

GLOSSARY OF VA TERMS

ADDRESS: The address you put on your VA application is the one to which the VA will send any VA correspondence. If you are not living at this check address, make sure you will be promptly notified of the arrival of mail from the VA. The school's Veteran's Certification Office will also use this application address unless you provide them with a more local one to use. Most of the mail from the school will have a deadline for a response, so mailings must get to you quickly in order for benefits to be uninterrupted. It is each student's responsibility to give any change of address to our office by the second Friday of the term in which the change becomes effective. Many schools (including UC) have an agreement with the Post Office **not to forward** school mail.

ADVANCE STANDING: VA regulations require ALL previous coursework, even if it was only a different UC college or a change of major within the same UC College, to be evaluated by the current college office advisor. This evaluation should be provided to the UC certifying official to be reported to the VA. **NOTE:** The VA needs this information in order to track degree progress in the new program and to determine whether or not a VA "change-of-program" has been used. The college office advisor doing the evaluation should only award credit for those prior courses that directly apply to the student's current graduation requirements. The VA will suspend VA benefits if they do not receive this evaluation from the school's VA Certifying Official within three quarters (or two semesters) from the beginning of the new program. (In some cases of excess credit this evaluation will be required before certification in the new program may be processed.) VA will not pay benefits for any repeat coursework that student has been awarded credit for from previously completed study.

AUDIT CLASSES: These classes never apply to graduation requirements so they cannot be included on your certification for VA Educational Benefits. According to UC policy, if you are registered for any class(es) that does not apply to your current degree requirements, you must provide the school's Veteran's Certification Office with a written statement indicating which class(es) does not apply (by course title) **BY THE 2ND FRIDAY OF THAT TERM**. If an audit class is on your official schedule of classes and we do not have this note on file by the deadline, your benefits will be interrupted for noncompliance with UC policy. Please contact the UC Veteran's Certification Office if you have any questions and to make sure written statements have been received in time (if they were mailed). **NOTE:** This policy must be adhered to whether or not the class(es) affects your VA pay rate status.

AWARD LETTER: After VA Educational Benefits have been approved by the VA, the VA will send the recipient a letter stating when the benefits will begin, the date when they will end for that certification period, and the amount of the monthly benefit check. VA usually issues only one award letter per school year, so **SAVE THOSE VA LETTERS!** If you apply for any financial aid, that office will ask verification of your VA benefit income. **These VA letters are sent directly to the student and are not sent to the school.** If you lose your VA "award" letter, or your most recent one is not within one academic year, then you may go to the VA Office (36 East 7th St.) in downtown Cincinnati for a computer screen-print of your benefit award. (Make sure you can interpret this screen-print information to the Financial Aid Office.) Take a photo I.D. with you and phone beforehand (513) 684-3877 to make sure someone will be available to assist you. Students outside the Cincinnati area should check with their local VA Office to see if they have the capability to provide this service, or phone VA (1-888-442-4551).

BREAK PAY (no longer payable by VA effective 8/1/11): Payment between class terms is available to GI Bill recipients who are enrolled in consecutive quarters. The student must have ended the prior term immediately preceding the break period with at least a half-time pay rate and officially begin classes the following term. (In-service students are not eligible for break pay between terms.) **NOTE:** Students who totally withdraw from classes for the term immediately following the break period should promptly notify the VA Certifying

Official of their withdrawal and provide the date of the withdrawal. VA will usually not pay for the break if the student totally withdraws from classes on the first day of the term following the break.

CERTIFICATION: The process by which the school informs the VA of a student's official UC status (college, degree, major, number of credit hours, grades, satisfactory progress, etc). There are strict deadlines and regulations governing the certification process, so BE SURE to respond promptly to any requests by the school's VA Certifying Official and to promptly notify him/her of any changes in status including changes of address, college degree, major, credit hours, etc. Those classes that do **not** apply to the **current** official degree program will not be included for VA payment on the certification report.

CERTIFIED COPIES: If you must have a "Certified" discharge document (DD214) you may obtain certified copies by taking your original DD214 to your local county recorder's office. In Hamilton County, go to the Administration Building, 138 East Court Street, Room #205 (phone 632-8251). **NOTE:** Notarized copies are not the same as certified copies. (These DD214 records are now "public" records.)

CHANGE OF PROGRAM: The VA usually allows unlimited VA "changes of program". A VA "change" is charged against the student's VA record if more than 12 credit hours are lost when transferring to the new program. The VA determines a "change" based upon the advance standing evaluation provided by the student to the VA Certifying Official at the school. The VA may require additional paperwork from the student entering a 3rd "change-of-program" before awarding benefits.

