

WACRAO Veterans Conference 2017

VA Updates

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to help you
achieve
your goals



What's on the agenda?

- Introductions
- Updates
 - Year 1 lessons
 - Legislative, Policy, Procedural, Systems
 - SCO Handbook
 - Submit a Question/Ask a Question/Right Now Web
- Questions

Introductions

- VA Education Liaison Representative

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U.S. Department
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- State Approving Agency – Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs

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Year 1 ELR Lessons

- It's cold and windy in the north! Always bring/wear one more layer than you think.
- Have the memory of an elephant, and if you don't, save everything you do!
- Information from the VA hotlines makes my job more interesting.
- Limit travel in September
 - September Travel on the books: Sept 4-8 personal travel to Alaska, Sept 11-15 National ELR and ECSS Training Conference
 - Two tentative trips between Sept 20 and Sept 29
- Wisconsin SCOs > Minnesota SCOs
 - Thanks for bearing with me through growing pains!



Legislative, Policy, Procedural, & System Update Overview

- August 1, 2016 & February 2, 2017 – VA-ONCE Changes
- September 21, 2016 – 48 month rule
- October 1, 2016 – St. Louis Regional Processing Office (RPO) move to the Prevedel
- October 7, 2016 – Additional Guidance on hourly basis approval requirements
- November 7, 2016 & April 20, 2017 – VONAPP updates
- December 16, 2016 – PL 114-315 H.R. 6416 Jeff Miller and Richard Blumenthal Veterans Health Care and Benefits Improvement



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

Legislative, Policy, Procedural, & System Update Overview

- February 16, 2017 – Changes to Army’s Interpretation of 10 USC § 12301(d) for Eligibility to Post 9/11 GI Bill and Transfer of Education Benefits (TEB)
- April 10, 2017 – Koss Scholarship
- April 11, 2017 –Notification to Work-Study Sites to Submit Time Records
- May 8, 2017 – National Quality Reviews for the Education Call Center (ECC)
- May 11, 2017 – New 2017- 2018 Academic School Year Tuition and Fee Caps – Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH) Information



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

VA ONCE Changes – August 1, 2016 & February 2, 2017

Based on user feedback, the following changes were implemented into the VAONCE system:

- 1) VA-ONCE will now display the date and time a School Certifying Official (SCO) last logged in to the application. A new column has been added to the SCO page titled 'Last Login'.

The screenshot shows the VA-ONCE SCO page in Internet Explorer. The page title is "VA-ONCE SCO - Internet Explorer". The main header includes "VA-ONCE administrator" and "Student Details Maintenance" with "Add Delete" links. The page content shows "Name: DEMO UNIVERSITY IHL", "Facility Code: 2-2-2222-22", "SCO Type of Hours: QUARTER", and "Full Time Measurement: 12". Below this is a navigation bar with "School" and "SCO" tabs. On the left, there are icons for "Select" (people) and "Admin" (wrench). The main content is a table of users. The table has columns: User ID, Last Name, First Name, Email, Phone, Read Only, User Type, and Last Login. The "Last Login" column is highlighted with a red box. The table data is as follows:

User ID	Last Name	First Name	Email	Phone	Read Only	User Type	Last Login
VAFinance	OFFICE	FINANCE			✓	Asstnt View	
VAdemoBMatus	MATSUS	BOB				SCO	6/10/2016 11:41:22 AM
VAdemoCOLsen	OLSEN	CRAIG				SCO	6/10/2016 11:43:24 AM
VAdemoTGeffre	GEFFRE	TIM				SCO	6/10/2016 11:43:24 AM
VAonce04	ACCOUNT	VAONCE	shay.norton@va.gov	(734)222-4295		SCO	5/31/2016 2:58:47 PM
VAonceAUDIT	ACCOUNT	AUDIT				SCO	6/22/2016 4:36:15 PM

VA ONCE Changes – August 1, 2016 & February 2, 2017

2) SCOs will now be able to run a new report entitled “Weekly Completion Report”. This report will allow SCOs to pull all terminations submitted for a week. The report can be broken down by graduation, end of term or course, graduation **and** end of term of course, or all. It is available in the Reports Section.

