

VA BENEFITS STANDARDS

Revision 02/15/2012

Welcome to the Yavapai College Veterans Services Office

The Veterans Services Office at Yavapai College functions as an intermediary between the student and the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). We have three primary responsibilities:

1. to certify to the VA that you are registered at Yavapai College
2. to verify for the VA that the classes in which you are enrolled are required for the Program of Study you declared at Yavapai College
3. to verify that you have not successfully completed equivalent courses previously at Yavapai College or elsewhere

These standards are provided to assist you in applying for and receiving your Veterans Educational Benefits each semester at Yavapai College. You are responsible for knowing and abiding by these standards. If you do not, Yavapai College Veterans Services may not be able to certify your enrollment to the VA. Please read this document carefully. You must sign a statement confirming that you understand and will comply. Also please be advised that any email correspondence from the Yavapai College Veterans Services will be sent to your YC scholar email address only.

Apply for Benefits: A complete description of benefits and eligibility requirements is available at www.gibill.va.gov. For information or questions regarding your own eligibility, call the VA Regional Processing Center directly at 1-888-442-4551. Apply for benefits online at <http://www.gibill.va.gov/apply-for-benefits/application/>.

Processing your Application for Benefits: In approximately six to eight weeks, VA will mail a Certificate of Eligibility directly to you confirming your eligibility.

Documentation Required by Yavapai College Veterans Services:

1. New applicant: Application for VA Education Benefits <http://www.gibill.va.gov/apply-for-benefits/application/>
2. If you have already applied directly to the VA: Certificate of Eligibility (mailed to you from VA)
3. If you have received benefits elsewhere: Request for Change of Program or Place of Training:
Veterans: VA Form 22-1995 <http://www.vba.va.gov/pubs/forms/VBA-22-1995-ARE.pdf> or
Dependents: VA Form 22-5495 <http://www.vba.va.gov/pubs/forms/VBA-22-5495-ARE.pdf>
4. DD-214 Member-4 Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty
5. VA Vocational Rehabilitation Chapter 31 only - VA Form 28-1905 sent to the college by your VA Case Manager

Prior Education: You must provide Yavapai College with official transcripts from your military training and every postsecondary institution you have attended regardless of how long ago you attended or the applicability of those courses to your current program.

Per VA regulations, a student can only be certified for two semesters without the evaluation of all transcripts. This is to ensure that the VA does not pay for coursework twice and that you receive the most from your benefits. If you are paid for a course for which you later receive transfer credit you will owe money to the VA.

To request your official college transcripts call or visit that college's website. There will be a nominal charge for this service. If you owe money to your former college it is your responsibility to pay the debt in order to receive official transcripts.

To request your official military transcripts, please use the links below. There is no charge for this service.

- ARMY: <http://aarts.army.mil/>
- NAVY/MARINES: <https://smart.navy.mil/>
- AIR FORCE: www.au.af.mil/au/ccaf/transcripts.asp
- COAST GUARD: http://www.uscg.mil/hq/cgi/active_duty/go_to_college/official_transcript.asp

Send official transcripts directly from your prior college to: **Veterans Services Office, Yavapai College, 1100 East Sheldon St, Prescott, AZ 86301.** Transcripts submitted by the student are not official.

Program of Study: All Veterans and Dependents must be enrolled in a VA approved Program of Study with Yavapai College **prior** to being certified to the VA. To do this, you must meet with an Academic Advisor **before** registering for classes. The Academic Advisor will help you select a Program of Study that meets your educational goals and record that information in your record. Benefits are only payable for courses required for your Program of Study which you have not successfully completed with a grade of C or better previously.

Tuition and Arizona Residency

Post 9/11 Benefits pay in state tuition and fees only at public colleges. All other benefits pay a standard maximum based on credit hours. Veterans only, for immediate reclassification to Arizona in-state status for tuition purposes- Scan your **DD-214 Member 4, Arizona Voter Registration card and Arizona Driver's License** to Admissions@yc.edu. (Or present these documents in person to registration staff on the Prescott Campus.) <http://www.yc.edu/v4content/registration/citizenship-residency.htm>.

38 Code of Federal Regulations 21.4201(6)(h)

Or the 85/15 rule states that no more than 85% of students in any program may be veterans using their Veterans Education Benefits. Prior to certifying your enrollment to the Department of Veterans Affairs, this ratio will be verified. If you are beginning your first semester in a Yavapai College degree or certificate program, it is possible that Yavapai College will be unable to certify your enrollment in that program if it fails to meet the acceptable ratio as of the drop/add period for that semester.

Active Duty or recently discharged veterans

The Post 9/11 Veterans Education Benefit does not pay a housing allowance to service persons who are still active duty or whom the Department of Veterans Affairs believes are still active duty. If your Certificate of Eligibility indicates that you are receiving active duty benefits, it is the student's responsibility to notify the Department of Veterans Affairs of their status as discharged.

Your housing allowance will not begin until after your discharge date **and** notification of the Department of Veterans Affairs of your changed status.

