

# Remedial courses

Remedial and deficiency courses are courses designed to correct deficiencies in Basic mathematics, English, and Reading at the elementary or secondary level. These courses can be certified as part of an approved program, but only for students for whom a verifiable need has been established. Keep test results and other documents in the student's file that support the student's need for remedial and deficiency courses.



# Remedial courses

Remedial and deficiency courses offered as independent study (online) cannot be approved and cannot be certified to VA.

If a student fails to meet the objective of the remedial course they may continue to take the course until they have met the criteria to advance.

If the student passes the remedial course and then fails the next level they can not repeat the remedial course in which they have already demonstrated proficiency.



# What to do with a walk away

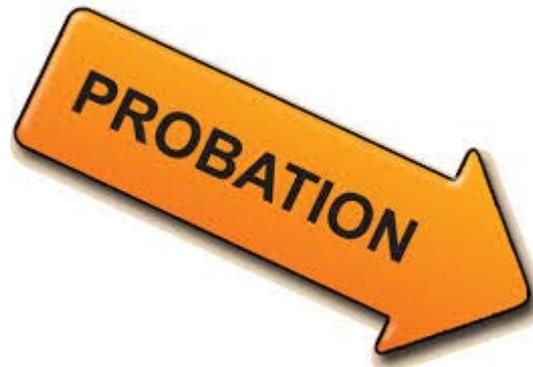
Schools with an established attendance policy must monitor compliance with that policy, enforce the policy, and report terminations due to violations of the policy to VA. However, absences that do not violate the established attendance policy don't need to be reported. Schools that don't have an established attendance policy are not required to report changes in attendance.



**ATTENDANCE  
POLICY**

# How to Report Probations

Schools that have an academic progress policy allowing for a period of academic probation prior to termination for Unsatisfactory Progress (Academic Suspension) should notify VA promptly when a student receiving VA education benefits is placed on academic probation. Notifications should be sent using VA's "Ask a Question".



# How to Report Probations

If multiple students are placed on academic probation (e.g., end of term, semester, quarter) schools may submit a single notification to VA by indicating that multiple students were placed on academic probation in the text and attaching an Academic Probation Spreadsheet listing each student.

School Official Completes							
Benefit Chapter	SSN/File Number	Payee	Last Name	First Name	Facility Code	Start Date Academic Probation	Zip Code Current Address

- ✓ All notifications must include “Academic Probation” in the subject line.
- ✓ Use 000-00-0000 as Social Security Number

# How to Report Suspensions

Unsatisfactory Progress (Academic Suspension) must be reported to VA as a termination. Terminate the semester the student is suspended. If suspension follows the fall semester, for example, terminate fall semester. Choose “Unsatisfactory Attendance, Conduct, or Progress” as the reason.

Edit Termination								Save	Cancel	
Facility:	11999999		Trng Type:	IHL_UNDERGRAD		Prgrm:	AAS JIM		Prior Credit:	2
FALL14	08/14/2014	12/15/2014	10	0	0	0	1000.00			
Term Name	Begin Date*	End Date*	Res	Dist*	R/D	Clock	T & F*			
<input type="checkbox"/> Advance Pay	<input type="checkbox"/> Accelerated Pay (high-tech courses only)									
08/13/2014	0.00	0.00								
LDA/EFF Date	Yellow Rbn*	Out St Chg								
Remarks										
	End Of Term Or Course									
	Graduation									
	Unsatisfactory Attendance, Conduct, Or Progress									
	Withdraw Before Beginning Of Term									
	Withdrawal After Drop Period - Non-Punitive Grades Assigned									
	Withdrawal After Drop Period - Punitive Grades Assigned									
	Withdrawal During Drop Period									
	Withdrawal Or Interruption (Noncollege Degree Programs Not On A Term Basis)									
	Preregistered But Never Attended									
	Other (Explain In Remarks)									

# How to Report Suspensions

VA-ONCE will insert the end date of the term as the default “LDA/EFF Date”. You can change the default end of term date if it isn’t the correct date.

