



VETERANS GUIDE AND STANDARDS

FOR

STUDENTS RECEIVING

VA EDUCATION BENEFITS

Cochran Campus:

vacerts@mga.edu

478.934.3458

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478.471.3599

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Table of Contents

Introduction	1
Enrollment Verification	2
Standards of Progress	2
Withdrawal & Dropping a Course	2
Termination & Academic Dismissal	2
Certification of Benefits	3
Payment Information	3-6
Overpayments	7
Other Information	7

NOTICE: THE ABUSE OF VA EDUCATIONAL BENEFITS IN ANY FORM IS PROHIBITED; THE BENEFITS ARE SUBJECT TO BE DISCONTINUED WHICH MAY RESULT IN REPAYMENT.

INTRODUCTION

Recipients of VA Educational Benefits at Middle Georgia State University should know and understand that Federal Laws, Rules, and Regulations pertaining to Veterans and other eligible persons who receive VA Educational Benefits will change.

These standards represent one of our many attempts to keep our students informed, and they should be received as helpful guidelines to ensure that their stay on campus is pleasant and academically rewarding.

Please read the guidelines and follow them carefully. These guidelines are not intended to answer all questions about the VA Educational Benefits but they are an attempt on our part to deal with those questions, issues and other problems that are most frequently brought to our attention.

The staff of Middle Georgia State University's VA Certifying Office is not employed by the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Our office does not determine eligibility for educational benefits. Therefore, the staff cannot make decisions for the VA, control the regulations for the VA, or control the regulations that have been made by the Veterans Administration or Congress. However, our office can assist Veterans and Dependents by certifying their enrollments and serve as a liaison between them and the VA.

Eligible educational benefits recipients will receive a Certificate of Eligibility (COE) letter from the VA stating the approved educational chapter benefit. The VA generally will process and deliver a COE in 30 days upon receipt of completed application. A copy of the COE should be submitted to our office. As a temporary measure, students can sign into their eBenefits account (www.ebenefits.va.gov) and provide a print screen of their eligibility status. Failure to provide proof of eligibility could result in a delay in certification.

Additionally, students should provide our office with a copy of their DD-214. However, submittal of the DD-214 will not delay processing their certification, if the student already completed an application with the VA.

CONTACTING THE VA

The Veterans Administration toll free number is 888.442.4551 and the Fax number is 918.781.7863.

ENROLLMENT VERIFICATION

Students receiving education benefits through the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) are required to verify their enrollment each month to continue receiving payments.

Online Enrollment Verification

Students using any of the following VA education benefits may verify enrollment online:

- Post-9/11 GI Bill
- Montgomery GI Bill Active Duty (MGIB-AD)
- Montgomery GI Bill Selected Reserve (MGIB-SR)
- Survivors' and Dependents' Educational Assistance (DEA)

Information Required for Verification

Students must confirm the following details each month:

- Credit hours or clock hours enrolled
- Start and end dates of enrollment for the month

Students may complete enrollment verification by signing in to the VA's online enrollment verification tool.

Alternative Verification Methods

Students who choose not to verify online, or those using the Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) Scholarship, may use one of the following methods:

Verification by Text Message

When a student begins their program, the VA will send a text message asking if they would like to verify enrollment via text.

- If the student replies "yes," they will receive a monthly text reminder to verify enrollment.
- To update a phone number or opt out of text verification, students must call 888-442-4551.

Verification by Email

Students who do not opt into text messaging may verify enrollment through a monthly email sent to the address on file with the VA.

Important: Students using the STEM Scholarship are not eligible to verify enrollment by email.

Students are responsible for completing enrollment verification in a timely manner to avoid delays in benefit payments.

STANDARDS OF PROGRESS

In addition to the Rules and Regulations that are set forth in this guide, it is the student's responsibility to read, understand, and observe the Rules, Regulations, and Policies of Middle Georgia State University as published in the University Catalog.

The VA Rules and Regulations require that a Veteran or other eligible person who receives VA Educational Benefits must declare a degree program.

