



Ohlone Community College District

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VA BENEFITS REFERENCE GUIDE

The Ohlone College Veterans Affairs Office is providing this document for your reference and information. You should refer to this guide for clarification on receiving your VA benefits. This information is of a general nature. If you have a specific question not covered under the guidelines, please contact the Veterans Affairs Office at 510-659-6199.

1. APPLYING - WHAT'S REQUIRED AT OHLONE COLLEGE?

- VA Form 22-1990 Initial Application or VA Form 22-1995 Request for Change of Program for transfer students (Chapter 30 or 1606 veterans).
- VA Form 22-5490 Initial Application for new students or VA Form 22-5495 Request for Change of Program for transfer students (Chapter 35 dependents).
- An original or copy of the DD 214 form for Chapter 30 Active Duty veterans or Notice of Basic Eligibility (NOBE) for Chapter 1606 National Guard and Reserve Veterans.
- Original or copy of letter from the Veterans Administration indicating dependent's eligibility for educational assistance for Chapter 35 program.
- Marriage certificate and dependent birth certificate, if applicable.
- Student Educational Plan with a declared major.
- Prior college transcripts, if applicable.

Application for admission to the College and for the VA benefits - Apply for admissions on-line at <http://www.ohlone.edu/org/admissions/> . You need to complete the appropriate VA application forms in the Veterans Affairs Office.

You must check in with the Ohlone College Veterans Affairs Office every semester after signing up for your classes in order to receive continuing benefits and to prevent delays in payment of benefits. If you do not submit a Request for Certification at our office, we will assume that you are not a continuing student and your benefits will not continue into the next semester. The Request for Certification can be submitted in person, by mail, or by fax to 510-659-7309.

2. PROCESSING TIME

The Veterans Affairs Office usually processes paperwork in one week; during peak periods allow at least two weeks. Processing of the initial VA application takes at least 8-to-12 weeks at the Veterans Administration; subsequent paperwork usually takes 4-to-6 weeks.

3. TRANSCRIPTS

Federal law requires Veterans to submit OFFICIALLY transcripts in sealed envelopes from all schools, colleges, training institutes, and technical schools attended to the Ohlone College Records Office. This includes all training and education received before entering active duty, as well as any received during service and after discharge, even if VA benefits were not paid for attending the course or program. Military transcripts (AARTS, SMARTS or CCAF) are required and/or DD 295 or VMET or certificates of completion must also be submitted for military schools.

Foreign schools - Students with foreign school transcripts will need to have the foreign transcripts evaluated by an academic credentials evaluation service, and will need an official evaluation sent to the Ohlone College Records Office.

4. SELECTING A MAJOR

Veterans and dependents are required to declare a two-year major as listed in the Ohlone College Catalog or a transfer major based on four-year schools articulation agreements with a California State University (CSU) or University of California (UC) and Ohlone College.

VA students are allowed to change majors. The first major change is discretionary; the second and subsequent changes require VA approval.

WHAT IS A MAJOR?

A major is a field or area of study chosen as an academic specialization or occupational certification. It consists of general education classes, specialized courses as prescribed in the catalog or articulation agreement and electives (only as required by a specific major). The VA also pays for required remedial/refresher courses as determined by Placement Testing through the Counseling Department at Ohlone College, specifically Math, English, and Reading classes

Changes of major must be made through the Veterans Affairs Office; informing the school is not sufficient. You may only declare one major at a time at Ohlone College

(no dual majors or majors plus minors are allowed).

Ohlone College has approval for most of the AA/AS Degrees listed in our current catalog, and CSU and UC transfer majors. Transfer majors require separate and individual approval through the State of California and the VA. Veteran students interested in selecting a transfer major should contact the Counseling Office or Transfer Center to obtain a four-year articulation form. Students will need to provide the Veterans Affairs Office with both the transfer general education and major pattern they plan to pursue.

5. PAYMENT/MONEY/\$\$\$ (And what classes are / are not payable)

Payment is based on the dates the required class meets. The VA automatically pays students for all payable breaks between regular semesters unless the veteran student states in writing that they do not want break pay. Payment of benefits usually come between the 1st and the 15th of each month, and is paid for the previous month. The VA does not consider checks as late until after the 10th of the month. Inquiries may be made through the Veterans Affairs Office or directly with the VA at their toll free number 1-888-442-4551.

