

~ June Office Hours Agenda ~

- Rollback of COVID Provisions.....Chelsea Jackson
- Processing of Post-9/11 GI Bill® Vacation Days.....Traveon Ward Sr.
- THE REMOTE ACT - Section 3.....Marit Solem
- Yellow Ribbon Ext to Active-Duty Service Members – Heather Cates

This Event is SCO Approved Training.....[Portal](#)



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs



Rollback of COVID Provisions: FAQ Edition



Chelsea Jackson

Training Specialist

National Training Team-Schools

Who is responsible?

Regarding Rollback of COVID - Will VA review certifications previously submitted and identify which ones need to be recertified or is this solely the responsibility of the SCOs?

Answer: SCOs should not rely on VA to notify them of their affected certifications. It is the school's responsibility to be aware of certifications that included converted courses. Additionally, if the COVID remark was inadvertently left off the initial certification the SCO is still required to submit the adjusted certification.



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Rollback of COVID Provisions Part 1



Questions and Answers from Certifying Officials during May Office Hours

The requirement to make corrections to the Summer certifications if the term spans 01-June date, is this just for schools who are NOT approved for online classes? Or for all schools?

Answer: This is a requirement for **any** school that has certified a student in a converted course during a term or enrollment period that spans June 1, 2022. Please see the updated FAQs on the GI Bill® website for instructions on how to adjust the certifications for each type of school and program.

We no longer do asynchronous online courses. We do live Zoom and record the class period for later viewing if missed. Is Live Zoom considered Distant or Resident? We have military grad students in different states zooming in live

Answer: If your students are attending the course from anywhere other than in a classroom on campus with other students (with attendance taken) the course must be certified to VA as distance training for terms beginning after June 1, 2022.

Rollback of COVID Provisions Part 2

Questions and Answers from Certifying Officials during May Office Hours



What is the plan for certifications already submitted that cover the June 1 end date if the certifications were submitted with the COVID process?

Answer: You must adjust or terminate (as applicable) any certification that included converted courses where the term or enrollment period certified spans June 1, 2022. What you will submit (adjustment or termination) varies depending on if your school or program is approved for online training by the State Approving Agency. Please see the updated FAQs on the GI Bill® website for specific instructions for your school and program type.

What is the deadline for submitting all the adjustments for the terms spanning the covid-19 expiration date?

Answer: While there is no deadline, other than the normal 30-day requirement to report changes, timely corrected COVID-19 certifications will assist with payment processing accuracy and reduce overpayments. To avoid debts, SCOs should strive to have COVID-19 related adjustments submitted before the end of June so June payments for MHA are correct.

Rollback of COVID Provisions Part 3

Questions and Answers from Certifying Officials during May Office Hours



So , for our summer certs that go through the 6/1 date, do we have to recertify if our school is already back to normal offerings and have been?

Answer: If the student was only attending resident (in-person) courses and no converted courses were certified you do not need to adjust the certification as there is no change to report.

Rollback of COVID Certifications- Does it apply to VRRAP students as well?

Answer: Yes, the COVID-19 provisions and the sunseting of those provisions applies to VRRAP students.



Additional Covid FAQs can be found here:

[School Certifying Officials COVID-19 FAQs](#)

[VBA Education Office Hours - Education and Training](#)



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PROCESSING OF POST 9/11 GI BILL® VACATION DAYS



Traveon D. Ward, Sr.

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National Training Team - Schools

VACATION PERIODS

What does the Department of Veterans Affairs consider a vacation period?

The Department of Veterans Affairs considers an enrolled Veteran or other eligible person whose work was interrupted by a holiday vacation to be in pursuit of the program of education during the holiday vacation



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THE TERM HOLIDAY VACATION

What does the term holiday vacation mean?

