

# EVERYTHING YOU ALWAYS NEEDED TO KNOW ABOUT VA BENEFITS...BUT WERE AFRAID TO ASK!

The Palomar College Veterans' Services Office (VSO) is providing this document for your reference and information. You should refer to this guide for clarification on receiving your VA benefits. This information is of a general nature. If you have a specific question not covered under the guidelines please contact the Veteran's Service Office at 744-1150 extension 2173 or 2174

Additional information can be found on our web site at:

<http://www.palomar.edu/veterans/>

## 1. APPLYING - WHAT'S REQUIRED AT PALOMAR COLLEGE?

**DD-214 (Certificate of Release from Active Duty)** – Three photo copies of all DD-214's (member four) must be submitted to the Veterans' Services Office.

**\$600.00 Additional Contribution** – Each service member who paid this contribution needs to submit a photo copy of the following: \* DD Form 2366, or \* Copy of LES's - if deductions were payroll deducted, or \* DD Form 1131 - Cash Voucher if paid cash in full. These documents provide proof to the VA that the \$600.00 was paid and VA will process your claim to include this kicker.

**Selective Reserves/Chapter 1606 recipients** – New reserve students need to submit a copy of form 2384 Notice of Basic Eligibility (NOBE) issued and signed by the reserve unit with the VA application.

**Application for admissions to school and for the VA benefits** - You need to fill out the appropriate VA application forms in the Veteran's Services Office. Admission to the College is separate.

**You must check in every semester after signing up for your classes with the VA office at Palomar IN PERSON in order to receive continuing benefits and in order to prevent delays in payment of benefits. If you do not fill out the "Request for Certification" form at our office we will assume that you are not a continuing student.**

**Translation: IF you do not fill out a request for credit your benefits will not continue into the next semester.**

## 2. PROCESSING TIME

The Veterans' Office usually clears paperwork in two week; during peak periods allow at least three weeks. Processing of the initial VA application takes at least 8 to 12 weeks at the Veterans Administration; subsequent paperwork usually takes 4 to 6 weeks.

## 3. TRANSCRIPTS

FEDERAL LAW REQUIRES Veteran to submit OFFICIAL SEALED transcripts from all schools, colleges, training institutes, and technical schools attended to the Palomar College Records Office. This includes all training and education received before entering active duty, as well as any received during service and after discharge, **even if VA benefits were not paid for attending the course or program.** Military transcripts (AARTS, SMARTS or CCAF and USAFI tests) are required and/or DD-295 or certificates of completion must also be submitted for military schools.

Veteran Students **have one semester to have original transcripts sent to the College Records Office.** The VSO **will not** certify students beyond the first semester of attendance until all transcripts, military schools and other training are on file with the college records office.

**Foreign schools** - Students with foreign school transcripts will need to have the foreign transcripts evaluated by an academic credentials evaluation service, and will need an official copy of the evaluation sent to the Palomar College Records Office.

#### 4. SELECTING A MAJOR

Veterans and dependents are required to declare a two-year major AA Degree as listed in Palomar's catalog, or a transfer major based on four schools **major articulation agreements** with California State or University of California and Palomar College.

VA students are allowed major changes. Students wishing to change their major are required to meet with the Financial Aid Counselor or the Veterans' Advisor for approval of the major change and new education plan. Both new major sheet and a copy of new education plan need to be turned in the VSO along with the rest of the required documentation.

You may only declare one major at a time at Palomar (no dual majors or majors plus minors are allowed).

##### WHAT IS A MAJOR?

A major consists of general education classes, major courses as prescribed in the catalog or articulation agreement and electives (only as required by a specific major). The VA also pays for required remedial/refresher courses as determined by testing through the Counseling Department at Palomar College, specifically Math, English and Reading classes. Refresher/remedial Courses are number between 1 & 49 and are not usable towards AA or transfer degrees, not all courses numbered 1 & 49 are remedial classes, (see the Veterans' office for clarification).