VA ONCE
VAonce04
2-2-2222-22

Weekly Completion Report

Showing 1-3 of 3 records

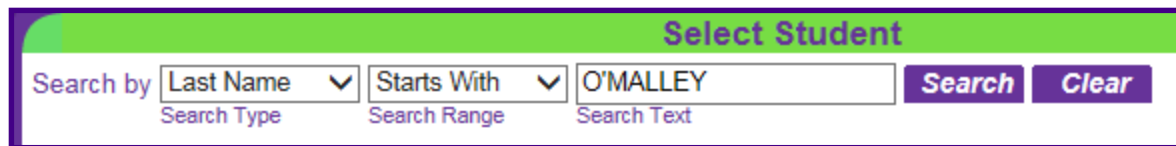
For Week Beginning: 7/11/2016

SSN	File #	Last Name	First Name	Chapt	Cert Id	Submtd Dt	Termination Reasons
4X [REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	BARBARINO	VINNY	33YELL OW	33038382	07/14/2016	Graduation
4 [REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	CLAYBOUR NE	DEACON	30	33038386	07/14/2016	Graduation
4 [REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	DOE	JOHN	30	33038385	07/14/2016	End of term or course

VA ONCE Changes – August 1, 2016 & February 2, 2017

- 3) When searching by a last name which contained an apostrophe, the apostrophe was being doubled, and would not find the student.

Example: The user would enter, “O’Malley” in the Search Text field. When leaving the field to click Search, the text would be changed to “O”Malley”. This has been corrected so that the apostrophe does not double and the student is found.

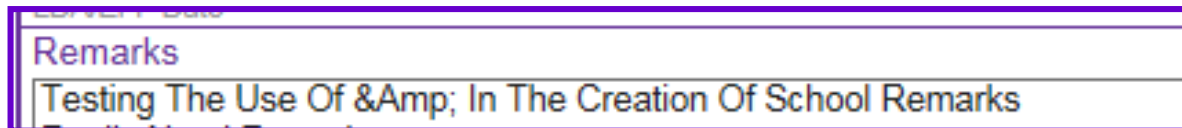


Select Student

Search by Last Name Starts With O'MALLEY Search Clear

Search Type Search Range Search Text

- 4) When entering an ampersand in the Additional Remarks field or on the Log page, the “&” was being converted to “&Amp;”. An example is below. This has been corrected and now displays correctly as “&”.



Remarks

Testing The Use Of &Amp; In The Creation Of School Remarks

September 21, 2016 – 48 month rule advisory

- Effective September 21, 2016, as per VBA leadership, Education Service should continue to consider Chapter 31 entitlement usage when determining available entitlement for other VA education benefit programs (32, 33, 35, 1606) in accordance with the manual.
- Per VBA leadership, Regional Processing Offices (RPOs) should not re-adjudicate claims previously processed based on any draft documents (e.g., proposed procedures, instructions, etc.) released to the field related to the 48-month rule and the liberal interpretation. RPOs should process claims point forward with the guidance provided below. The Department of Veteran Affairs will honor certificates of eligibility and awards processed under any past directive from Central Office.

October 1, 2016 – St. Louis Regional Processing Office (RPO) move to the Prevedel

Mailing Address:

Department of Veterans Affairs
9700 Page Avenue
Suite 101 – Education
St. Louis, MO 63132-1502

Fax: 314-253-4131

Work Study:

Customer Service: 314-253-4343

Fax: 314-253-4130

WKSRTN.VBASTL@va.gov



October 7, 2016 - Additional Guidance on Approval Requirements for IHL Degree Programs Charged on an Hourly Basis

- On September 1, 2015, an advisory was issued concerning institutions of higher learning (IHL) degree programs involving training that is provided and charged on an hourly basis (such as flight training). This advisory specified that, among other things, an IHL must state the exact mandatory fees associated with each program of education because VA can only pay those declared mandatory fees. If there are variations in the fees, VA can only pay the various fees if they are associated with separate programs.
- Clarification: if a school wants to ask the SAA for approval for concentrations or tracks within a program of education instead of asking for approval for completely separate programs of education, they can do so, and, if approved by the SAA, these separate approved concentrations are enough to satisfy the September 1, 2015, advisory's requirement that "the students are enrolled in two separate and distinct courses – in which case VA can pay for the fees under the Post-9/11 GI Bill..."