**Edit Termination** Save Cancel

Facility: 11999999 Trng Type: IHL\_UNDERGRAD Prgrm: AAS JIM Prior Credit: 2

FALL14	08/14/2014	12/15/2014	10	0	0	0	1000.00
Term Name	Begin Date*	End Date*	Res	Dist*	R/D	Clock	T & F*

Advance Pay  Accelerated Pay (high-tech courses only)

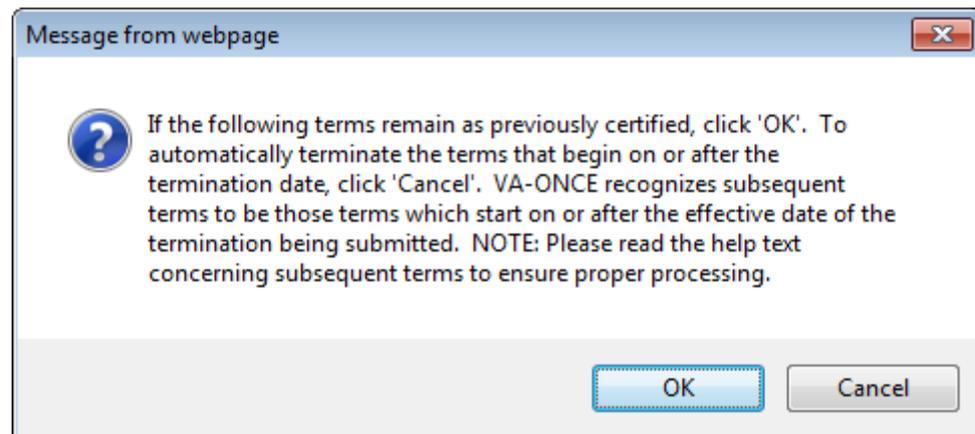
Reason for Termination: Unsatisfactory Attendance, Conduct, Or Progress

12/15/2014	0.00	0.00
LDA/EFF Date	Yellow Rbn*	Out St Chg

Remarks Modify Remarks List

# How to Report Suspensions

If a student successfully petitions the dismissal, is readmitted, and is already certified the subsequent term, don't terminate the student. Instead, annotate the student's file that the student was dismissed and readmitted following a successful appeal. If enrollment status changed the subsequent term, be sure to adjust the credit for the term. When you submit the termination, a pop-up window will appear asking about subsequent terms if any are to be certified.



# What to do with suspensions

## Student will receive a suspension letter:

Our regulations require that students maintain satisfactory attendance, conduct, and progress to continue receiving VA education benefits. The school certifying official is required to notify VA when a student doesn't meet these requirements. We stopped your educational assistance payments on May 17, 2014, because we received school notification that your progress in training hasn't been satisfactory.

### What You Can Do to Restart Your Benefits

If you **re-enroll** in the **same program** and in the **same school**, we can start your payments when your school sends your enrollment information.

If you **enroll** in a **different program** or a **different school**, you must send us a completed VA Form 22-5495. In addition, before we can pay benefits we may need evidence to show that the cause of your unsatisfactory progress in training is not likely to recur. Here are examples of the kinds of information that we may require:

- A written explanation of why you couldn't maintain satisfactory progress in training.
- A written explanation of how you plan to overcome the problems causing your unsatisfactory progress in training.
- A transcript of grades or evaluation of performance from your prior school or place of training.
- A copy of your official notice of acceptance into your proposed program. This should include the school's evaluation of your prior training and experience.
- A copy of your counselor's recommendations if you have received counseling at school.

If you would like counseling assistance in choosing a new program, you may contact VA at 1-800-827-1000. (For the hearing impaired, dial 1-800-829-4833.)

# Mitigating Circumstances

Beginning November 15, 2015, VA requires students using the Post-9/11 GI Bill to provide mitigating circumstances when they withdraw from or drop a course after the drop/add period and receive a non-punitive grade.

Acceptable mitigating circumstances must be provided in order to pay benefits for the period of attendance prior to the drop date. If they are not provided and accepted, any benefits paid from the beginning date of the term will be considered an overpayment, and a debt may be established.

Mitigating circumstances are circumstances beyond the student's control that prevent the student from continuing in school or that cause the student to reduce credits.

# Mitigating Circumstances

Examples are:

- An illness or death in the student's immediate family.
- An illness or injury afflicting the student during the enrollment period.
- An unavoidable change in the student's conditions of employment.
- An unavoidable geographical transfer resulting from the student's employment.
- Immediate family or financial obligations beyond the control of the claimant that require him or her to suspend pursuit of the program of education to obtain employment.
- Discontinuance of the course by the school.
- Unanticipated active military service, including active duty for training.
- Unanticipated difficulties with childcare arrangements the student has made for the period during which he or she is attending classes.

