



## **VetHERO Frequently Asked Questions**

### **How do I apply for the GI Bill ® and other VA education benefits?**

To apply for VA education benefits online, go to [VA.GOV](http://VA.GOV) for detailed information. If you need assistance, please contact the VA education benefit hotline at 1-888-442-4551.

### **How do I receive financial aid through Military Tuition Assistance as an active duty member?**

The University of Central Oklahoma will require Service members to provide the following:

1. Verification is needed of approved Tuition Assistance agreement from the Education Services Officer (ESO) prior to enrollment. Tuition assistance funds are a unique, distinct source of financial aid available to eligible Service members, and the University of Central Oklahoma recognizes Tuition Assistance as a first payer of financial assistance. The Department of Defense (DoD) Tuition Assistance (TA) program provides financial assistance to Service members for voluntary off-duty education programs in support of professional and personal self-development goals.
2. To submit approved Tuition Assistance, students can email documentation to UCO Student Financial Services at [scholarships@uco.edu](mailto:scholarships@uco.edu). TA is available for courses that are offered in the classroom or by distance learning and are part of an approved academic degree or certificate program. For more information please see the link below and the [UCO Unearned Military Tuition Assistance Policy](#).

### **Who authorizes approval for my enrollment to receive Tuition Assistance (TA)?**

The Department of Defense (DoD) Tuition Assistance (TA) program provides financial assistance to Service members for voluntary off-duty education programs in support of professional and personal self-development goals. TA is available for courses that are offered in the classroom or by distance learning and are part of an approved academic degree or certificate program. The courses must be offered by schools that are recognized by the U.S. Department of Education and are signatories to the current DoD Voluntary Education Partnership Memorandum of Understanding (DOD MOU).

For more information please see the following link:

<https://www.dantes.doded.mil/FinancialAid/MilitaryTuitionAssistance.html>

Military Tuition Assistance is a benefit paid to eligible members of the Army, Navy, Marines, Air Force, and Coast Guard. Each service has its own criteria for eligibility, obligated service, application process' and restrictions. This money is usually paid directly to the institution by the individual services.

TA is not a loan; it should be viewed as money you have earned just like your base pay.

The Services are authorized to establish Service specific eligibility criteria to manage TA funds. For Service specific TA policies and procedures, visit their voluntary education websites below:

[Air Force Tuition Assistance \(MilTA\)](#)

[Army Tuition Assistance](#)

[Navy Tuition Assistance](#)

[Marine Corps Tuition Assistance](#)

[Coast Guard Tuition Assistance](#)

[National Guard Tuition Assistance](#)

[Reserve Tuition Assistance](#)

Military Tuition Assistance (TA) is awarded to a service member under the assumption that the service member will attend school for the entire period for which the assistance is awarded. Eligible service members must receive approval from an Educational Services Officer (ESO) or counselor within the Military Service prior to enrolling as required by the DoD and indicated in then UCO TA Policy.

### **What is UCO's return policy for Military Tuition Assistance (TA)?**

If a service member withdraws on or before the \*60 percent portion of the term, the service member will no longer be eligible for the full amount of Military TA funds originally awarded.

To learn more about the calculation for the term: <https://www.uco.edu/admissions-aid/financial-aid/enrollment-changes>

Please see the UCO policy here for more information: <https://www.uco.edu/admissions-aid/financial-aid/unearned-military-tuition-assistance-policy.pdf>

To comply with the policy of the Department of Defense, the institution will return any unearned Military TA funds on a proportional basis through at least the 60 percent portion of the term for which they were provided. Any unearned Military TA funds will be returned directly to the military service, not to the service member. The calculation of the return may result in the service member owing a balance to the University. If a service member withdraws after the 60 percent portion of the term, all Military TA will be considered earned.  
<https://www.military.com/education/money-for-school/tuition-assistance-ta-program-overview.html>  
<https://www.military.com/education/gi-bill/tuition-top-up-program.html>

### **How to apply for the GI Bill ® and other VA education benefits:**

To apply for VA education benefits online, go to [VA.GOV](http://VA.GOV) for detailed information. If you need assistance, please contact the VA education benefit hotline at 1-888-442-4551.

### **After applying for VA education benefits:**

- 30 days is the average time to process education claims
- Learn about educational and career counseling
- A Certificate of Eligibility (COE), or award letter, will arrive in the mail if your application is approved
  - Take your COE to the VA School Certifying Officer on your campus for processing
- Learn about career-development resources

Please access the following site for more information:

[After You Apply | Veterans Affairs \(va.gov\)](#)

### **To receive your VA education benefits as soon as possible:**

- Early enrollment is strongly encouraged, if possible. No action will occur, for any semester, until you have submitted an [VA Enrollment Form](#) with the required signatures, to the VetHERO office.

- Be aware of the following issues which could affect the continuation of your VA benefits:
  - Timely submission of the VA Enrollment Form will enable the VetHERO office to send your claim to the VA so you can receive your benefits promptly.
  - Changes in your class schedule may affect your VA benefits. Frequent changes can cause delays or overpayment of benefits.
  - If changes are made to your original schedule – please note that these changes could change the payment rates and enrollment status reported to the VA. It is recommended to make as few class schedule changes as possible to eliminate payment problems or processing delays.
  - If your major changes, notify VetHERO office staff when submitting your ADVISORY FORM for the latest semester you wish to be certified.
  - Notify the VetHERO office of any changes in your name, address, or telephone numbers.