November 7, 2016 & April 20, 2017 – VONAPP is now Vets.gov

- All education application forms have been transitioned from the VA Online Application site (VONAPP) to Vets.gov.
 - VA Form 22-5490 Dependents' Application for VA Education Benefits
 - VA Form 22-5495 Dependents' (Fry or DEA) Request for Change of Program or Place of Training
 - VA Form 22-1990E Application for Family Member to Use Transferred Benefits
 - VA Form 22-1990N National Call to Service (very rare)
 - VA Form 22-1990 Veteran or Service member Application for VA Education Benefits
 - VA Form 22-1995 Veteran, Service member, or dependent (Transferred benefit) Change of Place of Training
- **Vets.gov does not currently allow applicants to attach forms to their application. The claimant will be redirected to Right Now Web to send any attachments.**

December 16, 2016 – PL 114-315 H.R. 6416 Jeff Miller and Richard Blumenthal Veterans Health Care and Benefits Improvement

- 18 Sections under Title IV of the bill which affect VA educational assistance and vocational rehabilitation. [Link to PL 114-315](#)
- Notable Sections:
 - 401. Clarification of Eligibility for Marine Gunnery Sergeant John David Fry Scholarship
 - 404. Reports on Progress of Students Receiving Post-9/11 Educational Assistance
 - 407. Centralized Reporting of Veteran Enrollment by Certain Groups, Districts, and Consortiums of Educational Institutions
 - 411. Compliance Surveys
 - 412. Modification of Reductions in Reporting Fee Multipliers for Payments by Secretary of Veterans Affairs to Educational Institutions
 - 417. Technical Amendment Relating to In-State Tuition Rate for Individuals to Whom Entitlement is Transferred Under All-Volunteer Force Educational Assistance Program and Post-9/11 Educational Assistance

PL 114-315 Implementation

PL 114-315: Weekly Status Overview 05/25/2017

#	Section Title	Required Implementation Date	Latest Action
401	Clarification of eligibility for Marine Gunnery Sergeant John David Fry Scholarship.	The changes made by section 401 would apply to a quarter, semester, or term commencing on or after January 1, 2015.	COMPLETE
404	Reports to VA on progress of students receiving Post-9/11 Educational Assistance.	Saturday, December 16, 2017 (data collection required one year after the date of enactment)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft pre-announcement letter to schools pending approval • “Academic and Employment Success” definition in work • Met with DoED and CFPB
405	Recodification and improvement of election process for Post-9/11 Educational Assistance Program.	01/01/2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final advisory prepared • Training package in development • Manual update in work
406	Work-study authority for SAAs, VA Hospitals, national/state cemeteries	06/30/2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comms Plan developed • In concurrence
407	Centralized reporting of veteran enrollment by certain groups, districts, and consortiums of educational institutions.	December 16, 2016 (applies to any reports of enrollment submitted on or after the date of enactment)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working centralized reporting guidance
408	Role of State approving agencies for “deemed approved” schools.	12/16/2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes pending to FY18 contract
409	Modification of requirements for approval for programs designed to prepare individuals for licensure or certification.	12/16/2016 (with grandfather clause for those currently enrolled)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SAAs implementing • VA Waiver process in work
410	VA, in consultation with SAA, determine if additional approval criteria are necessary and equitable.	This change would apply with respect to criteria developed pursuant to 38 U.S.C. 3676(c)(14) on or after January 1, 2013, and an investigation conducted under 38 U.S.C. 3676(c) that is covered by a reimbursement of expense paid by VA to a state, pursuant to 38 U.S.C. 3674, on or after October 1, 2015.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determined additional criteria by SAAs - under evaluation