Rates depend upon amount contributed and length of time in service (number of months of contribution), as well as *enrollment status*. More information about [rates](#) is available on the Web site at www.gibill.va.gov.

Undergraduate Enrollment Status by Number of Credits				
Enrollment Status	Full Time	3/4 Time	1/2 Time	Less 1/2 Time
Spring/Fall - 16 Week Session	12 +	9-11	6-8	1-5
8 Week Summer Session	6 +	4-5	3	1-2
5 Week Summer Session	4 +	3	2	1

SELF-CERTIFICATION - Veterans drawing benefits under Chapter 30, 32, 1606 or 1607 are required to send in monthly self-certification of their attendance. The earliest this can be done is the last day of the month. Monthly verification can be done via one of the following two ways:

- Telephone - Using Interactive Voice Response (IVR) 1-877-823-2378
- Internet - WAVE (Web Automated Verification of Enrollment)
<https://www.gibill.va.gov/wave/>

Failure to self-certify will cause your benefits to stop. You must do this every month or you will not get paid!

RECOMMENDED CLASSES - The VA DOES NOT PAY for Recommended Classes.

REQUIRED PREREQUISITES - The VA WILL PAY for REQUIRED prerequisites such as English and Math. They will pay for remedial courses for students where testing has shown the student to be deficient.

ACCELERATED SESSIONS - Non-standard sessions such as summer or short sessions / Fast Track are payable, but only during the time that they meet. Summer is the most common session and is 6 or 8 weeks in length. Unit requirements for summer are:

<u>6 week session</u>	<u>8 week session</u>	<u>Pay Status Equivalent</u>
4 units	6 units	Full Time
3 units	4 units	Three-Quarter Time
2 units	3 units	Half Time

DIRECTED STUDIES/DISTANCE LEARNING - The VA will pay for TV courses, computer assisted instruction, online courses, one-way video, two-way video courses and independent study courses. Payment for these classes will cover only the period the class is in session.

SHORT SESSIONS - Short and nonstandard sessions are classes that meet less than or more than a regular semester, such as the summer and Fast Track sessions. Benefits for these nonstandard length classes are paid during the period of time the class meets. Short sessions are paid at an accelerated rate. (See description of "Accelerated Sessions" above.)

REPEATED CLASSES - You may repeat a course and receive VA payment for it if you received an "F," "NC," or "W" grade on the original attempt. The VA does not pay for repeats of "D" or better grades or for incomplete grades, unless the Incomplete is changed to an "F" grade. EXCEPTION: When a class is required for a major and must be passed with a certain grade level to progress to another required class; for example, Math 101A has a prerequisite of Math 188; the Math 188 must be completed with a C or better grade to progress to Math 101A.

SELF-PACED OPEN-ENTRY/OPEN EXIT courses allow students flexibility in scheduling. Students can register at any time up to a designated date in the semester/session. Hours of attendance are arranged with the instructor and a specified number of hours must be completed to receive credit. All course work must be completed before the end of the semester, and depending on the number of hours the student arranges with the instructor each week, these courses can be completed in shorter time frame. Whenever students finish the course work, they take the final exam.

The VA pay is based on attendance; therefore, they only pay for the self-paced course(s) while the student is actually attending the course(s). The Veterans Affairs Office certifies students for the longest period (semester/session) and then shortens the course dates if needed.

The Veterans Affairs Office will require veteran students enrolled in self-paced course(s) to submit weekly verifications of attendance for the courses. Failure to do so will result in the student being dropped from the self-paced course and a reduction in the student's rate of payment.

CREDIT/NO CREDIT - No credit grades will be considered in probation and dismissal procedures. The College does not allow students the option of a credit or no-credit grade when the class is required for and going to be used for the major.

CHALLENGED CLASSES - The VA will not pay for any class that is challenged. You must attend a class to receive payment for it.

6. ATTENDANCE – IF YOU DON'T ATTEND CLASS, YOU ARE NOT ENTITLED TO BENEFITS

If a student stops attending a class, they must drop officially through the Ohlone College Admission Office and then report the drop to the Veterans Affairs Office. Federal law requires that a student reports any change in enrollment status which might affect their VA education benefits to the school and the VA. Your signature on the request for certification of VA educational benefits shows acceptance of the responsibility to keep the Veterans Affairs Office informed on any change in student status.

FAILURE TO ACCEPT RESPONSIBILITY FOR DROPPED COURSES CAN RESULT IN AN OVERPAYMENT.

