

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

Connecticut
Certifying Official's
Introductory
Guide

EDUCATION SERVICE

Certifying Official's Introductory Guide

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Special Thanks
to
Nancy Rohlfing
Certifying Official
St. Louis University
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for
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It was last revised on January 8, 2009 by Gerard Jacques, ELR at VARO Hartford CT for distribution to
VA certifying officials at schools in CT.

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Key People

Who are the key people involved in seeing that eligible veterans, service persons and their dependents receive Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) education benefits?

Certifying Official: The Certifying Official is the training institutions representative responsible for completing all paperwork necessary to certify the enrollment and changes in enrollment for students eligible for VA benefits. He/she must notify SAA of changes in the approval of the school and its programs, e.g. accreditation, location, ownership, catalogs and program modification.

Department of Veterans Affairs: The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is the government agency responsible for determining eligibility for VA education benefits and for authorizing payment for the benefits. You will come in contact with several employees. They are the:

- Chief Education Liaison Officer (CELO) **Gerald Miller**
- Education Liaison Representative (ELR) **Gerard Jacques**
- Education Compliance Survey Specialist (ECSS) **Gerard Jacques**

The CELO is the supervisor of all the ELRs and ECSSs and is responsible for overseeing the education liaison and compliance functions of VA. The ELR is responsible for reviewing the approvals done by the State Approving Agency, and acts as VA's liaison representative with the training institutes. The ECSS is responsible for conducting reviews of the schools records and processes to ensure they are in compliance with the laws which allow VA benefits to be paid. The ELR and/or the ECSS will visit the school to assist you in completing certifications, and to review your records. (Sometimes the ELR and the ECSS are the same person).

State Approving Agency: The State Approving Agency (SAA) is responsible for reviewing the training facility and the courses and programs of education to determine if they can be approved for the payment of VA education benefits. Officials of the SAA will also visit the school to assist you and to check your records. Contact the SAA with any questions concerning the approval of current or new courses or programs.

Students: Students who are eligible to receive VA education benefits may fall in one of the following categories:

- Active duty service person
 - Reservist or National Guards person
 - Veteran (discharged or separated service person)
 - Veteran's dependent (spouse, surviving spouse, or child)
 - Disabled veteran
-

Helpful Numbers & Addresses

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs:

860 666-7324

860 667-1062 Fax

gerard.jacques@va.gov Gerard Jacques, ELR and Compliance Survey Specialist
Flight and Correspondence training program approvals.

1-888-442-4551 (enter 1 for touchtone and then students enter 0 to reach a counselor -
only certifying officials can hit 1 for their priority queue)

Students can contact the Regional Processing Office toll-free between 8:00 AM and 4:00 PM to check on **VA-education related problems**. Some offices have extended hours.

1-800-827-1000 Enter 1 for touchtone and 0 to reach a counselor at the local Regional Office for non-education related VA information and questions.

1-800-829- 4833 TDD number for hearing impaired but there may be static with this device.

860- 666-7379 Vocational Rehabilitation Division: **Mel Wilson, Chief, VR&E**

- **Mail enrollment certifications for college degree programs and occupational school certificates to:**
Department of Veterans Affairs, P.O. Box 4616 Buffalo, NY 14240-4616
- **Mail enrollment certifications for Flight, Correspondence, OJT and Apprenticeship training and accelerated payment requests to:**
VA RPO - Education Hard Copy, P.O. Box 21 Buffalo, NY 14240-0021
- **Mail certifications for Chapter 31 to:**
DVA Hartford RO/VR&E, PO Box 310909, Newington CT 06131-0909

State Approving Agencies (SAA)

860 947-1816

860 947-1310 Fax

cbenvenuti@ctdhe.org: State Approving Agency for college degree programs, occupational school training programs, licensing and certification tests:
Carolyn P. Benvenuti, Coordinator, Veterans Program Approval,
Connecticut Department of Higher Education, 61 Woodland Street,
Hartford, CT 06105-2326. Consultants: Patrick Fox and Jason Stevens.