PL 114-315 Implementation

PL 114-315: Weekly Status Overview 05/25/2017

#	Section Title	Required Implementation Date	Latest Action
411	Compliance surveys > 20 schools	FY 18 Compliance Cycle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Building FY 18 strategies
✓ 412	Modification of reductions in reporting fee multipliers for payments by Secretary of Veterans Affairs to educational institutions.	Varies (December 16, 2016, through September 25, 2017, \$6.00 and \$12.00) (September 26, 2017, through September 25, 2018, \$7.00 and \$12.00) (September 26, 2018, through September 25, 2026, \$12.00 and \$15.00)	COMPLETE
413	Composition of Veterans' Advisory Committee on Education.	12/16/2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reconstituting membership
414	Survey of individuals using their entitlement to educational assistance under the educational assistance programs administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs.	Varies (September 12, 2017, VA must enter into Contract) (One month before collection of data, survey must be sent to HVAC/SVAC) (180 days after signed contract date, contractor must complete survey and send results to Secretary) (90 days after receiving results, Secretary must sent report to HVAC/SVAC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Added to JD Power contract Funding approved
415	Department of Veterans Affairs provision of information on articulation agreements between institutions of higher learning.	Thursday, March 16, 2017 (90 days after the date of enactment to implement this legislation)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Awaiting upload of new language into LTS/PCGL
416	Retention of entitlement to educational assistance during certain additional periods of active duty.	12/16/2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pending approval of notification letter and ECC script
417	Technical amendment relating to in-state tuition rate for individuals to whom entitlement is transferred under all-volunteer force educational assistance program and post-9/11 educational assistance.	07/01/2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 37 states and territories compliant 19 states non-compliant Building waiver package

February 16, 2017 – Changes to Army's Interpretation of 10 USC § 12301(d) for Eligibility to Post 9/11 GI Bill and Transfer of Education Benefits (TEB)

- The Army has changed its interpretation of 10 USC § 12301(d) for eligibility to Post 9/11 GI Bill and Transfer of Education Benefits (TEB).
- Prior to October 1, 2016, the U.S. Army Human Resources Command (HRC) interpreted 38 U.S.C. § 3301(1)(B) to only include mobilization, contingency, ADOS-AC, CO-ADOS-AC service as qualifying service for the Post-9/11 G.I. Bill.
- Beginning October 1, 2016, the Army HRC corrected their interpretation and began including Active Duty Training (ADT), Active Duty Special Work (ADSW), and Active Duty Operational Support-Reserve Component (ADOS-RC) performed after September 10, 2001 as qualifying service for the Post 9/11 GI Bill (PGIB) for Veteran eligibility and Transfer of Education Benefits (TEB) eligibility.

Are you getting seemingly random Post-9/11 GI Bill payments for past students? This may be why...



April 10, 2017 – Koss Scholarship

- Mr. Ronald W. Koss, a Vietnam War Veteran, bequeath a generous sum of money to the Department of Veterans Affairs to establish an educational scholarship for the children of Veterans – this became known as The Ronald William Koss Endowment Fund or the Koss Scholarship. Because of his generosity, VA has gifted the Koss Scholarship to children receiving Chapter 35 education benefits for the month of April of 2017. However, a beneficiary's educational entitlement remains the same:
 - They will not receive extra money or payments from VA
 - They will not earn any additional entitlement under your VA education benefits
 - Their entitlement charge remains the same
- Letters were sent to all recipients on April 6, 2017.



April 11, 2017 – Notification to Work-Study Sites to Submit Time Records



- Effective immediately, each Regional Processing Office (RPOs) will focus on increasing the use of other systems for Work-Study work sites to submit their time records and, if not done so already, create a corporate mailbox for receiving communications from Work Study sites.
- Each RPO is required to keep a running list of work sites which send time records via fax or paper mail. Once the list has increased to 25 or so sites, the RPOs will send a mass email to the worksites and notify the supervisors that time records should be submitted electronically via RNW or to the appropriate corporate mailbox.

