

Veteran's Handbook

A Reference Guide

To Using Your VA

Benefits

At

West Georgia Technical College

*Honoring All Who
Serve*

Veterans Affairs

Veteran benefits are designed to provide eligible individuals with an opportunity for educational and career growth. They are certainly the most valuable benefits afforded to veterans and qualifying dependents and should be wisely utilized. Veterans have earned the right to use their educational benefits. West Georgia Technical College is pleased and honored to assist you in utilizing them to your best advantage. We welcome you to WGTC and hope you will significantly benefit from your training.

The Veterans Coordinator at WGTC is not an employee of the Department of Veterans Affairs. Our responsibility is to interpret, explain, and administer VA regulations as they apply to you at WGTC.

Veteran Education Benefits are provided through the Montgomery G. I. Bill, Survivors and Dependents Benefits and Veterans' Rehabilitation Benefits. Most of West Georgia Technical College's programs are approved for Veteran Educational Benefits.

Veterans and other eligible students receiving Veterans Administrative (VA) educational entitlements are required to comply with the admissions, academic, and attendance regulations that have been established for all students at WGTC. In addition, those receiving VA benefits must:

- Seek credit for all previous training or experience that could be applicable to their chosen program of study. VA regulation 14253 requires all previous training be evaluated for possible credit. A transcript or other documentation of training must be submitted to the college with the individual's eligibility papers. The school will give written notice granting or denying such credit.
- Once admitted to WGTC, the veteran must comply with the college's policies and regulations.

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Formal Acceptance to the College

The Department of Veterans (DVA) requires each applicant for VA Educational Benefits be formally accepted (and registered in) to an approved curriculum (program of study) before initial certification of attendance can be sent to the DVA.

Formal acceptance is achieved by completion of the following:

Complete and submit WGTC application for admission with a one-time non refundable \$25 fee.

Submit an official high school or GED transcript.

If you have previously attended college/technical school, submit an official transcript from each college/technical school attended.

If you have taken a SAT, ACT, ASSET or COMPASS college placement test within the last five (5) years, submit your official test scores. Or complete ASSET or COMPASS placement testing.

Applicants who submit official placement test scores or college transcripts may not be required to test with West Georgia if the previous test scores or course completion meet program placement requirements.

Additional Financial Assistance

There are several additional forms of financial aid you may be eligible for to supplement your DVA educational assistance. These include scholarships, HOPE Grant and Pell Grants.

Scholarships

Scholarships do not have to be repaid. They are available from many sources, including the College, state agencies, professional and service agencies, private foundations and some employers.

Grants

The largest and best known source of grants is the Federal Pell Grant. The HOPE Grant is available to Georgia Residents. Grants are awarded based on need and do not have to be repaid.

Work-study jobs

Pell Grant students may apply for work-study positions to earn money toward their education while attending school.

Benefits

The Veterans Administration is authorized by law to provide a wide range of benefits to those who have served their country in the Armed Forces and to their dependents. These are some of the benefits for which you may be eligible while attending West Georgia Technical College.

The following program descriptions are up-to-date, for more detailed information of each program, go online to www.gibill.va.gov/GI_Bill_Info/benefits.htm.

(NOTE: All students who feel they may be eligible for education benefits should submit an application.)

MONTGOMERY G.I. BILL – ACTIVE DUTY, CHAPTER 30

MONTGOMERY G.I. BILL – SELECTED RESERVE, CHAPTER 1606

MONTGOMERY G.I. BILL – RESERVE EDUCATIONAL, CHAPTER 1607 (REAP)

EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE FOR SURVIVORS' & DEPENDENT'S, CHAPTER 35

POST 9/11 GI BILL

Chapter 30: Montgomery G.I. Bill—Active Duty

Eligibility for this educational program requires an honorable discharge and 2 or more years of active duty. Delimiting date is 10 years after discharge.

Montgomery G.I. Bill - Selected Reserve, Chapter 1606

Educational program for active members of the Selective Reserve, basic eligibility requires a 6-year obligation to serve in the Selective Reserve and satisfactory participation in required Selective Reserve training.

Montgomery G.I. Bill – Reserve Educational Assistance, Chapter 1607 (REAP)

Educational program for active members of the Selective Reserve called to active duty in response to a contingency operation declared by the President or Congress. Members of the Selective Reserve may be eligible for Chapter 1607 after serving 90 consecutive days on active duty for a contingency operation.

Educational Assistance for survivors' and Dependents' Chapter 35

Survivors and Dependents of a veteran may be eligible for benefits if the veteran is permanently and totally disabled due to a service-related condition or disability, died in service, or died of a service connected disability, or died while evaluated as having total and permanent disability resulting from a service-connected disability; or was listed as a POW or MIA.

