

# VA Education Benefits FAQs



For up-to-date information on eligibility criteria and payment rates, please visit the Education section of [VA.gov](http://VA.gov). If you have questions or concerns about your benefit eligibility or payments, please contact the VA Education Assistance Hotline at 1 (888) 442-4551. You can also submit specific questions through their secure site: <https://gibill.custhelp.com>.

## How do I apply for VA education benefits?

Students who have not previously used benefits must submit an [initial online application at VA.gov](http://VA.gov).

The VA estimates at least 30 days for the processing of initial applications.

Once your application is approved you will receive a **Certificate of Eligibility** from the VA in the mail. You can upload a copy of this in your MySCC Portal: *Under Quick Links > Eforms > Forms > VA Certificate of Eligibility*. This can also be emailed to SCC at [enrollment@stchas.edu](mailto:enrollment@stchas.edu).

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

You can find our **New Veteran Checklist** online at [www.stchas.edu/veterans](http://www.stchas.edu/veterans). If you have questions about anything on the checklist, please contact our Veteran Services Coordinator at [agates@stchas.edu](mailto:agates@stchas.edu).

## 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 term that you would like to use your VA benefits, you must submit a **VA Certification Request** in your MySCC Portal: *Under Quick Links > Eforms > Forms > Certify My VA Benefit*. This must be completed as soon as possible once you register to ensure that you are not removed from your courses for non-payment.

If you change your schedule at any point after registering, please submit a **VA Certification Adjustment** in your MySCC Portal: *Under Quick Links > Eforms > Forms > VA Certification Adjustment*. Credit adjustments must be reported to the VA within 30 days of the add or drop.

You must be actively pursuing a degree or educational goal and maintain good academic standing. All courses must apply to your approved degree program.

## 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 Veterans Services Coordinator as soon as possible so that the school can update the program change to the VA.

## What happens if I drop a class?

If you change your schedule at any point after registering, please submit a **VA Certification Adjustment** in your MySCC Portal: *Under Quick Links > Eforms > Forms > VA Certification Adjustment*.

SCC is required by the VA to report changes in enrollment within 30 days of the adjustment. Reduction in credit during the term can sometimes create an overpayment with the VA. The VA will contact you regarding any effect these changes have on your past or future benefit payments.

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

Your rate of pursuit must be greater than half-time (7 or more hours for fall or spring; 4 or more for summer) each term. To receive full BAH, you must be enrolled in at least 12 credit hours for the entire fall or spring term, or 6 for the summer term.

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

Current payment rates for all VA education programs can be found at [VA.gov/education](http://VA.gov/education).

Payment amounts are based on a number of factors, including the type of GI Bill or other education program you are certified under; the number of credit hours in which you are enrolled at a given time; your eligibility tier (Post-9/11) and/or your remaining entitlement. Taking courses with various beginning and end dates can affect payment amounts, as well as whether or not you are considered enrolled for the entire month.

## **How do I secure my enrollment and avoid getting dropped if I am using VA education benefits?**

Students who request to be certified under VA Chapter 33 Post 9/11 GI Bill and Chapter 31 Vocational Rehabilitation & Employment will be held in their courses upon receipt of their VA Certification Request.

Students who request to be certified under any other VA Education Benefit (Chapters 30, 35, and 1606) have the option to enroll in a Nelnet Deferred Payment Plan, which will effectively hold them in their courses. This option can be selected on the VA Certification Request; once this is received, the student will be directed via email to enroll in the plan through their MySCC Portal under SCC Connection.

## **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)

## **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)