Palomar College has approval for all AA Degrees listed in our current catalog, and California State, or University or California System transfer majors. Students interested in selecting a transfer major should see the Financial Aid Counselor or the Veterans Advisor for four-year major articulation forms. Or go on line at <http://www.assist.org/> to obtain a four year major articulation agreement. **(Obtaining the forms does not exclude VA benefit recipients from meeting with a counselor or VA Advisor prior to major change.)**

**Note: The VSO can not use the Assist agreements done under the department listing as they are not officially articulated agreements between the four year schools and Palomar College.**

Students will need to provide the Veterans Office with both the transfer general education and major pattern they plan to pursue. The VA will only pay for up to 70 transferable usable units to the CSU or UC systems (see the Veteran's Office for clarification).

**Evaluation to major** - Evaluations are prepared during the first semester of attendance, unless the Palomar College Record Office has not received the official transcripts. The VA requires that Palomar complete an evaluation of the veteran students declared major and provide a copy to the student. This copy will be sent to you in the mail. Once an evaluation is completed, the VSO will check semester courses against the evaluation, and verify that the enrolled courses are payable. Payment of VA benefits for courses cannot be positively determined until an evaluation is complete.

#### 5. PAYMENT/MONEY/\$\$\$ (And what classes are / are not payable)

Payment is based on the dates the required class meets. The VA is supposed to automatically pay students for all payable breaks between regular semesters unless the veteran student states in writing that they do not want break pay. **Note - Break pay does decrease the amount of the remaining months of pay available** to students. Payment of benefits usually come between the 1st and the 15th of each month, and is paid for the previous month. The VA does not considered checks as late until after the 10th

of the month. Inquiries may be made through the Veterans office or directly with the VA at their toll free number 1-888-442-4551.

**SELF-CERTIFICATION** - Veterans drawing benefits under Chapter 30, 30/34 or 1606 are required to send in monthly self-certification of their attendance. The earliest this can be done is the last day of the month. Monthly verification can be done via one of the following two ways: Telephone - Using Interactive Voice Response (IVR)  
**1-877-823-2378**

Internet - WAVE (Web Automated Verification of Enrollment).

<https://www.gibill.va.gov/wave/>

**Failure to self-certify will cause your benefits to stop. You must do this every month or you will not get paid!**

**RECOMMENDED CLASSES** - The VA **DOES NOT PAY** for RECOMMENDED CLASSES, or for AERO 75, 85, 80, and 90, or the apprenticeship program.

**REQUIRED PREREQUISITES** - The VA **WILL PAY** for REQUIRED prerequisites such as English 50 and Math 50. They will pay for remedial course such as English 10, Math 10 or 15 for students where testing has shown the student to be math deficient.

**ACCELERATED SESSIONS** - Non-standard sessions such as summer or short sessions / Fast Track are payable but only during the time that they meet. Summer's most common sessions are 6 and 8 weeks in length. Unit requirements for summer are:

	6 week session	8 week session	Pay Status Equivalent
<b>Units</b>	4	6	Full Time
	3	4	¾ time
	2	3	½ time

**COOPERATIVE EDUCATION** IS NOT always appropriate for VA students. CE courses are only payable when it is listed as part of a specific major, and the student has not taken the course previously, or when elective units are allowable under the declared major. See the Veterans Office for clarification and **PLEASE REGISTER FOR CE CLASSES WITH CAUTION.**

**HE 100** - the 3-unit credit, which is based on military service and granted to veterans, **DOES NOT** have the equivalence of HE 100. If HE 100 is needed for the major the veteran must still take the class.

**DIRECTED STUDIES/DISTANCE LEARNING** - The VA will pay for TV courses, computer assisted instruction, online courses, one-way video, two-way video courses and independent study courses. Payment for these classes will cover only the period the class is in session.

**SHORT SESSIONS** - Short and nonstandard sessions are classes, which meet less than or more than a regular semester such as the summer and fast track sessions. Benefits for these nonstandard length classes are paid during the period of time the class meets. Short sessions are paid at an accelerated rate. (See description of "Accelerated Sessions" above.)

**REPEATED CLASSES** - You may repeat a course and receive VA payment for it if you received an "F", "FW", No Credit or "W" grade on the original attempt. The VA does not pay for repeats of "D" or better grades; or for repeats

of incomplete grades, unless the Incomplete is changed to an "F" grade. **EXCEPTION:** When a class is required for a major and must be passed with a certain grade level to progress to another required class; as Math 140 with a minimum grade of "C" is a prerequisite to progress to Math 141; repeat of a "D" grade for Math 140 would be approved for payment.