The Post- 9/11 GI Bill is a new benefit providing educational assistance to individuals who served on active duty on or after September 11, 2001.



Changes

All changes made after your initial application or certification are forwarded to the DVA Regional Office and must be brought to the attention of the College's Veterans Affairs Office so the change can be reported. The most common changes include:

Change in major:

Should you decide to change your major, be aware there are WGTC forms to complete and you must notify your veteran's coordinator.

Change in credit hours:

This occurs when you drop a class(es) or are dropped from a class(es) by the instructor.

Notify the College VA office immediately.

Withdrawal from school:

If you plan to withdraw from all classes, contact the College Veterans Affairs Office before doing so. There are many concerns you should be aware of before withdrawing completely.

Failure to report changes:

Constitutes **fraud** and is the primary cause for delays in educational checks and overpayment.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q. Can I receive Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH) under the Post 9/11 program if I enroll in 6 credits or less?

A. No. You must be enrolled in at least 7 credits to receive BAH under the Post 9/11 program.

Q. Do I have to use my VA benefits by a certain date?

A. Yes. Each educational program has a certain time period by which the VA benefits must be used before they expire. To find your deadline, visit the website www.gibill.va.gov and find the details on your particular educational program.

Q. Can I receive scholarship funds while receiving VA benefits?

A. Yes. There are many scholarships available for veterans.

Q. Can I receive VA benefits if I take online classes?

A. Yes. Be aware, however, that under the Post 9/11 GI Bill, you must take at least one class on campus when taking an online class to receive benefits.

Q. Can VA benefits be used for remedial classes?

A. Yes.

Q. How is the Post 9/11 benefits paid?

A. Remember that the Post-9/11 GI Bill housing and books and supplies stipends are paid "in arrears." This means that your housing stipend for January won't be received until February. Also, if you are starting school for the first time, your first payment may not be for a full month of housing because we pay from the actual day you start school. So, if you start January 8th, your February payment will be for 23 days you attended in January.

Q. How do I know what type of veteran educational benefit I am entitled to?

A. Eligibility depends on:

- whether you are the service person
- or the dependent of a service person
- or spouse of a service person
- on the type and length of military service
- and the service members' monetary contribution at the time of service

Q. I have never used my benefits, how do I apply?

A. apply online using [VONAPP](http://vabenefits.vba.va.gov/vonapp/main.asp) (Veterans ON-line Application Website) (<http://vabenefits.vba.va.gov/vonapp/main.asp>)

For more information regarding VA Education Benefits view the website www.gibill.va.gov or contact the VA hotline at 1-888-442-4551.

Q. When should I apply for benefits?

A. VA processing can take up to 10- 14 weeks for first time applicants. Benefits will not be paid until the process is complete.

Q. How do I get my benefits and how much will I receive?

A. Once the VA has processed your application and the school certification you will begin to receive your benefits within approximately 3- 4 weeks of the first time you verify your enrollment, if required. Payment will either be sent to you or directly deposited in your bank account from the VA.

The exact payment amount will depend on your chapter of eligibility and your enrollment status as a student (*full-time, three-quarter time, half-time or less-than-half-time*).

For information regarding your eligibility chapter and enrollment status please contact the VA at 1-888-442-4451 or visit the [GIBILL](http://www.gibill.va.gov) site.

Q. Do I have to pay for all my tuition/fees and books before the quarter starts and receipt of my VA benefits?

A. Yes students are responsible for all tuition and fees owed to the college.



Q. Why do I have to choose a program of study, and once I choose a program of study for VA educational benefit payment, am I permitted to switch programs?

A. The VA requires that students choose a degree plan, to ensure that progress is made toward a clear educational objective while the veteran is receiving benefits.

Once veteran students choose their initial degree plan they may change it at anytime by submitting to WGTC Veterans Services, located in Financial Aid Office, the appropriate VA Request for Change of VA Education Program or Place of Training.

Q. I did not receive my monthly check from the VA, what do I do?

A. The most common reason veterans do not get paid is because they have not verified their enrollment on-line or over the touch-tone system. Once verification is completed, a check should be received within 23 days.

To find out why a check has not been received call the VA Regional Office at 1-888-442-4551.

Q. I have been called to active military service or deployed for a military mobilization, what do I need to do to withdraw from school?

A. A student in the Armed Forces or the National Guard who is called to active duty and assigned to a duty station, verifiable by a copy of the orders, will be allowed to withdraw and receive a 100% refund of tuition, provided courses have not been completed.

- Bring a copy of your orders to the Registration & Records Office.
- Notify your College Veteran Office.