VA- ONCE will display a Mitigating Circumstances box. The drop down arrow for the box will display the above list of mitigating circumstances. If the SCO knows the circumstance and it's clearly one of the circumstances listed, then the SCO should select that circumstance and **documentation** of mitigating circumstances provided by the student should be retained within the student's file.

# Mitigating Circumstances

The school may act as an agent for the student. Schools are required to submit a description of the mitigating circumstances when reporting the reduction or termination. If the school reports the reason for the reduction or withdrawal, the VCE should consider it as the claimant's statement. If additional corroborative documentation is needed to substantiate the reason for the withdrawal or reduction, the VCE should develop directly to the claimant.

# 6-Credit Hour Exclusion

VA automatically grants mitigating circumstances for up to 6 credits the first time a student reduces or terminates and mitigating circumstances must be considered. This automatic grant is called the 6-Credit Hour Exclusion. The exclusion is a **one-time grant** made the first time mitigating circumstances must be considered for the student. Up to 6 credits can be excluded if the student has been awarded benefits for the credit. The 6-Credit Hour Exclusion cannot be granted if the student **completes** the term and receives non-punitive grades.

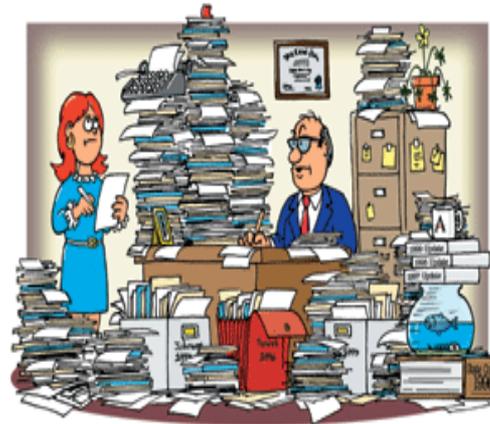
- If the student withdraws from 3 credits, the exclusion will be granted for 3 credits and the student's one time exclusion is used.
- If the student withdraws from 12 credits, the exclusion will be granted for 6 credits, the student's one time exclusion is used, and the student must provide mitigating circumstances for the other 6 credits.

# Records and Student Files

Certifying official must maintain copies of all certifications and changes in enrollment for a minimum of 3 years after last day of attendance.

Hard copy or electronic format is ok.

All documents subject to review by SAA or VA to include Chapter 31 caseworkers.



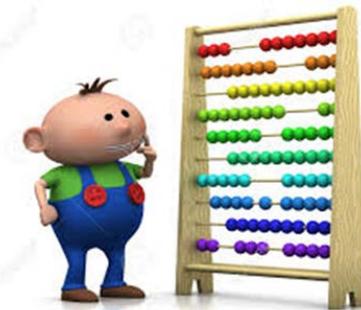
- 38 U.S.C 3680A(d)
- 38 CFR 21.4201
- Prohibits paying benefits to students enrolled in a course when more than 85% of the students enrolled in the course are having all or part of their tuition, fees, or other charges paid to or for them by the school or VA



# Who is a VA Eligible Person?

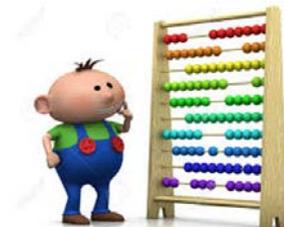
1. VA-eligible person is a student having all or part of their tuition, fees, or other charges paid to or for them by the VA.
2. If VA students are excluded from the school's financial aid (i.e., grants, scholarships, or other financial assistance including the school disregarding nonpayment) because they are entitled to VA benefits, the school must count them on the VA side of the ratio even if they are not receiving VA benefits. This requirement does not apply to financial assistance from the school or federal agencies for graduate level training
  - XYZ Scholarship, an institutional tuition waiver is **not** available to veterans. The number of non-VA students receiving XYZ Scholarship must be added with VA students.

Example: employee tuition waivers



# Who is a Counted on the Non-VA Side?

1. Students who are not veterans or reservists, and are not in receipt of institutional aid.
2. All graduate students in receipt of institutional aid.
3. Students in receipt of any Federal aid (other than Department of Veterans Affairs benefits).
4. Undergraduates and non-college degree students receiving any assistance provided by an institution, if the institutional policy for determining the recipients of such aid is equal with respect to veterans and nonveterans alike.



