

GVSU Registrar's Office

VA and Military Benefits Questions & Answers

Q. How do I find out if I'm eligible for benefits and how much my benefits will cover?

A. Please visit <https://www.va.gov/education/eligibility/>.

Q. How do I apply for my VA education benefits?

A. Please visit <https://www.va.gov/>.

Q. How do I check on the status of my VA benefit application?

A. Please call the VA at 888-442-4551.

Q. How do I find out how much benefit I have remaining?

A. Please visit <https://www.ebenefits.va.gov/ebenefits/homepage> or call the VA at 888-442-4551.

Q. If I qualify for more than one VA benefit can I use them both at the same time?

A. No.

Q. What if I want to change my direct deposit information with the VA?

A. You can call 888-442-4551 or report the change in eBenefits at <https://www.ebenefits.va.gov/ebenefits/homepage>.

Q. Will I receive any transfer credit from my military transcript? If so, how do I get my transcript?

A. For Army, Coast Guard, Marine Corps and Navy please visit <https://jst.doded.mil/jst/>
For Airforce please visit <https://www.airuniversity.af.edu/Barnes/CCAF/>.

Q. Will the VA pay for my application and orientation fees?

A. The VA will reimburse students for the orientation fee under chapter 33 Post 9/11 only and as long as orientation is taken just prior to the start of the first semester. The VA does not reimburse application fees. However, GVSU is currently waiving the application fees for veterans and their spouses and dependents.

Q. What if I'm from another state? What is my residency for tuition purposes?

A. All veterans, dependents or a spouse of a veteran qualify for in state tuition upon verification of military status and/or proof of relationship.

Q. Do I have to notify the VA of a change of address?

A. Yes. You can call 888-442-4551 or report the change in eBenefits at <https://www.ebenefits.va.gov/ebenefits/homepage>.

Q. How do I apply for Federal Tuition Assistance (FTA) and Michigan National Guard State Tuition Assistance Program (MINGSTAP)?

A. Apply for FTA at <https://www.armyignited.com/app/> and MINGSTAP at <https://mingstapapp.state.mi.us/>.

Q. Can I use STA, FTA and GI Bill at the same time?

A. You cannot use Chapter 1606/MGIB-SR and FTA for the same course but you can use them both for different courses during the same semester. You can use Chapter 30 MGIB-active duty or Chapter 33 Post 9/11 with FTA. You can use STA with FTA, 1606, or 33.

Q. Am I eligible for financial aid and scholarships if I am also receiving VA benefits?

A. Yes. Please visit our financial aid website at <https://www.gvsu.edu/financialaid/>. Also, visit <http://search.militaryscholar.org/> for possible service member scholarships.

Q. How long do I have to complete my degree while using VA benefits?

A. This depends on your entitlement. The VA charges your entitlement one day for each day you are a full-time student. $\frac{3}{4}$ of a day if you are a $\frac{3}{4}$ time student, $\frac{1}{2}$ of a day if you are a $\frac{1}{2}$ time student and $\frac{1}{4}$ of a day if you are a $\frac{1}{4}$ time student. For Chapter 33 Post 9/11 this is calculated on a percentage basis.

Q. Am I eligible for priority registration?

A. Yes. All students receiving VA benefits are eligible to register on the 2nd day of registration unless you are a returning graduate student in which case you would register on the 1st day.

Q. How will the VA be notified that I am attending classes?

A. Your GVSU Certifying Official will report your enrollment to the VA each semester.

Q. How will I know if I've been certified for a semester?

A. You will receive an email from the Registrar's Office (Responsibility Letter) that tells you that you've been certified listing your responsibilities as a student using VA education benefits. You also receive an email from the VA as soon as you are certified.

Q. If I do not want to use my benefits for a certain semester or if I plan on no longer attending GVSU, what should I do?

A. Let your GVSU Certifying Official know by sending an email to vetrec@gvsu.edu. Always include your G Number in your emails.

Q. Should I let my GVSU Certifying Official know when my benefits will run out?

A. Yes.

Q. When will I get paid from the VA for books and housing?

A. Book money is typically received within a couple of weeks from the date of the enrollment certification but this timeline is not guaranteed. Housing is paid at the end of each month of enrollment.

Q. If I have not received my BAH or book money who do I contact?

A. Please call the VA at 888-442-4551.

Q. How is my book money calculated?

A. You will receive \$41.67 per credit hour up to \$1,000 per academic year if you're at the 100% benefit level.

Q. How much can I expect in housing allowance?

A. Housing is based on the zip code of where your classes are being held and based on an E-5 pay grade. Current rates can be found at <https://www.defensetravel.dod.mil/site/bahCalc.cfm>.

Q. Will the VA pay for housing for online classes?

A. Yes, but in order to obtain the full housing allowance at least one credit has to be taken in the classroom. Otherwise, they pay ½ of the national average for the housing allowance for all online courses only (\$871 for 20/21 school year through July 31 for the full-time rate).

Q. Why did I receive a smaller housing payment than usual in Aug/Dec/Jan/Apr even though I'm certified for full-time?

A. Because you are only paid for the days that you are enrolled during each month.

Q. When does my GVSU Certifying Official report tuition to the VA?

A. After the first week of classes which is after the 100% add/drop deadline.

Q. When will the school get the payment from the VA for tuition?

A. Typically within a couple of weeks of reporting tuition to the VA but this timeline is not guaranteed.

Q. Are my classes going to be dropped because the VA has not made the payment by the deadline?

A. As long as you don't have a past due amount from a previous semester a hold will be put on your classes to avoid them from being dropped. Check with your GVSU Certifying Official to confirm the hold.

