VETERANS' AFFAIRS POLICIES, PROCEDURES AND REFERENCE GUIDE
CHAPTER 33 (POST-9/11 GI BILL)
READ CAREFULLY AND KEEP FOR YOUR RECORDS

Welcome to Central Piedmont Community College (CPCC)! We recognize and appreciate your contributions while serving in the US Military.

Please read the information provided in this Policies, Procedures and Reference Guide carefully and feel free to contact our office if you have any questions.

If you haven't decided on which GI Bill Educational Benefit to use, it is important to access the VA website www.gibill.va.gov) or call the Department of Veterans' Affairs 1.888.442.4551 (toll free) to discuss your options and determine which benefit would meet your needs while attending CPCC. The monetary issue is most likely a very important factor students will consider before selecting a benefit. While students may think they will receive more money under Chapter 33, that may not always be the case.

All Veterans' Affairs students seeking to use VA Educational Benefits are in the unique position of having to meet requirements as specified by both the Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) and the NC State Approving Agency (NCSAA), Although CPCC's VA Office does not work for the Department of Veterans' Affairs, it is our job to work closely with them to ensure that your needs as a student are met. Our office strives to meet the DVA goals of "Putting Veterans First."

Under Chapter 33, students may receive (amounts based on percentage of eligibility for each student):

- a tuition & fees payment for in-state cost only.
- a monthly housing allowance based on the Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH) for an E-5 with dependents. This amount is based on the zip code of the location of the school (CPCC – 28204).
- an annual book/supply stipend of $1,000 paid proportionately based on enrollment and percentage of eligibility.

Eligibility for Chapter 33:

Eligible individuals include those who served on active duty at least 90 aggregate days beginning on or after September 11, 2001, or individuals discharged with a service-connected disability after 30 days of continuous service. Discharged individuals must have received an honorable discharge. For detailed information go to www.gibill.va.gov or call 1.888.442.4551.

Chapter 33 eligibility criteria is service related and is based on an Active Duty service requirement under Department of Defense (DOD) or Department of Homeland Security (DHS) orders. The service requirement is an aggregate step system and is posted on the VA website at www.gibill.va.gov. Example: A student with 36 months of active duty may receive 100% of the maximum benefits payable and a student with 6 months but less than 12 months of service may receive 50% of the maximum benefits payable.

Chapter 33 benefits are payable for training pursued on or after August 1, 2009. No payments can be made under this program for training pursued before that date. In general, individuals will remain eligible for Chapter 33 benefits for 15 years from either date of last discharge or release from active duty of at least 90 continuous days. Individuals will generally receive 36 months of benefits and are limited to 48 months of combined benefits under educational assistance programs administered by VA.

Benefit Ranges:

For those who served fewer than 36 months, the percentage of benefit ranges from 40% to 90%:

- 90% - 30 total months (including service on active duty in entry level and skill training)

- 80% - 24 total months (including service on active duty in entry level and skill training)

- 70% - 18 total months (**excluding** service on active duty in entry level and skill training)

- 60% - 12 total months (**excluding** service on active duty in entry level and skill training)

- 50% - 6 total months (**excluding** service on active duty in entry level and skill training)

- 40% - 90 or more days (**excluding** service on active duty in entry level and skill training).

For example, an individual with five months of qualifying service could receive 40% of the tuition benefit, 40% of the monthly housing allowance, and a maximum of $400 books and supplies stipend.

General Information:

Students interested in utilizing Chapter 33 benefits should visit the Department of Veterans' Affairs website at www.gibill.va.gov or call 1.888.442.4551. Students must complete an application at www.gibill.va.gov, by going to "Apply Online", then "Education" to submit a VONAPP (Veterans Online Application) electronically. Eligibility is determined by the Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) and the Department of Defense (DOD) and not CPCC's VA Office.

Students will receive a Certificate of Eligibility (COE) once the VA Regional Processing Office processes the application and determines both percentage rate and months of entitlement. CPCC must have a copy of your Certificate of Eligibility and a completed CPCC Chapter 33 packet to secure your tuition and fees so it is important to apply early and before your tuition is due.