# Any Course?

## Program of Education

- (1) A combination of subjects or unit courses pursued at a school which is generally acceptable to meet requirements for a predetermined educational, professional or vocational objective; or
- (2) Such subjects or courses which are generally acceptable to meet requirements for more than one objective if all objectives pursued are generally recognized as being related to a single career field; or
- (3) Any unit course or subject, or combination of courses or subjects, pursued by an eligible veteran at any educational institution required by the Administrator of the Small Business Administration as a condition to obtaining financial assistance under the provisions of section (7)(i)(1) of the Small Business Act.

# Counting?

An 85-15 percent ratio must be computed for each course of study or curriculum leading to a separately approved educational or vocational objective.

Computations will not be made for unit subjects, unless only one unit subject is approved by the State approving agency to be offered at a separate branch or extension of a school.

Courses or curricula which are offered at separately approved branches or extensions, as well as courses or curricula leading to a secondary school diploma or equivalency certificate offered at any branch or extension, must have an 85-15 percent ratio computed separately from the same course offered at the parent institution.

The count of students attending the branch may not be added to those attending the parent institution even for the same courses or curricula.

However, the count of those attending courses or curricula offered at an additional facility, as opposed to a branch or extension, must be added to those attending the same course at the parent institution.

The school must compute the full-time equivalency for part-time students



# Breaking it Down 4 Year Degree

Students attending 4-year institutions of higher learning and graduate schools may be counted in general curricula such as BA (Bachelor of Art) and BS (Bachelor of Science) only until the normal point at which the school requires the student to declare a major subject. Then the 85-15 percent computation must be made for each specific curriculum, i.e., BS (Bachelor of Science) in electrical engineering, MA (Master of Arts) in English, etc.



# Breaking it Down NCD

NCD (non-college degree) courses must be computed separately by approved vocational objective. If several curricula lead to the same coded vocational objective, each must meet the 85-15 percent requirement separately, unless it can be shown that two or more courses are identical in all respects (scheduling, hours devoted to each unit subject, etc.). Branch or extension courses will be computed separately from courses at the parent facility. Courses offered on a full- and part-time basis which are identical in length and content will be combined for computing the ratio.



# Reporting

If the school is organized on a term, quarter or semester basis, the calculations must be submitted no later than 30 days after the beginning of each regular school term (excluding summer sessions), or before the beginning date of the next term, whichever occurs first.

If a school is not organized on a term, quarter or semester basis, reports must be received by the Department of Veterans Affairs no later than 30 days after the end of each calendar quarter.



# Reporting-Statement of Assurance

List each program approved for VA education benefits with currently enrolled VA Students.

All concentrations (may also be identified by school as emphasis; specializations; etc.) must be listed and computed separately. If “Undeclared” is listed, those students counted within that program may have only taken general education coursework. Any undeclared student who has taken courses associated with a specific major’s curriculum must be calculated within that program, even if student has not officially declared that major.

COLUMN 1	COLUMN 2	COLUMN 3	COLUMN 4	COLUMN 5	COLUMN 6
Program Name	Number of FTE VA Students	Number of FTE Non-VA Students	Total Enrollment	VA Student Percentage	Date of Calculation
<b>Totals</b>					

# Reporting-Request for 35% Wavier

When 35 percent or less of a school's total enrollment receive VA benefits, the school and each branch with separate administrative capability may certify to that effect and receive a waiver of periodic reporting of the percentage of VA students enrolled in each program. The school must count all students receiving VA benefits on the VA side of the ratio. The certification is required only once. The waiver will remain in effect unless the school's percentage of VA students rises above 35 percent.

Number of VA Students	Total Enrollment	VA Student Percentage

\_\_\_\_\_  
School Official's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date Signed

# GI Bill Web Page

<http://www.gibill.va.gov/>

The screenshot shows the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs website. The header includes the VA logo, the text 'U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs', and a search bar. Below the header is a navigation menu with links for Home, Veteran Services, Business, About VA, Media Room, Locations, and Contact Us. The main content area is titled 'Education and Training' and features a sidebar with a navigation menu. The central banner displays 'VA GI Bill Comparison Tool (beta)' with a 'START COMPARING' button. The right-hand panel contains a 'GI Bill Comparison Tool' section with a description and a link to 'Try out our Comparison Tool today'.