860 263-6087

860 263-6323 Fax

jackguerrera@ct.gov: State Approving Agency for Apprenticeship and On-the-Job training programs: Jack Guerrero at Veterans Program Approval,
Connecticut Department of Labor, Office of Apprenticeship Training,
200 Folly Brook Blvd., Wethersfield, CT 06109-1114.

VA Education Programs

Chapter 30: The Montgomery GI Bill - Active Duty *in general* is for individuals who have been on Active Duty since 7/01/85, who have contributed \$1,200.00 to an education fund and have completed a qualifying amount of “honorable” active-duty service. They receive 36 months of full-time benefits. As of **August 1, 2008**, the basic, monthly rate for full-time training is **\$1,321.00** for an initial obligation of 3 year and **\$1,073.00** for an initial obligation of under 3 years.

Chapter 34-30: Some persons eligible for Chapter 34 (who enlisted during the Vietnam era between 8/4/64 and 12/31/76) also completed enough active duty after July 1, 1985 to qualify for eligibility under Chapter 30 with no required financial contribution. As of **August 1, 2008** the basic, monthly benefit for full-time training, is **\$1,509.00** (plus additional allowances for dependents).

Chapter 1606: The Montgomery GI Bill - Selective Reserves is for individuals who incurred an initial 6 year Select Reserve obligation after June 30, 1985 in the Reserves or National Guard. In general they must remain in a Select Reserve status during their 14 years period of eligibility. As of **October 1, 2008** the basic monthly benefit for full-time training is **\$329.00**.

Chapter 32: The Veterans Educational Assistance Program (VEAP) is for individuals who initially entered active duty from 1/1/77 to 6/30/85. The benefit rate varies with the amount of the serviceman’s contribution while on active duty. The member’s contribution to VEAP is re-fundable.

Chapter 35: The Dependents Educational Assistance Program is for the dependent(s) of a member of the Armed Forces who has died while on active duty or as the result of a service-connected disability, or is 100% permanently and totally disabled for a service-related reason. Dependents receive up to 45 months of full-time benefits. Children generally are eligible for benefits between the ages of 18 and 26, but in certain instances may begin before age 18 and continue beyond age 26. As of **October 1, 2008** the monthly benefit for full-time training is **\$915.00**. Under Chapter 35 the student is identified by the veteran’s VA file or claim number (C#) and a suffix. (10 or W, 41 or A, 42 or B, etc.) The Chapter 35 program has it’s own application form (VA Form 22-5490, and it’s own Change of Program/Training form (VA Form 22-5495).

Chapter 31: Vocational Rehabilitation is for disabled veterans. This is the most unique program and each school is assigned a Vocational Rehabilitation Specialist to work with these students, and to assist the School Certifying Official. These disabled veterans go through a testing process to determine if they are eligible for the benefit. If eligible, the VA sends an Authorization. Full tuition, fees, books and supplies parking are paid by the VA to the school. The full-time monthly stipend to the veteran is **\$541.05** (plus additional allowances for dependents) as of **October 1, 2008**.

Chapter 1607: REAP is for Reserve or National Guard personnel with qualifying periods of federal active-duty after 9-10-01. The basic, monthly benefit for full-time training as of **August 1, 2008** is \$528.40 for continuous active-duty of at least 90 days, \$792.60 for continuous active-duty of at least 1 year or \$1056.80 for continuous active duty of 2 years (or cumulative 3 years – eff.1-28-08).

VA claimants under Ch. 30 (Categories 1A or 1B) and 1606 need to send in proof of DoD “*kickers*” or of Buy-Ups (*contributions to 1607 or to Ch 30 while on active duty*). Service-persons under Chapter 30 receiving DoD Tuition Assistance (TA) can only request benefits under **CH 30 Top-Up**. Ch. 30, 32, 35 and 1606 provide re-imbusement for approved **Licensing and Certification Tests**.

Responsibilities of the Certifying Official

Primary Function: The primary function is to let VA know if a student is registered for classes in an “approved program”, showing credit allowed for prior training, the beginning and ending dates of the enrollment period, the number of credit-hours or the net amount of clock- hours scheduled per-week, and identifying the type of training as college undergraduate or graduate, non-college degree, high-school diploma, etc.

