County Veterans Services Office located at 1940 N Monroe, 488-8462
3. Proof of additional \$600 payment to obtain \$150/month kicker (i.e. LES, receipt)
4. FSU Request for Veteran Benefits (appropriate to semester) – an FSU form requesting certification of enrollment.
5. Statement of Responsibilities – an FSU form stating you understand what you are responsible for while using Veterans benefits at FSU.
6. Graduate students must submit a “Program of Studies” from you department for certifications.

Category II (commonly called Chapter 34/20 Vietnam War Era – must have served at least 181 days between 2/1/55 and 12/31/76) – application package includes:

1. Form 22-1990 Application for Educational Benefits
2. Form 21-686c Declaration of Status of Dependents
3. Copies of all DD214's. These can be obtained through the County Veterans Services Office, located at 1940 N Monroe, 488-8462
4. Form 21-674 for dependent children over age 18 but still enrolled in either high school or college.
5. FSU Request for Veteran Benefits (appropriate to semester) – an FSU form requesting certification of enrollment.
6. Statement of Responsibilities – an FSU form stating you understand what you are responsible for while using Veterans benefits at FSU.
7. Graduate students must submit a “Program of Studies” from you department for certifications.

Chapter 31 – Vocational Rehabilitation

This benefit is designed to assist veterans with a service-connected disability in obtaining and maintaining employment. A service-connected disability rating is required as part of the eligibility requirements.

Veterans should apply for vocational rehabilitation through the County Veterans Services Office, located at 1940 N Monroe, 488-8462. They will receive guidance from the Vocational Rehabilitation and counseling Division of the DVA regarding application and admission requirements.

Chapter 32 – VEAP/Veterans Educational Assistance Program

This benefit is for those veterans who served between the Vietnam GI Bill Era and the Montgomery GI Bill era. Generally, between January 1977 and June 1985.

The application package includes:

1. Form 22-1990 Application for Educational Benefits
2. Copies of all DD214's - These can be obtained through the County Veterans Services Office, located at 1940 N Monroe, 488-8462
3. FSU Request for Veteran Benefits (appropriate to semester) – an FSU form requesting certification of enrollment.
4. Statement of Responsibilities – an FSU form stating you understand what you are responsible for while using Veterans benefits at FSU.
5. Graduate students must submit a “Program of Studies” from you department for certifications.

Chapter 35 – Survivor's and Dependent's Educational Assistance

This benefit is for surviving spouses and children of veterans who died in the line of duty while a service member, surviving spouses and children of veterans who died while totally and permanently service-connected disabled, or for surviving spouses and children of a veteran permanent and totally service-connected disabled.

The application package includes:

1. Form 22-5490 Application for Survivor's and Dependent's Educational Assistance
2. Copy of 100% service connected disabled veteran's rating
3. Dependent birth certificate
4. Copy of marriage license of veteran parent if dependent is a step child.
5. FSU Request for Veteran Benefits (appropriate to semester) – an FSU form requesting certification of enrollment.
6. Statement of Responsibilities – an FSU form stating you understand what you are responsible for while using Veterans benefits at FSU.
7. Graduate students must submit a “Program of Studies” from you department for certifications.

Chapter 1606 – Reservist/Guard Benefit

This benefit is for those currently serving in the Selected Reserves.

The application package includes:

1. Form 22-1990 Application for Educational Assistance
2. DOD form 2384 – Notice of Basic Eligibility (NOBE). This form is issued through the Guard/Reserve Unit
3. Copy of any “Kicker” contract. Also issued by the Guard/Reserve Unit
4. FSU Request for Veteran Benefits (appropriate to semester) – an FSU form requesting certification of enrollment.
5. Statement of Responsibilities – an FSU form stating you understand what you are responsible for while using Veterans benefits at FSU.
6. Graduate students must submit a “Program of Studies” from you department for certifications.

Chapter 1607 – REAP-Reserve Educational Assistance Program

This benefit is for Guard/Reservist and Coast Guard who served on active duty on or after 9/11/2001 under title 10 U.S. Code (Reserves), section 502(f) (National Guard) or title 32 U.S.C.(Coast Guard) for a contingency operation and who served at least 90 consecutive days or more. DOD will determine eligibility.

