

A photograph of a university campus. In the foreground, there are large, leafy trees with sunlight filtering through, creating a lens flare effect. A paved walkway leads towards a modern, multi-story building with large windows. Several people are walking along the path. The sky is clear and blue.

# **GI Bill Veterans Benefits at UCSB**

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## **General Information & FAQs**

**UC SANTA BARBARA**  
**Office of Financial Aid  
& Scholarships**

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## How Do I Apply for Benefits with the VA?

If you are using VA education benefits for first time, it is your responsibility to apply for benefits with the VA. You can apply for VA educational benefits online at [www.vets.gov](http://www.vets.gov).

You will need the following to complete the application:

- Create username/password
- Fill out VA Form 22-1990
- Have ready electronic DD-214 and if applicable, kicker contract and/or proof of \$600 buy-up
- Bank Information (Name of Bank, Routing Number, and Account Number)
- If known: school address, educational objective (degree), date planning on enrolling
- Former college information (degree, address, and dates)
- Non-military job information (type, length of time, and any licensing)
- ROTC/Service Academy/ Student Loan Repayment Program information

It will take the VA approximately 6-8 weeks to process your application. The VA has 4 [Regional Processing Offices \(RPO\)](#) than handle claims. For California, the RPO is located in Muskogee, OK. Once the application is processed, you will receive a Certificate of Eligibility (COE) which you can then submit a copy to the VA Certifying Official.

### Transfer Students

Students who have received benefits previously at another institution and are new transfers to UCSB, you must submit VA form 22-1995: [Request for Change of Program or Place of Training \(PDF\)](#) and submit to the VA Certifying Official at UCSB.

## How Do I Request Benefits at UCSB?

### New Students

If you've applied for benefits through the VA, have been found eligible and have received your Certificate of Eligibility (COE) letter from the VA, please submit the COE to the VA Certifying Official.

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## All Students (New and Continuing)

You must submit a completed and signed [Veterans Benefit Request Form \(VBRF\)](#) prior to any quarter you wish to use and receive benefits at UCSB. The VBRF needs to list your course enrollment for the upcoming quarter. This is to verify that the units you are requesting to be certified for with the Department of Veteran Affairs will apply towards your degree/major/minor requirements. Also, please be sure to thoroughly review the student acknowledgement portion of the VBRF.

## Certification of Benefits with the VA

Certification is the process by which the VA Certifying Official reports to the VA a student's dates of attendance, degree program, and the number of registered units, and tuition and fees, if applicable. The VA will not pay any student without receiving this information, and the VA Certifying Official will not certify for a quarter until the VBRF form has been completed and received. Certifications are usually processed within a 48-hour period, with the exception of changes of prior enrollment or status that may cause delays. Please feel free to contact the Certifying Official to check the status of your certification.

## Changes in Enrollment and Student Responsibilities

All changes made after your initial certification for a quarter should be brought to the attention of the VA Certifying Official so the change can be reported. If your schedule, enrollment, courses or units change during a quarter, you must submit a new/updated VBRF form. The most common changes include:

- Changes in unit/credit hours or (dropping OR adding)
- Changes in courses/enrollment/schedule
- [Withdrawal from school](#)
- [Changes in major](#)
- [Changes in previously reported or incomplete grade \(PDF\)](#)
- [Waiving/unwaiving student health insurance](#)

Failure to report changes may result in **termination of benefits, delays in future certifications, delays in receiving benefit payments and debt/overpayment with the VA**. Changes may be reported to the VA Certifying Official in person, by telephone, or via email or fax at the contact information below. Periodic audits are

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conducted and changes in units may be caught, but it is ultimately the student's responsibility to report these changes when they occur to reduce the possibility a student overpayment or possibly an underpayment.