**SELF-PACED OPEN-ENTRY/OPEN EXIT** courses allow students flexibility in scheduling. Students can register at any time up to a designated date in the semester/session. Hours of attendance are arranged with the instructor and a specified number of hours must be completed to receive credit. All course work must be completed before the end of the semester, and depending on the number of hours the student arranges with the instructor each week these courses can be completed in shorter time frame. Whenever students finish the course work, they take the final examine.

The **VA pays based on attendance**; therefore the VA only pays for the self-paced course(s) while the student is actually attending the course(s). Students in Self paced / Open Entry/Open Exit courses are required to verify their weekly attendance in their classes with the VSO and are only paid for the courses during the time they are actually attending the classes. The Veterans' Services Office certifies students for the longest period (semester/session) and then shortens the course dates if needed.

The Veterans Office will require veteran students enrolled in self-paced course to submit weekly verifications of attendance for the courses. Failure to do this will result in a reduction in the student's rate of payment.

**CREDIT/NO CREDIT** - No credit grades will be considered in probation and dismissal procedures. The school does not allow students the option of a credit or no-credit grade when the class is required for and going to be used for the major.

**CHALLENGED CLASSES** - The VA will not pay for any class that is challenged. You must attend a class to receive payment for it.

## 6. ATTENDANCE - IF YOU DON'T ATTEND CLASS...YOU ARE NOT ENTITLED TO BENEFITS

If a student stops attending a class they must drop officially through the Palomar College Admission Office **and** report the drop to the Veteran's Office. **This is a student responsibility - not ours.** Federal law requires that students' report any change in enrollment status, which might affect their VA education benefits to the school and the VA. Your signature on the request for certification of VA educational benefits shows acceptance of the responsibility to keep the Veterans Office informed on any change in student status.

**FAILURE TO ACCEPT RESPONSIBILITY FOR DROPE  
COURSES CAN RESULT IN AN OVERPAYMENT.**

**When there is an overpayment the VA will ask for repayment of the overpaid benefits. If you ignore the VA's request they can withhold future GI bill payments, disability payments, or depending upon the situation they can take a student to court, charge interest and they may take future taxes returns attach wages put a legal hold on property or deny home loans.**

The Veterans Office monitors student attendance on a weekly basis via the computer and updated unit reports are sent to the VA. When adding or dropping classes the student **must report the drop or add directly to the Veterans office.**

**FW, NC, INC Grades** – Since the **VA will not pay benefits for the period after a student has ceased attending class**, Palomar College Veterans office is required to check on student attendance for all classes in which a student receives an "FW", "NC", or "INC" grades. It is possible that a student received the "FW", "NC", or "INC" grade as a result of an unofficial withdrawal, and we are required to contract students to learn the basis for the grade.

Each semester a letter will sent to the veteran student's who receive "FW" ,"NC", or "INC" grades asking why the student received the "FW" ,"NC", or "INC". Veteran students will be **required** to state if they

completed the classes and received the grade on the basis of the work completed for the class; or if they ceased attending the classes in which case they must indicate the month and the day they last attended.

The reason for the "FW", "NC", or "INC" grade will be noted in the students file. No further action will be necessary for those who received a grade based on work completed in the class. If the "FW", "NC", or "INC" grade is a result of non-attendance the VA will be notified of the last date of attendance reported by the student and the VA will reduce the students units and pay rate effective the date the student indicated as the last date of attendance

If veteran student does not return the letter as directed, the Veterans office will follow VA regulations and automatically report the last date of attendance for the "FW", "NC", or "INC" grade as the last official date to drop the course. At Palomar College this is the end of the "W" grade period or 50% mark of the course.