Important Factors:

In most cases, applying for Chapter 33 will be an **irrevocable election**. Students should calculate the benefits before making this choice to determine if Chapter 33 suits their financial needs. If you are not sure which benefit you should use or are eligible to receive (Chapter 30, 1606, 1607, or 33), contact the DVA at 1.888.442.4551 or visit the website for guidance. Once you have elected to receive Chapter 33 benefits, you may no longer access benefits under the Chapter you have relinquished. If you have time remaining under Chapter 30 and elect to receive Chapter 33 benefits, your time/months remaining will be transferred to Chapter 33. If you have exhausted your Chapter 30 benefits, you may be eligible to receive up to 12 additional months of benefits under Chapter 33 (for a total of 48 months using both benefits); contact the DVA at 1.888.442.4551 for guidance.

Tuition and Fee Payments:

Chapter 33 statutory requirements governing the Post-9/11 GI Bill require the DVA to pay in-state tuition and fee payments for the claimants enrolled at CPCC and receiving benefits under Chapter 33 to be paid **directly to the training institution**. Payments are made after the DVA receives and processes the student's enrollment certification submitted by CPCC's VA Certifying Official. Payments are based on the student's percentage of eligibility.

The Chapter 33 GI Bill pays only in-state tuition and fees. A student may have tuition and fees that exceed that amount if they are attending in an out-of-state status. Students need to be prepared to pay the difference in costs if not at the 100% benefit rate or if being charged out-of-state rates. **If tuition and fees are due before the student's VA file is complete, the student is responsible for paying and the student will receive a refund from the college (if eligible) once funds are received from the Department of Veterans' Affairs. Failure to pay or have tuition secured when the bill is due will result in classes being dropped for non-payment.**

Important Note: All changes in hours/costs for students under Chapter 33 must be reported to the DVA immediately. Because Chapter 33 is paid based on cost per credit hour and BAH is paid based on "Rate of Pursuit", even small changes can create overpayments. Students are responsible for notifying CPCC's VA Certifying Official of all changes as soon as they occur. Overpayments of tuition and fees will be the responsibility of the student.

BAH (Basic Allowance for Housing):

Students who qualify for the Basic Allowance for Housing under Chapter 33 will receive the amount based on CPCC's zip code for the main campus which is 28204 and equivalent to the military pay grade of E5 with dependents. Students qualify for a percentage of the BAH based on aggregate days served after 9/10/01 and determined by the DVA and DOD. Percentage of eligibility ranges from 40% to 100% and is listed on the Certificate of Eligibility.

BAH is paid to students based on "Rate of Pursuit." To receive the Housing Allowance, the student must have enough hours to be considered more than 50% of the full time rate at CPCC. To meet the "more than 50% requirement" at CPCC, students must take at least 7 hours during the 16 week term or 4 hours during an 8 week short session (one class must taken in a total class room setting). Students must be enrolled in 12 credit hours for the full 16 week term to receive their full percentage of their BAH allowance. Students enrolled in 7-11 credit hours receive a prorated allowance.

Important Note: Individuals on Active Duty will not receive the BAH. Individuals enrolled in exclusively online courses will receive a reduced amount.

Book/Supply Stipend:

An annual books & supply stipend will be paid directly to the student, paid proportionately based on enrollment and percentage level up to $1,000 per year. For students eligible for 100% of the maximum benefits payable, the book/supply stipend will be paid at a rate calculated at $41.67 per credit hour for up to 24 hours. This stipend will be paid in a lump sum once the DVA processes the enrollment certification each semester that is transmitted by CPCC's VA Certifying Official.

Students must be prepared to pay for books at the bookstore at the time of purchase and expect the book allowance as repayment from the DVA.

Kickers:

Individuals eligible for a kicker under other benefits may receive the Kicker under Chapter 33. The monthly Kicker amount will be prorated based on the individual's rate of pursuit. Payments of Kickers will be issued monthly directly to the student.

Important Note: $600.00 Buy-Up Kicker is not payable under Chapter 33.

Federal Tuition Assistance (TA) and Chapter 33:

A student cannot receive Tuition Assistance and Chapter 33 benefits at the same time for the same courses per VA Regulations.

For questions regarding TA, contact the DVA at 1.888.442.4551 or your Tuition Assistance Officer at your Unit.