### **VA Certifying Official**

Marcee Davis

Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships

2013 SAASB

[VeteransBenefits@sa.ucsb.edu](mailto:VeteransBenefits@sa.ucsb.edu)

**Phone:** 805-893-8905

If you are called to active duty, a student whose enrollment is interrupted with active duty in the current military conflict will be given full refund of fees regardless of the date of withdrawal. A copy of the student's official orders is required and must be presented to the VA Certifying Official. Students will be dropped from all classes and a message will appear on their transcript which states: Compulsory withdrawal for active military duty "date". Readmission procedures will be streamlined, waiving readmission fees. Financial Aid loans will continue in deferred status. Students living in University-owned housing will be accommodated on a case by case basis.

## **Course Applicability and VA Benefits**

**Only units that apply toward completion of your program can be certified to the VA.** If you take a course that does not fulfill a program requirement, it cannot be certified for VA purposes. It is your responsibility to monitor academic progress within your program and to request certification only for classes that will count towards graduation. Requesting certification for units that will not count towards your program will result in an overpayment causing a debt to the VA.

There are two **exceptions** to this. First, during the last quarter before graduation, all units taken can be certified if one or more of the units satisfy a graduation requirement. Second, if the university allows a substitution for a program requirement, then that substitution will be certifiable. A student's degree program includes:

- Major Requirements
- Minor Requirements (if applicable)
- General University Requirements

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## Grades and Academic Progress

You must maintain [satisfactory progress](#) and academic eligibility. As a student, you are expected to meet the minimum grade and GPA requirements of the university. Failure to meet the standards of progress will result in an "Insufficient Progress" designation being reported to the VA. This in turn may affect your monthly benefit.

### Grades

**Non-Punitive:** A NP "not-passed" or U "unsatisfactory" or W "withdrawal" grade is considered a non-punitive grade with the VA, meaning it is a grade that doesn't earn credit towards your degree program and does not affect your GPA. These grades will be reported to the VA as they do not qualify for payment by the VA because they do not count towards your degree. This will generally cause a student debt/overpayment with the VA and you will be responsible for repaying the VA any payment you received for such classes.

It is recommended that students receiving VA educational benefits do *not* elect to take a course as P/NP. A "failing" F grade is considered a punitive grade eligible for benefits with the VA since it counts towards your degree requirements. So, an F grade will be eligible for reimbursement by the VA as long as it is an "earned" F rather than an F based on non-attendance.

**NG/NR:** Students who receive a grade of NG "no grade" or NR "not reported" must communicate to the VA Certifying Official as to the circumstances surrounding the grade and must keep the veterans office up to date one the situation. A failure to communicate could result in a termination and create an overpayment with the VA, as NG and NR grades are not passing grades.

**I/IP:** Students who receive a grade of I "incomplete" or IP "in progress" must communicate to the Veterans Specialist as to the circumstances surrounding the grade and must keep the Veterans office up to date as to the situation. A failure to communicate could result in a training time adjustment being reported to the VA. The VA allows a student 1 year (with petition extensions) to complete the work required. Our office tracks students' progress.

**Repeat Courses:** Courses that are failed or for which the grade does not meet the minimum requirements for graduation may be certified for VA purposes if they are repeated. Courses that are successfully completed may not be certified for VA purposes if they are repeated. If you must take additional courses in order to raise their GPA to graduate, the courses must have not already been successfully

completed. To be paid for a repeat course that was not failed, the requirement must not be able to be met by any other course.

Please review the [UCSB General Catalog](#) for further information regarding the [grading system](#), [repetition of courses](#) and [additional academic policies](#).

## Training Time and Full-Time Status

Benefits are paid according to training time status. During the standard terms (fall, winter, and spring quarters) undergraduates are considered 'full-time' if they are in at least 12 certifiable units. Graduate students are considered 'full-time' for VA purposes if they are in 8 or more certifiable units. See the equivalency charts below to determine status that is not full-time for standard terms. See the Summer Sessions section below to learn about how status is determined for the non-standard term.

