COVID-19

How will COVID-19 impact my benefits?
• Students using CH 35 DEA, CH 30, CH 1606 Selected Reserves will not be affected by a change in course instruction delivery (moving from seated to online).
• Students under CH 30 and CH 1606 Selected Reserves will continue to certify their attendance through the Web Automated Verification of Enrollment (WAVE) website as normal.
• S.3503 was recently signed into law allowing schools to certify courses transitioned to online learning as residential through December 2020 for CH 33/Post 911 students. Note: Courses originally scheduled and designed for DE learning will still be certified as DE learning and will not be reported as a residential course.

APPLYING

1. How do I find out which veterans education benefit I qualify for?
   • Only the Department Of Veterans Affairs can determine your eligibility for benefits. You are required to apply for veterans benefits online at https://benefits.va.gov/benefits. You will receive an automated e-mail confirming your application has been received.
   • Once the VA processes your application they will send you your Certification of Eligibility (COE), which you should then submit to the Office of Scholarships and Financial Aid.

2. How long does it take to receive a COE from the VA?
   • It can take 4-6 weeks to receive the COE from the VA. We understand that the timing of the letter may conflict with when the certifications need to be submitted to the VA for the semester.
   • To assist with the process of having your benefits processed in a timely manner, new students should complete a NEW STUDENT INTAKE form if they are not able to submit a COE. Once you receive your COE, you should submit it to our office at veterans@uncw.edu

3. I used my benefits at another school; how do I switch my benefits over to UNCW?
   • When using benefits at a new school, students are required to submit the VA form 22-1995 to the VA. You can do this online at GI Bill benefits.

CERTIFICATION

1. How do I certify my classes for payment each semester?
   • After your initial semester, you will receive an email from the Office of Scholarships and Financial Aid (OSFA) at the time of registration. You will be reminded that VA certification process is about to begin and unless you do not wish to continue your benefits there is nothing you will need to do. Your benefits will continue to be certified each semester, automatically, from our office. It is that simple!
2. **How many hours do I need to take to be full-time?**
   - 12 hours is classified as a full-time student for Undergraduate studies and 9 hours is full-time for the graduate program.

3. **What happens if I am not enrolled full-time?**
   - If you are a recipient of CH 33 you must be registered for courses that constitute at least 51% of fulltime status to receive your Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH). Less than 51% will result in the VA paying only tuition and fees to the school.
   - Recipients of non-CH 33 benefits, who take less than half-time credit hours, will have their tuition and fees paid for my the VA but that will be all they will receive for payments.

4. **Does the VA pay for classes that I audit?**
   - No.

5. **Does the VA pay for non-degree students?**
   - The VA will not continue to pay benefits to students enrolled in a non-degree status beyond the second semester.

6. **What if I withdraw from one or more of my classes?**
   - If you withdraw from one or more of your courses after the end of the school's drop period, the VA may reduce or stop your benefits on the date of reduction or withdrawal.
   - If you withdraw from a course after the end of the drop period, you may have to repay all benefits for the course unless you can show that the change was due to mitigating circumstances. VA defines "mitigating circumstances" as unavoidable and unexpected events that directly interfere with your pursuit of a course and are beyond your control.
     
     Examples of reasons VA may accept are:
     - Extended illness;
     - Severe illness or death in your immediate family;
     - Unscheduled changes in your employment; and
     - Lack of child care.

     Examples of reasons VA may not accept are:
     - Withdrawal to avoid a failing grade;
     - Dislike of the instructor; and
     - Too many courses attempted.

7. **If I fail a class, will I have to pay anything back to the VA?**
   - No, you do not have to pay the VA back if you do not pass a course. You may repeat a course if it is required for your degree program and the VA will pay for it a second time.