CO-OP RATE: Chapters #30, #31, #32, and #35 are all eligible for this VA pay rate. Chapter #1606 students who executed a new 6-year contract with the DOD after 9/30/90 are also eligible for this VA pay rate. Students who are matriculated in a co-op degree program will be eligible for payment at 100%* of their regular full time pay rate for the six month period covering one term of Work Section that is consecutive to a class term completed at full time earned credit hours. The maximum certification period covered during co-op rate is twelve months which includes two Work Sections balanced by two Class terms completed with 12 earned credit hours toward their current degree major. This rate is optional and must be specifically requested in writing to the VA Certifying Official prior to beginning the rate. Please contact the VA Certifying Official for exactly what is needed in the written request for this pay rate. **NOTE:** Entitlement is charged against the student's record for the entire Co-op rate period. (*This rate is effective 10/9/96 except for "rollover" Chapter #30 students who will receive a blend of 80% (old Chapter #34) + 100% (Chapter #30 part).

EXCLUSION RULE (or "Forgiveness" Rule): If a student withdraws from a class and the withdrawal will affect the student's VA pay rate and the student does not have any mitigating circumstances (see definition), the VA will "EXCLUDE" the overpayment (see definition). This is automatic up to 6 credit hours for the first time overpayment occurs after 6/1/89. The VA will pay the student for pursuit in the dropped class(es) through the last day of attendance in the class(es) and not assess an overpayment retroactively to the beginning of that term. The VA cannot issue payment past the withdrawal date in the class(es) however. It is important that students hoping to be "EXCLUDED" for dropped class(es) immediately notify the school's VA Certifying Official of the drop date and class title. Also, the students who "verify" monthly with VA should verify per the VA W.A.V.E. site and use the same drop date there (so the school's report and student's verification data will match). (**NOTE:** VA will not award this exclusion for retroactive certifications.)

MATRICULATION: Formal declaration of your pursuit of a degree from a particular UC college. The UC Admissions Office (556-1100) handles this process in most cases. Be sure to keep track of your application for admission and matriculation because you must be matriculated in a specific degree major approved for VA benefits at UC, in order to be certified for VA Educational Benefits at UC. **NOTE:** Registering for UC classes does NOT mean you are admitted and matriculated at a UC college.

MITIGATING CIRCUMSTANCES: Unanticipated, unavoidable events beyond the student's control that are the cause of a student's inability to complete a course can be submitted to the VA with documentation (proof of the event). If the VA approves this reason they will reduce any overpayment generated by the withdrawal from the class(es) by the appropriate amount. For a "Statement in Support of Claim" form (#21-4138) and perhaps some suggestions on how to write your statement, you can contact the school's Veterans Certification Office. **NOTE**: No matter what circumstances caused the withdrawal, however, the VA cannot issue payment for a class after the official withdrawal date.

MONTHLY VERIFICATION: Chapter's #30 and #1606 have to verify their enrollment with the VA each month during the certification period in order to receive benefit payment. Students may phone in the information to the VA per their toll-free number (1-877-823-2378) or their web site (WAVE) at <http://www.gibill.va.gov>. Both are available 7 days/week, 24 hrs/day and will only accept verifications for the month just ending as of the last day of that month. There is usually a 7-10 day processing before payment is actually received by the student. **NOTE**: If the student has a change in enrollment during the month then they MUST use the WAVE site to report change; changes cannot be reported on the automated phone system. (Students are required to, also, notify the school's VA Certifying Official of all changes in their enrollment so the proper report may be sent to the VA.)

NON-PUNITIVE GRADES: Grades that do not figure into your grade point average ("W", "I", "IP", "SP", "UP", "NP", "NG", Graduate "I") will not be paid for. However, exceptions may be made for the "W" grades (see "VA EXCLUSION RULE" definition). The overpayment will be assessed back to the beginning of the term (as if the student was never in the class). Mitigating circumstances can be submitted to reduce an overpayment caused by a "W" grade. Graduate students can be paid for "NG", "IP" and "SP" grades if the grade is issued for enrollment titled "Master's Thesis Research" or "Ph.D. Dissertation Research". (Receipt of a "UP" grade for these classes, however, may create a VA overpayment.) **NOTE**: The VA will never pay for an "Audited" ("A") class since these do not apply to graduation requirements. (Refer to the UC policy concerning non-applicable classes.) Undergraduate students that may be assigned an "IP", "NG", "SP", "NP", or "UP" grade should request a temporary grade of "I" if receipt of these grades will affect their VA pay rate. Make sure you complete the work within the following term since undergraduate "I" grades figure as an "F" in the GPA if not changed by the end of the following term. Notify the school's VA Certifying Official immediately once the "I" grade is officially changed to a standard "A, B, C, D, F" grade. (Also, see "Unsatisfactory Progress" definition.) **NOTE**: Graduate "I" grades and undergraduate "IP", "SP" and "UP" grades will count as "F's" in your GPA one year from when the grade was initially assigned.