When to Certify: A student may be certified after applying for admission and pre-registering for classes. The Certifying Official may not have anything to do with the admission process, but should encourage the student to look into financial aid as the VA benefits are not sufficient to cover all educational costs. (VA students are paid benefits based on the number of approved credit hours they carry and **not** based on the cost of the school they choose to attend.)

How to Certify: You can certify a student for VA benefits by filling out VA Form 22-1999. If a student has used VA educational benefits previously you can certify the enrollment electronically through VA ONCE. We suggest that you familiarize yourself with the form, and then try one of the electronic methods.

How Are Enrollment Changes Handled? Monitor the enrollment of VA students to determine any addition, reduction or termination in training on VA Form 22-1999b, “Notice of Change in Student Status”. **Schools must report to VA any reductions in a student’s training due to receipt of a “non-punitive grade” and terminations due to academic dismissal.**

What Records Do I Keep: We require the Certifying Official to keep copies of certifications and changes in enrollment for three years from last date of training (for VA compliance surveys).

What Is VA ONCE?

VA ONCE is VA’s internet program for electronically certifying student enrollments and changes in enrollment. A school official (with authority to sign contracts) can register for VA ONCE by completing a Memorandum of Understanding at our web site at www.gibill.va.gov/once. There is no software to load, it is accessible from any location, provides secure transmission of data, help text for every field and page, validation check, access to VA award data and links to other useful sites.

VACERT and VA ONCE

Training facilities, which were registered to use VACERT, were no longer able to transmit any enrollment certification or notice of changes in student status through that system as of 6-1-05. Notices of change in student status to report a termination of training, increase or reduction of credits/clock-hours must be accomplished by hard-copy form if the enrollment certification for that period was done by VACERT or hard-copy form. Any further enrollment certifications must be accomplished in hard-copy forms or electronically by VA ONCE. Please note that a training facility can only use VA ONCE to report changes in an enrollment which was certified on VA ONCE.

VA Inquiries and VA Forms

Students may inquire about the status of their claim by calling toll-free at **888-442-4551** (hit 1 for touch-tone and hit 0 to reach a counselor) on weekdays during normal working hours. They will need to furnish their claim number and to identify what forms, where and when they filed a claim with VA. Also they can register on our web-site at www.gibill.va.gov to submit inquiries through the “Ask a Question” section. School certifying officials should check their section of our web-site for the School Official’s Guide to Establishing a Frequently Asked Question Account.

A supply of forms should be kept in the office that certifies VA students. Additional forms can be ordered by using **VA Form 20-8800**. **You can fax your order to: (716-857-3396)**. This “Request for VA Forms and Publications” must be used to order VA Forms 22-1999, 22-1999b and 22-8794. You can down-load most other forms from the Education Forms at www.gibill.va.gov. **If you elect to file on-line VA Forms 22-1990, 22-1995, 22-5490 or 22-5495**, you will be instructed to **print out the page to add your original signature and mail it to VA RPO** (since VA can not accept a claim with an electronic signature at this time).

22-1990: VA Form 22-1990, Application for Education Benefits, is completed by the student the first time an application is made. Please mail in the certification of enrollment (VA Form 22-1999) along with the application and a copy of the student’s DD-214 (if the student has been released from active-duty military-service) or a Notice of Basic Eligibility (NOBE) from the unit’s Education Officer if the student is in a select-reserve obligation in a Reserve or Guard unit. ***Do not delay sending in the 22-1999 if the student doesn’t have the DD 214 or NOBE.***

22-5490: VA Form 22-5490, Application for Survivor’s and Dependent’s Educational Assistance is used by first time Chapter 35 students to apply for benefits. Dependents of veterans have a different VA file number than their Social Security number. It is the VA claim number of the veteran who died while in service or of a service connected disability, or is 100% permanently disabled due to a service connected disability. The “C” number is followed by a payee number or letter (a “W” or “10” for a spouse or widow(er) and A, B, C, etc. or 41, 42, 43, etc. for children).