## 7. KEEPING IN THE KNOW

Here are ways to keep informed on the latest developments affecting veterans:

1. Stop by the Veteran's Services Office.
2. Read the Telescope, the student newspaper.
3. Check the Electronic Message Board in the Student Union.
4. News releases are in all the local newspapers at key times (such as before registration).
5. There are messages on the Palomar Television Station and Palomar Radio Station.
6. Check our website at: <http://www.palomar.edu/veterans/>

## 8. COUNSELING/ACADEMIC

When you see academic counselors (in the counseling office or transfer center) identify yourself as a veteran. Be aware that the VA places restrictions on what courses you may be paid for. A counselor's recommendation may not be payable under VA regulations, especially if the class is a recommended elective. Substitutions of courses must be approved by the school through the Evaluations Department and must be reported to the Veterans Office. Veterans' Office has several designated counselors and advisors who can assist the student with academic, financial, and VA counseling

## 9. EVALUATIONS

Evaluations are done during the first semester of attendance, unless the Palomar College Record Office has not received transcripts. The VA requires that Palomar complete an evaluation to the veteran students declared major and provide a copy to the student. Once an evaluation is done the Veterans Office will check semester courses against the evaluation; courses are also checked for payability at the beginning of each new term. The VA is notified of students enrollment in courses not required for completion of the declared major.

Make sure that the courses you register in are payable to your major prior to actually enrolling in classes. We will aid you as much as possible, but **students are ultimately responsible for the courses they register in**. When you receive a copy of the evaluation, if you do not agree with your evaluation you must contact the Palomar College Evaluations Office, clear any discrepancies with an evaluator and have them officially notify us of any changes.

## 10. VERIFICATION OF PAYABLE CLASSES

1. Consult with academic counselor or vet services.
2. Refer to your evaluation or Ed plan.
3. Please be aware that when you turn in paperwork to Veterans Office your classes will be reviewed to see if they are payable, however you are responsible for registering in proper payable courses.
4. If you decide to change majors you must do so officially through the Veterans' Office. A new Evaluation will be done for the new major, and classes will be checked for usability.

## 11. ACADEMIC AND PROGRESS STANDARDS

Veteran students should be aware of the standards of satisfactory progress and attendance for GI Bill recipients attending at Palomar College. If at the end of three consecutive semesters on academic or progress probation the student will be placed on Dismissal Status and the Veteran's Services Office is required to notify the VA. The VA will

terminate payment of benefits at the end of the Dismissal Status semester and students will not be eligible to draw benefits at Palomar College. A student may be reinstated when the student (a) does not attend for one semester, and (b) meets with a Palomar College counselor to determine whether the reasons that led to dismissal have been corrected sufficiently to enable improved performance. Please check with the Veteran's Office for details.

## **12. EXTRA PROGRAMS THAT MAY APPLY OR HELP YOU**

**ROUND OUT** - is a program, which allows students who have a limited number of courses remaining in their program to add non-required courses and be paid at a higher rate. Round Out may only be used in the final semester of attendance. It may be used under one major at the two-year level and again for one major at the four-year level. For further information contact the Veterans' Office.

**TUTORING** - the VA provides a reimbursed tutoring program for Dependents (Chapter 35), Vocational Rehabilitation students (Chapter 31), Chapter 32 (VEAP), and a limited tutoring program for Chapter 30. Chapter 1606 students do not receive a tutoring assistance allowance from the VA. Free tutoring is available to veterans through Palomar College's Math Department's Math Clinic and the Tutoring Center in the Library. Ask for more information in the Veteran's Office.

**CAL VET PROGRAM** - The California Veterans Dependents Educational Assistance Program offers educational assistance to children and spouses of disabled or deceased veterans. Dependents of POWs and MIAs, widow/ers of deceased veterans, and wives of 100%-disabled veterans may also be eligible. Ask for more information in the Veterans' Office.

**WORK STUDY PROGRAM** - Chapter 30/New GI Bill, Chapter 1606/1607 Selective Reserves, Chapter 35/Dependents, Chapter 32/VEAP and Chapter 31/Vocational Rehabilitation students who are receiving VA educational benefits of at least 3/4 time are eligible to apply for the VA work study program. The program provides up to 450 hours of work per semester at a tax-free rate of \$6.75 per hour. Work-study positions are also available at the Vets Center in Vista. If you are interested in the work-study program stop by the Veteran's Office for more details.

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