### Hour Requirements for Fall, Winter and Spring Quarters

Training Time	Credit Hours	
	Undergraduate	Graduate
Full-Time	12 or more	8 or more
3/4 Time	9-11	6-8
1/2 Time	6-8	4-5
< 1/2; > 1/4	4-5	3
1/4 Time	3 or less	1-2 or less

## Summer Sessions

Only students who are matriculated (incoming or current UCSB students) may be certified for [Summer Sessions](#) without additional requirements. All non-UCSB students must have a signed parent school letter if they wish to receive chapter benefits for summer session classes at UCSB. Non-matriculated and non-UCSB students who wish to receive certification should see the Concurrent and Supplemental Enrollments section, below. Training time for summer sessions is determined for each session individually and students will be certified for each

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session accordingly. To determine your enrollment status for summer sessions see the training time section.

Summer Sessions are considered a non-standard term and status is determined by the number of weeks in the term along with the number of certifiable units a student is taking. Each summer session is considered an individual term and training time status is determined for each session. For non-standard length terms, the VA will convert the credit once certified, using the quarter formula:  $\text{Number of Units} \times \text{Full Time Unit in a Standard Quarter (12 for undergraduate, 8 for graduates)} \div \text{number of weeks in Summer Session} = \text{credit hour equivalents}$ . This calculation will be done for each Summer Session separately.

Changes in enrollment, sessions and units is common in summer. Be sure to report any changes as soon as they occur to the VA Certifying Official to prevent debt and overpayment.

## Concurrent and Supplemental Enrollments

**If you wish to take a course for credit at another university or college**, you may be eligible to receive VA benefits if the course will apply towards your degree program. To facilitate this, you must get a signed letter from an advisor in either your department or college stating how the course(s) will apply towards your program, and submit this letter to the VA Certifying Official at UCSB. The proposed courses will be assessed by a degree auditor and if they are found to count towards the completion of the program, then the VA Certifying Official will issue a Parent School Letter.

The parent school letter will be given to you to take to the VA office at the supplemental (secondary) school you will be attending. The VA office at the supplemental (secondary) school will be the certifying official for courses taken at their school and they must have a parent school letter to do so. All non-UCSB students wishing to receive VA educational benefits by taking classes at UCSB must have a signed parent school letter from their primary institution. Our office will not certify any students without this letter.

## Overpayments and Debts with the VA

There may be a time when a student receives an overpayment and debt letter from the VA. An overpayment or student debt can occur for any of the following reasons:

- Withdrawal from school
- Withdrawal from one or more classes which changes the training time

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- Changes in dependency status
  - Taking course(s) not in the applicable towards a degree program

This list is not all-inclusive, and other reasons may also trigger an overpayment. Under certain circumstances, the VA may allow the money to be kept, depending on the mitigating circumstances. If you should experience any kind of change that may affect either your eligibility status or your training rate, you should contact the VA Certifying Official.

Once a debt or overpayment is created, if not repaid, the VA will:

- Add interest charges or collection fees to your debt
- Withhold future benefits and apply them to your debt
- Collect the debt from your federal income tax refund
- Turn your debt over to a private collection agency
- Withhold approval of your VA home loan guarantee
- File suit in federal court to collect your debt

## Mitigating Circumstances

Mitigating circumstances are unanticipated circumstances or events beyond the student's control that prevent the student from continuing in school, completing a course with a punitive grade or that cause the student to reduce credits. This includes withdrawing from a course or receiving a "non-punitive" grade. In most cases, if mitigating circumstances are not shown, the student will be forced to repay the VA or have the overpayment deducted from future benefits. If mitigating circumstances are an issue, the VA requires adequate evidence and documentation.

Examples of **mitigating circumstances** 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



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- Unanticipated difficulties with childcare arrangements the student has made for the period during which he or she is attending classes

Examples of ***unacceptable*** mitigating circumstances are:

- Withdrawal to avoid a failing grade
- Dislike of instructor
- Too many courses attempted

If the VA does not accept the claim, the student may appeal the decision in writing to the VA.

**The Six-Credit Hour Exclusion:** The VA waives the mitigating circumstances provision the *first* time a student using benefits withdraws from courses. In this case, the student is not required to show proof of mitigating circumstances. The six-hour exclusion only applies to the first instance of withdrawal. It does not apply across the board for the entire semester of a student's first withdrawal. In order for the full six hours to be accepted, the last date of attendance must be the same for all six hours.

