

Veteran Student Handbook

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Veterans Handbook

One important task of the Office of Military and Veteran Services is to assist you in applying for and receiving Department of Veteran Affairs (VA) Educational Benefits. Our role is that of a liaison between the student veteran, military spouses, dependents and the Department of Veteran Affairs and the State of Ohio. The purpose of this handbook is to provide information on topics we think you should be aware of, not to act as a substitute for the college catalog. Read and understand the information it contains. Failure to adhere to the information contained in this handbook may result in delays of certification, overpayment and unnecessary termination of educational benefits. If you have questions beyond the scope of this handbook, please feel free to contact Brian Caudill at 740-351-4441.

Applying for VA Benefits at Shawnee State University

If you intend to use VA Educational Benefits while attending SSU you should be sure to provide all required documentation so that we can better serve you. The following steps outline the procedure for how to get started. You should:

1. Apply for the college at <http://www.shawnee.edu/offices/admission/apply.aspx>
2. Complete the Application for VA Education Benefits at <https://www.va.gov/education/how-to-apply/> (Click on “Apply for Educational Benefits”) Bring your Certificate of Eligibility to the Office of Military and Veteran Services when you receive it (processing time 30-45 days). If you have already applied, bring a copy of your Certificate of Eligibility/Notice of Basic Eligibility to the Office of Military and Veteran Services.
3. Submit a copy of your DD-214 (member 4) to the Office of Military and Veteran Services.
4. Send all previous college transcripts, including military transcripts, joint transcripts to the Admissions Office. All transcripts must be on file by the end of the semester. Students who are pending transcripts will not be certified for future semesters.
5. Take College Assessment exams if needed.
6. Meet with your academic advisor for an Academic Plan and a VA Semester Worksheet.
7. Submit a copy of your Certification Request Form to the Veteran Services Coordinator.

Military Credit Evaluation

To receive credit for your military experience, you must request your Joint Service Transcript at <http://jst.doded.mil>. Those who served in the Air Force may obtain their transcripts at <http://www.airuniversity.af.mil/Barnes/CCAF/>. Once your transcript is received, an advisor will review and evaluate it for possible college credit.

Getting Your DD-214

All Chapters of the GI Bill, except Chapter 31 (Veteran Readiness and Employment) and Chapter 1606 (Montgomery GI Bill Selected Reserve) are required to submit a copy of their DD-214 (Member 4) to the Certifying Official in order to obtain benefits. If you do not have your DD-214, you can get a copy by going to www.ebenefits.va.gov/ebenefits-portal and creating a premium account. This will give you access to your military documents, including your DD-214. You can also get a copy by going to www.archives.gov/veterans/ and requesting it.

Certification Request

Prior to each semester, students must complete the Certification Request form. Per Federal law, students must request, in writing, their desire to use VA Education Benefits. Please read this document carefully before signing and submitting. This document can be accessed at anytime at this link: [Military & Veteran Services | Shawnee State University](#) (Click “Veteran Certification Request form on the left side of the page)

Post 9/11 GI Bill® for Veterans Duty and Dependents – Chapter 33

Eligibility

- Service member must have completed at least 90 days of aggregate service on or after September 11, 2001 or be discharged with as service-connected disability after 30 days.
- Service member received an honorable discharge.
- Spouse and dependents must have DEERS issued certificate of Transfer of Eligibility and have completed the application for DVA Education Benefits (VA Form 22-1990).
- Benefits may expire 15 years from the date of discharge/separation, depending on date of discharge. If the veteran departed military service after to January 1, 2013, the benefits do not expire.
- For detailed information on eligibility requirements, please visit the DVA website at www.gibill.va.gov

Benefits

- Provides up to 36 months of education benefits.
- Includes reimbursement of tuition and fees.
- A Monthly Housing Allowance (MHA) that is generally the same as the military Basic Allowance for Housing (BHA) for an E-5 with dependents. The student’s MHA is based on the zip code for your school. The housing allowance is paid directly to the student at the beginning of each month for the previous month’s enrollment.
- Individuals using the Post 9/11 GI bill are eligible for up to \$1000 per VA academic year for books and supplies. This amount is paid proportionately based upon the student’s enrollment.

