Before we begin…

• The webinar will start at **2 pm** (Eastern Standard Time)

• Please make sure to:
  – Mute your phone
  – Turn off any webcams or microphones (if applicable)

• **Audio can ONLY be accessed by calling 1-800-767-1750**
  – Conference code: 37638

• Slides will be available in 1-2 weeks on our website under the **School Training Resources** page
Agenda

• Harry W. Colmery Educational Assistance Act of 2017 (Forever GI Bill) Updates
  – Section 107
  – Section 305
• Academic Progress and Outcome Measures
• SCO Handbook Updates
• Dual Certification
• Question & Answer
• Participants may submit questions and feedback during the webinar in the QA box. We want this to be beneficial for you.

• Answers to questions will be provided when a copy of the webinar is uploaded to www.benefits.va.gov/gibill

• To find the webinars, visit www.benefits.va.gov/gibill
  – Click on “For School Administrators”
    • Select “School Resources”
      – Select “Education Benefit Presentations” under the Certifications and Training header

• For any specific or situational questions you may have, please contact your ELR or call the School Certifying Official Hotline
Colmery Act (PL 115-48)
Section 107 - Focus Group
Today’s Objectives

• Review and discuss the definition of “campus” and potential changes to how enrollments will be submitted
• Review which VA systems will likely be updated
• Review and discuss impact to student housing payments
• Review and discuss potential updates to Compliance Survey requirements
SEC. 107. CALCULATION OF MONTHLY HOUSING STIPEND UNDER POST-9/11 EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM BASED ON LOCATION OF CAMPUS WHERE CLASSES ARE ATTENDED.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 3313(c)(1)(B)(i)(I) is amended by striking “the institution of higher learning at which the individual is enrolled” and inserting “the campus of the institution of higher learning where the individual physically participates in a majority of classes”.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendment made by subsection (a) shall apply with respect to initial enrollment in a program of education on or after August 1, 2018.

*This bill was modified by the EXTENDERS BILL – H.R. 3819 – TITLE V – TECHNICAL CORRECTION – which clarified that this change affects all quarters, semesters, and terms commencing on or after August 1, 2018.
Understanding Section 107

- Requires VA to calculate the Monthly Housing Allowance (MHA) under the Post-9/11 GI Bill based on the location of the campus where the individual physically attends the majority of their classes.

- MHA will no longer be based on the “Institution” location of the school where the individual is enrolled.

- Applies to all new terms beginning on or after August 1, 2018.
The Definition of “Campus”

“Campus” has been interpreted to mean any place an individual spends the majority of their time training for their program of education.

This definition of campus includes:

- The individual campus of a school where the student is taking classes (i.e. the school’s science center, humanities building, or athletic center)
- The physical location where a student is learning in a study abroad program
- Any internship, externship, practicum or student teaching site
  - Congressional Representatives have indicated that the inclusion of these sites was desired by Congress.
Updates to VA Systems

• The systems potentially being updated as a result of Section 107 are:
  – VA Online Certification Enrollment (VA-ONCE)
  – Long Term Solution (LTS)
  – Web Enabled Approval Management System (WEAMS)
  – GI Bill Comparison Tool

• The projected date for these system updates is July 2018
Current Enrollment Submission Process

• Schools submit the student’s enrollment information through VA-ONCE.

• MHA is calculated using the zip code attached to the facility code where the student is enrolled.

• In a single term, if the student physically attends multiple schools or a school with multiple facility codes (a “guest school” relationship), the facility code with the higher MHA is used.
Under the Post-9/11 GI Bill, starting August 1, 2018, VA will calculate MHA based on the location of the campus where the individual "physically attends" the majority of their classes.

A student’s MHA will no longer be based on the zip code of the facility the student is attending. It will be based on the zip code where the student physically attends the majority of their classes.
Approval of Sites by the State Approving Agency (SAA):

- Schools will need to provide their SAA of jurisdiction and VA an updated copy of their catalog (or a catalog addendum) which specifically lists each campus of the school and provides the zip code for that campus.

- VA will be actively engaging with SAAs and schools to see how schools can identify and provide the zip code information for each of the schools’ internship, externship, practicum and student teaching sites.