Transfer of Entitlement (TOE or TEB):

This is a Department of Defense (DOD) program and they determine eligibility for TOE/TEB. DOD may allow an individual to transfer entitlement to one or more dependents if he/she meets service requirements and agrees to serve additional time in the Armed Forces. Go to www.gibill.va.gov to learn more current information.

Yellow Ribbon Program:

CPCC doesn't need to participate in the VA Chapter 33 Yellow Ribbon Program because our tuition and fees does not exceed the maximum limits for our state.

Getting Started at CPCC:

All VA students must complete CPCC's admission steps and complete a VA Student Packet before their tuition/fees can secured and an enrollment certification can be transmitted to the VA Regional Processing Office. The admission steps are listed on our website at www.cpcc.edu (see online catalog) and are listed below:

- ✓ Complete an Admissions Form either online or in person.
- ✓ Submit an official copy of your High School Transcript to Student Records (this will be waived if you have completed an Associates or Bachelors Degree from an accredited college).
- ✓ Submit official copies of all previously attended colleges, military transcripts, and Member 4 copy of your member 4 DD 214 to Student Records. Request an evaluation of credits by submitting a request for evaluation through your MyCollege.
- ✓ Meet with a Counselor to be admitted into a VA approved Program of Study. We can only certify courses required for one program of study.
- ✓ Take Placement Tests, if applicable. You may not be required to take these if you have transfer credits or recent test scores from another college. If you are planning on enrolling in remedial courses (MAT 080, ENG 090, etc), your Placement Test scores cannot be over two years old.
- ✓ Activate your CPCC email. All communication from the VA office will be emailed to that address.

Important Contact Numbers at CPCC (Central Campus – Main Numbers:

- Academic learning Center 704.330.6474
- Admissions/Registration/Residency Office: 704.330.6006
- Career Services 704.330.6551
- Counseling and Advisement Services Office: 704.330.6433
- Disabilities Services 704.330.6556
- Financial Aid Office: 704.330.6942
- Security 704.330.6632
- Student Records Office: 704.330.6625
- Student Success Center 704.330.6425
- Testing Center/Placement Tests 704.330.6886
- Transfer Resource Center 704.330.6454
- Veterans' Resouce Center 704.330.6126

Getting Certified for your VA Educational Benefits:

Your CPCC VA file must be complete before you can be certified for VA Educational Benefits and have your tuition/fees secured. Once your file is complete and you have registered, you can make an appointment to be certified by calling 704.330.6267 if your last name begins with letters A through I or 704.330.6699 if your last name begins with letters J through Z**.** A VA Request for Certification Form must be completed listing the courses that you are requesting for Certification of your benefits. Please access your "MyCollege" online service and run a Program Evaluation to confirm all courses are required for your Program of Study when you register as only required courses can be certified.

It is important that students not rely solely on VA checks for vital living expenses (rent, car payments, etc.) since CPCC can't guarantee the VA Regional Processing Office's timeframe in processing and making payments. Students can contact the VA Regional Processing Office to inquire about the status of their payments once they have been certified by CPCC's VA Certifying Official.

Each registration period, it is the student's responsibility to contact CPCC's VA Certifying Official as soon as they have officially registered so their tuition/fees can be secured. Students will not receive the book/supply stipend or BAH for another semester after their initial certification unless they contact the VA Certifying Official. Students are encouraged to register early and are sent an email notification listing their priority registration dates from the college before each registration period begins.

The DVA sends students an email confirming that they have received the enrollment certification once the VA Certifying Official transmits the information.

Getting Paid under Chapter 33:

Tuition and fees are paid directly to the college that certifies the student under this program. BAH payments will be paid directly to eligible students at the end of each month during the semester once the VA processes the Enrollment Certifications transmitted by CPCC's VA Certifying Official.