Rate of Pursuit

- To be eligible for the BAH rates, the student's rate of pursuit must be greater than 50% (more than half-time (6 credits) enrollment)
- Students attending less than full time will only receive partial housing allowance based on the rate of pursuit. Current payment rates can be viewed online at https://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/comparison_tool.asp
- Student will only be certified for approved courses as identified on the Academic Plan on file.

Distance Learning and BAH

- Students enrolled exclusively in distance learning (online courses) are eligible for monthly housing allowance equal to 50% of the national BAH average and your rate of pursuit.
- If a student's enrollment is a combination distance learning and on-campus and the rate of pursuit is greater than 50% the student may be eligible to receive the local BAH rate.
- Specific information can be found here: <https://www.va.gov/education/benefit-rates/post-9-11-gi-bill-rates/>

Montgomery GI Bill® for Veterans (MGIB) – Chapter 30

Eligibility

- Benefits expire 10 years from date of discharge/separation.
- Veteran was active-duty personnel.
- Veteran has received an honorable discharge
- For detailed information on eligibility requirements, please visit the DVA website at www.gibill.va.gov

Benefits

- Provides up to 36 months of education benefits.
- Students are paid a monthly stipend at the beginning of the month for the previous month's enrollment certification.
- Current payment rates can be found at www.gibill.va.gov

Vocational Rehabilitation® – Chapter 31

Eligibility

- Served on or after September 16, 1940.
- Has service-connected disabilities rated at least 20% by the VA.

- Is in need of vocational rehabilitation because his or her disability creates an employment handicap.

Benefit

- Services include: vocational and personal counseling, education and training, financial aid, and job assistance.
- Services generally last up to 48 months, but can be extended in certain instances.
- To apply: complete VA Form 28-1900, Disabled Veterans Application for Vocational Rehabilitation and mail it to the VA Regional Office that serves your area. You can also apply online at <https://www.ebenefits.va.gov/ebenefits/about/feature?feature=vocational-rehabilitation-and-employment> or visit the VA Regional Office, 420 North James Street, Columbus, Ohio 43219.

Dependents Educational Assistance® (DEA) Program – Chapter 35

Eligibility for dependents of veterans:

- Service member was released from active duty due to permanent and total disability as a result of active-duty services in the Armed Forces.
- Service member who died while serving on active duty or is Missing in Action (MIA) or was a Prisoner of War (POW).
- Children of service members between the ages of 18 and 26.
- The spouse of a service member may begin to use benefits during the eligibility period provided he/she has not remarried.

Benefits

- DEA offers up to a total of 45 months of educational benefits.
- DEA benefits may be used for college degree and/or certificate programs.
- Students are paid a monthly stipend based on credit loan at the beginning of the month for the previous month's certification.
- Current payment rates can be viewed online at www.gibill.va.gov.

Monthly Verification Procedures

Students receiving Chapter 30, 1606 or 1607 Educational Benefits must verify their enrollment at the end of each month. Students can verify their enrollment through the VA's Web Automated Verification of Enrollment system (WAVE) website at www.gibill.va.gov/wave or by calling 1-888-442-4551. This is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Students receiving benefits under Chapter 33-Post 9/11 educational benefits are not required to verify their enrollment.

Advanced Payment

Shawnee State University participates in the advance payment program with the DVA. New students and continuing students with 30 or more days break between semesters are eligible. If you elect advance pay, you will be paid in advance for the first month or fraction thereof in, which the semester begins, plus the amount payable for the following month. Requests for advance pay should reach the DVA Processing Regional Office at least sixty (60) days before the start of the semester.

NOTE: If you receive an advance payment, it will take approximately 3 months before you receive another benefits check. Those receiving Post 9/11 benefits are ineligible for advanced payments

Direct Deposit

Those receiving VA Education Benefits can choose to have their VA payments directly deposited into a checking or savings account of their choice. Those Interested should create a profile at www.ebenefits.va.gov.

Repeat Courses

The VA will not pay for repeated courses which were successfully completed. If a class in your program requires a specific grade and you did not meet that requirement, VA will pay for you to repeat the course. For example, if you successfully completed a course and received a C but the program requires a B or higher in the course, VA will pay to repeat the course.