28-1905: The student’s VA Vocational Rehabilitation case-manager sends you VA Form 28-1905, Authorization & Certification of Entrance or Re-Entrance in Rehabilitation and Certification of Status, to certify the enrollment of Chapter 31 students for both first time enrollments and for subsequent enrollment periods within the approved contract.

22-1995: VA Form 22-1995, Request for Change of Program or Place of Training, is used for students (under Chapters 30, 32 and 1606) who have previously received VA education benefits for training at another institution. It is also used by students who are changing their educational program - declaring a major, changing the major, or adding a second major. (VA Vocational Rehabilitation students need to obtain a new VA Form 28-1905 from their case manager to approve the new program or place of training)

22-5495: VA Form 22-5495, Request for Change of Program or Place of Training (Survivor's and Dependents Educational Assistance) is used by dependents who are changing their program or school. Chapter 35 students have the veteran's VA claim number and their own payee number (or letter) - instead of their Social Security number.

22-1999: VA Form 22-1999, Certification of Enrollment, is used by the certifying official to tell the VA about the student's enrollment. It includes the dates of enrollment, credit or clock hours, prior credit, type of training, and name of program. This can also be accomplished electronically by using VA-ONCE (but currently the enrollment certification for Chapter 31 students must still be printed out, signed, dated and mailed to the VR&E unit at your local VA Regional Office). All schools are required to keep records to show that they evaluated and gave credit for prior training, reducing the approved length and cost of the program, but accredited schools are no longer required to report it on the enrollment certification. The school must certify each enrollment period as a separate line on the enrollment certification without combining overlapping periods or successive periods.

22-1999B: VA Form 22-1999b, Notice of Change in Student Status, is used to notify VA of any change in a student's enrollment - adding or dropping courses that change the student's status. This can be used for all students. (The prior VACert program can be used only to print, date, sign and mail in a Change in Student Status). VAONCE can be used to report a Change of Student Status only for enrollment periods which were submitted through VAONCE except for Ch. 31. Currently VAONCE can be used to print, date, sign and mail in a Change in Student Status for Chapter 31.

22-1999V: VA Form 22-1999V, Certification of Delivery of Advance Pay, is used to verify that the student has received the advance pay from the school, and that the student is registered. The student signs the 22-1999V after registering, and after receiving the advance pay, and the school returns the 22-1999V to VA.

28-0175: VA Form 28-0175, Chapter 31 Change in Enrollment, is only used for changes in enrollment for Chapter 31 students.

Military & Related Non-VA Forms

DD-214: The DD-214 is the veteran's discharge or separation papers. You need to ask for Member Copy 4. This is indicated on the bottom of the form, and this form shows the individual's type of discharge and reason for discharge.

NOBE: The NOBE is a Notice of Basic Eligibility. DD Form 2384-1. This is a temporary eligibility certificate which is issued to individuals in the active Selective Reserves or National Guard who have established eligibility for Chapter 1606, but whose computer record has not yet been updated to show the eligibility.

DD Form 293: Application for the Review of Discharge or Dismissal from the Armed Forces

DD Form 149: Application for Correction of Military Records

Standard Form 180: Request Pertaining to Military Records (to request a copy of DD 214)

What To Do When A Student Comes In About VA Education Benefits

When a student first comes in seeking your assistance, there are several questions you should ask that will help you decide how best to assist the student. The following are questions you should ask, and information on how you should proceed.

Am I Eligible for VA Benefits? I Have Questions About VA Benefits: Refer the student to the toll-free VA Education Phone number: 1-888-442-4551 (hit 1 for touchtone and then 0 to reach a counselor). Do not try to make determinations of eligibility. The benefit programs change frequently, so it is best to refer the student directly to VA for questions about the programs.

Have You Applied for Admission and Pre-Registered in Classes? If they say **“NO”**, give them the forms, but explain that until they have applied and are pre-registered for classes, you can not certify their enrollment. Direct them to the Admissions Office and also recommend they also apply for Financial Aid. Tell them to notify you to request a certification of enrollment when they have registered.

If they say **“YES”**, continue with the following determinations and explain the student’s responsibilities regarding withdrawals affecting a change of status, maintaining satisfactory progress, and taking only courses applicable toward the degree goal.