The application package includes:

1. Form 22-1990 Application for Educational Assistance
2. DOD form 2384 – Notice of Basic Eligibility (NOBE). This form is issued through the Guard/Reserve Unit if not already using Chapter 1606 benefits
3. Copy of orders to active duty.
4. DD214 – Member 4 copy.
5. Copy of any “Kicker” contract. Also issued by the Guard/Reserve Unit
6. FSU Request for Veteran Benefits (appropriate to semester) – an FSU form requesting certification of enrollment.
7. Statement of Responsibilities – an FSU form stating you understand what you are responsible for while using Veterans benefits at FSU.
8. Graduate students must submit a “Program of Studies” from you department for certifications.

Correspondence

Utilization of VA Educational Benefits will generate a continuing stream of school and VA correspondence either by conventional mail or email. All correspondence is important and should be read carefully upon receipt. Any misunderstandings or discrepancies should be brought to the attention of the Veterans Affairs Office immediately for clarification or correction when appropriate. We urge you to create and maintain a file for all VA and school correspondence. It is also recommended you keep a photocopy of each check received.

The documents you will receive include a letter of enrollment verification and changes in student status from the Veterans Affairs Office.

Enrollment certifications contain information about the classes you are taking. They are sent to the VA periodically. After processed, the DVA Regional Office will send you a letter verifying your enrollment. Look over this letter carefully. Verify personal data such as address, date of birth, social security number and name. Pay particular attention to the dates and hours reported. If any information is incorrect, please notify the Veterans Affairs Office immediately.

Notice of Change in Student Status is usually sent to the DVA after an initial enrollment certification has been sent. These forms reflect a change in hours either as a result of dropping a class, being dropped from a class by the instructor, or the beginning of a new semester. You should **carefully** review this form to verify name, social security number, and hours reported. If the information appears incorrect, please contact the Veterans Affairs Office so the information can be explained or corrected.

Telephone Certification for Montgomery GI Bill (Chapter 30 and 1606)

The Verification of Enrollment Form (VA Form 232-8979) has been discontinued as of June 2002. Students receiving Chapter 30 and 1606 education benefits must certify their monthly verification of attendance via the telephone or use the WAVE. These are automated systems.

Use of these systems eliminates the need for you to sign and return the VA Form 232-8979 (form is phased out 7/02). The number to call is **1-877-823-2378**. Find the WAVE at www.gibill.va.gov. While at the WAVE web site you can also request an email reminder to do your certification each month!

Check the information **carefully**, paying close attention to the dates and hours reflected. If the information is incorrect, bring it to the Veterans Affairs Office for correction. If a change is necessary, your payment may be delayed. *The DVA will not process the payment until they have received a Notice of Change in Student Status from the University that reflect the same information you have given them.* Please contact the Veterans Affairs Office if you have changed anything prior to sending in or utilizing either the automated system or the internet. Failure to complete and submit monthly verification in a timely fashion may result in delayed checks and possible termination of educational benefits.

Additional Financial Assistance

There are several additional forms of financial aid you may be eligible for to supplement your DVA educational assistance. These include special assistance for the educationally disadvantaged, scholarships, and Pell Grants. You may be required to obtain a “vet letter” for financial aid purposes. If so, you may contact the FSU Veterans Affairs Office for this letter.

Special Assistance for the Educationally Disadvantaged-

Veterans training under Chapter 32 and Chapter 34, and eligible surviving spouses under Chapter 35, may receive reimbursement for the cost of tuition and fees to pursue courses leading to a secondary school diploma (GED or Adult High School Diploma). The student’s entitlement to educational assistance benefits will not be reduced when payments are based on tuition and fees. Veterans, spouses and surviving spouses may, instead, elect to receive regular monthly payments based on their training time. Students electing to receive monthly payments based on training time should be aware their entitlement would be charged accordingly.

Scholarships-

Scholarships do not have to be repaid. They are available from many sources, including the university, state agencies, professional and service agencies, private foundations and some employers.

Grants-

The largest and best-known source of grants is the Federal Pell Grant. Grants are awarded based on need and do not have to be repaid.

Loans-

Student loans are available from the Federal government, banks or private financial institutions.

Work-study jobs-

Work-study programs allow students to earn money toward their education while they are attending school. You can obtain a complete list of local approved VA work-study sites and contacts through the FSU Veterans Affairs Office. You will need a copy of your 22-1999 Certification of Enrollment for the application process. General university work-study is available through the Office of Financial Aid

Contact (850) 644-5871 for financial aid information.