Book/Supply Stipends are paid directly to the student based on percentage of eligibility (up to $1,000 per year) and once the VA has processed the Enrollment Certification transmitted by CPCC's VA Certifying Official. Example: students eligible for 100% of the benefits payable will receive $41.67 per credit hour each semester up to $1,000 per year. **Students must be prepared to pay for books at the bookstore at the time of purchase and expect the book allowance as repayment from the DVA.**

Note: **Currently, Chapter 33 students will not verify their monthly enrollment on WAVE** as other benefit recipients are required to do to receive payment each month. Chapter 33 will be processed manually and students will automatically receive payments each month, if eligible. The DVA will notify Chapter 33 students in the future regarding WAVE requirements.

Satisfactory Progress:

Students must be in good academic standing to be eligible for VA Certification. VA students must complete each semester with a GPA of at least 2.0 or above to remain in a satisfactory status. Failure to maintain a 2.0 or above will result in Probation the first semester and Suspension the second semester. Once on Suspension, students are not eligible to be certified for their VA Educational Benefits until their GPA is brought up to the minimum required standards of progress.

Students are notified via their CPCC email account once their academic status becomes Probation or Suspension. It is the student's responsibility to seek academic assistance to prevent losing eligibility for their VA Educational Benefits.

CPCC has free academic tutoring at all campus locations and we encourage students to seek assistance early in the term. CPCC's VA Office along with our Academic Counseling Department offer mentoring sessions for any students who may need assistance with their academic plan.

Virtual Course Eligibility:

CPCC currently offers "eLearning" through distance learning courses offered online (web-based), telecourses broadcast on Time Warner Cable Channel 17 in Mecklenburg County, NC Information Highway courses and videoconference courses, and hybridcourses. Distance learning courses are designed for students who need reduced classroom time and greater flexibility with their schedule

It is important to read and understand the Virtual Course Guidelines/Eligibility Criteria Form included in this VA Student Packet. The option of receiving Veterans' Affairs educational benefits for Open Circuit Television courses or Internet courses is offered to students who have met specific criteria. If a student enrolls for Virtual Courses without meeting the specific criteria, the VA Office is not allowed to certify the course(s) for payment of educational benefits. **Remedial courses offered as Virtual Courses are not eligible for certification for VA educational benefits at CPCC.**

Important Notice for Chapter 33 (Post-9/11) students*: Per VA Federal regulations, individuals who are enrolled exclusively in virtual courses* ***will receive a reduced amount of BAH*** *(Basic Housing Allowance). Virtual Courses include online, telecourses and hybrid courses taught at CPCC (hybrid courses blend instruction both in class and online).*

Eligible Courses for Certification:

It is extremely important that students follow the college catalog under which he/she was admitted to his/her program. Failure to do so may result in courses not being applicable for benefits. To ensure courses are in the student's program, he/she should run a "Program Evaluation" through the "MyCollege" online service for students or check with their program advisor or academic counselor. If a course will not count toward graduation credits at CPCC, the course cannot be certified by VA. (Example: audited courses, courses transferred in from previous colleges, etc.)

Please note: courses that are required by other colleges or universities but are not required for the student's program of study at CPCC are not eligible to be certified for benefits at CPCC.

Schedule Adjustments/Withdrawals/Attendance Issues:

It is the responsibility of the student who is receiving Veterans' Affairs educational benefits to **immediately** notify the Veterans' Affairs Office of any adjustments to his/her schedule (examples: withdrawals, attendance problems, absences of more than 5 consecutive days, changing courses **or** sections even if the adjustment does not change the registered credit hours, credits by examination, audits, etc.). Failure to do so will result in overpayment of Veterans' Affairs educational benefits to the student. The student, because he/she is aware of the number of credit hours that he/she is enrolled for and the classes that he/she is actively attending, is responsible for the occurrence of the overpayment. A VA Schedule Adjustment Form must be completed by the student as soon as their enrollment changes. If there are mitigating circumstances that they would like to submit, they must provide a signed letter with documentation along with the VA Schedule Adjustment Form within 5 business days of withdrawing.

The last date of attendance (LDA) must be verified for all withdrawals or any classes that the student stops attending before a reduction can be transmitted to the DVA. If the student has attended classes throughout the semester and receives a "W" as a grade, this non-punitive grade must be reported to the Department of Veterans' Affairs. The Department of Veterans' Affairs does not pay for courses where students receive a non-punitive grade (W) and this usually results in an overpayment of VA benefits.