Have You Ever Received VA Education Benefits Before? If the student says **“YES”**, do the following:

- Have them fill out an application, VA Form 22-1995 or VA Form 22-5495 if they are a Chapter 35 student
- Ask them which chapter they are eligible for (many do not have any idea)

If they do not know, ask whether they are or were active military or active reserves. Sometimes a student is eligible under two chapters - they were active and are now active reserve. Chapters 30 and 32 pay better than 1606, so it is best for them to use all their benefits under the chapter that pays the best, and when that is exhausted apply for benefits under the next chapter.)

- Write the Chapter on the top of the form

The form doesn’t ask for the chapter, but this is information you need when you certify them.

- If they are Chapter 31, they do not need to fill out either the 22-1995 or 22-5495, refer them to the VA vocational rehabilitation specialist for authorization

If the student answers **“NO”**, do the following:

- Have them fill out an application, VA Form 22-1990 or VA Form 22-5490 if they are a Chapter 35 student.
- Determine the type of military service that is involved

Did You Have Active Military Service, or Are You an Active Reservist?

- * If they have been **discharged**, tell them they need a copy of their DD-214 which they get at the time of their separation from active duty. They should submit this with their application for benefits. If they do not have a copy immediately available, **do not** delay submission of paperwork. VA will ask for a copy if necessary.
- * If they are **still active**, they do not have a DD-214 and have Part II of VA Form 22-1990 signed by the Education Service Officer of their military unit
- * If they are **Active Reserves or National Guard** (they have signed a 6-year contract with a Unit and are actively drilling), tell them they need to get a copy of the Notice of Basic Eligibility (NOBE) from their unit.

Note: The NOBE is not sufficient for VA after 90 days. At that time the electronic DOD record should be updated. If it isn't, VA will accept a letter on the unit's letterhead paper which states that the reservist is under a 6-year contract and that the reservist is actively drilling. The letter should provide a contact person (name & phone number) and it should be signed by the Commanding Officer of the Unit.

- * If the student has never served in the active military or reserves, but is a **dependent** with eligibility based on an eligible parent or spouse, have them fill out a 22-5490. (They need to know the veteran's file or claim number.)
 - * If the student is **disabled** and wants to apply for vocational rehabilitation, refer them to the Vocational Rehabilitation Specialist. Explain that they will be certified once the VA furnishes the authorization.
 - * If the student in the reserves or national guard was federally activated (other than active duty for training only) after 9-11-01 from IRR (Inactive Ready Reserve) or Select Reserve status (drilling one weekend per month plus 2 weeks during the summer), he/she may be eligible for benefits under **REAP** (Title 10, Section **1607**). It requires an honorable character of service for active duty service of at least 90 days (unless discharged for disability) and the member must return to the IRR or Select Reserve status from which he/she was activated (unless discharged for disability). Initial application is made on VA Form 22-1990 or a Change of Program or Place of Training on VA Form 22-1995. If the applicant is already receiving benefits for the same training, he/she needs to send a signed request to VA to elect benefits under Section 1607 on VA Form 22-1995.
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Rules Of Thumb (And Their Exceptions)

36 Months of Full Time Benefits: Eligible students receive 36 months of full-time VA education benefits. This does not mean they have to go to school full-time. They can receive their benefits in lesser amounts over a longer period of time. If they go to school half-time, they can receive benefits over a period of 72 months, for $\frac{3}{4}$ time they get 54 months, etc.

If the student is unsure how many months remain, have them call VA, and ask exactly how much their full-time benefits will be. There are many different programs with different “kickers” so it is best to ask VA rather than guess.

Exceptions to the 36 month rule:

- * Chapter 31 - VA Vocational Rehabilitation determines the number of months
- * Chapter 35 - have 45 months of eligibility
- * Students with eligibility under more than one chapter may not exceed 48 months

Period of Eligibility: Eligible veterans under chapters 30 and 32 have 10 years from their date of release from active duty to use their education benefits. Under chapter 1606 qualified persons now have no time limit. Under chapter 1607 qualified persons have no time limit (but only 10 years from date of eligibility if medically discharged). Under CH31 students usually are eligible for up to 12 years from date of notice of Rating. Under Chapter 35 a spouse has 10 years from the date of eligibility and children generally are eligible from age 18 until they reach age 26. When a service-person dies on active duty or the veteran is rated 100% P&T within 3 years the spouse/widow now has 20 years to use Chapter 35 benefits.