## **Additional VA Assistance**

### **Tests and Certifications**

Some exams or tests may be necessary to advance your education. You may be eligible for reimbursement from the VA. Visit the [National Testing Area](#) of the US Department of Veteran Affairs website for more information or to find out if your test is approved. Be sure to research how your GI Bill entitlement may be affected or charged by using the National Test Benefit. For the Post-9/11 GI Bill, your entitlement charged is rounded to the nearest non-zero whole month; this means even low-costs are charged one month of entitlement. To review further information or directions on how to apply for reimbursement of a test visit [the Veterans Affairs website](#).

### **VA Work-Study Program**

UCSB is an approved VA Work-study site. The VA Work-Study program provides additional payments of VA educational assistance benefits in return for work. Students participating in the VA work-study program receive payments equal to the minimum wage for each hour of service performed. For more information, visit

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the [Work-study section](#) of the US Department of Veteran Affairs website, or contact the [Veteran and Military Services Coordinator](#) at UCSB.

## Tutorial Assistance

Upon entering a college program many students find that they need additional help in order to obtain passing grades in their course work. One method of assistance is individual tutoring by knowledgeable students or faculty members. For Chapters 30, 32, 1606, 1607 and 35, the VA will help defray the cost of such individualized tutoring as found necessary. This benefit will reimburse eligible VA students for the actual cost of the tutorial sessions up to \$100.00 per month. The maximum amount of tutorial assistance is \$1200.00 to any VA student. For more information, visit the [Tutorial Assistance section](#) of the US Department of Veteran Affairs website, or download the [VA application \(PDF\)](#).

## FAFSA, Financial Aid and VA Benefits

You can receive both VA educational benefits and financial aid by filling out the [FAFSA](#). You may be eligible for federal, state and/or institutional loans and scholarships in addition to your VA educational benefits. In some cases, your financial aid can be affected by your VA educational benefits, but by filling out the FAFSA, you will maximize your funding for school. The FAFSA is available starting January 1 for the following academic year and the priority deadline to be considered for state and institutional aid is March 2 – so don't forget to complete the FAFSA early. You are also encouraged to apply for additional outside scholarships, visit the [Veterans Resource Center website](#) for a list of some scholarships available for veterans and military dependents. For further questions about the FAFSA and financial aid, please contact [our office](#) or the VA Certifying Official.

## Payments and Direct Deposit

Chapter 33 payments for tuition and fees will be paid directly to the school by the VA. All other benefit payments will be paid directly to the student. It is recommended to setup direct deposit and to keep your direct deposit information current. Chapter 30, 1606 and 1607 students can use [WAVE](#) (see below) to update address and financial institution information. Students can also call the direct deposit center at 1-877-838-2778 to setup and change direct deposit.

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## Veterans Enrollment Verification

[The Web Automated Verification of Enrollment \(WAVE\)](#) application on the GI Bill website will allow you to verify your enrollment, change your address or establish or change direct deposit. Anyone receiving MGIB-Active Duty benefits as well as those in the Selected Reserve (Chapter 30, 1606 and 1607) must verify your enrollment in order to receive payment for each month by calling the toll-free Interactive Voice Response (IVR) telephone line at 877-823-2378. Anyone receiving Chapter 33 Post 9/11 GI Bill, verification of enrollment is required monthly as well, by calling the GI Bill hotline at 888-442-4551. The earliest you can verify your enrollment is the last calendar day of each month. First time users and users with questions about the system should review the [WAVE User Guide \(PDF\)](#).

## Priority Registration

Priority registration is offered to veterans starting their second quarter at UCSB. If you are a veteran or reservist receiving benefits, you will automatically receive priority registration. If you are not receiving benefits, you are also eligible for this priority status. Please submit a copy of your DD-214 or Notice of Basic Eligibility to the VA Certifying Official