Kickers, College Funds, Additional Contributions

Students eligible for a Kicker/College Fund under Chapter 30 or 1606 may receive the Kicker/College Fund under Chapter 33 (Post 9/11). The Kicker/College Fund will be prorated by the student's rate of pursuit percentage and paid monthly to the student. The student will need to send a copy of the Kicker/College Fund document to the student's VA Regional Processing Office. This document was signed with the enlistment contract.

Satisfactory Academic Progress

All students receiving VA educational benefits are required to maintain satisfactory academic progress according to published standards established and enforced by the university. Shawnee State's Standards of Progress have been approved by the State Approving Agency (SAA) and accepted by the VA. Title 38, United States Code, Section 3474 and 3524 requires that education assistance benefits to veterans and other eligible persons be discontinued when the student ceases to make satisfactory progress toward completion of his or her training objective.

Remedial and Deficiency Courses

Remedial and deficiency courses are typically intended to assist individuals in overcoming weaknesses in particular areas of study. Often, institutions will require the completion of certain deficiency courses without granting credit toward graduation. Basic English language or mathematics courses are authorized only when the need for training has been established by accepted testing methods. These courses must be taken in the classroom in order to receive VA benefits.

Parent (Visiting) School Letters

Parent school letters are issued to students taking courses simultaneously at more than one school. The home school that is granting the degree is the student's "parent" school. All other institutions are "secondary" schools. Even when a student is taking classes at another institution the classes must still be part of the student's degree plan. The "home" school will supply the "secondary" school with a letter stating what classes are authorized. If a student is seeking a degree from another institution and taking classes at SSU, the student must have prior approval from their degree granting institution.

Break Pay

The VA does not pay for any break in instruction for more than eight (8) days in duration. For example, if winter break in December is eight days, the VA will only pay for 22 days (VA always counts a month as 30 days, regardless of the actual number of days in the month).

Overpayment

An overpayment is a charge of indebtedness to the U.S. Government. An overpayment must be repaid. Failure to comply with overpayment letters from the VA could result in legal proceedings. An individual with an overpayment has the right to request a waiver or repayment of debt in monthly installments. In both cases the VA will make the final decision. See a representative from the Office of Military and Veteran Services for the procedure of this type of request. Please keep in mind that you will be charged interest and possible administrative fees on any overpayment with the VA. Listed below are some possible causes for overpayment, their solution or possible ways to avoid them:

- **Cause:** Enrolling in courses not required on your degree plan.
- **Solution:** Always review your degree plan prior to enrolling for courses, make sure they are required.

- **Cause:** Enrolling for courses for which credit was previously granted from prior colleges/universities attended or military experience.
- **Solution:** DO NOT ENROLL FOR A COURSE if you have the slightest feeling that you have taken a similar course before or earned credit based on past military experience.

- **Cause:** Withdrawing from a course or courses during a semester.
- **Solution:** If at all possible, try to avoid this. It is recommended that a statement be submitted to the VA identifying your reason for the withdrawal. If your reasons are accepted by the VA, it will reduce the amount of the overpayment.

Audits, Repeats, Withdrawals & Non-Required Courses

The DVA will not authorize payment for the following:

- Withdrawals/drops
- Audits
- Courses which are not applicable to a declared degree objective
- Courses for which a grade assigned is not used in computing requirements for graduation
- Repeating a course with a grade of “D” or better unless a higher grade is required
- A course you stopped attending

Note: Payment will be authorized for repeating required courses for which you have failed.

Financial Assistance

The major categories of financial assistance programs for undergraduates include loans, grants, scholarships and student employment. Loans from federal government sources or from private lenders must be repaid; however, the interest rate is usually low and the repayment period is extended. Grants and scholarships do not have to be repaid, nor does the income earned through student employment.

We encourage all veterans to complete the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) to see if they are eligible to receive the Pell Grant, the Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (SEOG), Federal Work Study, or the Ohio Instructional Grant (For Ohio residents only). The FAFSA should be submitted as early as possible beginning in October preceding the academic year. Federal recipients must have a complete financial aid file, including necessary verification documents.

After your FAFSA needs analysis and other documents have been received and reviewed for accuracy, you are notified through your MySSU account of any award for which you are eligible. If you are denied grants, you are encouraged to continue in the process to be considered for supplemental forms of assistance such as student loans.