- The expected deadline for all schools to provide updated catalogs or catalog addendums to their SAA is August 2019.
Proposed View in VA ONCE

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<th>Status</th>
<th>Facility Code</th>
<th>Begin Date</th>
<th>End Date</th>
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<th>Dist</th>
<th>R/D</th>
<th>Clock</th>
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**Enrollment Certification VA-ONCE var. DD30 - Chapter 33**

**VA File No.**

**Student Information**

**Type of Training**

**Undergraduate**

**Name of Program**

**PERFORMING ARTS - BA-021:094**

**Total number of credits enrolled:** 12

**Credit for Prior Training VA**

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<th>Hours</th>
<th>Zip</th>
<th>Code</th>
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<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
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</tr>
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</table>

**Certification:** All provisions on VA Form 22-1064 are certified.

**Date Signed School Information**

**12/30/2017**

**Facility Code:** 2222222

**VA Form 22-1064**

**VA File Control No.** 2900-0702

**CertID:** 00000000

**TransID:**
Payment Scenario #1: Different Campuses

- A student is taking 3 credits at a school’s main campus in New York City (Zip Code: 10001 – MHA Rate: $3,669.00).

- The student is taking 9 credits at the school’s science campus on Staten Island (Zip Code: 10309 – MHA Rate: $2,724.00).

This student would be paid at the MHA rate of the Staten Island campus: $2724.00.
Payment Scenario #2: Equal Credits at Different Campuses

- A student is taking **6 credits** at a school’s main campus in New York City (Zip Code: 10001 – **MHA Rate: $3,669.00**).
- The student is taking **6 credits** at the school’s science campus on Staten Island (Zip Code: 10309 – **MHA Rate: $2,724.00**).
- When a student is taking an equal number of classes at two locations, VA will pay the higher MHA rate.

**This student would be paid at the MHA rate of the main campus: $3,669.00.**
Payment Scenario #3: Change in Credits

• A student is taking 9 credits at a school’s main campus in New York City (Zip Code: 10001 – MHA Rate: $3,669.00).

• The student is taking 9 credits at the science campus on Staten Island (Zip Code: 10309 – MHA Rate: $2,724.00).

• This student would be paid the MHA rate of the main campus: $3,669.00.

• Midterm the student drops 3 credits from the main campus.

Effective the date of reduction, the student would be paid the MHA rate of the Staten Island campus: $2,724.00.

NOTE: There are no changes in processing rules or the establishment of debts. If a school does not notify VA of a reduction until the end of term, VA will retroactively correct the student’s account and establish all debts. (E.g. If the student above reduced one month prior to the end of the term, but the school failed to report the drop until the end of term, then a MHA debt of $945.00 would be made for the student).
Payment Scenario #4: Different Campuses + Online Classes

- A student is taking **3 credits** at a school’s main campus in New York City (Zip Code: 10001 – **MHA Rate: $3,669.00**).
- The student is taking **3 credits** at the school’s science campus on Staten Island (Zip Code: 10309 – **MHA Rate: $2,724.00**).
- The student is taking **6 credits** online (**MHA Rate: 840.50**).

**NOTE:** MHA rate is based on physical attendance. If a student is taking at least one credit in-residence, they will receive the in-residence MHA rate and not the online training MHA rate. **This student would be paid at the MHA rate of the main campus: $3,669.00.**
Payment Scenario #5: Equivalent Credit Hours

- A student is taking **7 credits** at a school’s main campus in New York City (Zip Code: 10001 – **MHA Rate: $3,669.00**) during the Fall Semester (8/20/18- 12/12/18).

- The student is taking a “mini-mester” **4 credits** at the school’s science campus on Staten Island (Zip Code: 10309 – **MHA Rate: $2,724.00**) running from 9/17/18 – 10/17/18.