Where Benefit Checks are Sent: VA benefit checks are sent directly to the address the student has indicated on the application or that is shown on the certification. Benefit checks are NOT paid to the school. The money is intended to help the student go to school. It does not have to go directly toward school costs. Benefit payments can be used for other expenses.

Exceptions: *Under Chapter 31 the student is paid a monthly stipend but the school bills VA VR&E for Tuition, Fees, Books and Supplies as required for the veteran's courses as certified and VA VR&E authorizes the US Treasury to make these payments directly to the school.* These benefit payments are sent as 3rd party billing. The Chapter 31 student's VR&E case-manager must approve any other expenses.

Direct Deposit: Chapter 30, 31, 32 and Section 1606 students can arrange to have their benefit checks deposited directly into their bank account. This is advisable since it eliminated the possibility of a check going to the wrong address or being stolen. The student can call the toll-free number and make arrangements with a VA representative. Note: College students who have been awarded benefits under Chapter 30 and Section 1606 (and all non-college degree VA students) still need to contact VA to complete their monthly verifications of completed training during the prior period before VA will authorize the US Treasury to release payment of benefits.

Accelerated Payment: A student under Chapter 30 in an approved, high technology program, seeking employment in a high technology industry, may request a lump-sum payment of 60% of tuition and fees – in lieu of regular Chapter 30 benefits – if tuition and fees would exceed 200% of the Chapter 30 benefit amount payable for the enrollment period being certified. In this case the student would still be responsible for payment of the other 40% of tuition and fees in addition to any other charges. This type of request must be made on – or attached to – an enrollment certification which is dated not earlier than the first day of the enrollment period and the school must include the amount of tuition and fees which were charged to the student for the approved course or program as certified. As of 10-1-08 Accelerated Payment is authorized for persons under 1606 and 1607 in non-degree programs lasting less than two years.

Advance Pay: An advance payment provides payment for the first partial and first whole month of enrollment if requested by the student for an enrollment at ½ time or greater. The student must request an advance pay and the school must agree to accept delivery of the advance pay. **An advance pay request must be received by VA at least one month before the start of school.** The school should contact the ELR to apply for approval to handle Advance Pay.

The check is mailed to the school and can be released to the student within 2 weeks of the beginning of classes if the student is still enrolled for the amount of training for which his/her enrollment was certified to VA - after signing a certification of delivery form, 22-1999V which must be completed and returned to VA before any further payments can be released.

If an advance pay is received for an enrollment beginning in September, the advance pay would include payment for part of September and all of October. The November payment won't be released until the student completes a monthly verification of training about the first of December - so the student will have a long gap between the advance pay and the next regular payment.

Break Pay: This is sometimes called interval pay. When a student discontinues education for over a month, a break in pay occurs. This means they will only be paid for the exact number of days they were certified for during the month. If at a later date they return to school, they will only be paid for the actual days of enrollment during that first month. If the student is not on active duty, is training at ½ time or greater in the prior term, the break does not exceed 56 days and the break is not shorter than either term, VA does not consider that as a break and pay will continue for the entire break.

During summer months the break issue is complicated. If the student is enrolled in summer sessions that total at least 8 weeks, then the break between summer sessions can be paid.

Benefits are Paid in Arrears: Generally speaking, benefits are paid in arrears. *After VA has awarded benefits* for an enrollment period, the student will be due payment of benefits for the prior months of training. College degree students under Chapters 30 and 1606, all non-college degree students, (Correspondence course enrollees, commercial flight trainees and trainees in apprenticeship or On-the-Job programs) *are required to complete a verification of the training which was completed during the prior months before VA will authorize payment of benefits.* This can be accomplished after benefits have been awarded by touch-tone telephone at 877-823-2378 (Interactive Voice Response), by internet at www.gibill.va.gov by using the W.A.V.E. system or by calling 888-442-4551 (hit 1 for touch-tone and then hit 0 to reach a counselor). Students must use the W.A.V.E. system to verify their enrollment if they have changed their number of credits or clock-hours per week of training time or changed in their dates of enrollment.

