

VETERANS AFFAIRS EDUCATION BENEFITS GUIDELINES FOR CHAPTER 35

**BE PREPARED TO PAY FOR TUITION, FEES, BOOKS, AND SUPPLIES UP FRONT AS VA BENEFITS DO NOT BEGIN UNTIL THE MONTH AFTER YOU START CLASSES EACH SEMESTER.**

**CERTIFICATIONS**

Your Central Piedmont VA file has to be complete before you can be certified for VA education benefits. Benefits are provided on a semester by semester basis and students are only paid for the exact dates of enrollment. Students enrolled in less than six credit hours in the a full term will need to have their attendance confirmed prior to certification. Please access your “MyCollege” online service and run your “Progress” to confirm all courses are part of your program of study when you register. Only courses in your program of study are certifiable.

**VA ANNUAL CERTIFICATION WORKSHOP**

All students attend a mandatory Annual VA Certification Workshop each academic year to be eligible for certification. The workshop schedule is located at [www.cpcc.edu/veterans](http://www.cpcc.edu/veterans) and is updated monthly.

**COURSE CERTIFICATION ELIGIBILITY**

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 their “Progress” through the “MyCollege” online service for students, check with their program advisor, or request a graduation check to be completed by the Graduation Office. If a course will not count toward graduation credits at Central Piedmont, it cannot be certified. If the student is enrolled in their last semester and will be graduating, they may be over-certified by taking an extra class(es) to bring their hours up to full-time. Check with the VA Education Benefits Office for more information if you are enrolling in your last confirmed semester to graduate.

Please note: courses that are needed by other colleges or universities and are not applicable to a program are not allowable for educational benefits at Central Piedmont.

**VA LOCK/RESTRICTION**

Each semester, once certification is requested a VA Hold/Lock is placed on the student’s account. Students must contact Central Piedmont’s VA Education Benefits Office to discuss any class schedule changes before the VA Hold is removed.

**DEVELOPMENTAL COURSES**

Developmental/remedial courses (examples: DMA 020, DRE 096) 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. Developmental courses can only be certified if taken in the classroom and don’t

include an online lab component. If the developmental course is hybrid (includes both classroom and online), we can't certify per federal law.

### **REPEATING COURSES**

Only courses in which students received a grade of "F" may be repeated and certified. 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. 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 curriculum administrator. The administrator for 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 "Progress" in their MyCollege account has been updated with the new course that is being substituted.**

### **ACADEMIC STANDARDS OF PROGRESS**

At the end of each semester, the VA Education Benefits Office will check grades. If the student does not complete the semester with passing grades, their academic status has to be evaluated and any failing (F), incomplete(I) and non-punitive grades(W) will be reported to the VA Regional Processing Office within a strict timeframe. For any F,I or W grades, last date of attendance will be confirmed by the instructor. The first semester the student falls below a 2.0 GPA, they are placed on VA Probation and are not eligible for online courses. If they fall below a 2.0 GPA for the following semester, they are placed on VA Suspension. Once on Suspension, the student is not eligible to receive VA Benefits until they meet the minimum standards of progress.

### **VA PROBATION ON TRACK MEETING**

Students on VA Probation will need to schedule an On Track meeting with a VA Counselor/Advisor in the Center for Military Families and Veterans before they can be certified. This meeting is to establish a support system and build a strong connection to ensure academic success for each student whose education benefits are in jeopardy.

### **DROPS, WITHDRAWALS, OR NOT ATTENDING**

It is the responsibility of the student who is receiving Veterans Affairs education benefits to immediately notify the Veterans Affairs Office of any adjustments to his/her schedule (withdrawals, credits by examination, audits, not attending etc.). Failure to do so will result in overpayment of Veterans Affairs education benefits to the student. A VA Education Benefits Office Schedule Adjustment Form needs to be completed by the student as soon as their enrollment changes. If there are mitigating circumstances that they would like to submit, they will need to provide a signed letter with documentation along with the VA Education Benefits Office Schedule Adjustment Form within 5 business days of withdrawing.

The LAST DATE OF ATTENDANCE (LDA) has to be verified for all withdrawals or if the student has stopped attending. If the student has attended classes throughout the semester and receives a "W" as a grade, this has to be reported to the Department of Veterans Affairs. The Department of VA does not pay for courses where students receive a non-punitive grade (W) and this usually results in an overpayment of VA benefits.