<table>
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<th>Period Paid</th>
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<th>MHA Amount Due to Student</th>
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<td>Full</td>
<td><strong>2724.00</strong></td>
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<td>10/18/18 – 12/12/18</td>
<td>.60</td>
<td><strong>2,201.40</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(3669.00 * .60)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Payment Scenario #6: Internship/Practicum/Student Teaching

• The student is taking **3 credits** at a school’s main campus in San Francisco (Zip Code: 94016 – **MHA Rate: $4,329.00**)

• The student is **student teaching 40 hours per week** (how the School Certifying Official certifies the course) in Fresno (Zip Code: 93650 – **MHA Rate: $1,500.00**)

**The student would be paid at the MHA rate of the student teaching site: $1,500.00**
Payment Scenario #7: Overseas Internships and Study Abroad

- A student is taking **9 credits** online (MHA Rate: $840.50).
- The student is taking a mandatory **3 credit** study abroad course in Paris (MHA Rate for foreign schools: $1,681.00).
- All of this student’s time is physically spent in a foreign country.

This student would be paid at the MHA rate for foreign schools: $1,681.00.
Payment Scenario #8: Overseas Internships - Partial Term

- A student is enrolled at VA-ONCE University in San Francisco
- The student is taking **9 credits** online (**MHA Rate**: $840.50).
- The student is taking a mandatory **12 week** long **3 credit** course in Paris.
  - For the first **3 weeks** the student study's at the main campus in San Francisco (Zip Code: 94016 – **MHA Rate**: $4,329.00).
  - For the final **9 weeks** the student study's at study abroad course in Paris (**MHA Rate for foreign schools**: $1,681.00).

Since the majority of this student’s time is physically spent in a foreign country. This student would be paid at the **MHA rate for foreign schools**: **$1,681.00**.
Payment Scenario #9: Truck Driving and Flight Schools

- A student is attending VA-ONCE Truck Driving School in Fresno (Zip Code: 93650 – **MHA Rate: $1,500.00**).
- The student is training for 25 hours per week.
- The student trains across many zip codes including San Francisco (Zip Code: 94016 – **MHA Rate: $4,329.00**).

**NOTE:** When a student’s course of study involves travel as part of the training, VA will continue to use the zip code of the facility’s main campus to establish the student’s MHA rate.

**This student would be paid at the MHA rate for Fresno:** $1,500.00.
A student is attending VA-ONCE Mechanic Training Institute.

VA-ONCE Mechanic Training Institute is located in Fresno and a student spends 15 clock hours per week here receiving classroom instruction (Zip Code: 93650 – MHA Rate: $1,500.00).

The student also trains for 10 hours per week at VA-ONCE Mechanic Training Institute garage (working hands on with cars) which is located in San Francisco (Zip Code: 94016 – MHA Rate: $4,329.00).

This student would be paid at the MHA rate for Fresno: $1,500.00.
Payment Scenario #11: On-the-Job Training and Apprenticeship Sites

There is no change in how the MHA is paid for On-the-Job Training and Apprenticeship sites at this time.

- A Veteran is receiving payment for the approved Apprenticeship program: “Claims Agent” with VA-ONCE INC.
- This program is approved for a length of 18 months.
- The first 9 months of this program are spent in classroom training in Fresno (Zip Code: 93650 – MHA Rate: $1,500.00).
- The following 3 months are spent in a training site in Staten Island (Zip Code: 10309 – MHA Rate: $2,724.00) practicing the skills they learned hands-on.
- The student spends the last 6 months training at their home station. This is where the site is approved (the facility code of the approval is tied to this site).
  - Example – an individual’s home station is in San Francisco (Zip Code: 94016 – MHA Rate: $4,329.00).
Compliance Survey Updates

It will be the responsibility of the school to be able to provide formal documentation to the Compliance Survey Specialist to verify specifically where a course, internship, externship, or practicum is taking place.

- Example: Updated Course Catalog which shows the zip codes of the campuses where students are attending.
- Example: Catalog addendum which identifies each campus and its zip code.

Reminder - VA may hold a school liable for an overpayment to a student if the overpayment was made as a result of:

- Willful or negligent failure of the school to report excessive absences from a course, or discontinuance or interruption; or
- Willful or negligent false certification
Other Alternative Considered

- All “campuses” will need to be assigned their own unique facility code.
- The School Certifying Official will certify each campus individually (this submission is exactly the same as the method for Centralized Certification).

