

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Do I have to pay tuition and fees?

Yes, if using Chapter 30, 35, 1606, or 1607, you are responsible for your own tuition and fees, which are due upon registration. However, the MiraCosta College Veteran's Education Office offers an optional one-time only tuition deferment. This defers tuition only and is payable when you receive your first check from the VA. You are still responsible for all mandatory fees upon registration. See our office for details.

If you are Chapter 33 and a California resident, the VA will pay mandatory **in-state** fees based on your VA benefit percentage. If you are not initially classified as a California state resident you should contact Admissions & Records and let them know that you are receiving benefits. The newly passed Section 702 of the VACA permits California Community Colleges to exempt non-resident students who are receiving benefits and who meet certain criteria from the non-resident tuition fee. An optional one-time only tuition deferment is available to assist with nonresident fees. See our office for further details.

Why must I complete all of this paperwork?

The new student paperwork establishes your education file at MiraCosta as well as your VA file in Muskogee, OK. There is a reason for each document. Once your file is established, you will typically only need one form (the *Letter of Intent*) each semester to continue benefits. If you change your major, additional documents will likely be required.

When will I receive payment?

Upon completing your initial application for VA educational benefits, processing can take up to eight weeks. Once the VA establishes your file, subsequent processing usually takes 30 to 45 days. During peak periods, such as the start of the semester, VA educational benefit paperwork may take longer for the school and VA to process.

How will I be paid?

Once the VA processes your paperwork, you will receive monthly payments based upon your satisfactory attendance in classes. Monthly payments are distributed at the beginning of each month, for the preceding month.

If using Chapter 30, 33, or 1606, you MUST verify your enrollment the last day of each month, or after, to receive payment. This verification can be done either by using the Web Automated Verification of Enrollment (WAVE) application at www.gibill.va.gov/wave or by calling 1.877.823.2378.

Is it possible to receive payment in a lump sum?

With the exception of the Chapter 33 books and supplies stipend, all entitlements are paid monthly.

I have the College Fund. Will I receive that payment as well?

Yes, the VA should add the college fund into your monthly benefit payment.

How do I establish direct deposit?

You may request direct deposit when you apply for benefits by either: 1) attaching a voided check to your application or 2) providing your financial information on the application. You may also establish direct deposit by calling the VA at 1.888.442.4551. Those using Chapter 30 or 1606 may complete this action using the Web Automated Verification of Enrollment (WAVE) at www.gibill.va.gov/wave.

What is an assessment test and why is it required?

Lower-level college preparatory or prerequisite courses may be certifiable if they are required to advance toward your degree or certificate requirements. For example, ENGL 50 or ENGL 52 will be certified if you need these courses as preparation/support for ENGL 100. The VA requires that we have test results that support the need for remedial courses in your file. Remedial courses (MATH 30 and ENGL 50) must be taken on campus to be certifiable.

Should I notify the VA if I move?

Yes! If you change your mailing address, telephone number, or e-mail address, you must notify MiraCosta's Veterans Services Office, Admissions & Records, and the VA at 1.888.442.4551. Those using Chapter 30 or 1606 may notify the VA of their address change via WAVE at www.gibill.va.gov/wave.

Why do I have to declare a major?

The VA requires you to declare an objective (major) or goal. At MiraCosta College, options include an Associate's Degree (A.A or A.S.), Transfer Degree, or approved Certificate of Achievement as listed in the catalog.

Why must I have a *Comprehensive Education Plan*?

The VA requires all benefit recipients to have a *Comprehensive Education Plan* designating which courses are approved toward their program. If you change your major, you **MUST** see a Veterans Counselor to formulate a new *Comprehensive Education Plan*. Submit the new plan to the Veterans Services upon completion.

Can I get a certificate instead of an AA or AS?

Yes, as long as it is an approved certificate program. Certificates of Achievement are the only approved certificate programs at MiraCosta College. Certificates of Proficiency are not approved for VA benefits.

Why do I have to provide transcripts from the military and/or previous institutions?

All prior credit must be reported to the VA. If you have completed coursework at any other college or institution, including military training, you have one semester in which to have official transcripts sent to MiraCosta College for evaluation. The arrangements for obtaining official transcripts are your responsibility, not the responsibility of the Veterans Services Office. In the event that transcripts for all prior coursework are not received by MiraCosta College within one semester, the college will withhold certification until all transcripts are on file.

My Joint Services Transcript (JST) is incomplete or doesn't exist. What do I do?

Data can go back as far as 1976 but data older than 1994 may be missing or incomplete. If your transcript is missing any information or has not yet been completed, please visit the following website for directions on how to correct: <https://jst.doded.mil/correction.html>.

What courses am I paid for under a major at MiraCosta?

You are paid for general education classes, major classes, and electives (**if needed**) for your major. You are not paid for classes you have already completed with a passing grade, or those not required for your declared major.

Why am I not getting paid for all of my current classes?

Only major classes, general education requirements, or electives (as needed), are payable classes. An exception to this would be required prerequisite classes and remedial level English or math classes, which are shown to be needed through assessment testing. Remember, remedial courses (MATH 30 and ENGL 50) must be taken on campus to be certifiable. Repeat classes (any class you have previously taken with a passing grade) or a class outside of your major are not payable.

Why did I receive approximately half the amount of money I normally get?

Have you dropped classes? Are you in a short session class which ended before the end of the rest of the semester? Could an instructor have dropped you for non-attendance? These are a few reasons that could impact pay. First, check your enrollment. You may also contact our office to request a file review.