- SCO HB
- ELR
- Webinar
- Yellow Ribbon
- RNW
- Updates and Announcements



# New Stuff

## **Yellow Ribbon Program Open Season**

From March 15 to May 15, 2017 we are accepting new Yellow Ribbon Program agreements, modifications to existing open-ended agreements, or withdrawal from participation. See our Yellow Ribbon Program schools web page for instructions and forms.

## **Post-9/11 GI Bill Rate Increase for August 2017**

As you may know, the maximum amounts for tuition and fees under the Post-9/11 GI Bill change every academic year. For academic year 2017-2018, the maximum annual reimbursement for those attending a private or foreign school increased from \$21,970.46 to \$22,805.34. Additionally, the monthly housing allowance for those taking online training exclusively (no classroom instruction) increased to \$840.50 per month. These increases are effective August 1, 2017 - July 31, 2018. Remember: while BAH rates for DoD personnel are effective in January, GI Bill beneficiaries will not see the change in MHA until Sept (for terms that started on or after Aug 1).

# New Stuff

## **Important Information for Spouses Regarding Fry Scholarship Eligibility**

A new provision was signed into law in December that extends benefit eligibility for spouses of Servicemembers who died in the line of duty between 9/11/01 and 12/31/05. As a result, these spouses will now be eligible to use their remaining Fry benefits until January 1, 2021.

For spouses that elected to use the Survivors and Dependents Educational Assistance benefit instead of Fry, they may be eligible to switch from DEA to Fry.

# New Stuff

## Army Reservists and GI Bill Eligibility Update

The Department of the Army recently announced that they are now counting Active Duty Training (ADT), Active Duty Special Work (ADSW), and Active Duty Operational Support-Reserve Component (ADOS-RC) performed under section 12301(d) of title 10, United States Code, after September 10, 2001 as qualifying service for the Post-9/11 GI Bill. As a result, certain individuals may gain eligibility for Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits, be eligible to receive additional benefits as a result of a higher eligibility level (%), or establish eligibility for Transfer of Education Benefits (TEB).

Those impacted will not need to reapply with VA for benefits. Corrections to service should be automatically transferred to VA and reviewed when beneficiary enrollments and/or applications are submitted for processing.



# New Stuff

## Expansion of Resident Rate Requirements

Congress recently passed the Jeff Miller and Richard Blumenthal Veterans Health Care and Benefits Improvement Act of 2016 - this law expanded the coverage of who is eligible for the resident rate at public institutions of higher learning.

Expanded an existing category

- Fry Scholarship beneficiaries who live in the state in which the public institute of higher learning (IHL) is located were already covered but now they are no longer required to enroll within **three years** of the Servicemember's death, and the Servicemember does not have to have served a minimum of ninety days on active duty.

Dependents who live in the state in which the public IHL is located and are using transferred Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits while the transferor (Servicemember) is on active duty are now covered and must also be charged the resident rate.

# New Stuff

## **Important Information Regarding ACICS' Recognition**

The U.S. Department of Education (ED) announced on December 12, 2016 its decision to withdraw ACICS' recognition as a federally recognized agency for several compliance failures, including its failure to provide appropriate consumer protection measures. If they execute new agreements with ED, affected schools can maintain Title IV Federal Student Aid eligibility for a period of up to 18 months.

VA may also continue paying education benefits for up to 18 months to students attending schools and programs accredited by the Accrediting Council for Independent Colleges and Schools (ACICS), as long as those schools are in good standing with their respective State Approving Agency (SAA).

Affected students will receive email updates as information becomes available. Students in need of information about their benefits should contact the Education Call Center at 1-888-442-4551. VA will provide updates on our website and on our GI Bill Facebook page.

# New Stuff

## **Koss Endowment Fund (Koss Scholarship)**

Mr. Ronald W. Koss, a Vietnam War Veteran, bequeath a generous sum of money to the Department of Veterans Affairs to establish an educational scholarship for the children of Veterans – this became known as The Ronald William Koss Endowment Fund or the Koss Scholarship. Because of his generosity, VA has gifted the Koss Scholarship to recipients of Chapter 35 education benefits.