Alternative not chosen because:
- Will require an untenable amount of new facility codes which will affect approval timeliness
- Will have pronounced impact on the SAA allocation model
- Will have pronounced impact on Reporting Fees
- Will have pronounced impact on determining compliance with 85/15 provision
- Forces schools to certify multiple enrollments (course by course if zip codes are all different) per term
Next Steps

1. VA will review the findings of this feedback session and address outstanding questions.

2. A SCO Webinar will be held in March 2018 to provide the training provided in this session (and the answers to the outstanding questions) to all SCOs.

3. Additional Training will be provided in Summer 2018.
Resources

- GI Bill Webpage – Colmery Act
- School Official’s Handbook
- VA-ONCE quick reference user guide
- Tips for Getting Started on VA-ONCE handout
School Certifying Official (SCO) Training Requirements

March 2018
Summary of Legislation

• Section 305 of the Harry W. Colmery Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2017, also referred to as the “Forever GI Bill,” authorizes VA to establish training requirements for SCOs at “covered institutions”.

• Training requirements will be developed in consultation with the State approving agencies (SAAs).

• VA may disapprove any course of education offered by the institution if training requirements are not met.
• A "covered educational institution" would refer to an educational institution that has enrolled 20 or more individuals using VA educational assistance.

• An “SCO” is defined as an employee of an educational institution with primary responsibility for certifying Veteran enrollment at the educational institution.

• This section will be effective on August 1, 2018.
Implementation Plan

- VA and SAAs are currently engaged in recurring conference calls to define specific training requirements.

- Training requirements must be met on an annual basis.

- VA will identify covered institutions and designated SCOs at those institutions.

- VA Form 8794, Designation of School Certifying Official(s), must be accurately maintained to ensure only SCOs performing certification duties are listed.
Implementation Plan

• Training will be deployed in phases, with specific requirements for new SCOs.

• First phase will be for new SCOs designated on or after August 1, 2018.

• New SCO training will be completed online and will include a basic overview of VA education benefits and SCO responsibilities.
Implementation Plan

• Training requirements for all SCOs may be met by completing online micro-learning training modules, verified registration and attendance at SCO conferences, or a combination thereof.

• Subsequent phases will include diagnostic testing for experienced SCOs, the results of which may be used to satisfy annual training requirements.

• SCOs may be given specific training requirements based on the results of site visits conducted at an institution.
Next Steps

- Continued collaboration between VA and SAA to fully develop implementation plan.
- Migrate and update existing training content into online training platform.
- Finalize communication plan to keep SCO community abreast of implementation updates.
Please enter any questions into the “QA” box to the right.
Academic Progress and Outcome Measures

March 2018
Background: Department of Veterans Administration, Department of Education, and Department of Defense have collaborated for the last 3 years to develop and publish outcome measures. However, VA did not have the statutory authority to require schools to report this information. Mostly recently with the passage of the Blumenthal-Miller Act (Public Law 114-315), VA is authorized to make it a condition of approval for schools to submit information regarding academic progress for GI Bill students.

Academic Progress includes:
- Retention Rate
- Persistence Rate
- Transfer Rate
- Graduation Rate - Institute of Higher Learning (IHL) Schools
- Certificate Completion - Non College Degree (NCD) Schools

What does this mean?
- It is mandatory by the law for educational institutions to report academic progress to VA
- If educational institutions fail to report student academic progress they risk losing VA approval for training
- Leveraging this data provides VA the ability to assist Veterans, Servicemembers and eligible dependents in making more informed educational decisions

Timeline:
- April 2017 - VA continues working diligently through plans incorporating outcome measure data available on the GI Bill Comparison Tool with the new requirements of Section 404 of Public Law 114-315.
- July 2017 – webinar with Stakeholders on Outcome Measures and Public Law 114-315 Section 404
- May 2018 – VA will finalize validation and begin school notification
- November 2018 – VA will publish final data set and submit Congressionally Mandated Report related to outcome measures.
Questions?