May 8, 2017 – National Quality Reviews for the Education Call Center (ECC)

- The Office of Inspector General (OIG) noted during a previous audit that Education Service did not conduct quality reviews at a national level for the Education Call Center (ECC). Based on this audit and the realignment within Education Service, the Quality Assurance Team will begin a review of call center agents at the ECC.
- Reviews will commence for the ECC beginning in May of 2017. ECC national reviews will focus on the quality of the call and the knowledge of the agent within the call center as a whole.



Record the operators name, time/date, and from what phone number you called. This allows us to track calls for training purposes.

May 11, 2017 – New 2017-2018 Academic School Year Tuition and Fee Caps and BAH Information



The Long Term Solution (LTS) has been updated with the new caps for terms beginning on or after August 1, 2017:

Training Type	Amount
Private IHL	\$22,805.34
NCD @ Non-IHL	\$22,805.34
Flight	\$13,031.61
Correspondence	\$11,076.86

May 11, 2017 – New 2017-2018 Academic School Year Tuition and Fee Caps and BAH Information

The entitlement charge for Licensing and Certification Tests and National Exams has been updated:

Entitlement Charged	Amount Received
1 Month	Up to \$1,902.61

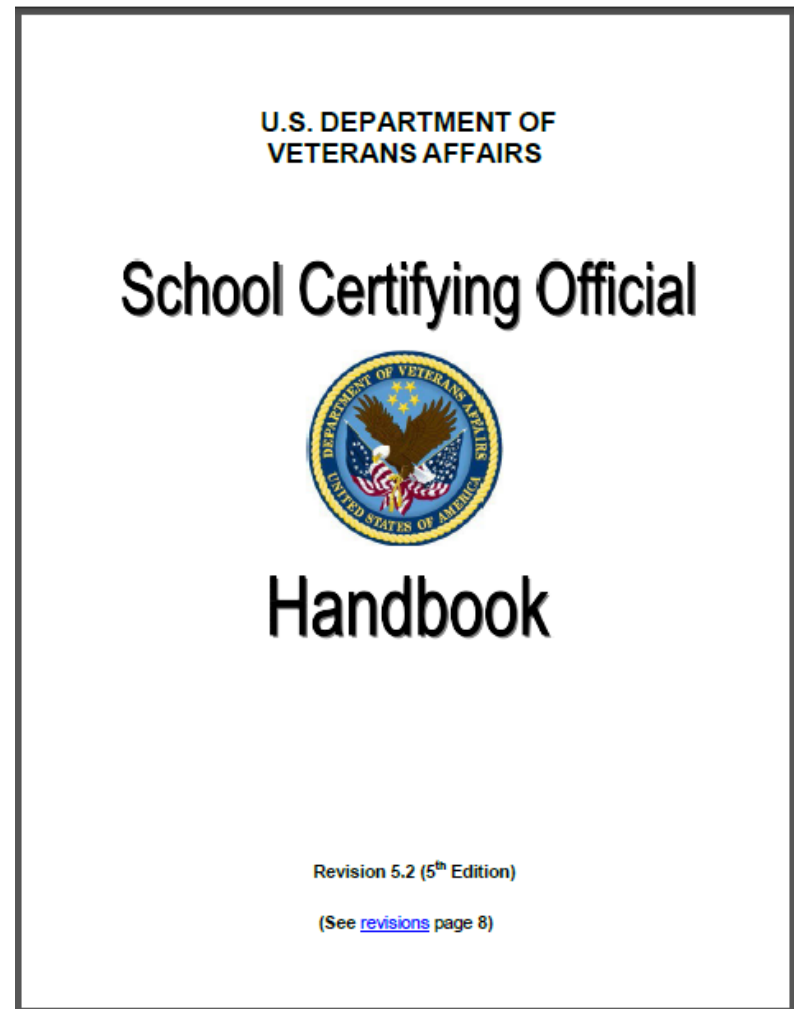
Also, the national average for Foreign and Distance Learning BAH rates have been updated:

Type	Amount
National Average	\$1,681.00
Foreign	\$1,681.00
Distance Learning	\$840.50

NOTE: The Department of Defense BAH rates will show \$50 less than the approved VA rate. LTS is programed to pay the higher rate.