Remaining Months of Eligibility and Delimiting Date

If you have used your Veterans Education Benefits previously, please contact the Department of Veterans Affairs to determine your remaining months of eligibility and your delimiting date (the last date you can use your benefits). For many students it is not possible to complete the declared program of study without Veterans Education Benefits. It is imperative that you confirm enough remaining benefits and your delimiting date before beginning your program. For information call the VA Regional Processing Center at 1-888-442-4551.

Change of Program of Study: A Change of Program occurs when you make a change to your educational, professional or vocational goal. An Academic Advisor will help you select the Program of Study that meets your new goal, incorporate all completed courses into the new Program of Study and update your records in our system. In addition, you must declare the change to the VA by submitting the "Change of Program" form that corresponds to your benefits chapter along with your Benefits Request Form that semester. If the Program of Study listed in your Yavapai College record does not correspond with that stated on your Benefits Request Form, we are not able to certify your enrollment to the VA. The VA is notified every time you change your Program of Study. Excessive program changes may result in suspension of your benefits at the discretion of the VA.

Request Benefits each semester: You must submit the Benefits Request Form **each** semester authorizing Yavapai College to certify your courses to the VA. You will only be certified for coursework that applies to your Program of Study. Do not submit the form if you have not finalized your semester registration and/or completed the Yavapai College Veterans Services application requirements. An email confirmation of your enrollment certification will be sent to your YC scholar email address. **Failure to submit this form means your enrollment will not be certified to the VA and no benefits will be paid.**

Concurrent Enrollments: You may take courses that apply to your Program of Study at more than one college. The school that will grant the degree is your "primary" school. All other schools are "secondary" schools. The primary school will send a Primary School Letter to the secondary school requesting that they certify your enrollment to the VA for courses taken at the secondary school.

Yavapai College Veterans Services Office has no way of knowing that you are enrolled at another college. It is your responsibility to meet with an Academic Advisor for prior approval of courses taken at another college. You must submit that information to the Yavapai College Veterans Services Office along with your Benefits Request Form in order for us to send a Primary School Letter to your secondary college and have all your eligible credits certified.

If Yavapai College is your secondary college, you are responsible for contacting your primary school for a Primary School Letter. Yavapai College Veterans Services has no way of knowing that your enrollment is eligible for benefits if your primary school does not provide the proper documents. It is your responsibility to follow up on this process.

Monthly Verification: If you are receiving benefits under Chapters 30, 1606, or 1607 (REAP) you must verify your enrollment on or after the last day of each month online using the Web Automated Verification of Enrollment (WAVE) at www.gibill.va.gov or by calling the Interactive Voice Response (IVR) at 877-823-2378.

IVR allows you to "phone in" their monthly verification if there are no changes to the enrollment during the previous month. If there were changes in your enrollment you must use the WAVE system or speak with an Education Case Manager at 1-888-442-4551. Benefits will not be paid for that month until this is complete. Chapters 31, 33 and 35 are currently exempt from this requirement.

Change of information: The WAVE system can be used by all Chapters to perform a multitude of functions. For instance, you may:

- Change your mailing address
- Initiate or change your direct deposit information
- View your enrollment period and monthly benefit amount
- View your remaining entitlement
- Sign up for a monthly e-mail reminder

Course Approval: Meet with your Academic Advisor each semester to select your classes and ensure that they are required for your VA approved Program of Study. If you are paid for a course for which you later receive transfer credit you could owe money to the VA. **Per VA regulations, a student can only be certified for two semesters without the evaluation of all prior college and military transcripts.**

Course Length: Classes that have different start and end dates from the standard semester may cause a fluctuation in your pay during the semester. When the course ends, it is no longer counted by the VA as part of your enrollment. It is best to select courses that last the whole term whenever possible. If you are considering short-format classes, check with the Yavapai College Veterans Services Office to determine how this may affect your benefits for that semester.

Enrollment Changes: As required by law, you must report all enrollment changes, including complete withdrawal from classes, to the Veterans Services Office immediately via email (va.services@yc.edu). These changes may affect your eligibility for benefits and rate of pay. The VA pays you to participate in class. If you do not complete a class for which you were certified you will owe money back to the VA.

Tuition payment deferral: Tuition and fees are due the same day you register. If you are unable to pay the same day you register, you may defer the cost of tuition and fees by completing the Veterans Payment Plan immediately after you register. Instructions for enrolling in the Veterans Payment Plan are available under Semester MUST DO List at www.yc.edu/veterans. The Veterans Payment Plan is a contract between you and Yavapai College in which you agree to pay Yavapai College a specified amount of money on a specified date. You are bound by this contract even if the VA does not pay you or Yavapai College by that date. Please plan accordingly.

