

# Veterans Services Center FAQ's

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## **How do I get started?**

Apply for admissions to SF State. For more information on requirements, go to [www.sfsu.edu/future](http://www.sfsu.edu/future).

After your application has been received by SF State you will receive confirmation and be requested for transcripts from previous schools attended, military release records (DD-214), and military transcripts.

If you haven't done so already, apply for your VA Educational benefits on the Vonapp system found at the [www.gibill.va.gov](http://www.gibill.va.gov) website. A Certificate of Eligibility or Notice of Basic Eligibility will be sent to you after applying. Please provide our office with a copy.

If you are transferring your benefits from another school, you will need to file a VA form 22-1995 (veterans) or 22-5495 (dependents) with our office. Forms can be downloaded from [www.sfsu.edu/~veterans](http://www.sfsu.edu/~veterans) under the "Benefits and Forms" section.

Complete your Intent to Enroll or Acceptance of Admissions online and sign-up for an orientation.

Fill out a deferment form so that you can register for classes and defer payment of tuition until your VA benefits are processed.

Attend orientation and register for classes.

Contact our office after registration so that we can certify your enrollment, and then you can start receiving your VA educational benefits.

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## **Why do I need to send my DD-214?**

SF State grants college credit for military experience. If you have served at least one year of active duty service, you can receive 6 units of elective credit and fulfill the Lifelong Learning Development (LLD) GE requirement. You will also be given first-day priority registration starting your 2<sup>nd</sup> semester whether or not you receive VA educational benefits and while you remain a matriculated or continuing student (does not include registration through College of Extended Learning). If you attend orientation during your first semester, you will be allowed to register for full-time enrollment as opposed to only 8 units.

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### **Will VA pay for my orientation fee?**

No.

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### **Will VA pay for my placement tests?**

Under Ch. 33, you can be reimbursed for certain national exams needed for admissions. These include SAT, ACT, GMAT, LSAT, and others but does not include the ELM or EPT.

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### **What if I am denied admissions?**

You must either apply to another institution or you might be able to take classes through Open University to complete needed requirements for admissions. Contact our office for further advising.

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### **Which benefit am I eligible for?**

VA determines eligibility whether you are a veteran or dependent. You can contact the VA directly at 1-888-442-4551 for any federal benefits questions or you can contact your local VA County Service Office for possible Fee Waiver eligibility as a dependent of a disabled or deceased veteran.

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### **What will the VA pay?**

All federal benefits will pay a monthly stipend depending on how many classes are certifiable by our office (full-time,  $\frac{3}{4}$  time,  $\frac{1}{2}$  time,  $\frac{1}{4}$  time or less). Go to the [www.gibill.va.gov](http://www.gibill.va.gov) website for current payout rates and descriptions of the all available educational benefits.

The California Veterans Administration Fee Waiver covers the in-state tuition but does not cover any local university fees. See the [www.sfsu.edu/~bursars](http://www.sfsu.edu/~bursars) website for a current breakdown of state/local tuition/fees.

Ch. 33 (Post 9-11) and Ch. 31 (Vocational Rehab) pay additional benefits:

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Ch. 33 includes a housing and book stipend paid to the student as well as in-state tuition paid directly to SF State. The amount varies on the eligibility of the student which can range from 40%-100% depending on amount of service and type of discharge.

Ch. 31 includes tuition payments (not limited to in-state tuition) and also a supplies stipend which can cover books, computers and other needed supplies. Your Vocational Rehab case manager can explain further the limitations.

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### **Do I need to fill out a deferment every semester?**

If you do not receive other financial aid or do not want to wait for a refund of tuition fees, you should fill out a deferment form each semester so that you may be eligible to register without paying tuition up-front. Full payment of tuition is due on the deferment date regardless of reason.

Note: Ch. 33 recipients at less than 100% eligibility must pay the difference by the deferment deadline, regardless of when VA payment is received.

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### **What do I do to receive my benefits every semester?**

Certification is not done automatically every semester. You must contact the Veterans Services Center after you finish registering for classes each semester. After reviewing your enrollment, we may need you to justify or get approval for classes that do not meet standard university requirements for your major or for general education requirements. After review of your enrollment we will send the VA an enrollment certification for that semester so that you can receive your benefits.

If you must drop/add/withdraw from any or all your classes, you must contact the office within 10 business days to stay in compliance with VA reporting procedures.

Note: Fee Waiver only recipients do not need to be certified. Ch. 30 and Ch. 1606 (Select Reserve) must also confirm attendance on a monthly basis after the VA receives the school certification.

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### **Am I eligible if I do not have an honorable discharge?**

You can be eligible with a general discharge. Contact the VA directly at 1-888-442-4551 to find out if you can apply for benefits.

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**Can I apply for FAFSA financial aid while receiving Gibill benefits?**

VA educational benefits that are applied to tuition and fees may affect the amount of FAFSA financial aid you can receive. See the financial aid office to see how your particular benefit will affect your FAFSA award.

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**I was certified by your office. When will I get paid?**

VA takes approximately 4 weeks to process a claim. If you have not received notice or payment from VA after this time, you can verify with our office to see if we sent your certification, or you may contact VA directly at 1-888-442-4551 to verify if payment has been processed.

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**My housing payment is smaller at the beginning and end of the semester. Why is that?**

VA pays the monthly amount during the time you are in class only. Most semesters begin at the end of the month and end by the third week of the month. That is why you are seeing smaller payments during this time.

You may also receive a smaller payment or see a stoppage of payments if your benefits run out. You may contact the VA to verify if your benefits have run out.