I dropped a class. What should I do?

Phone, email, or stop by the Veterans Services Office to let us know. We will adjust your units as appropriate and submit any changes to the VA. If you are using Chapter 30, 33, or 1606, you also need to notify the VA during your monthly self-verification via the Web Automated Verification of Enrollment (WAVE).

Are online classes payable?

Yes, if they are required for your major, with one major exception: remedial courses must be taken on campus (MATH 30 and ENGL 50) to be certifiable. **The VA does not pay for online or hybrid remedial coursework.**

If you are a Post 9/11 GI Bill (Chapter 33) recipient, your rate of pursuit must be greater than 50% to receive your monthly housing allowance. To receive the local (92056) housing rate, at least one course must be on campus. For those enrolled solely in distance learning, the housing allowance payable is equal to half the national average BAH for an E-5 with dependents. **Remember, most hybrid courses (courses taught partially on campus and partially online) are considered as 'Distance Learning' (online) according to VA guidelines.**

It's been six weeks; what steps should I take to inquire about the status of my payment?

Depending on the backlog at the VA Regional Office in Muskogee OK, six weeks may be a reasonable amount of time for processing. Check with our office to initiate a file review or contact the VA directly at 1.888.442.4551.

Do I have to pay taxes on my GI Bill?

No, all GI Bill benefits are tax-free.

Can I apply for financial aid?

Yes, we encourage you to do so. VA educational benefits do not count as income when determining your eligibility for federal financial aid. For more information, please contact the Financial Aid Office at 760.795.6711, visit their office in Building 3000 on the Oceanside campus, or check out their website at www.miracosta.edu/financialaid.

I'm not a veteran. Do I still have to meet with a Veterans Counselor for development of my Education Plan?

Yes, all students receiving VA benefits should develop their Comprehensive Education Plan with a Veterans Counselor. To schedule an appointment, please call 760.795.6750, visit the Veterans Counseling website, or visit Building 3700, Oceanside campus. Identify yourself as a student receiving VA benefits. Remember to provide the Veterans Services Office, with a copy of your Education Plan, once complete.

I'm using the Post 9/11 GI Bill. What costs might I be accountable for?

Based on your eligibility percentage, the VA will pay for required courses. For example, if you are 100% eligible and taking all required courses, the VA should cover 100% of your tuition and mandatory fees (health fee, student center fee, and certain class fees) as long as you still have benefits remaining and have not reached your delimiting date. However, if you're only 70% eligible, then the VA will only pay 70% of those costs, leaving you to pay the remaining 30%. Regardless of your eligibility percentage, the VA will never pay for courses that are not required; any course that is not required will be the financial responsibility of the student. Nonresident fees are also the responsibility of the student. If you are not initially classified as a California state resident you should contact the Admissions and Records Office and let them know that you are receiving benefits. The newly passed Section 702 of the VACA permits California Community Colleges to exempt non-resident students who are receiving benefits and who meet certain criteria from the non-resident tuition fee. You are also responsible for certain optional fees, such as the cost of your parking pass and Student I.D. card.

What is Round Out?

In your last term, you can round out your schedule with non-required courses to bring your course load up to a full-time schedule. This allows you to continue receiving benefits at the full-time rate in the last term of enrollment, even though fewer credits are required to complete your program. This procedure can only be done once per program. In rounding out a full-time schedule, you may use any credit hour subject, including a subject that has previously been successfully completed (received a passing grade). See a Veterans Counselor to request Round Out. Upon approval, please submit the *Round Out Request* form to the Veterans Services Office.

PAYMENT AND BENEFIT STATUS

eBenefits

You may research, access, and manage your benefits and personal information using the Veterans Benefit Administration's eBenefit website at: <https://www.ebenefits.va.gov>.

Click "Register Now" and select a free Premium account for unlimited access to:

- Download a DD-214
- View benefit status
- Check Post-9/11 GI Bill entitlement
- Check enrollment status

PAYMENTS

Direct Deposit

To establish or change your direct deposit, please complete one of the following:

1. Call 1.888.442.4551
2. Login to WAVE (www.gibill.va.gov/wave) and select "Direct Deposit Enrollment Form" (Note: This option is applicable only to those using the Montgomery GI Bill or REAP)

Pay Status

The Veterans Services Office does not have access to individual payment information regarding education benefits. Please contact the VA directly at 1.888.442.4551 for all pay status inquiries.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Department of Veteran Affairs

Located in Muskogee, Oklahoma (Central Standard Time)

Education Benefits: 1.888.442.4551

All other benefits: 1.800.827.1000

Online VA Education Benefits: www.benefits.va.gov/gibill

Online VA Home website: www.va.gov

Online VA (Other) Benefits: www.benefits.va.gov

Web Automated Verification of Enrollment (WAVE): www.gibill.va.gov/wave or 1.877.823.2378

For all mail correspondence:
Veterans Affairs Regional Office
P.O. Box 8888
Muskogee, Oklahoma 74402-8888

San Diego Regional Office

8810 Rio San Diego Drive, San Diego, CA 92108

Disability Claims, Vocational Rehabilitation, VA Work-Study Program, PTSD, Health & Well-Being

Phone: 1.800.827.1000

Website: www.vba.va.gov/ro/sandiego

MiraCosta College Veterans Services Office

Building T100, Oceanside Campus

Phone: 760.795.6750

Email: vetsbenefits@miracosta.edu

Mon–Thurs: 8am–7pm, Friday: 8am–3pm