

Policies for Students Who Receive VA Educational Benefits

Through the Veterans Affairs Office, GSCC cooperates with the Department of Veterans Affairs and with students who receive VA educational benefits to ensure that the objectives of the VA are pursued to the fullest advantage of all parties. The policies and procedures followed by the College are explained in the Campus Policies section of the catalog.

Veterans Educational Assistance Programs

1. Montgomery GI Bill® – Selected Reserve Educational Assistance Program (Chapter 1606 of Title 10, U.S. Code)
2. Montgomery GI Bill® – Active Duty Educational Assistance Program (Chapter 30 of Title 38, U.S. Code)
3. Veteran Readiness & Employment (Chapter 31) -- This program provides educational assistance to disabled veterans who are in need of employment. To be eligible, a veteran must have a service-connected disability entitling him/her to these benefits. An award authorization must be received from a VA VR&E Counselor/ Specialist before benefits can be used.
4. Post-9/11 GI Bill® (Chapter 33, Post-9/11 Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2008)
5. Survivors' and Dependents' Educational Assistance Program (Chapter 35 of Title 38, U.S. Code)
6. The following individuals shall be charged a rate of tuition not to exceed the in-state rate for tuition and fees purposes:

You may be eligible for in-state tuition if you meet all of these requirements:

- You're receiving benefits under the Post-9/11 GI Bill (Chapter 33), the Montgomery GI Bill Active Duty (MGIB-AD) (Chapter 30), or Veteran Readiness and Employment (VR&E) (Chapter 31), and
- You're a "covered individual" (the next 2 sections explain what this means for Veterans, spouses, and children) and
- When you start school, you live in the state where the school is located

Eligibility requirements for Veterans

As a Veteran, you're a "covered individual" if you've served on active duty for at least 90 days since September 10, 2001.

Note: Section 702 of the Veterans Choice Act covers you only after discharge, not while you're still on active duty or while you're a member of the Active Guard Reserve (AGR).

Eligibility requirements for spouses or children

As a spouse or child of a Veteran, you're a "covered individual" if one of these is true:

- You're using education benefits transferred from a Veteran, or
- You're using benefits under the Fry Scholarship and the Veteran had served a period of active-duty service of at least 90 days before their death

Note: Starting August 1, 2022, if you're using benefits through the Survivors' and Dependents' Educational Assistance (DEA) program, you'll be eligible for in-state tuition rates.

Keeping your status as a covered individual

You'll keep your status as a covered individual as long as you stay enrolled at the College. You can take scheduled breaks between courses, semesters, or terms, but if you leave school and then enroll again, you won't keep your status as a covered individual.

The policy shall be read to be amended as necessary to be compliant with the requirements of 38 U.S.C. 3679 (c) as amended.

GSCC recommends that students receiving educational benefits from the VA adhere to college attendance policies as explained in the Campus Policies section of the catalog. The College will report promptly to the VA if a student withdraws or drops classes for which the student was certified. Such a change in enrollment could lead to an overpayment situation for the student.

Selection of Program (VA Students)

In consultation with an admissions counselor or an academic advisor, each student receiving VA benefits must select and plan a program in accordance with Gadsden State's catalog. A change of program requires the student to contact the Veterans Affairs Office. All programs of study must be deemed approved by law, the State Approving Agency, or the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, in order to be certified by VA for payment of benefits.

Some of Gadsden State's courses are not offered every semester. It is important to consult with your advisor to determine course schedules to stay on track to graduate.

Certification of Courses (VA Students)

The student will not be certified to receive benefits for any course that does not fulfill a requirement for his/her declared program. Each student approved for VA education benefits must notify the Gadsden State School Certifying Official each semester after his/her registration is complete to request submission of an enrollment certification. Certifications will be submitted online via VA's Enrollment Manager beginning the day after the drop for nonpayment and/or nonattendance, or as time permits prior to this date. Courses that award audit credit, continuing education units, or no credit cannot be certified. Courses that award only institutional credit in required remedial or developmental subjects may be acceptable if such subjects are measured on the same basis as regular college credit courses and if these courses are determined by the College to be necessary for one to reach his/her academic objective. If the student changes from credit status to audit or non-credit status in a course prior to completing that course, the student must have enrollment certification amended, effective the day the semester began, so that the actual number of semester hours for which the student can receive credit is accurately reflected. Course substitution must be approved by the academic advisor in writing for the VA student's file.

"I" (incomplete) is not considered a grade by the VA. VA students having "I" grades will be changed to "F" grades when required coursework is not completed in the prescribed time allotted by the Grading Policy located in the Campus Policies section of the catalog.

Repeat Courses (VA Students)

VA students failing a required course may repeat that course with pay. However, the student cannot repeat a course just to improve a grade and receive payment through the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Course Load (VA Students)

A full-time course load for a student receiving veterans' benefits is twelve semester hours or more, a three-quarter time load is nine semester hours, and a one-half time load is six semester hours. If a student is enrolled in an accelerated course (weekend, mini, summer, etc.), adjustment of enrollment status may be made according to VA policies. The student should contact the Veterans Affairs Office for additional information.

Withdrawal Policy (VA Students)

Students who receive veterans' benefits must notify the Veterans Affairs Office when dropping or adding courses or when withdrawing to avoid payment problems. Each withdrawal or change in course load must show the effective date of the change. The withdrawal policies of Gadsden State also apply.

Standards of Academic Progress – Veterans Educational Assistance Programs

To remain eligible for VA benefits, the student is required to achieve the minimum levels of progress as outlined in the [Standards of Academic Progress Policy](#). Failure to make satisfactory progress as defined by these requirements will be reported to the VA.

Overpayments (VA Students)

Each student receiving veterans' benefits should be aware that it is the responsibility of the student to comply strictly with the policies and procedures that govern the receipt of educational benefits. Any overpayment created through non-compliance with veterans' policies is subject to repayment, and such overpayment can cause a delay in the payment of further benefits.

The student must visit the Financial Aid Office and meet with the VA certifying officer at the One Stop Center or Ayers Campus each semester to present and confirm his/her schedule for certification of benefits. For more information, students should call 256.549.8207 or 256.835.5467.

Official School Catalog Addendum - Terms beginning 8/1/2019 and Thereafter (PL 115-407 Sec. 103)

Students utilizing VA education benefits shall not be charged a penalty, including assessment of late fees, denial of access to classes, libraries, or other institutional facilities, or be required to borrow additional funds because of the individual's inability to meet their financial obligations due to the delayed disbursement of a payment to be provided by the Department of Veterans Affairs.