If the applicant's income has decreased from the previous year, they can complete a Special Condition form to show change of income. Once completed, this change of income may enable the student to be eligible for grants.

Should you need further information concerning the financial aid process, stop by the financial aid office or contact them at 740-351-4243.

Training Time Chart

Fall and Spring Semesters

(Chapters 33, 30, 32, 35, and 1606)

Undergraduate

Full time	12 or more credits hrs
$\frac{3}{4}$ time	9 – 11 credits hrs
$\frac{1}{2}$ time	6 – 8 credit hrs
< $\frac{1}{2}$ time	4 – 5 credit hrs

Graduate

Full time	9 credit hrs
$\frac{3}{4}$ time	7 -8 credit hrs
$\frac{1}{2}$ time	5 -6 credit hrs
< $\frac{1}{2}$ time	1 – 4 credit hrs

10 Week Summer Semester

Undergraduate

Full time	7 or more credit hrs
$\frac{3}{4}$ time	5 – 6 credit hrs
$\frac{1}{2}$ time	3 – 4 credit hrs
< $\frac{1}{2}$ time	1 – 2 credit hrs

5 Week Summer “A” and Summer “B” Semesters

Undergraduate

Full time	4 credit hrs
$\frac{3}{4}$ time	3 credit hrs
$\frac{1}{2}$ time	2 credit hrs
< $\frac{1}{2}$ time	1 credit hr

Student Veterans of America

SVA is a coalition of student veteran groups on college campuses across America. These member chapters help veterans reintegrate into campus life and succeed academically. Each chapter is a student group officially recognized by the institution that can provide a peer-to-peer network for veterans. Please contact the Office of Military and Veteran Services for more information at 740-341-4441.

Important Campus Phone Numbers

Office of Admission – 740-351-4778

Clark Memorial Library – 740-351-3323

Counseling and Health Services – 740-351-3608

Campus Security (Non-Emergency) – 740-351-3243

Campus Security (Emergency) – 740-351-3232

Accessibility Services – 740-351-3276

Financial Aid – 740-351-4243

Student Business Center – 740-351-4357

Student Life – 740-351-3549

Student Success Center – 740-351-3594

University Housing – 740-351-3222

Veterans Services – 740-351-4441, 740-351-3332

Ohio War Orphan & Severely Disabled Veterans' Children Scholarship Program

The Ohio War Orphan & Severely Disabled Veterans' Children Scholarship Program awards tuition assistance to the children of deceased or severely disabled Ohio veterans who served in the armed forces during a period of declared war or conflict. To receive War Orphans Scholarship benefits, a student must be an Ohio resident and enrolled for full-time undergraduate study and pursuing an associate or bachelor's degree at an eligible Ohio college or university. Applications must be completed and submitted before the **May 15th deadline** for first-time applicants to be eligible for the Fall semester of that same year. Applicants must apply between the ages of 16 and 24. Scholarship benefits cover a portion of instructional and general fee charges at two and four-year public institutions and a portion of these charges at eligible private colleges and universities. The benefits are determined each year based on the number of eligible applications. Applications are made to the Ohio Department of Higher Education, State Grants and Scholarships Department. *Current scholarship recipients DO NOT need to reapply. The application can be completed electronically or by downloading and sending in a paper application by mail or fax. Please review and select ONLY ONE submission process. More information can be found here: <https://highered.ohio.gov/educators/financial-aid/sgs/wos/wos#Overview>

Formal Complaint Process

As with all issues, we encourage you to speak with the Veteran Engagement Coordinator if you have any issues that need to be addressed. The mission of this office is to ensure your education is as stress free and seamless as possible. Issues MAY arise. We ask for the opportunity to address and correct those issues if they arise. You may submit a complaint if your school is failing to follow the Principles of Excellence. VA will review the following types of complaints: Recruiting/Marketing Practices, Quality of Education, Accreditation, Grade Policy, Financial Issues (e.g. Tuition/Fee charges), Release of transcripts, Student loans, Transfer of Credits, Post-Graduation Job Opportunities, Refund Issues, Change in Degree Plan/Requirements, Other. Visit [Feedback - Education and Training](#) to file a complaint.