Supplemental Educational Benefits

There are two benefits students receiving VA Educational Assistance are eligible for, tutorial assistance and Work-Study program. We also have a student organization.

Tutorial Assistance-

Tutorial assistance may be arranged for eligible persons training under Chapter 30, 31, 32, and Chapter 35 to offset the cost of expenses incurred by their need for tutoring. This allowance is considered a supplement to the claimant's monthly educational assistance check and it is paid without any entitlement charge for those training under Chapters 31 and 35. However, for those persons utilizing Chapter 30 and 32 benefits, an individual's period of entitlement will be charged with respect to the amount of tutorial assistance paid in **excess** of \$600.

The DVA will pay up to a maximum of \$100 per month of tutorial assistance. The maximum assistance to which a claimant will be eligible throughout the duration of his/her entitlement is \$1200.

Tutorial Payment for Chapter 30, 32, and 35 – Payment for tutorial services is sent to the student. The student is responsible for paying the tutor.

Tutorial Payment for Chapter 31 – The DVA is billed for payment for tutorial services by The Florida State University. Payment is then sent to FSU for distribution to the tutor.

Work-Study-

The DVA Work-Study program permits eligible veterans to perform specific services in return for a monetary allowance equal to the prevailing federal/state minimum wage. DVA work-study payments are not taxable.

Veteran students are employed throughout the community and in the Veterans Affairs Office. Applications and a list of available job sites are available through the Veterans Affairs Office. These should be submitted prior to the start of the semester. Placement is dependent upon availability.

Collegiate Veterans Association

The Collegiate Veterans Association (CVA) is a recognized student organization. It is a group of college-based military veterans and supporters dedicated to supporting military veterans and their families. This group is NON-Partisan, NON-political.

You can find information regarding CVA and join the listserv to hear about meetings, events, and how you can support America's military at the website: <http://www.fsu.edu/~cva/>

General Guidelines

Initial check for First Time Applicants-

Generally, the Veterans Affairs Coordinator cannot certify a new student at FSU until they have registered for classes. The DVA requires a minimum six to eight weeks to process an award and begin payment.

The monthly amount of your VA educational award may be prorated if necessary. For example, if the first term of your enrollment begins on the 15th of the month, the VA will divide your monthly rate by 30 (the number of days in a standard month). This will provide your daily rate. Your daily rate is then multiplied by the number of days you are attending class that month. This is the amount of your check for the first month of attendance.

Payment is made at the end of each month. For example, you will be paid in February for attendance during January, in March for attendance in February, in April for attendance in March and so on.

Because there can be a delay of as much as four months in receiving payment, **tuition deferments** can be obtained from the Veterans Affairs Office. This must be done by the fifth day of classes. Deferment deadlines are posted in the Registration Guide. This is a privilege extended by the Veterans Affairs Office and the university. If you do not pay tuition in a timely fashion, this privilege will not be extended for following semesters.

Annual Certification Cycle-

VA regulation dictates that enrollment certifications cannot exceed a period of 12 months. Certifications at The Florida State University are designed for Fall/Spring semesters with termination at the end of each spring term unless circumstances restrict doing so if you clearly indicate your intentions on the FSU Request for Benefits form.

It is **never** assumed you wish to have your enrollment certified as some students like to utilize their benefits for graduate work when tuition is more expensive. Be sure to clearly mark Fall and Spring and include estimated hours of enrollment. Any changes can be reported at a later date.

If you register for the following summer semester, it is **necessary** for you to return to the Veterans Affairs Office. It will not be necessary for you to resubmit an entire educational benefit application package again. There are, however, forms that will need to be completed before certification will take place. You should receive a check for the break between the two terms after the DVA processes your summer semester certification.

The cycle begins again with Fall/Spring and it is once again **necessary** for you to return to the Veterans Affairs Office.

Tuition deferments must be applied for every semester regardless of enrollment certification.

Hour Requirements

It is important for anyone utilizing VA Educational Assistance to be aware of hour requirements for each pay status graduate or undergraduate. Each type of certification is described below.

<u>Credit Hours</u>	<u>Training Time</u>	<u>Amount of Pay</u>
12 or more	Full Time	Maximum Allowance
9 – 11	$\frac{3}{4}$ Time	75% of Maximum Allowance
6 – 8	$\frac{1}{2}$ Time	50% of Maximum Allowance
5 or less	Below $\frac{1}{2}$ Time	Tuition and Fees**

** For training below $\frac{1}{2}$ time, the DVA will pay for tuition and fees only. This is not per month it is total. In some cases, they may send a lump sum payment or they will send a portion of your tuition and fees for each month.