The term holiday vacation means a customary, reasonable vacation period connected with a Federal or State legal holiday, which is identified as a holiday vacation in the educational institution's approved literature

Generally, VA will interpret a reasonable period as not more than one calendar week. Continuity of enrollment is not broken by holiday vacations/vacation periods



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VACATION PERIOD RATE OF PURSUIT

Rate of pursuit for Post 9-11 GI Bill® (or training time Chapters 30, 1606, and 35,) during standard semesters (15-19 weeks) and standard quarters (10-13 weeks) is not impacted by vacation periods within the semester or quarter

Non-Standard terms are longer or shorter than a standard semester or quarter. VA determines a credit hour equivalent during nonstandard terms. Qualifying vacation periods during these terms are excluded from count of total days in the period used in the equivalent credit hour calculation (ECH).

For VA to properly determine the credit hour equivalents during a nonstandard term, suitable vacation periods must be reported on the enrollment certification



HOW TO REPORT VACATION PERIODS

- Only vacation periods of 7 calendar days or greater should be reported
- The period must be identified as a holiday period in your approved catalog
- This typically means no class sessions for at least a Monday through the following Friday. Only consecutive vacation days can be reported and should be reflected as a date range, not as a total number of days.



HOW TO REPORT VACATION PERIODS – EXAMPLE

EXAMPLE

December							January						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
				1	2	3	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4	5	6	7	8	9	10	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
11	12	13	14	15	16	17	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
18	19	20	21	22	23	24	22	23	24	25	26	27	28
25	26	27	28	29	30	31	29	30	31				
7:○	16:◐	23:●	29:◐				6:○	14:◐	21:●	28:◐			

In the example above, December 23rd is the last day of classes before Christmas Break. Classes resume on January 3rd. The beginning date of the vacation period should be reported as the 1st day after the last day of class, or December 24th in this case.

The last day of the vacation period is the day before class resumes, or January 2nd. This equals 10 days. Proper reporting is required and is advantageous to the student's rate of pursuit or training time. Vacation periods less than 7 days will be disregarded.

HOW TO REPORT VACATION PERIODS – EXAMPLE CONTINUED

December							January						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
				1	2	3	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4	5	6	7	8	9	10	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
11	12	13	14	15	16	17	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
18	19	20	21	22	23	24	22	23	24	25	26	27	28
25	26	27	28	29	30	31	29	30	31				
7:○	16:●	23:●	29:●				6:○	14:●	21:●	28:●			



Using this example, the correct entry in the remarks field is “**Vacation Period: December 24th through January 2**”. The Veterans Claims Examiner (VCE) will count the days in the date ranger when determining the equivalent credit hours (ECH).

Because the full-time modifier for graduate training is determined by the school, vacation periods should be considered prior to reporting graduate enrollments to VA. It is not necessary to report vacation periods for any graduate training.

PROCESSING OF POST 9/11 GI BILL® VACATION DAYS

The new system known as Enrollment Manager (EM), is scheduled to replace VA-ONCE in Fall 2022, EM will include a new field to report qualifying vacation periods

The paper form known as VA Form 22-1999, VA Enrollment Certification and the SCO Handbook are currently being updated to include a field to report vacation period(s)

Further details will be provided during the next Office Hours



Mini Quiz #1

The vacation period must be identified as a holiday period in your approved catalog

True

False



Mini Quiz - #1 - Answer

The vacation period must be identified as a holiday period in your approved catalog

True



Mini Quiz - #2

When reporting vacation periods, the beginning date of the vacation period should be reported as the same day as the last day of class

True

False



MINI QUIZ - #2 - ANSWER

When reporting vacation periods, the beginning date of the vacation period should be reported as the same day as the last day of class

False

When reporting vacation periods, the beginning date of the vacation period should be reported as *the 1st day after the last day of class*



REMINDER REGARDING: ENROLLMENT VERIFICATION

Certifying Officials,

If you're submitting changes in student's enrollment late in the month, it prevents some students from receiving their enrollment verification text message at the end of the month.