Class attendance and academic progress will be monitored, and the Middle Georgia State University VA Certifying Official reports irregularities to the VA.

WITHDRAW, DROPPING A COURSE, TERMINATION AND ACADEMIC DISMISSAL

The VA Certifying Official must be notified immediately of discontinued enrollment at the University. This is necessary to prevent VA overpayments. This includes any course or term drops or withdrawals.

CERTIFICATION FOR BENEFITS

It is the student's responsibility each semester to contact the VA Certifying Official at Middle Georgia State University to ensure that enrollment is certified for the term as early as possible to decrease delays in payment processing.

- Send a copy of your Certificate of Eligibility (COE) to the VA Certifying Official at the University.
- When applicable, send a copy of your DD214 or Active Duty Orders for active duty personnel.
- Student must notify the VA Certifying Official at the University that you are ready to be certified after you registered **each semester**. Middle Georgia State University does not automatically certify students as a student may elect to not use their benefits. Student must send an email to vacerts@mga.edu to request certification.
- To ensure the timely receipt of monthly benefits, notify the VA Certifying Official at the University if enrollment has changed or credit hours have increased or decreased. Failure to notify this office immediately will cause a delay in the processing.
- Students can only be certified for courses required for to complete their approved program.
- Transient students must bring a copy of their Transient Letter to the VA Certifying Official at Middle Georgia State University.

PRIORITY REGISTRATION

Middle Georgia State University students are allowed to register in priority order. That means that athletes, seniors, and veterans can register first (see academic calendar for registration dates). Students are scheduled with a time ticket to allow them to participate in priority registration.

Priority Registration Schedule:

- Athletes, Veterans and Seniors will be able to register beginning on the first day when registration becomes available*.
- Juniors register on the second day
- Sophomores register on the third day
- Freshmen register on the fourth day

PRIORITY REGISTRATION (CONTINUED)

All other student groups including any brand new students, Transient, and Transfer are not assigned a ticket; therefore, they must wait until the fifth day in which registration opens up to begin the registration process.

Academic Calendar: <https://www.mga.edu/academics/calendars/index.php>

** Students in their first semester with MGA will be assigned to the fifth day of registration as a new student. The priority registration system applies to returning students.*

PAYMENT INFORMATION

VA Educational Benefits are based on the number of semester hours taken, as recorded by the Registrar's Office. During accelerated mini terms, the benefits will be paid for the period of time that the Veteran **actually attends** class, not over the duration of the full "regular" semester.

Except for the accelerated mini term, VA Educational Benefit rates are based on enrollments as follows (for undergraduate):

Fall, Spring & Summer

12 semester hours: Full Time*

9 - 11 semester hours: 3/4 Time

6 - 8 semester hours: 1/2 Time

4 - 5 semester hours: <1/2

1 - 3 semester hours: <1/4

*12 semester hours is considered full time for undergraduate programs.

For graduate students the rates are as follows:

Fall, Spring, and Summer

9 semester hours: Full Time

6 - 8 semester hours: 3/4 Time

4 - 5 semester hours: 1/2 Time

3 semester hours: 1/4 Time

"Kickers" are authorized Department of Defense payments to individuals to encourage enlistment or retention in the Armed Forces, usually in specialized areas. "Kickers" are added to the basic rate of pay.

ADVANCE PAYMENT

Middle Georgia State University does not participate in Advance Payment.

REGULAR PAYMENT

Regular payments are received by the student through direct deposit following the end of each month, if the student has verified his/her enrollment.

Example:

September's payment will be received at the beginning of October.

PAYMENTS FOR BREAKS

VA Benefits do not pay for periods of break after a term ends. The VA only pays for the start date of the term through the end date of a term.

PAYMENT FOR REPEATING A COURSE

VA Benefits are NOT PAID for courses in which a passing grade has already been received. Courses in which an "F" grade is earned and major field of study courses in which a "D" grade is earned may be retaken. If a program requires a higher grade then the course can be certified again.

PAYMENT OF AUDITED COURSE

VA Benefits will not be paid for courses that are audited.