NON-STANDARD CLASSES: These classes meet outside the realm of the normal standard term dates. Some are identified as "**Flexibly**" scheduled courses and may meet for a longer period and others may meet simply for a weekend during a standard term. These classes are identified by an "F" on your registration. Some **summer** classes do not meet the entire standard term, but meet for 3-5 week periods only. These are accelerated class terms that are identified by the appropriate term letter on your registration. Although total credit hours for the term may appear to the student as being Full-Time enrollment, the VA will only award benefits for these non-standard classes during the official specific term date rather than total credit hrs. **NOTE**: Students registered for nonstandard classes must make sure the school's VA Certifying Official receives their final grade for these classes within approximately ten days from official ending date of the class term. Their instructor may send a letter (on departmental letterhead) stating the final grade the student is assigned for the course or may post the grade on the school's main database, within this ten-day deadline. (This deadline allows the school's VA Certifying Official time to report the grade to VA within their established reporting deadlines.) If the school's VA Certifying Official does not receive this final grade information by the deadline it may create an overpayment with the VA for the student for that enrollment.

OFFICE OF VETERANS CERTIFICATION: Located on the 5th Floor of the University Pavilion Building, this office handles all VA Educational Benefit paperwork for UC students. Contact this office or the VA if you have questions regarding your benefits. DO NOT get VA information from friends, teachers, etc., because they may not know the most recent regulations. The office phone number is (513) 556-6811, 10a.m.-4p.m., Mon.-Fri.

OVERPAYMENT: The receipt of VA Educational Benefits in excess of the amount to which you are actually entitled. VA will notify the student of any overpayment incurred. If you do not understand the reason for the overpayment you can contact the school's Veterans Certification Office for assistance. If that office cannot determine the cause you will need to call the VA for an explanation. To minimize overpayments, be sure to notify the school's VA Certifying Office of ANY changes in your status immediately, and give advance notification of any terms that you will not be attending classes. Always respond to VA overpayment letters. The school's Veterans Certification Office can help you with the appropriate response if so desired. Please note that when repaying an overpayment, the debt amount is returned to the student's education benefit account.

PAY RECORDS: KEEP YOUR OWN RECORDS of VA payments received by you. Keep a list showing the date and amount of each deposit/check. These records come in handy if there is ever a dispute over the amount of entitlement you have remaining or if you are charged with a VA overpayment.

PELL GRANT: The Financial Aid Office requires verification of VA benefits. If the student has not yet received their VA award letter for that Pell Grant year, they can get a temporary letter stating estimated benefits from the school's Veterans Certification Office. Chapter #32 and Chapter #31 must get this statement from the local VA office (36 East 7th Street, Suite 210). Phone ahead (513) 684-2487 to make sure someone will be available to assist you. Chapter #31 students should contact their Voc. Rehab. Counselor for documentation of their VA income. **NOTE:** If you are turned down for a Pell Grant award, ask the One-Stop Center about the "special conditions" form—It may make all the difference!

PUNITIVE GRADES: Students may receive VA pay for standard grades that are computed into a student's grade point average ("A, B, C, D, F, X, and UW"). See special rule concerning "UW" (formerly "Y") grades under "Unofficial Withdrawal" definition and get more information on "X" grades under that definition. **NOTE:** Some grades that are initially non-punitive will become punitive after time. See the definition for "Non-punitive Grades" for more information.

REFRESHER/REMEDIAL/DEFICIENCY CLASSES: Students may receive VA pay for these classes IF the specific class has been approved for payment of VA benefits and the class is being required by the student's current college for their current degree program. Any student planning to register for these types of classes should contact the UC Veterans Certification Office (556-6811) **before** the class begins to see if the class is approved for VA pay and if any additional paperwork is required. **NOTE:** Chapter #35 students may be paid VA benefits differently for these types of classes. These students should call VA (1-888-442-4551) if they are planning to register for any required refresher-type classes to see how it may impact their VA benefits.

RETROACTIVE PAYMENT: The VA may go back one year (365 days from receipt of the school's certification) to award back-pay for eligible veterans. Contact the school's VA Certifying Official if you think you may be eligible for some back pay for prior UC study. Courses must be proven to apply to the current degree program for certification to occur. Forms for applying for back-pay are available in the school's Veterans Certification Office. These forms are only issued to students that have started classes as a matriculated student in a UC degree program within the one-year time limit. (There are some exceptions made for Chapter #35 benefits.)