A Special Note Concerning Split Sessions for Degree-Seeking Students

FSU offers split sessions referred to as “accelerated sessions” by the DVA (i.e. Summer Sessions B, C, D, E, F). This means the DVA will accelerate pay status in proportion to the rate of the split sessions. A full-time course load will be different for students enrolled in the split sessions. **For this reason, you should check with the Veterans Affairs Office to be sure of the actual rate of acceleration.**

The following is an example of the hours necessary to be considered full-time during the summer semesters:

<u>Option 1</u>	<u>Option 2</u>	<u>Option 3</u>
A (13 weeks)-9 hours	B-(1 st 6 wks) 4 hours	A-(13 wks) 3 hours
	C-(2 nd 6 wks) 4 hours	B-(1 st 6 wks) 3 hours
		C-(2 nd 6 wks) 3 hours

The number of hours needed to be full-time for the school and financial aid purposes may differ from the VA hour requirement as well. Be sure to check with the financial aid office and the registrar’s office on the credit-hour requirements for full-time. Graduate student’s full time status may vary according to their assistantships.

Changes

All changes made after your initial application or certification are forwarded to the DVA Regional Office and should be brought to the attention of the Veterans Affairs Office so the change can be reported. A VA form 22-1995 or 22-5495 is necessary when the following changes occur. These forms can be downloaded from the VA website at <http://www.vba.va.gov/pubs/educationforms.htm>

The most common changes include:

1. Change in status of dependents
2. Change of address
3. Change in major
4. Changes in credit hours
5. Withdrawal from school
6. Anticipated change in place of training

Changes in status of dependents:

This applies to those students utilizing Vietnam Era GI Bill benefits and Vocational Rehabilitation. These groups of veterans receive an additional allowance for each dependent.

Changes can occur when:

- A dependent child reaches the age of 18. If the dependent child is still in high school or is enrolled in college, the veteran may continue to receive an allowance for that child. This requires the veteran to complete and submit a 21-674 Form available through the Veterans Affairs Office.
- A child is born. If this happens, you will need to submit a certified true copy of the child's birth certificate immediately.
- A divorce occurs. The veteran will need to submit a certified true copy of the divorce degree.
- A dependent dies. The veteran will need to submit a certified true copy of the death certificate.
- A veteran marries. You will need to submit a certified true copy of the marriage license.

Change in address:

If you should move during your enrollment at FSU, you will need to change your address with the VA Regional Office and the Veterans Affairs Office as well as the university. Changing your address with only one of these will not automatically change your address with the other. A change of address can be called into the VA Regional Office at **877-838-2778**.

Change in major:

Should you decide to change your major you should be aware there are school and VA forms to complete. After you have changed your major with the university, the Veterans Affairs Office will ask you to fill out a VA Form 22-1995 (Ch 30, 31, 32, 34, 1606 or 1607) or a VA Form 22-5495 (Ch 35 only). These forms are available at <http://www.vba.va.gov/pubs/educationforms.htm>

Change in credit hours:

This occurs when you drop a class (es) or are dropped from a class (es) by the instructor. You should notify the VA office immediately.

Withdrawal from school:

Should it become necessary for you to withdraw from all classes, you should contact the Veterans Affairs Office before doing so. There are many concerns you should be aware of before withdrawing completely. If you are called to active DO NOT go through the withdrawal office, please bring a copy of your orders to the Veterans Affairs Office.

Change in place of training:

Should you change your place of training it is necessary to complete a VA Form 22-1995 (Ch 30, 31, 32, 34, 1606 or 1607) or a VA Form 22-5495 (Ch 35 only). These forms are available at <http://www.vba.va.gov/pubs/educationforms.htm>

❗ FAILURE TO REPORT CHANGES constitutes fraud and is the primary cause for delays in the delivery of your educational checks and occurrences of overpayment. Changes may be reported to the Veterans Affairs Office in person or by telephone. Periodic audits are conducted and changes in schedule are caught but it is ultimately **student's responsibility** to report these changes before incurring an overpayment or possibly an underpayment

Frequently Asked Questions

How do I receive credit for military training? Any prior credit is evaluated by the Office of Admissions and Records located on the 2nd floor of University Center, Building A. You should provide official military transcript (i.e. Army-AARTS, Navy-SMARTS, Air Force-Community College of the Air Force) or a copy of your DD214.