PAYMENT FOR COURSES THAT DO NOT FULFILL GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

Benefits will not be paid for courses that cannot or will NOT be used to satisfy graduation requirements.

LAST SEMESTER RULE (Rounding Out) BEFORE GRADUATION

Veterans and Dependents entering the final semester who may need less than 12 credit hours to meet requirements for graduation may register for 12 or more credit hours to receive full-time benefits.

PAYMENT FOR PHYSICAL EDUCATION CREDITS

Veterans with 12 or more months of active duty may be granted 2 Physical Education credits. To obtain these credits, Veterans should submit a copy of their DD-214 to the VA Certifying Official at the University. However, PE is not a degree requirement at Middle Georgia State and the course will not be certified for VA payment.

VA does not authorize payments to Veterans for additional physical education courses, unless the Veteran's major is Physical Education.

PAYMENTS DURING ACCELERATED PERIODS OF ENROLLMENT

The University's semester term of enrollment may include several terms such as 1st session and 2nd session. The duration of these terms may cover the first half of the regular semester (4 to 8 weeks) or second half of the regular semester.

The Veterans Administration considers all short terms as an accelerated term and payments are adjusted to compensate for the extended time in class during accelerated periods of enrollment.

Therefore, the benefits will be paid for that period of time when the Veteran is actually attending class and not the duration of a 15-week semester.

Consistent with the VA Rules and Regulations pertaining to accelerated terms, this Office reports the Veteran's enrollment in each of the University's enrollment periods according to the Registrar's record.

Again, it should be clear that the VA Educational Benefits are based on how many hours are taken in a given session of the semester, and after any short session is completed, the benefits for that session will be discontinued.

Important Notice Regarding VA Payments

Please review the following information carefully regarding VA education benefit payments:

- **Chapter 33 (Post-9/11 GI Bill®)** is the only chapter in which tuition and mandatory fees are paid directly to the school.
- Students using Chapter 33 benefits are protected from being dropped for non-payment of tuition and mandatory fees.
- **All other VA chapters** require students to ensure that tuition and fees are paid by the institution's payment deadline.
- Failure to submit payment by the deadline may result in being dropped for non-payment.
- **Chapter 31 (Veteran Readiness and Employment – VR&E)** students must ensure their VA counselor has submitted proper authorization (Purchase Order) to the school for payment.
Students are encouraged to monitor their benefit status and communicate promptly with the appropriate VA representative to avoid enrollment or payment issues.

OVERPAYMENTS

Students and beneficiaries may repay debt related to VA disability compensation, non-service-connected pension, or education benefits in one of the following ways:

Payment Options

1. Pay Online

Payments may be made online using a credit card or ACH direct debit. Each debt must be paid separately.

If you plan to pay your full balance, or

If you currently receive monthly VA benefit payments,

You should call first to confirm your total balance to avoid overpayment.

2. Pay by Phone

Call 800-827-0648

(Overseas: 1-612-713-6415 | TTY: 711)

Representatives are available Monday through Friday,

7:30 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. ET.

3. Pay by Mail

Send a separate check or money order for each debt.

Make payments payable to:

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Be sure to include the following on each payment:

Your full name

Your VA file number or Social Security number

Your deduction code

Include your payment stubs or a note indicating the amount being paid toward each debt.

Mail payments to:

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Debt Management Center

PO Box 11930

St. Paul, MN 55111

OTHER INFORMATION

You should promptly notify your school's Veterans Certifying Official and the VA if there is any change in enrollment. You are responsible for all debts resulting from reduction or terminations of your enrollment even if the payment was submitted directly to the school on your behalf.

Generally, we cannot certify you for:

- Courses you do not attend
- Courses from which you withdraw
- Courses you complete but receive a grade that will not count towards graduation

YOU MAY NOTIFY THE VA VIA:

Internet <https://www.va.gov/contact-us/ask-va>

Telephone

TTY 888.442.4551 VA benefit hotline 800.827.1000

Postal Mail 711

Send correspondence to: Muskogee Regional Office
125 South Main Street
Muskogee, OK 74401

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