Higher Education Executive
All Institutions of Higher Learning

Dear Higher Education Executive:

VA is pleased to announce that the Post-9/11 GI Bill Yellow Ribbon Program open season for the 2018-2019 academic year will run from March 15th through May 15th. During the open season, institutions can (1) request participation in the program, (2) modify participation in the program, or (3) request withdrawal from the program. Additionally, participating institutions may indicate their commitment to adhere to the Principles of Excellence set forth in Executive Order 13607.

All institutions considering initial or continued participation in the Yellow Ribbon Program should review the Yellow Ribbon Program agreement form and Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) on the Yellow Ribbon Program website (http://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/yellow_ribbon/yellow_ribbon_info_schools.asp) to ensure compliance with all program requirements.

The Harry W. Colmery Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2017 (also known as the Forever GI Bill) makes significant changes to VA education benefits over the next few years. Please note there are a few changes that expand Yellow Ribbon benefits-

- Effective August 1, 2018, recipients of the Marine Gunnery Sergeant John David Fry Scholarship and Purple Heart recipients may participate in the Yellow Ribbon Program
- Effective August 1, 2022, active duty service members may participate in the Yellow Ribbon Program

Institutions with existing Yellow Ribbon Program agreements

Please review your current agreement to determine whether any modifications are required. You may view the terms of your current agreement by going to the Yellow Ribbon Program web page and selecting “2017 - 2018 Yellow Ribbon Participant List” or by using the following link: (https://www.benefits.va.gov/GIBILL/yellow_ribbon/yrp_list_2017.asp).
As the Yellow Ribbon Program agreement is an open-ended agreement, existing agreements will remain valid until modified or withdrawn. If your institution does not need to modify any information previously provided or withdraw from the program, then no further action or communication is required. If your institution desires to change any elements of its agreement, or withdraw from the program, then your institution must submit a signed agreement via email attachment to YellowRibbon.VBACO@va.gov by May 15, 2018.

As an institution approved by your State Approving Agency for Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) educational benefits, you are strongly encouraged to commit or recommit to the Principles of Excellence, publicly recognizing the importance of transparency and providing students with appropriate information as indicated in enclosure A. If you have not yet submitted your 2018-2019 Principles of Excellence commitment or recommitment letter, please utilize enclosure B rather than the Principles of Excellence document in the Yellow Ribbon Agreement; and submit enclosure B directly to principles.excellence@va.gov. If your school chooses not to participate, VA would greatly appreciate that your main campus complete, sign and return enclosure C indicating the reason for your non-participation to principles.excellence@va.gov.

Institutions without existing agreements

Institutions that do not have an existing Yellow Ribbon Program agreement may request approval for the Yellow Ribbon Program by submitting a signed agreement via email attachment to YellowRibbon.VBACO@va.gov.

With your support, we can ensure that our nation’s Veterans and dependents receive the education benefits they deserve.

Enclosures

Respectfully,

Robert M. Worley II
Director, Education Service
Enclosure A

**Background:** Executive Order (EO) 13607, Establishing Principles of Excellence (PoE) for educational institutions serving service members, Veterans, spouses, and other family members was signed on April 27, 2012.

PoE is to ensure that Veteran educational benefits programs provide Veterans, service members, spouses, and their eligible family members with the information, support, and protections they deserve. PoE also strengthens, provides oversight, enforcement, and accountability within the Department of Veterans Affairs’ (VA) education benefit programs for educational institutions.

**Overview:** The VA shall also notify all institutions participating in the Post-9/11 GI Bill program that they are strongly encouraged to comply with the Principles and post their commitment on the GI Bill® Comparison Tool.

### Principles of Excellence

Educational institutions participating in the Principles of Excellence program agree to the following guidelines:

- Provide students with a personalized Financial Aid Shopping Sheet covering the total cost of an education program.
- Inform students who are eligible to receive Veterans education benefits of the availability and potential eligibility of Federal financial aid before packaging or arranging private student loans or alternative financing programs.
- Avoid fraudulent and unduly aggressive recruiting techniques as well as misrepresentations, payment of incentive compensation, and failure to meet State authorization requirements.
- Obtain the approval of the institution’s accrediting agency for new courses or program offerings prior to enrolling students.
- Accommodate service members and reservists to be readmitted to a program if they are temporarily unable to attend class or have to suspend their studies due to service requirements.
- Align institutional refund policies with those under Title IV, which governs the administration of Federal student financial aid programs.
- Provide educational plans for all military and Veteran education beneficiaries.
- Designate a point of contact to provide academic and financial advising.

Foreign schools, high schools, on-the-job training and apprenticeship programs, residency and internship programs, and institutions that do not charge tuition and fees are not requested to comply with the Principles of Excellence.


You may also access a Q&A produced by the Department of Education about the Principles at [http://ifap.ed.gov/dpcletters/GEN1210.html](http://ifap.ed.gov/dpcletters/GEN1210.html)

Enclosure B

Principles of Excellence
2018-2019 Academic Year

________________________ agree to commit/recommit to comply with:
(Main Campus)

Principles of Excellence:

- Provide students with a personalized Financial Aid Shopping Sheet covering the total cost of an education program.
- Inform students who are eligible to receive Veterans education benefits of the availability and potential eligibility of Federal financial aid before packaging or arranging private student loans or alternative financing programs.
- Avoid fraudulent and unduly aggressive recruiting techniques as well as misrepresentations, payment of incentive compensation, and failure to meet State authorization requirements.
- Obtain the approval of the institution’s accrediting agency for new courses or program offerings prior to enrolling students.
- Accommodate service members and reservists to be readmitted to a program if they are temporarily unable to attend class or have to suspend their studies due to service requirements.
- Align institutional refund policies with those under Title IV, which governs the administration of Federal student financial aid programs.
- Provide educational plans for all military and Veteran education beneficiaries.
- Designate a point of contact to provide academic and financial advising.

List all participating locations below:

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<th>School Name/Location</th>
<th>Facility Code</th>
<th>Point of Contact</th>
<th>Email Address</th>
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(Continue on blank sheet if necessary)

Main Campus Authorized Administrator: ____________________________

First Name  Last Name

Official Title: ________________________________________________

Telephone Number: ____________________________________________

Email Address: ________________________________________________

Signature: ____________________________________________________

Date: _________________________________________________________
Enclosure C

Principles of Excellence
2018-2019 Academic Year

DOES NOT agree to commit/recommit to comply with:
(Main Campus)

Principles of Excellence:

- Provide students with a personalized Financial Aid Shopping Sheet covering the total cost of an education program.
- Inform students who are eligible to receive Veterans education benefits of the availability and potential eligibility of Federal financial aid before packaging or arranging private student loans or alternative financing programs.
- Avoid fraudulent and unduly aggressive recruiting techniques as well as misrepresentations, payment of incentive compensation, and failure to meet State authorization requirements.
- Obtain the approval of the institution’s accrediting agency for new courses or program offerings prior to enrolling students.
- Accommodate service members and reservists to be readmitted to a program if they are temporarily unable to attend class or have to suspend their studies due to service requirements.
- Align institutional refund policies with those under Title IV, which governs the administration of Federal student financial aid programs.
- Provide educational plans for all military and Veteran education beneficiaries.
- Designate a point of contact to provide academic and financial advising.

Provide an explanation for NOT complying.

You may be contacted by a VA staff member to assist in overcoming any barriers your institution may have in complying with the Principles.

Main Campus Authorized Administrator: ________________________

Official Title: ________________________

Telephone Number: ________________________

Email Address: ________________________

Signature: ________________________

Date: ________________________