Please enter any questions into the “QA” box to the right.
Knowledge Management (KM) Solution and School Certifying Official (SCO) Handbook

March 2018
• VA is transitioning the SCO handbook to a new platform known as the Knowledge Management (KM) Solution
  – Accessible through GI Bill website
  – Real-Time Updates

• Seamless transition for end users

• Scheduled for deployment in Spring 2018
SCO Handbook

- Call Center Information for Students
- Dual Certification
- Incarcerated Claimant
- Tuition Assistance (TA)
- Harry W. Colmery Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2017
- Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (VR&E, Ch31)
Enter KM Solution and SCO Handbook Revision Questions in Questions & Answers (Q&A) Chat Box
Dual Certification

March 2018
• Schools are obligated to submit student’s enrollment “without delay”
  – In the SCO handbook (page 44) this is expressed as, “Schools are requested to submit certifications as early as possible in order to ensure that students receive their benefit payments in a timely manner, but must be submitted 30 days of the beginning of the term.”

• An effective way to minimize student debts and adjustments is for schools to submit an enrollment certification with $0.00, and then amend the tuition and fees after the end of the drop-add period. This practice is often called “Dual Certification.”

• Dual Certification is the process by which a school may certify an enrollment and fill out the term dates, credit hours, and other pertinent information (claimant’s SSN, address, school facility code etc.).
Dual Certification

• **This process is highly encouraged** but is not mandatory.

• The benefits of dual certifications are two-fold:
  – It allows the school to certify an enrollment in a timely manner while ensuring that the student receives housing allowance, books and supplies stipend, and;
  – It allows for a more precise report from the schools when they certify tuition and fees and **prevents overpayments**.

• In addition, schools also get an accurate picture of how many credits a student pursued during a term, quarter, or semester and have the ability to track what an individual student owes.
• School Certifying Official Handbook

• School Certifying Official Hotline
  – Direct line of communication with VA for inquiries on student issues
  – Education Case Managers who have the expertise to answer and resolve most SCO questions work between 7:00am to 5:00pm (CST) Monday through Friday
  – **Contact your ELR for the number**

• School Training Resources on GI Bill Website
  – Includes VA ONCE training, online training, handbook, links to webinars, etc.
Contact Us

Website: www.benefits.va.gov/gibill
Facebook: www.facebook.com/gibilleducation

GI Bill Hotline: 1-888-442-4551
Education Service is working towards moving the SCO Handbook from the GI Bill website and into a new online platform, accessible through the GI Bill website, called the Knowledge Management (KM) Solution. You may notice minor changes to the look and feel of the SCO handbook in this platform, but the transition will basically be seamless to you as an end user.

This platform will help VA disseminate updates to the SCO community faster (more timely) since it will allow VA to make real-time updates to the SCO handbook as revisions occur.

The KM solution will not only maintain current versions of the handbook, but it will also maintain a list of all previous versions and will indicate the date of each revision.

Currently we are in the process of transferring the handbook to this new platform and updating several sections. We expect it will be accessible to SCOs within the upcoming months.
SCO Handbook Script cont’d

Script for slide 46-
• **SCO Handbook Revisions:** Some section revisions of the handbook that will be included and disseminated via the KM solution are:
  - The **Call Center Information for Students** section = this section informed students of the option to receive either an “As Soon As Possible Callback” or “Scheduled Callback” from a VA representative when they are experiencing high call volumes. However, this functionality does not exist with the Call Center’s current telephone system therefore it will be removed from the SCO Handbook
  - **Dual Certification** (which falls under the Chapter 33 Enrollment Certification section of the handbook) has also been revised. We added language to describe the benefit of certifying zero dollars for tuition and fees and subsequently submitting an amendment when the final tuition and fee amount has been determined.
  - The **Incarcerated Claimants (Felony Convictions)** section of the handbook was revised in order to provide more detailed guidance for submitting enrollment information for individuals incarcerated for a felony conviction,
  - The **Tuition Assistance** section of the handbook was updated with clarifying information about TA, who administers it, and circumstances under which VA education benefits can be paid in conjunction with it.
Due to the large number of questions raised during the webinar, the responses are in a separate document on the GI Bill® website - Education Service Quarterly Webinar Questions and Answers.