As a child of a Veteran, students enrolled and attending a program of education during the month of (March/April) of 2017 were selected to receive a portion of their Dependents' Educational Assistance Program (Chapter 35) benefits payment courtesy of the Ronald W. Koss Scholarship fund.

No additional payments. recipients will receive the previously determined amount of education benefit payments indicated in their letter. However, a part of the funding for the payments was made utilizing the funds from the Koss Scholarship donation.

# New Stuff

## Release of the Revised School Certifying Official (SCO) Handbook (02/23/2017)

Education Service is pleased to announce the release of the updated School Certifying Official Handbook. The Handbook has been revised to include additional information and updates suggested by School Certifying Officials through their Education Liaison Representatives. A list of revisions can be found on page 8 of the handbook, which can be accessed and/or printed from the School Training and Information Resources page of the GI Bill website.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF  
VETERANS AFFAIRS

School Certifying Official



Handbook

Revision 6.2 (6<sup>th</sup> Edition)

(See [revisions](#) page 8)

# New Stuff

## Applying for Education Benefits

<https://www.vets.gov/>

Apply for Benefits ▾

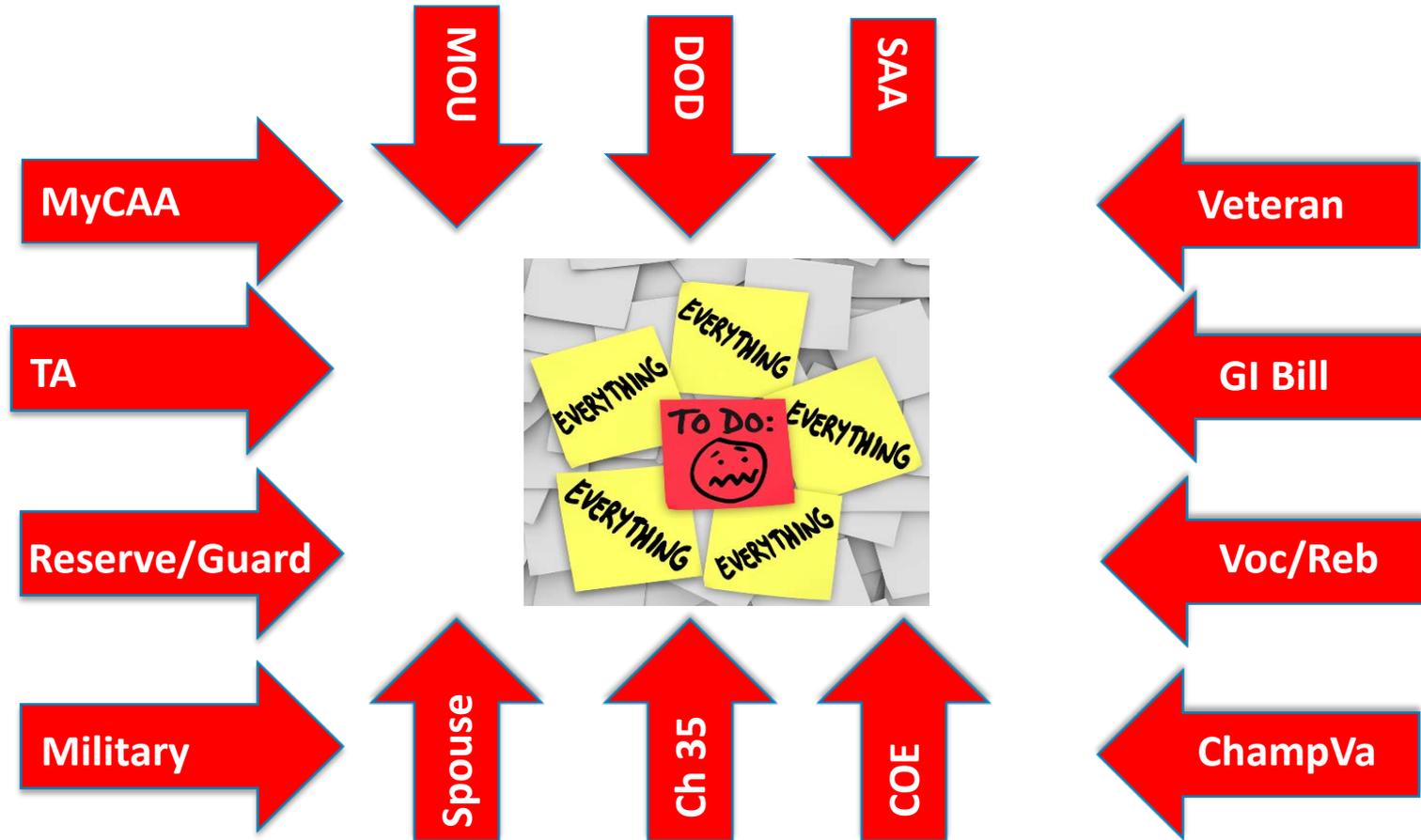
Which form do you want to use?