Please, try to submit any amendments to your students' enrollments as soon as possible (as early in the month as possible) so that students receive their enrollment verification text messages on time.



ATTENTION REGARDING: SECTION 1010 VERIFICATION FAILURES

Students continue to be confused with when to respond 'YES' vs 'NO' to Enrollment Verification text messages and emails

The most common scenario that has people confused occurs when a student ends their enrollment during a verification month

For example, when a student's term ends on 5/12, they still receive a text message/email on 5/31 and are often confused on how to respond

VA has noticed that students often responded 'NO' although there were no changes to their enrollment were recorded

*Students should be responding in situations like this with "YES" for their enrollment verification





THE REMOTE ACT - SECTION 3



Marit Solem

Training Specialist

National Training Team - Schools

HISTORY

Isakson & Roe Section 1018 required use of college financial planning plan or shopping sheets and provided opportunity for waivers for institutions



REMOTE ACT - SECTION 3

Section 3: Amends 38 U.S.C. § 3679(f)(2)(B), to now allow schools to pay incentives to recruit foreign students not eligible for Federal financial student aid; exempts all foreign schools from the requirements of 38 U.S.C. § 3679(f) and amends 38 USC 3689(c) and 3690(c) to exempt certain foreign students and foreign schools from certain reporting requirements; exempts schools that provide their students with financial disclosure information required by the Secretary of Education (e.g., schools that provide students with a College Financial Plan as part of participation in Federal financial student aid) from any of the requirements of § 3697(f); and delays enforcement of § 3679(f) until August 1, 2022, and any school seeking a waiver may apply for one starting on June 15, 2022.



WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?

If you provide a Department of Education College Financial Planning Plan (also called Financial Aid Shopping Sheet) you are exempt from this requirement

If you do not provide this, you will be able to request a waiver for one year

More information will be coming soon via Gov Delivery

You will have from June 15, 2022 – July 31, 2022, to apply for a waiver

Financial Aid Shopping Sheet

University of the United States (UUS)		MM / DD / YYYY	
Undergraduate College Financing Plan			
Student Name, Identifier			
Total Cost of Attendance 2022-2023			
	On Campus Residence	Off Campus Residence	
Tuition and fees		\$X,XXXX	
Housing and meals	\$X,XXXX	\$X,XXXX	
Books and supplies		\$X,XXXX	
Transportation		\$X,XXXX	
Other education costs		\$X,XXXX	
Estimated Cost of Attendance	\$X,XXXX / yr	\$X,XXXX / yr	
Expected Family Contribution			
Based on FAFSA		X,XXXX / yr	
As calculated by the institution using information reported on the FAFSA or to your institution.			
Based on Institutional Methodology		X,XXXX / yr	
Used by most private institutions in addition to FAFSA.			
Scholarship and Grant Options			
Scholarships and Grants are considered "Gift" aid - no repayment is needed.			
Scholarships		Grants	
Merit-Based Scholarships		Need-Based Grant Aid	
Scholarships from your school	\$X,XXXX	Federal Pell Grants	\$X,XXXX
Scholarships from your state	\$X,XXXX	Institutional Grants	\$X,XXXX
Other scholarships	\$X,XXXX	State Grants	\$X,XXXX
Employer Paid Tuition Benefits	\$X,XXXX	Other forms of grant aid	\$X,XXXX
Total Scholarships	\$X,XXXX / yr	Total Grants	\$X,XXXX / yr
VA Education Benefits			
VA Education Benefits		\$X,XXXX / yr	
College Costs You Will Be Required to Pay			
Net Price To You		\$X,XXXX / yr	





Yellow Ribbon Program Eligibility Extension



Heather Cates

Training Specialist

National Training Team-Schools

YELLOW RIBBON EXTENSION

Current:

Active-Duty Service members and spouses using the transferred benefits of an Active Duty Servicemember are not currently eligible for the Yellow Ribbon Program.