Q. Why do I get emails from Student Accounts telling me I have a balance due when the VA is expected to pay my tuition?

A. Student Accounts sends out mass emails to all students with a balance. Double check with your GVSU Certifying Official to make sure there is a hold on your classes from being dropped.

Q. What is required in order for my classes to be eligible for the VA?

A. The VA requires that all classes certified are required by your program in order to complete your degree. The VA will not cover classes that are used for "helpful knowledge." However, you can take free electives if you have met your program requirements and you need to take additional courses to get to the 120 credits requirement for graduation.

Q. How can I tell which courses are required for my degree?

A. Meet with your academic advisor and review your MyPath in mybanner.

Q. Can I still take a course that interests me even if it isn't required for graduation?

A. Yes, but the credits will not be certified and you will not receive any benefits for those credits. You may be able to take advantage of the block rate where tuition is the same for 12-15 credits.

Q. If I want to be certified for full-time benefits, what do I need to do?

A. Register for at least 12 required undergrad or 9 graduate full-term credits during the Fall and/or Winter semester (16 weeks). Spring Summer is unique with 6 weeks or 12 weeks long courses. Discuss your Spring Summer training time with your GVSU Certifying Official.

Q. Why do I have multiple certifications for one semester?

A. The VA requires that we report the specific campus you are taking classes on which leads to the multiple certifications, but that does not impact the full-time status. Part of term courses are also reported separately which could impact the full-time status.

Q. Can I receive VA benefits if I repeat a course?

A. You may only receive VA benefits to repeat a course if you failed it and still require a passing grade for the course, or if you did not meet the minimum grade required for that course according to your program. Check your MyPath for requirements.

Q. What happens to my VA benefit if I fail a class I was certified for?

A. Your benefit remains as is provided you maintained attendance/participation through the end of the term and earned the failing grade. The VA will also pay for the course to be repeated with no limitations on the number of repeats as needed.

Q. Will the VA pay for more than one major, minor and concentration?

A. Yes

Q. What happens to my benefit if I change my major in the middle of the semester after I have been certified?

A. Your certification will not change unless courses that weren't certifiable under the previous major and are now required for the new major in which case we can adjust the certification to include those courses.

Q. How many times can I change my major?

A. There are no limitations but if it extends your program for more than one semester this will be reported to the VA.

Q. What happens to my benefits if I drop a class?

A. Your benefits could be impacted and a debt to the VA or school could incur. Check with your GVSU Certifying Official to discuss any consequences before changing your schedule.

Q. Can I add a class to my schedule after my credits have been certified with the VA?

A. Yes. Notify your GVSU Certifying Official. They will submit changes to the VA.

Q. How will it impact my benefit if I seek a late w/d after the semester has ended?

A. This could create a debt once we report non-punitive W grades to the VA going back to the beginning of the term (6 credit hour exclusion rule may apply).

Q. How will it impact my benefit if I seek a tuition refund through TRAC?

A. This could create a debt as it would result in the course being removed from your record if 100% refund is approved or W non-punitive grades for 75% or 50% refund. Discuss how this will impact your benefit with your GVSU Certifying Official.

Q. I have graduated with a bachelor's degree but plan to start a master's program and continue to use my benefits. Do I need to do anything?

A. Yes. Please notify your GVSU Certifying Official. You will need to complete the VA 22-1995 (VA 22-5495 for chapter 35) Change of Program/Place of Training form and notify your GVSU Certifying Official. The form can be completed online at <https://www.va.gov/education/change-gi-bill-benefits/> or contact your GVSU Certifying Official for a paper form.

Q. I have graduated with my bachelor's degree and want to return to pursue another major, minor or emphasis. Can I still use my remaining benefits?

A. Yes.

Q. What do I need to do if I want to take a class at another college as a guest student?

A. Contact the VA Certifying Official at the other school and they will request that GVSU send a parent letter to them verifying the courses will transfer as a required course at GVSU. The guest school certifies your enrollment with the VA as a guest student.

Q. If I am taking classes at more than one school does the VA add my credits together to determine my full-time/part-time status?

A. Yes

Q. Can I use my benefit for two different programs at two different colleges at the same time?

A. No. In order to be certified for classes at two colleges at the same time the courses taken would have to apply to one main program at your home school.

Q. What do I do if I run out of benefits before I graduate and need additional funding?

A. Be sure to file FAFSA at <https://studentaid.gov/h/apply-for-aid/fafsa> for additional funding including scholarships, grants and loans.

Q. How can I contact my GVSU Certifying Official?

A. You may email vetrec@gvsu.edu or call 616-331-3327. Walk ins are welcome. Appointments are not necessary.

Q. How can I make sure the certification process goes smoothly?

A. Always be sure to communicate with your GVSU Certifying Official. Please Touch base at least once a semester and anytime you plan to make changes to your schedule after certification.

Q. What can I do if I can't get a response from the VA?

A. The VA student veteran phone line 888-442-4551 is your main VA resource and they are either available by phone or if their lines are busy they will generally offer a call back appointment. If you still have unanswered concerns or questions after consulting with a VA representative, please consult with your GVSU Certifying Official for further clarification.