When there is an overpayment the VA will ask for repayment of the overpaid benefits. If you ignore the VA's request, they can withhold future GI Bill payments, disability payments, or depending upon the situation, they can take a student to court, charge interest, and may take future taxes refunds, attach wages, put a legal hold on property, or deny home loans.

The Veterans Affairs Office monitors student attendance on the 15th and 30th of each month and updated unit reports are sent to the VA. When adding or dropping classes, the student must report the drop or add directly to the Veterans Affairs Office.

F Grades – Since the VA will not pay benefits for the period after a student has ceased attending class(es), Ohlone College Veterans Affairs Office is required to verify student attendance for all classes in which a student receives an "F" grade. It is possible that a student received the "F" grade as a result of an unofficial withdrawal and the College is required to contract students to learn the basis for the grade.

Each semester student's academic progress will be monitored for "F" grades. The veteran student who receives "F" grades will be sent a letter asking why the student

received the “F.” Veteran students will be required to state if they completed the class(es) and received the “F” grade on the basis of the work completed for the class or if they ceased attending the class(es), in which case, they must indicate the month and the day they last attended.

The reason for the “F” grade will be noted in the student’s file. No further action will be necessary for those who received an “F” grade based on work completed in the class. If the “F” grade is a result of non-attendance the, VA will be notified of the last date of attendance reported by the student and the VA will reduce the student’s units and pay rate effective the date the student indicated as the last date of attendance

If veteran students do not return the letter as directed, the Veterans Affairs Office will follow VA regulations and automatically report the last date of attendance for the “F” grade as the last official date to drop the course. At Ohlone College this is the end of the “W” grade period.

7. COUNSELING/ACADEMIC

Identify yourself as a veteran when you see the academic counselors (in the Counseling Office or Transfer Center). Be aware that the VA places restrictions on the courses for which you may be paid. A counselor's recommendation may not be payable under VA regulations, especially if the class is a recommended elective. Substitutions of courses must be approved by the school through the Evaluations Department and must be reported to the Veterans Affairs Office.

8. EVALUATIONS

Evaluations are done during the first semester of attendance, unless the Ohlone College Record Office has not received transcripts. The VA requires that Ohlone complete an evaluation of the veteran student’s declared major and provide a copy to the student. Once an evaluation is done, the Veterans Affairs Office will check semester courses against the evaluation; courses are also checked for pay ability at the beginning of each new term. The VA is notified of students enrollment in courses not required for completion of the declared major.

Make sure that the courses you wish to take are payable to your major prior to actually enrolling in the classes. Veterans Affairs will aid you as much as possible, but students are ultimately responsible for the courses for which they register.

9. VERIFICATION OF PAYABLE CLASSES

1. Consult with an academic counselor or Veterans Affairs Office.
2. Refer to your Student Education Plan.

3. Please be aware that when you submit paperwork to Veterans Affairs Office, your classes will be reviewed to see if they are payable, however, you are responsible for registering in proper payable courses.
4. If you decide to change majors, you must do so officially through the Veterans Affairs Office. A new Evaluation will be done for the new major and classes will be checked for usability.

10. ACADEMIC AND PROGRESS STANDARDS

Probation Status will be issued to students whose current grade point average (GPA) falls below 2.0 for any given semester and/or drop 50 % or more of course units during any given semester. If at the end of two consecutive semesters the cause for probation has not been removed, the Veterans Affairs Office is required to notify the VA. The VA will terminate payment of benefits unless the students improve their grade point average. The Veterans Affairs Office will reinstate the students on veteran's benefits. Veteran students should be aware of the standards of satisfactory progress and attendance for GI Bill recipients attending at Ohlone College.

11. EXTRA PROGRAMS THAT MAY APPLY OR HELP YOU

ROUND OUT - is a program that allows students who have a limited number of courses remaining in their program to add non-required courses and be paid at a higher rate. Round Out may only be used in the final semester of attendance. It may be used under one major at the two-year level and again for one major at the four-year level. For further information contact the Veterans Affairs Office.

CAL VET PROGRAM - The California Veterans Dependents Educational Assistance Program offers educational assistance to children and spouses of severely disabled or deceased veterans. Dependents of POWS and MIAS, widow/ers of deceased veterans, and wives of 100%-disabled veterans may also be eligible. Ask for more information in the Veterans Affairs Office.