When to Certify Students

Chapter 30: These students can be certified up to 120 days before the next semester's classes begin. This is because the student must recertify on a monthly basis.

Chapter 31: These students, if new, can be certified as soon as the vocational specialist authorizes them and they are registered. Returning students can be certified as soon as they are registered.

Chapters 1606, 1607, 32 & 35: Continuously enrolled students (have no break in pay) can be certified up to 60 days before the starting date of the next semester just like Chapter 30 students. Otherwise they can not be certified until the first day of class unless an advance pay is requested.

Advance pay: Students requesting an advance pay have to be certified so that VA receives their certification at least a month before the first day of class.

Accelerated pay requests cannot be processed before the beginning of the enrollment period.

Enrollment Status: Enrollment status is what determines the rate of pay. Students can be full-time, $\frac{3}{4}$ time, $\frac{1}{2}$ time, and $\frac{1}{4}$ (or less than $\frac{1}{2}$) time. VA's determination of status may be different from what the school determination is. Check with the VA to see if your school's status is the same as VA's. If a student is $\frac{1}{4}$ or less than $\frac{1}{2}$ time or is still on active-duty, you need to provide the tuition and fees for the student on the enrollment certification.

Undergraduate Students: VA determines undergraduate status so you do not need to report training time, just the credit hours. VA uses a formula that determines the rate of pay based on the number of weeks in the session and the number of hours the student is enrolled in. Usually 12 hours is full time in a semester or quarter.

Graduate/Professional Students: The School (where the student is getting his/her degree) determines the number of credits required for enrollment status to be full-time, $\frac{3}{4}$ time, etc.. For these students you need to indicate "training time" on the student's certification. Please note that in determining status, graduate students can have pseudo hours, so even if they have 0.0 (zero) hours, the graduate school can award them status. Be sure to check this.

Students Must be Enrolled in a Program: Students must be taking courses in an approved program and not just taking random courses. They can be enrolled with an undecided major, i.e. Bachelor of Arts, Major – Undecided, for up to 2 terms. Students need to report a change of major on VA Form 22-1995 and the school needs to report the new approved program and "credit for prior training" on VA Form 22-1999.

If the student has not been accepted into a program and has to take several courses to be accepted, get a statement from the School, and certify the student indicating it in the "Remarks."

Dual Program/Major: If a student is enrolled in more than one major or has an additional minor which will require the student to complete more credits than is required by the single "approved program", the school must obtain approval from the State Approving Agency for a "dual objective leading to a common goal" before certifying the enrollment of that student.

Completing VA Forms

*When completing any VA form, always read the instructions for detailed guidelines. It is helpful to **read the instructions** and fill out a sample form before attempting to assist a student.*

Paper Forms: When completing paper forms, always print clearly and firmly. Complete all sections, and make sure the forms are properly dated and signed. The student should complete the application (VA Form 22-1990 or 22-5490) and request for change in training or place in training (VA Form 22-1995 or 22-5495). The certifying official completes the certification of enrollment (VA Form 22-1999) or change in enrollment (VA Form 22-1999b).

Electronic Forms: Only the certifying official can complete an enrollment certification by electronic forms. Electronic forms are quicker to complete, ensure safe and quick delivery. Many of the forms submitted electronically are processed without human intervention which ensures faster payment for the claimant. If you have questions on how to complete electronic forms use the Help feature in the program or contact your ELR, Gerard Jacques at 860-666-7324, Program Administrator, Dave Ross, or Program Assistant, Lorraine Heusinger at **716-857-3148**.

****You can find the latest information about changes in law concerning educational assistance under sections 1606 and 1607 as of 1-28-08 and the provisions of the Post-9/11 Veterans Education Assistance Act of 2008 our web-site at www.gibill.va.gov.**

School Certifying Official's Personal Notes