- Veterans or Servicemembers applying for a **new benefit** (22-1990)
- Dependents applying for a **transferred benefit** (22-1990E)
- Dependent applying for a new benefit where your **sponsor is permanently and totally disabled** (22-5490)
- Dependent applying for a new benefit where your **sponsor is deceased, MIA, or a POW** (22-5490)

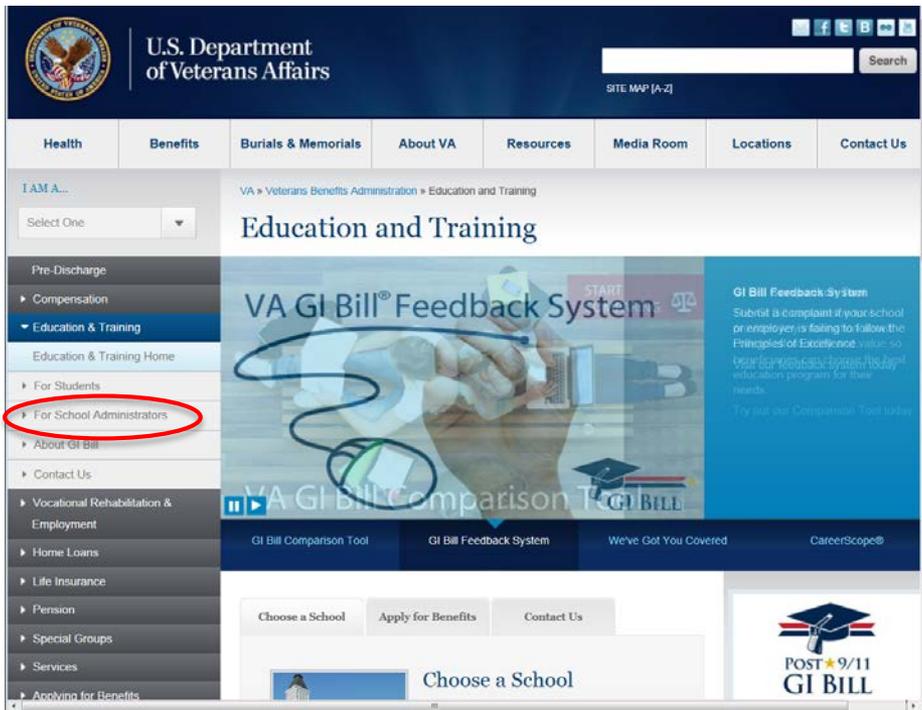
# New Stuff

DATE	REVISIONS	PAGE(S)
02/15/17	The Processing Map was updated to reflect the Atlanta RPO closure. The St Louis RPO's address and fax number were also updated	10
02/15/17	CELO map updated to reflect new St Louis mailing address	11
02/15/17	Modified Important Phone Numbers	12
★ 02/15/17	Modified Internet Inquiries section	15-16
★ 02/15/17	Troubleshooting notes were added about online SCO training	20-21
★ 02/15/17	Note added to clarify mandatory kit, supplies or equipment charges	31
02/15/17	Note about Chapter 1607 Sunsetting	40
★ 02/15/17	Note added about repeated courses	48
★ 02/15/17	Beginning Date A School Must Report To VA	52-53
02/15/17	Note added on how to alert DMC about uncashed Treasury checks	101
★ 02/15/17	Waiver requests sent to the Committee on Waivers and Compromises now all need to be sent to the St Louis RPO	103
02/15/17	Improper Payments Elimination and Recovery Act (IPERA) section added	115

# We Know



# Questions?



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF  
VETERANS AFFAIRS

## School Certifying Official



## Handbook