Purchase Required Textbooks: Eligible veterans may also defer the payment of textbooks purchased at the Yavapai College Bookstore by adding the cost to your Veterans Payment Plan. Simply bring the confirmation page of your Veterans Payment Plan to the bookstore when you are ready to purchase your textbooks. All textbook payments are sent directly to the student by the VA. **You are responsible to pay for your textbooks by the Yavapai College Bookstore payment deadline.**

Payment of Benefits: Education and housing benefits are paid at the beginning of each month for the previous month of attendance. The VA may take up to six weeks after electronic certification by the college and student verification (if required see above) to begin paying your Veterans Education Benefits. No benefits will be paid until the beginning of the first full month of classes at the earliest. Please plan accordingly.

Post 9/11 Chapter 33 Education Benefits are paid based on your percentage of eligibility as confirmed in your Certificate of Eligibility. Tuition and fees are paid directly to the college; textbook allowance is paid directly to you. BAH is paid directly to you at the beginning of each month for the previous month of attendance in eligible classes. Your eligibility percentage applies to all the above benefits.

VA Vocational Rehabilitation Chapter 31: In order to register for classes and certify your enrollment to the VA, the college must have a VA Form 28-1905 on file which is valid for the semester and Program of Study in which you are enrolled. Without this form, your classes will be dropped for nonpayment. The college invoices tuition and fees directly to the VA. The Yavapai College Bookstore bills the cost of your textbooks directly to the VA. If you require additional supplies or equipment not available for purchase through Yavapai College, you must discuss the process with your VA Vocational Rehabilitation Case Manager.

Tutorial Assistance: Yavapai College offers group and drop in tutoring at the Learning Center for classes in which you are enrolled. However, if you need private tutoring you may receive additional VA assistance to defer the cost of private tutoring services. You must select a tutor and submit the VA Tutorial Assistance Form, 22-1990t, to the Veteran Services Office, Yavapai College, Prescott campus. The amount paid is at the rate of the monthly tutoring cost not to exceed \$100.00 per calendar month up to a lifetime maximum of \$1200.00. The first \$600 comes from the VA and the last \$600 is deducted from the student's remaining entitlement. Dependent students, Chapter 35, receive up to \$1200 without entitlement being charged.

Financial Aid: Students receiving Veterans Education Benefits may also apply for additional federal and state financial aid and scholarships. Eligibility for state and federal financial aid is based on financial need. Eligibility for scholarships may be based on financial need, academic performance or your field of study. Please visit the Yavapai College website at www.yc.edu/financialaid for applications and information.

Final Grades: Acceptable grades for the VA are **A, B, C, D, and S (pass)**. However, a D grade is not transferrable and does not count toward your Program of Study. Please meet with your Academic Advisor for instructions. Courses with an "F" grade are only eligible for benefits if you continued to participate until the end of the term and fulfilled all the requirements of the course including taking the final exam and completing all final projects.

The VA will **not pay** for classes with a final grade of drop, withdrawal (W), administrative withdrawal (Y), or unsatisfactory (U).

The VA will **not pay** for you to repeat a course for which you already earned a grade of C or better at Yavapai College or elsewhere. Courses repeated more than once may not be eligible for Veterans Education Benefits.

Incomplete (I) grades must be converted to a letter grade within the contract period to be eligible for benefits. Failure to meet the completion deadline for incomplete courses will result in an automatic F grade that is not eligible for Veterans Education Benefits.

Academic Standards: Yavapai College and the VA have a minimum cumulative GPA (Grade Point Average) requirement of 2.00. Failure to maintain the required GPA will result in academic probation. You are still eligible for education benefits while on academic probation. However, standards that allow a student to remain in a probationary status for than two consecutive terms without defined improvement in academic standing do not meet minimum requirements for approval. See Yavapai College Catalog for Standards of Academic Progress. GPA calculation information is available online (<http://www.yc.edu/v4content/registration/studentpolicies.htm>).

Repayment of Benefits: You are responsible to pay back any Veterans Education Benefits to which you are not entitled as determined by the VA. The VA usually recovers overpayments by withholding future benefits until your outstanding debt is paid. If you are notified that you have been overpaid, please contact the DVA Debt Management Group at 1-800-827-0648 or email dmc.ops@va.gov to discuss other repayment options.

Petition for Mitigating Circumstances: If you fail to meet the above responsibilities due to mitigating circumstances, you may submit a Statement in Support of Claim VA Form 21-4138 directly to the VA within thirty days for evaluation. In addition, you may submit a Financial Status Report, VA Form 5655 if it is a financial hardship to repay your debt. These forms are available at www.gibill.va.gov. You may be required to repay all or part of benefits for the semester if you fail to provide acceptable documentation. A student is automatically granted mitigating circumstances for up to six credit hours the first time they withdraw.

VA Educational Counseling Services are available to veterans and their qualifying dependents through the VA, in addition to the career and educational counseling services offered by Yavapai College. This service can help you plan your individual career goals, determine the type of education most suited to those goals, and select schools or training facilities that offer the appropriate educational programs. Please call 602-827-1000 to schedule an appointment at the Department of Veterans Affairs Phoenix Office.