SUSPENSION AND DISMISSAL: If a student is suspended or dismissed from their UC College, their VA educational benefits will be interrupted. To have benefits reinstated, the student must provide written proof that the suspension/dismissal status has been removed OR get officially accepted into a different UC college's

degree program and provide proof of that. Counseling with the school's VA Certifying Official, completion of a #22-8873 VA form, and requirement of #22-1993a form may also be required, depending on the circumstances. The student will be informed of what is needed in their specific situation by the school's Veterans Certification Office. **NOTE:** If you were using VA educational benefits at a prior school and were suspended/dismissed or reported "unsatisfactory progress" (see definition) by that school's VA Certifying Official, BE SURE to tell the UC Veterans Certification Office immediately to ensure you are given all the proper paperwork to restart benefits.

TUTORIAL ASSISTANCE: UC students may receive free tutoring. Contact the UC Learning Assistance Center (556-3244) located in 2441 French Hall (West). An additional benefit available to Chapter #30, #32, #34, and #35 students allows total or partial reimbursement of fees paid for individualized tutoring. Contact the UC Veterans Certification office at 556-6811 for more information concerning eligibility for this benefit.

T.V. COURSES: These courses are offered through several UC Colleges and taught via videotape or cable T.V. Courses taught in this manner must be specifically approved for VA pay. Students wanting to register for this type of class must contact the UC Veterans Certification Office (556-6811) **before** beginning the class, in order to make sure the class has been approved for VA pay under this type of delivery mode. If the T.V. class has not yet been approved for payment of VA benefits, then the student will need to register for the same class under a different type of teaching method or change to a different class altogether. If the student remains enrolled in a non-approved T.V. class, then the student must give written notification to the UC Veterans Certification Office that they realize the T.V. class will not be included for their VA Enrollment Certification for that term (**even if** the class will not impact the VA pay rate for that term). These student notes are due by the second Friday of the term, in order for the student to be in compliance with UC policy and remain certified for VA benefits for that term.

"X" GRADE (Unofficial Withdrawal - No Participation): This is a new grade at UC effective Autumn Quarter, 2005 (05A). It represents a student who registered for a course but never attended the class and never officially dropped the class during the term. These "X" grades count in the GPA as "F" grades. VA will not pay any benefits for these grades.

"UW" GRADE (Unofficial Withdrawal - With Participation): A "UW" grade is assigned when students simply stop attending class(es) without doing the proper withdrawal paperwork. VA will not pay benefits for "UW" grades (even though they figure in the student's GPA as an "F") because VA will not pay for non-pursuit. If a "UW" grade reduces VA pay rate, additional paperwork obtainable and mailed to you from the UC Veterans Certification Office, is required when students want to receive benefits for the portion of the "UW" class they did attend.

UNSATISFACTORY PROGRESS: Students who accrue 16+ credit hours of "I, UW, X, Y and F" grades on their UC transcript beginning 1/1/77, and undergraduate "IP" grades (Autumn Quarter, 2003, through Winter Quarter, 2007), and "SP" or "UP" grades (beginning Winter Quarter, 2007 for Graduate study and beginning Spring Quarter, 2007 for undergraduate study) will be reported in "Unsatisfactory Progress" status to the VA and benefits will end until the situation is resolved. If you have received grade changes, be sure to notify the school's Veterans Certification Office once the grades are officially changed on the school's database in order to keep your "Unsatisfactory Progress" status totals accurate. If you are put in "Unsatisfactory Progress", you will be notified as to what is necessary for you to be re-certified for VA Educational Benefits by the school's VA Certifying Official at that time. If your transcript at UC indicates you are in "Unsatisfactory Progress" status prior to beginning the use of VA Educational Chapter Benefits, additional paperwork may be required by the school and VA for certification of benefits to occur.

VA REGIONAL OFFICE: Chapter's #30, #33, #35, #1606, #1607 benefits are awarded by the Buffalo, New York VA Regional Office (P. O. Box 4616, Zip Code 14240-46126). Chapter #31 benefits are awarded through the

Cleveland Office, Ohio VA Regional Office (1240 East Ninth Street, Zip Code 44199). Chapter #35 students may have a longer than normal initial processing time if the veteran's file is not located in the VA Office the school reports to and the student has not yet established eligibility for these benefits. Chapter #1606 Coastguard and VEAP veterans that have a VA claim number that is not their SS# may be hand-processed by St. Louis and Chicago VA Regional Offices, respectively, which means longer processing time before a check is issued. (Normal processing for New York is 8+ weeks, and for Cleveland 6+ weeks).

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