

## **Federal Education Benefits FAQs**

### **Are VA Education Benefits Taxable?**

No. Any veterans' benefits paid under any law administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) should not be reported as income to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS).

### **How is my housing allowance paid if I'm not a full-time student?**

Under the Post-9/11 GI Bill, a Veteran enrolled at more than one-half time can qualify for a monthly housing allowance based on DoD's Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH) rate for an E-5 with dependents. VA determines eligibility for housing allowance by calculating the rate of pursuit. Rate of pursuit is expressed in a percentage calculated by dividing the number of credits in which the student is enrolled by the number of credits considered to be full time. A student with a rate of pursuit greater than 50% can qualify for the housing allowance.

### **When will I receive an increase or decrease in my MHA based on BAH changes?**

The Department of Defense adjusts the military BAH rate every calendar year (or January 1) based on changes to housing costs across the country. Rates can either go up or down. If the BAH increased for your area, you will not see an increase until your September payment for training pursued in August. If the BAH decreases for your area, your MHA amount will not decrease unless you change schools or have more than a six-month break in training.

### **What if I receive a failing grade?**

If you fail a class you receive what is called a "punitive grade" for that class. A punitive grade is a grade that doesn't count as earned credit, but is used in determining a student's progress toward graduation requirements. Since this grade counts towards your graduation progress you are not required to repay any GI Bill money you received for that class.

### **Refund of the Montgomery GI Bill \$1,200.00 buy-in for Post-9/11 GI Bill recipients?**

Individuals who entered Active Duty after June 30, 1985 OR who served a combination of at least 2 years of Active Duty service and 4 years of Selected Reserve service after June 30, 1985 may qualify to receive a refund of the \$1,200 deduction for the Montgomery GI Bill - Active Duty (Chapter 30) under the Post-9/11 GI Bill (Chapter 33).

### **How do I verify my enrollment?**

If you're receiving the Active Duty or Reserve GI Bill, REAP, or VRAP, call our toll free telephone line at **1-877-VA-ECERT (1-877-823-2378)** to verify your attendance

### **I am enrolled in school. When will I receive my benefits from VA?**

Once your school submits your enrollment information, it must be entered into the system by VA. Because VA is generally overwhelmed with enrollments at the start of each semester, **it could take up to 6 weeks to process an enrollment during those times.** Your patience is appreciated - we will process all of the enrollments in order by the date received.

### **What if I want to change my school or training program?**

To change from one school or training program to another, individuals receiving benefits under the Post-9/11 GI Bill, MGIB-AD, MGIB-SR, VEAP, or REAP will need to submit a VA Form 22-1995 "Request For Change of Program or Place of Training" to the Regional Processing Office serving your state. Individuals receiving benefits under the Dependents Educational Assistance Program will need to submit VA Form 22-5495.

### **How do I update my address and Direct Deposit information?**

If you are currently receiving benefits or have received benefits in the last year, the WAVE online system is the simplest way to update your address and Direct Deposit information. This only applies to Montgomery GI Bill, REAP, or VRAP recipients. For VEAP, and Post-9/11 GI Bill recipients you must contact us via telephone. **1-888-442-4551**

### **Can I transfer benefits to my dependents?**

If you are a member of the Armed Forces on August 1, 2009 and eligible for the Post-9/11 GI Bill, the Department of Defense (DoD) may offer you the opportunity to transfer benefits to your spouse or dependent children.

### **Who's eligible for Dependents' Educational Assistance (Chapter 35) benefits and what can they be used for?**

The Dependents' Educational Assistance program provides education benefits for the spouse and dependent children of a veteran or service member who is determined to be permanently and totally disabled from service connected causes, is on active duty and is likely to be discharged with a permanent and total disability, or died in service, or died of service connected causes, or is currently missing in action or captured in the line of duty. This benefit may be used for pursuit of an undergraduate or graduate degree, courses leading to a certificate or diploma from business, technical or vocational schools, apprenticeship, and on-the-job training programs. Benefits for correspondence courses are available to spouses only. The program provides up to 45 months of education or training

### **My payment is less than the amount I was told the monthly rate would be. Why did that happen?**

The most common reason a check may be less than the monthly rate is that checks are prorated based on the number of days in the month for which you are enrolled.