August 1, 2022:

Service members currently on active-duty who qualify for the Post 9/11 GI Bill® at the 100% level (they already served on active duty for at least 36 months) and spouses using the transferred benefits of an active duty servicemember may be eligible for the Yellow Ribbon Program.

Yellow Ribbon Program



School Requirements

- Must be an Institution of Higher Learning;
- Must offer the Yellow Ribbon Program;
- Must not have offered the Yellow Ribbon benefit to more than the maximum number of students in their agreement with VA; and
- Must include Yellow Ribbon Program information in student certifications to VA



YELLOW RIBBON PROGRAM EXTENSION Q&A (1 of 2)



Can schools eliminate students attending part-time from the first-come, first-served selection process for the Yellow Ribbon Program? Can schools apply any minimum enrollment requirements on part-time students?

No, schools cannot eliminate part-time students from the first-come, first-served selection process. Also, schools cannot apply any minimum enrollment requirements as that also would violate the first-come, first-served selection process.



Can schools limit Yellow Ribbon Program participation to apply to only students seeking their first undergraduate degree, for example, but not students seeking a second undergraduate degree?

No, that is not permissible per 38 CFR 21.9700(d), which only allows for distinctions based on the student's status (i.e., undergraduate, graduate, doctoral) or sub-element of the school, (i.e., college or professional school), etc. Making a distinction of first versus second undergraduate degree would violate the first-come, first-served requirements, also within that section.



Can a school treat a traditional vs. a non-traditional program of study differently in its Yellow Ribbon Program?

No, the school cannot differentiate between a traditional vs. a non-traditional program of study, such as the day and evening programs with the same course material and GI Bill® approval.



YELLOW RIBBON PROGRAM EXTENSION Q&A (2 of 2)



Can a school's policy state the school will contribute Yellow Ribbon program funding towards a student's first attempt of classes, but not for successive attempts?

VA makes Yellow Ribbon Program contributions for punitive grades, so if the student is receiving Yellow Ribbon Program contributions initially, then the school must continue to contribute Yellow Ribbon funding when he/she re-takes the class, provided the following conditions apply:

- **The school continues to participate in the program;**
- **The student continues to maintain satisfactory progress towards completion of the program (per the school's policy);**
- **The student remains continuously enrolled (per the school's policy);**
- **The student has remaining entitlement under the Post 9/11 GI Bill®; and**
- **The student has not reached the school's maximum academic year Yellow Ribbon contribution noted on the agreement**



What are the responsibilities of a school participating in the Yellow Ribbon Program?

The responsibilities of a school participating in the Yellow Ribbon Program are:

- **Certifying in accordance with the school's Yellow Ribbon Program agreement**
- **Tracking the number of students enrolled under the Yellow Ribbon Program;**
- **Tracking the annual amount of the school's tuition and fees;**
- **Developing and documenting the process for the first-come, first-served enrollment of students into the school's Yellow Ribbon Program**





CERTIFYING OFFICIAL RESOURCES

SUNSET OF INTERNET EXPLORER

Internet Explorer has been the preferred web browser for VA-ONCE and will be “sunset” in June 2022

Usability testing has been conducted and **Microsoft Edge** is now the preferred web browser

VA-ONCE & Edge Browser Compatibility



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CERTIFYING OFFICIAL RESOURCE GUIDE

Issue	ELR	Certifying Official Hotline	SAA
Updating Certifying Officials; VA Form 22-8794	X		
Technical assistance with reporting enrollments	X		
Access to VA-ONCE and related technical guidance	X		
85/15 reporting matters	X		
Clarification on WEAMS 1998 reports	X		
Status of Tuition & Fee or Yellow Ribbon payments		X	
Explanation of school debt creation		X	
Individual student benefit information and hardship cases		X	
Program revisions; new/suspended/cancelled programs			X
Updated catalogs and related publications			X
School address updates – including branch/extension			X
Changes in accreditation status			X
Change of ownership and change of address			X



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RESOURCES FOR CERTIFYING OFFICIALS

- Find **ELR** Contact Information [here](#)
- Find **SAA** Contact Information [here](#)

Contact your ELR for the **Certifying Official Hotline** phone number.