8. **Can I enroll in any courses that I want?**
   - The VA is only going to pay for classes that are needed for your degree requirements. They will not pay for a course for which you have already received benefits. It is important to make sure you review your degree audit and enroll in classes you need for your program.
9. The VA says I’m only half time but I am concurrently enrolled in courses at another institution. I should be getting a full time check. What do I do?
   • Did you request a Parent School Letter from UNCW’s Veterans Affairs Office? To qualify, the veteran should meet with an Academic Counselor to document that the courses will transfer to UNCW. The other (secondary) school at which you are enrolled will not certify your enrollment unless they are provided with a Parent School Letter. Contact your VA counselor at UNCW for more information on this process.

MONEY

1. How much will I get paid?
   • Your pay is based on the rate of pursuit and chapter for which you are eligible. Benefits are paid monthly.
   • Chapter 30 and 1606 students must verify your enrollment every month directly with the VA. This can be done on the last calendar day of the month via the Web Automated Verification of Enrollment (WAVE) website.

2. When can I expect my first BAH payment to arrive from the VA?
   • Once you have been certified for the semester, the VA will begin processing your payment. We are unable to give you a specific timeline. It can take the VA 4-6 weeks to process the enrollment.
   • The VA only pays for the dates a student is enrolled in classes and not for a break between terms.

3. Will the VA pay for my tuition and books?
   • The VA program pays for tuition, fees, books and supplies for those in the CH 31/VR&E program.
   • CH 33 pays tuition to the school and BAH and book stipend to the student.
   • All other programs pay a monthly BAH directly to the student.

4. I received a letter from the VA that says my certification was submitted with $0 tuition and fees, what does this mean?
   • CH 33 students can have their benefits submitted to reflect course start dates and the number of credits they are taking before the semester actually starts. This allows the VA to issue the book stipend and first BAH in a timely fashion. Since tuition and fees can change during the add/drop period, $0 is listed in the initial certification to avoid erroneous payments from the VA for tuition.
   • After the add/drop period concludes, we will submit an adjusted certification to indicate the accurate tuition amount so the funds can be sent to the school.
   • While the school is waiting for payment, a pending payment is listed on your account for the tuition and fees so you do not need to pre-pay these costs. However, any other costs such as housing and meal plans do need to be paid.
5. Can I receive financial aid at the same time?
   • Yes! We strongly encourage all students to apply for financial aid, even when receiving veteran’s benefits. If you qualify, you can receive both. It’s not “double dipping”.

6. How do I set up Direct Deposit for my monthly educational benefits?
   • To enroll for Direct Deposit you can either:
     o Login to WAVE (or create an account if you are a new user). On the WAVE Main page, click on the link that says “Direct Deposit Enrollment Form.” This form can be submitted electronically, or you can print out a hard copy and mail it to your local Regional Processing Office.
     o Call the Direct Deposit center at 1.877.838.2778

7. Does the VA offer scholarships?
   • The North Carolina State VA offers scholarships for children of disabled or deceased veterans if the child was born in North Carolina or the veteran was a resident of the state prior to enlisting. Contact your county Veteran Service Officer at http://www.doa.nc.gov/vets/benefitslist.aspx?pid=scholarships for details or to apply.

8. I want to stay on campus, does the VA housing stipend pay for that?
   • Yes and no. The housing stipend for the Post 9/11 GI Bill is a flat rate payment based on the zip code of the school paid direct to the student and it is paid at the end of each month after enrolling. This amount may or may not cover the cost of room and board at the school. It is your responsibility to make arrangements with the Billing Office.
   • Contact Student Accounts to discuss a payment plan set up specifically for our military students.

9. I want to Study Abroad; can I use my GI Bill?
   • Only certain types of Study Abroad programs are covered under the GI Bill program. In general, faculty led programs and those that are billed through UNCW will be allowed. Please consult with your VA certifying official for more details.

10. Is it possible to receive retroactive benefits?
    • The VA will pay benefits up to one year from the beginning of a semester.

***I have a question that is not answered here, who do I contact?***

You can email our office at veterans@uncw.edu; you can call our main office number at 910.962.3177; or you can go to the source at www.gibill.va.gov.