**Note: VA will only issue benefits for courses that are necessary to complete your degree.**

### **What forms are need to receive VA benefits?**

Each semester that you wish to receive VA educational benefits, a VA Enrollment Form must be submitted to the VetHERO office. Upon receipt of your completed form, your current schedule will be reviewed for degree applicability and processed as quickly as possible.

### **Under what circumstances would I be required to contact the VetHero office once I am certified?**

Please report any program changes to include:

- Major
- Addition of a minor or second major
- Number of hours enrolled
- Changes in name, address, or telephone number changes

### **What if:**

- **What if I must suspend my course work due to my service requirements?**
  - The University of Central Oklahoma will allow Service members and reservists to be readmitted to a program if they are temporarily unable to attend class or must suspend their studies due to service requirements as permitted for all UCO student who request readmittance. The university has readmission policies that outline UCO's readmission policy under readmitted students here: <https://www.uco.edu/admissions-aid/get-more-information/other-student-types-admissions-standards>
- **What if I withdraw from school during the semester?**
  - It is the responsibility of the School Certifying Officer (SCO) to report all changes to the VA within 30 days of the event. The VA may require that you repay any money received for the semester. Upon withdrawal, you have the opportunity to submit a letter of Mitigating Circumstances - circumstances beyond the student's control that prevent the student from continuing in school or an issue that cause the student to reduce credits:
    - 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 made for the period during which he or she is attending classes.
- If the VA agrees that the circumstances were beyond your control, the benefits will be terminated effective the date of withdrawal and overpayment may not be established. Overpayments for withdrawals are at the discretion of the VA if required.
- **What if I drop a course?**
  - If you withdraw after the school's drop period, the VA will reduce or stop benefits on the date of reduction. If you are assigned a non-punitive (W) grade, you may have to repay all benefits for the course unless there are mitigating circumstances – as listed in the previous section.

### **Will the VA pay for courses that are not in my major program?**

Normally, federal law prohibits payment for courses that do not lead to a student's educational objective. You may be paid for a course not in your major program under certain circumstances:

- If it is a valid prerequisite for a course that is required in your major program.
- On your final graduating semester, if you are enrolled in at least one course that is required in your major program, then you may enroll in courses which do not have to be in the major program for rounding-up to full-time.
- To take additional courses that are not degree-applicable, a student can take courses that apply to a declared minor. Please note that you DO NOT have to complete the minor. However, the minor should display as a part of your degree plan.

### **It is the first of the month and my check is late. What should I do?**

If you have received your checks at the same time every month, call the VA Regional Office. The VetHERO office has no control over the disbursement of checks - only the regional office can tell you when and where your last check was mailed and if there is a problem.

### **As a student eligible to utilize Department of Veterans Affairs Educational Benefits, can I also apply for federal financial aid or scholarships?**

Yes, receiving education benefits through the Department of Veterans Affairs does not preclude you from also applying for financial aid or scholarships.

### **Why is there still a balance on my Bursar Account?**

Tuition payments are not reported to VA until after the Add/Drop date for the semester and there is no need to contact our office about your tuition payment unless there are additional complications.

### **Why did I receive an email about a payment plan?**

Our office will send a list of all students who have been certified to the Financial Office to be put on the Special Populations payment plan. The Bursar automatically sends those emails to any students with a balance on their account. Fees associated with the payment plan should not be charged, but if they are, please send an email to [vethero@uco.edu](mailto:vethero@uco.edu) to request a removal.

### **What if there are Non-Resident charges on my Bursar account?**

You can request a waiver by completing the Residency Petition and providing the requested documentation. You can also visit the [Residency website](#) for more information.

**I am a Chapter 31(Veteran Readiness and Employment Program) student. What do I need to purchase my books?**

The VetHERO office will receive a purchase authorization from your VRC, through the Tungsten Network; this purchase order allows you to buy your books from Barnes & Noble on campus.

- VR&E will pay for all supplies that VA determines are necessary for the Service member's or Veteran's rehabilitation program. Supplies necessary to accomplish the purposes of a Service member's or Veteran's rehabilitation program may include, but are not limited to, the following:
  - Books, office supplies, tools, consumable goods, computer packages and other material.
  - Pre-approval is required prior to obtaining needed supplies. Your vocational rehabilitation counselor is solely responsible for determining the need for supplies.
  - VR&E will only provide supplies for Service members or Veterans who are participating in an active plan of service.

When purchasing your books, please notify Barnes & Noble staff that you are a CH 31/VR&E student; no taxes should be charged to your order. Deliver or email ALL receipts from the campus bookstore to the VetHERO office or [vethero@uco.edu](mailto:vethero@uco.edu).

**Do you need to speak with VetHERO Center personnel?**

We can be reached at any one of the following options:  
VetHERO Center (Veteran Higher Education Resources Office)

University Drive, Building 63  
Office phone (405)974-2400  
Office fax (405)974-3889  
Email [VetHERO@uco.edu](mailto:VetHERO@uco.edu)

For more information from the Department of Veteran Affairs contact:

**VA Regional Office:**

125 S. Main Street  
Muskogee, OK 74401  
1-888-442-4551

**Other helpful numbers:**

Education Benefits Direct Deposit: 1-888-442-4551  
Web Automated Verification of Enrollment (W.A.V.E.): 1-877-823-2378  
Non-education related VA information And Questions: 1-800-827-1000  
Visit the VA at [www.va.gov](http://www.va.gov).

“GI Bill® is a registered trademark of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). More information about education benefits offered by VA is available at the official U.S. government Web site.