DEBT MANAGEMENT CENTER

Ask VA (AVA) School Inquiries

- All school inquiries and disputes should be submitted using AVA <https://ask.va.gov/>
- Select “**Veterans Affairs- Debt**” as the category and “**A School Official**” as the topic
 - Selecting these options is critical to ensure routing to DMC
- Under “**My inquiry is**” select “**On behalf of a Veteran**”- this enables you to select School Certifying Official or Other (Business) under “**relationship to Veteran**”
 - Selecting on behalf of a Veteran and then a business relationship will ensure the inquiries show up in a business dashboard
- You must log in to receive a response that receives specific debt information

Tell us about your question

Which category best describes your question? *

(*Required)

Veteran Affairs - Debt



Which topic best describes your question? * (*Required)

A School Official



Tell us the reason you're contacting us? (*Required)

Question



My inquiry is: (*Required)

On behalf of a Veteran



Are you currently an employee of the VA? *

No Yes

Your relationship to the Veteran (*Required)

School Certifying Official



Schools

DEBT MANAGEMENT CENTER

Tips for Submissions via AVA

When submitting disputes and inquiries via AVA

- One inquiry per student
- Identifying information for the student (not in the subject line)
- School name and facility code
- Debt amount
- Supporting details (front and back of cashed check, when was updated certification sent, etc.)



CERTIFYING OFFICIAL ANNUAL TRAINING RESOURCES

National Training Mailbox: edutraining.vbaco@va.gov

- Certifying Official training portal access and use
- Certifying Official approved training credit and progress tracking
- Adobe Connect registration and access

VBA Support: support@VBATraining.org

- Certifying Official training portal functionality

All webinars and training sessions are announced via [GovDelivery](#)

Be sure to register and update your information as needed

GovDelivery Support can be found [here](#)



CERTIFYING OFFICIAL RESOURCE LINKS

VBA Education Service Monthly Office Hours

[VBA Education Office Hours](#)

School Certifying Official Handbook

[School Certifying Official Handbook](#)

GI Bill® Website – School Resources Page

[School Resource Page](#)

GI Bill® Website – Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

[GI Bill® Website - FAQs](#)

School Certifying Official Training Portal

[School Certifying Official \(SCO\) Training](#)

VA-ONCE Quick Reference User Guide

[VA Once Quick Reference User Guide](#)

Debt Management Center (DMC)

[Ask VA](#) and 1-800-827-0648

Veteran Readiness & Employment (VRE)

[Veteran Readiness And Employment \(VR&E\)](#)

VRE Certifying Official Handbook

[VRE SCO Handbook](#)

Work Study

[Ask VA](#)

85/15 FAQs

[85/15 Frequently Asked Questions](#)



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CERTIFYING OFFICIAL TRAINING SELF-CERTIFICATION STEP-BY-STEP

1. Click on the URL below or Copy and Paste in your web browser

<https://vba-tpss.vbatraining.org/assess/trkSignIn?refid=XSCO>

2. Enter your email address and eight (8) digit facility code, then click Next

3. Scroll down and click the Conference/Workshop/Virtual Training tab

4. Select the applicable training session from the list of topics that appears on the right side of the screen by clicking Begin

5. To enter Conference/Workshop/Virtual Training Title, click the dropdown arrow, select SCO Virtual Training Session and click Submit

6. Enter the start date and the end date

7. Enter your Facility Name, City and State (Main Campus) and click Submit

8. Certify your attendance by clicking Agree and then submit

9. Print your training certificate and keep for your records



Thank You!

July Office Hours:

Education Staff – Tuesday July 19th

State Approving Agencies – Tuesday July 19th

Certifying Officials – Wednesday July 20th & Thursday July 21st



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