If you fail to provide the Veterans' Affairs Office with signed documentation of withdrawal from classes, your file cannot be processed for further benefits until after the LDA can be conclusively determined. If attendance cannot be conclusively determined, then your LDA will be the first day of the semester of the class in question. Determination of attendance via this manner will result in an overpayment, and will impede the process of payment of benefits for the following semesters.

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Remedial/Deficiency Courses:

Remedial courses and deficiency courses are those that are not credited toward the student's program, but are needed for the student to reach college level in certain areas. These can be certified for payment with the following documentation: Placement Test scores or documentation of rationale for the course is to be provided by the student's program counselor or academic advisor and entered in the student's computer file.

Note: Remedial courses must be taken in the classroom including labs, and not virtually, to be eligible for VA Certification.

Repeating Courses:

Only courses in which students received a grade of "F" may be repeated (one time only) and certified for Chapter 33 benefits. Courses completed with a grade of "D" cannot be re-certified unless the Graduation Office confirms that the student must pass the course with a "C" for graduation purposes at CPCC. This must be documented in writing before another certification can be transmitted for the repeated course.

Course Substitutions:

Students can substitute a course outside of their approved program for one within their approved program if approved by the Department Head. The Department Head of the course in question must enter an official course substitution in the "Graduation Substitution Waiver Display" screen. **The course for which substitution is sought cannot be certified until the Student's Program Evaluation has been updated.** The North Carolina State Approving Agency allows CPCC's Veterans' Affairs Office to accept only two substitutions per program curriculum.

Short Sessions (8 week terms within the 16 week term):

CPCC's VA Office must report the dates of enrollment for Short Sessions separately. **Students are paid for those hours of enrollment during the dates that the class runs and not for the entire term.** Due to the courses being accelerated, the rate of pay is higher during those dates of enrollment. The accelerated pay is determined by the Regional Processing Office in Georgia and not by the college. For BAH payments, Chapter 33 students must be enrolled in at least 4 hours in an in-class course to be eligible for BAH and would receive the payment only during the dates of that term for those 4 hours. Taking the lab portion of a class in seat will not meet the criteria for receiving BAH payments. In order to qualify for the BAH payments, at least one regular class must be in seat.

Changing Programs of Study:

To ensure that a Program Change doesn't impact a current enrollment certification, It is important to discuss program changes with the VA Certifying Official before making any changes.

Any and all program changes must be initiated through your Certifying Official and then Counseling/Advising. The student must complete a "Request for Change of Program," VA Form 1995 (veterans) and an evaluation of credits must be completed and reported to the DVA. This form is accepted only after your Program Code has been officially updated by your Counselor.

Corporate and Continuing Education Courses:

Veterans' Affairs educational benefits are not allowed for courses taken within the area of Corporate and Continuing Education. Any Chapter 33 students planning on enrolled in this specific CCE Program, must contact CPCC's VA Office for more details regarding eligibility.

Financial Aid:

We encourage all students to apply for Financial Aid to assist with educational expenses. Individuals can apply for Federal aid by completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) online at www.fafsa.gov. Any aid that is designated to go strickly toward tuition and fees must be deducted from the tuition and fees that are reported to the VA. Aid such as a PELL grant, student loans, NC Community College grant, and Education Lottery Scholarship do not have an affect on chapter 33 benefits.

Student Code of Conduct:

Students are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with generally accepted standards of scholarship and morality. The purpose of the Student Code of Conduct (policies and procedures are located at www.cpcc.edu) is not to restrict student rights but to protect the rights of individuals in their academic pursuit. CPCC's Counseling Department offers free Personal Counseling through their PCAP Program. Call 704.330.6433 for more detailed information.

Servicemembers Opportunity Colleges (SOC):

Central Piedmont Community College has been designated as an institutional member of Servicemembers Opportunity Colleges (SOC). As a SOC member, CPCC is committed to easing the transfer of relevant course credits and crediting education from appropriate military training. SCO has been developed jointly by educational representatives of each of the armed services, the Office of the Secretary of Defense, and a consortium of thirteen leading national higher education associations; it is sponsored by the American Association of State Colleges and Universities and the American Association of Community Colleges.

Contact Information for CPCC's VA Office:

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