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 may result in an overpayment, and will impede the process of payment of benefits for the following semester.

### **PROGRAM CHANGES**

Any and all program changes need to be initiated through the VA Education Benefits Office. After the student notifies the Veteran Affairs Certifying Official, the student should contact Counseling/Advising to update their program. The student needs to complete a "Request for Change of Program or Place of Training," VA Form 22-5495 at [www.benefits.va.gov](http://www.benefits.va.gov) by logging into VONAPP and then selecting that form. After transmitting the information, print, sign, and date the form to submit to our office. The form is accepted only after your Program Code has been officially updated by your Academic Counselor.

### **PAYMENT TIME-FRAME**

If you have questions about status of benefits once the Veteran Affairs Education Benefits Office has completed the certification, please call the VA Regional Office at 1-888-442-4551. Please wait at least 3 business days after your enrollment has been transmitted to call. You may also inquire about the status of your certification via e-mail. The address is: [www.benefits.va.gov](http://www.benefits.va.gov). Be sure to include: *your full name, claim number, Social Security Number and Central Piedmont Community College as the name of your school* with your question.

### **TRAINING RATES**

Training rates are based on the number of credit hours in which the student is enrolled for a given semester along with dates the courses start and end. These are broken down as follows: During a full 16 week term:

- Full Time is 12 + credit hours
- $\frac{3}{4}$  time is 9 to 11 credit hours
- $\frac{1}{2}$  time is 6 to 8 credit hours
- Less than half time is 1 to 5 credit hours.

Some courses are offered under acceleration (short sessions). These courses are certified according to dates of attendance. They are separated from full semester courses. Central Piedmont's VA Education Benefits Office certifies the dates of class sessions to the VA Regional Processing Office, and they determine overlapping dates and the rate of pay.

During the summer term, classes are accelerated. Students who attend for the full 8 week summer term may receive benefits as follows: (The Regional Office determines this calculation)

- 6+ credit hours is full time
- 5 credit hours is  $\frac{3}{4}$  time
- 3 to 4 credit hours is  $\frac{1}{2}$  time
- Less than half time is 1 to 2 credit hours.

(Central Piedmont's VA Education Benefits Office does not determine the rate of accelerated pay; this is determined by the VA Regional Processing Office).

Pay rates can be accessed at [www.benefits.va.gov](http://www.benefits.va.gov). For trainees on Active Duty, payment is limited to reimbursement of tuition and fees only.

## **VISITING STUDENTS**

Students attending two schools during the same semester cannot be certified at both unless they are a "Visiting Student or Guest Student." The Home School's VA Certifying Official needs to send an email to Central Piedmont's VA Education Benefits Office to give our college permission to certify the specific courses that the student is registered for at Central Piedmont. The student cannot be certified for benefits until the Veterans Affairs Education Benefits Office receives the documentation.

## **FINANCIAL AID**

We encourage all students to apply for financial aid to assist with education expenses. Individuals can apply for federal aid by completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) online at [www.fafsa.gov](http://www.fafsa.gov).

## **REINSTATING BENEFITS**

If you have not been certified at Central Piedmont for more than two semesters, you will need to update the documents in your VA file and with Student Records. Your program of study needs to be updated to a current catalog year and you will need to complete a VA Education Benefits Office Change of Program/Change of Schools Form 22-1995. If you have attended other schools since leaving Central Piedmont, you will need to have the college transcripts sent to Central Piedmont's Student Records Office. You will also need to be in good academic standing.

## **ACTIVATE YOUR CENTRAL PIEDMONT EMAIL ACCOUNT**

The college's official means of communication is via Central Piedmont's student email. All communication from the VA Education Benefits Office will be emailed to that address.

## **CHANGE IN ADDRESS**

Call the toll free VA Telephone number **(888) 442-4551** and have your address changed over the telephone. If you have a WAVE account (Chapter 30 or 1606), you can update your address at that website. Please notify the Central Piedmont Student Records Office and the VA Education Benefits Office of any address, phone or email changes.

## **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](http://www.cpcc.edu)) is not to restrict student rights but to protect the rights of individuals in their academic pursuit. Central Piedmont'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, Central Piedmont is committed to easing the transfer of relevant course credits and crediting education from appropriate military training. SOC has been developed jointly by education 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.