Must I maintain a certain GPA in order to keep my VA Educational Benefits? All students utilizing VA educational benefits must maintain certain standards of progress as detailed in The Florida State University General Bulletin. VA regulations allow students to attend school under a probationary status for two consecutive terms while they continue to receive educational benefits. However, benefits will be terminated following the second consecutive term of attendance under probationary status if the student's cumulative grade point average does not meet the university's published standards of progress.

Students using VA educational benefits must meet with the Veterans Affairs Coordinator after reinstatement of a dismissal from unsatisfactory progress.

How do I drop/withdraw from a course? How does it affect my VA educational program?

If you need to drop or withdraw from a course, you need to consult the Registration Guide on-line for step by step instructions. There are two types of grades you can get from dropping a course – punitive and non-punitive.

The school will establish the last date to withdraw. If you drop a class, withdraw from all classes, or are dropped by the instructor before that date, you are assigned a non-punitive grade. Remember, this means your GPA will not be penalized. However, the DVA treats a non-punitive grade as if you never attended that class. If the drop changes your attendance status, the DVA will require repayment of any amount you have received for attendance in that class unless you have mitigating circumstances. If you feel you have a valid reason for dropping the class or withdrawing from a class, you can write to the DVA and ask that you be allowed to maintain your prevailing rate of pay up to the last date of attendance in the course(s). The new rate of pay would be effective the day after your last date of attendance.

If you claim mitigating circumstances, the DVA will require in-depth statements and supportive documents before allowing payment for a course from which you dropped or were dropped by the instructor. Mitigating circumstances the DVA may accept include:

1. Illness or injury of the veteran
2. Death, illness, or serious injury of a family member
3. Relocation due to employment
4. Work schedule conflict
5. Hardships

If you have other reasons for dropping or withdrawing, you may also write to the DVA and provide them with the reasons.

If you drop a course, withdraw from all courses, or are dropped by an instructor after the last date to withdraw, you may be assigned a punitive grade. This grade will be figured into your grade point average as an "F". The DVA will, in this case, allow payment at the prevailing rates of pay up to the last date of attendance as reported by the instructor. The new rate of pay will begin the day after the last date of attendance.

You should try to avoid dropping courses after the last date to drop/withdraw as it does affect your GPA.

Can I take a course by independent study and receive payment for it? Yes. Guidelines for independent study can be found in The Florida State University General Bulletin.

How can I determine what classes I should take? The Florida State University General Bulletin outlines all majors available at FSU and what courses are required for graduation in each. All courses must be selected directly from the outline as it appears in the bulletin in effect at the time of your enrollment into the university. You will be certified only for those courses required for your degree. For example, if you are enrolled in the accounting program and register for Basket weaving 101, you will not be paid for that course, as it is not required for graduation in the accounting program.

Can I take remedial or deficiency courses and still get paid for it? Most VA educational benefit programs allow students to take remedial or deficiency courses. Remedial courses can only be certified if a need for the course is proven by a placement test or if the course is required as a prerequisite for another course in your major.

Important Resources

Veterans Affairs Coordinator – FSU

Location – University Center, Building A, Third Floor, Inside the Registrar’s Office

Address: A3900 University Center, Tallahassee, FL 32306-2480

Email address: cgoodson@admin.fsu.edu

Office 644-1252 Fax (850) 644-1597

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Atlanta Regional Processing Office

Address: Post Office Box 100022, Decatur, GA 30031-7022

1-888-442-4551

Verification of Enrollment

Ch 30 and 1606 only

1-877-823-2378

Direct Deposit or Address Change

Ch 30, 31 and 1606 only for direct deposit info. Address change for all chapters

1-877-838-2778

The Florida State University, Office of Financial Aid

Location – University Center, Building A, 4th Floor

644-5871

The Florida State University, Agency Billing

Location – University Center, Building A, 1st Floor, Student Financial Services

Ch 31 and 1606 only

644-5408

Miscellaneous Scholarship Information

www.floridalink.com/thenews/college_grants.htm

Chapter 35 Scholarship

<http://www.firn.edu/doe/bin00065/cddvfactsheet.htm>

Veterans Affairs Web Site

www.gibill.va.gov