SCO Handbook Update April 6, 2017

- Revision 5.2 (5th Edition)
- Found on the GI Bill website > For School Administrators > School Training Resources > SCO Handbook [Link](#)
- Page 8 outlines 14 revisions
- Notable Reporting Changes:
 - Repeat courses
 - Beginning Date a School Must Report to VA
 - Mandatory charges

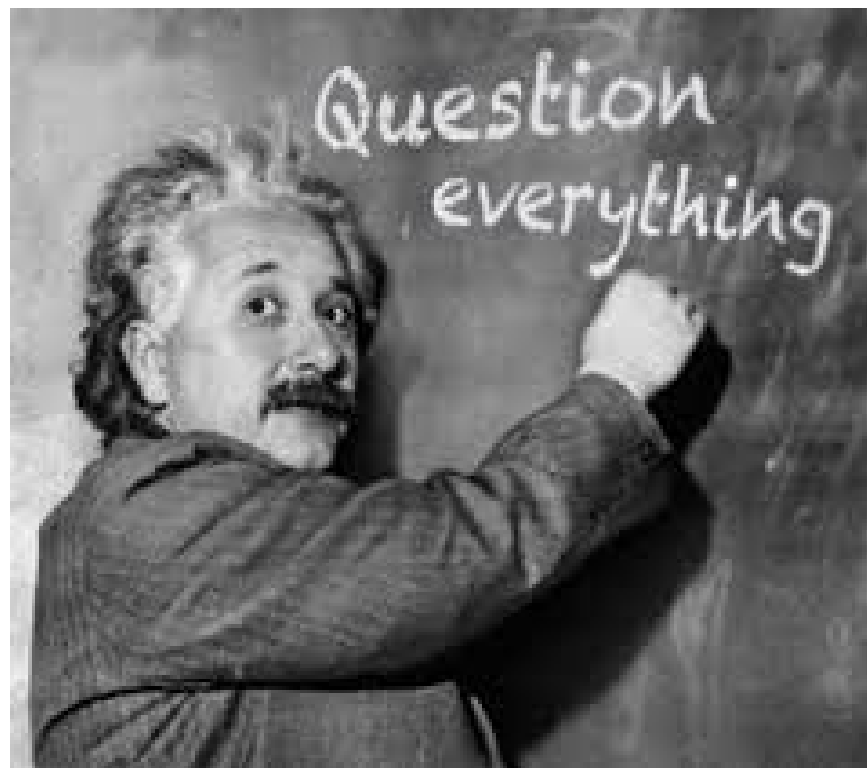


How to Contact VA as a Certifying Official

- Research EDU benefits and rates <http://benefits.va.gov/gibill/>
- Questions concerning EDU benefits or payments:
 - SCO Hotline 1-855-225-1159 is for School Certifying Officials ONLY. Please do not release this number to trainees. The hours of operation are 7:00A to 5:00P CST
 - “Submit a Question” section on the GI Bill website allows you to ask questions about a claim or browse FAQs <https://gibill.custhelp.com/>

Submit a Question/Ask a Question/Right Now Web

- **Great for claims inquiries!** [Link](#)
- Unlike the SCO Hotline, the person on the other end is a processor sitting at the St. Louis RPO
- Establish an account and notify the ELR (me) so you can be distinguished as an SCO in the system
- When submitting an inquiry:
 - Select “School Officials ONLY” as the ‘Product’. This will send the inquiry to a specified SCO queue.
 - The system now wants a file or claim number. When submitting multiple student inquiries, like probations, you can use all zeros.



Summary

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Questions?