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**My rent is due and I have not received my housing allowance. What should I do?**

It is advisable that you do not depend on your VA payments for important expenditures such as rent. There are many ways that a delay in payment can occur that is beyond your control and beyond our office's ability to intervene. Be sure to plan your finances well in advance and do not rely solely on your educational benefits as guaranteed monthly income.

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**VA has said my benefits are exhausted. What do I do now?**

You should contact VA to make sure there is no mistake in your records. If your benefits have run out, and you still owe tuition, you can apply for an emergency loan through the Bursar's Office, or talk to financial aid about other options.

If you have at least a 10% service-related disability, you may try to qualify for Vocational Rehabilitation through the Oakland Regional Office.

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**I got a refund from SF State. What was this for?**

You may be receiving a refund in error. Please contact Linda Nguyen in the Bursar's office (415-338-3348 or [lindang@sfsu.edu](mailto:lindang@sfsu.edu)) to verify.

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**Can I receive benefits from past semesters of attendance?**

VA will process back pay for up to a year or more depending on your benefits and when you became eligible for your benefits. You can contact our office to find out if back pay is possible.

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**Will VA pay for my graduation application?**

For Ch. 33 recipients, the VA will reimburse for the graduation application up to the percentage you are eligible. After paying for your graduation application, bring a copy of your receipt to our office for reimbursement. This does not include cap and gown rental.

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**Will VA pay for a certificate program?**

Yes. VA will pay for any certificate program as long as it is listed as an approved program on the WEAMS website at <http://inquiry.vba.va.gov/weamspub/buildSearchInstitutionCriteria.do>

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### **Will VA pay for a double major or minor?**

Yes. VA will pay for any program listed as an approved program for SF State on the WEAMS website at <http://inquiry.vba.va.gov/weamspub/buildSearchInstitutionCriteria.do>

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### **What happens if I fail a class?**

VA will pay for a failed grade that affects your gpa. This includes "F", "WU", "I" grades. You cannot earn a "NC" or receive a "W" grade because these grades do not affect your gpa and do not earn you credit towards graduation.

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### **What happens if I receive a "W" or "NC" grade?**

You may owe the VA repayment if it affects your enrollment status (i.e. changes your enrollment from full-time to ¾ time). Any changes may affect Ch. 33 recipients due to the book stipend.

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### **I live in on-campus housing. Why didn't SF State receive a housing payment from the VA?**

VA does not pay SF State the housing allowance. The housing allowance and book stipend under Ch.33 are paid directly to the student and it is up to the student to pay the SF State Housing Office.

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### **Can I use my Fee Waiver for summer?**

Currently, summer classes are offered through the College of Extended Learning. Since this is not a state-supported program, they cannot accept the Fee Waiver.

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**I filled out my deferment on time. Why am I being charged a late fee?**

You must pay the full balance of your tuition and fees before the deadline date listed on the deferment. This is regardless of any delays caused by the VA. In some cases, the late fee was charged for some other reason. You should contact Linda Nguyen in the Bursar's Office (415-338-3348) for clarification.

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**Can I attend more than one school while using my educational benefits?**

Yes. You must furnish a Parent School Letter provided by your home school's certifying official to the secondary school's certifying official. The Parent School Letter will confirm that the classes taken at the secondary school will count towards the degree program taken at the home school.

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**I have been disqualified because of gpa. Can I still receive benefits?**

If you have been disqualified and must take classes through the College of Extended Learning, you may still be eligible for your VA benefits. See our office for further advising.

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**How can I tell how many months of benefits I have left?**

For Ch. 30 and Ch. 1606 recipients, you can check online through the [WAVES system](#), or call the 1-888-442-4551 helpline. For all other benefits, you should call the 1-888-442-4551 helpline.

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**What if I am deployed in the middle of the semester? Will I need to re-apply for admissions?**

No. If you furnish your military orders to our office, you will be granted a military leave of absence until you return. You will be withdrawn from all your classes and any refunds due to you will be given. Please contact our office after you receive your orders for further advising.

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### **What about refunds when I'm deployed?**

Students who are activated for compulsory military service will receive a full refund of mandatory fees, including nonresident tuition (no refund administrative fee withheld).

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### **What documents are needed in order to submit a leave of absence from SF State and receive a refund?**

You must submit a copy of your military orders to the Veteran's Services Center (SSB 206) and must also complete the [SF State Leave of Absence form](#).

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### **What about my grades?**

Work with the Veteran's Coordinator concerning your enrollment and grades. You may, depending upon when you must leave, earn credit in your courses. If not, you will be automatically withdrawn from all of your classes with no academic penalty.

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### **What about returning, do I have to re-apply for admission?**

No. Students who are called to active duty and given a leave of absence may return as a continuing student without re-applying.

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### **Where can I go for academic advising?**

For general education advising, you can go to ADM 212 and see a general advisor. For major advising, you must go to the department office of your major or minor.

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### **I'm having a rough day, are there counseling services at SF State?**

Counseling and Psychological services are available for all students. Many of the counselors are experienced with PTSD and TBI as well as sexual trauma. Go to <http://www.sfsu.edu/~psyservs/> for more information or visit them in SSB 208.

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**Do you have VA Work-Study positions?**

Yes. We like to hire a mixture of veterans and dependents and are contacted by other agencies when they have openings. You must be certified for ¾ time or more to be eligible for VA Work-Study.

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**How much does it pay?**

VA Work-Study pays the current California minimum wage.

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