

Veterans Affairs Education Benefits

Note: All policies are subject to change based on institutional and federal guidelines.

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Central Piedmont is proud of its long-standing relationship with the men and women in uniform who bravely serve this country, those who have served, and their families. Central Piedmont is dedicated to providing the highest quality and comprehensive support to student veterans and their families in an atmosphere that provides commitment, respect, and academic excellence.

The North Carolina State Approving Agency approves Central Piedmont for the enrollment of persons eligible for education assistance benefits from the U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs. The college provides training opportunities for veterans, eligible National Guard/Reservists, and eligible dependents (spouse and/or children).

For additional information regarding these benefits, which are administered by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs, contact one of the following offices:

- U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Student Hotline - 1.888.442.4551
- Mecklenburg County Veterans Service Office - 704.336.2102
- Central Piedmont Veterans Affairs Education Benefits Office - 704.330.6552
- Central Piedmont Center for Military Families and Veterans - 704.330.6126

Priority Registration for Veteran Students

Central Piedmont offers priority registration to students using Veteran Affairs (VA) education benefits and veterans who submit a member 4 or service 2 copy of their DD214 to Student Records. Students using VA education benefits are encouraged to register early to ensure availability in the courses required for their program and to achieve timely program completion.

Eligibility for Enrollment Certification Process (Electronic Form 22-1999)

Students using VA education benefits are in the unique position of having to meet requirements as specified by both the Department of Veterans Affairs and the North Carolina State Approving Agency (NCSAA). The college strives to meet the Department of Veterans Affairs' goal of "Putting Veterans First."

For eligibility to receive VA education benefits, students are required to complete the following six steps:

1. Apply for VA education benefits.

All Veterans, National Guard/Selected Reserve members, and Survivors and Dependents of Disabled Veterans can apply online for benefits. Applications are available at benefits.va.gov/gibill. From there, applicants are directed to the eBenefits website for the online application. A Certificate of Eligibility from the Department of Veteran Affairs is sent to the student after the application is processed.

2. Complete all Central Piedmont admission steps.

All admission steps are available under Veterans on the Central Piedmont home page.

3. Submit official transcripts to Central Piedmont Records for evaluation.

Request official copies of high school, military, and all prior college transcripts to be sent to Student Records in the Central High Building along with the member 4 or service 2 copy of the DD214.

Evaluation of Transcripts

Students using Veterans Affairs education benefits need to request official academic transcripts be sent from all previous schools to the Central Piedmont Student Records Office, regardless of whether they received credit for the courses. VA regulations require that all prior college credit be evaluated toward the student's current degree plan and re-evaluated if/when the student changes programs or place of training.

Students are not eligible to be certified for any course they already have received credit, even if the course was completed before the establishment of eligibility for benefits. **Important Notice: A VA file is not complete until all official high school, military (including DD214 member 4 copy), and college transcripts are evaluated** by the Student Records office. A DD214 member 4 copy is also required (except students using Chapter 35 benefits).

4. Meet with an Academic Counselor in Military Families and Veterans Services to be admitted into a VA Approved Program of Study.

Selection of Degree Program

To receive Veterans Affairs education benefits, VA regulations require that students have a "predetermined and identified educational, professional or vocational objective." Benefits cannot be authorized for courses that do not lead to the completion of this objective. Courses that do not apply to the selected program are considered unrelated courses and are not eligible for benefits. Therefore, any such courses will not be certified. Students need to access their MyCollege account to confirm all courses are required for their program of study before they register for classes.

Important Notice: Students using Dependent Education Assistance Benefits (Chapter 35) must pursue a degree program to be eligible for certification in virtual/distance learning courses. This means students using Chapter 35 benefits seeking a diploma or certificate cannot be certified for virtual courses, per federal regulations.

Transitional Courses

According to federal guidelines, all transitional courses must be taken in seated classroom settings for VA certification. Examples of developmental courses are ENG 001, ENG 011, MAT 001, and all courses that start with 0.

Dual Degrees

Central Piedmont is approved for VA students to pursue dual degrees simultaneously. Diplomas and certificates do not qualify for the dual degree program. Students must meet certain criteria to be certified for Veterans Affairs benefits while seeking two degrees. Students desiring a second degree should contact the Center for Military Families and Veterans/Education Benefits for more information. Students can only be enrolled in two Certificate programs simultaneously (exceptions may apply for students using Chapter 31-Veteran Readiness and Employment benefits).

Conditions Permitting Dual Degrees

School policy allows dual degrees.

Dual degrees are approved at the school by the North Carolina State Approving Agency (NCSAA)

Students using VA Education Benefits can only be enrolled in 2 degree or certificate programs at a time. There may be exceptions to students using Chapter 31 benefits.

5. Submit a request for certification and a copy of your class schedule.

Certification request forms are located at <https://www.cpcc.edu/financial-aid/veterans-affairs-education-benefits/certification-process>.

Verification of Enrollment

Chapters 30 and 1606 Benefits

After the Veterans Affairs Education Benefits Office has certified a student's enrollment to the VA Regional Processing Office, **students using Chapter 30 and 1606 benefits need to verify their hours have not changed. This action is required on the last calendar day of each month** by calling 877.823.2378 or using WAVE (Web Automated Verification of Enrollment) through benefits.va.gov/gibill/.

Chapter 33 benefits are required to electronically verify their continued enrollment in school with the VA directly (separate from certification each semester with CPCC). If a student fails to certify with the VA for two consecutive months, VA will withhold housing allowance payments until the student confirms enrollment. (Guidance on how to certify will be sent to the student directly from the VA.)

Debt owed to the VA or Central Piedmont

To prevent student debt, the Central Piedmont Veterans Affairs Education Benefits Office is responsible for transmitting all enrollment changes immediately to the VA Regional Processing Office. Students are responsible for notifying the Veterans Affairs Education Benefits Office immediately:

- a. when changes are made to their schedule,
- b. if the student stopped attending class, and
- c. complete a Schedule Adjustment Form and submit to the Military and Families an Veterans Affairs office at Central Piedmont.

Notification from the Department of Veterans Affairs

All enrollment certifications are electronically transmitted through the Enrollment Manager Reporting System. The Department of VA transmits an electronic message directly to a students' Central Piedmont email account when any activity is transmitted by a School Certifying Official to the VA Regional Processing office. **A student's Central Piedmont email address is the official means of communication from the college.** It is always important to notify the Department of Veterans Affairs, Central Piedmont's Military Families and Veterans Services office, and the Student Records Department of address, phone number, or email address changes to prevent communication delays.

Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP)

VA education benefits are discontinued for students who cease to make satisfactory progress toward completion of their program. Veterans and eligible dependents/spouses are required to seek academic assistance by contacting their instructor and Military Families and Veterans Services before academic difficulties place them on "Probation" or "Suspension." **A cumulative grade point average of 2.0 or higher is required to meet the criteria for satisfactory academic progress for eligibility for Veterans Affairs education benefits.**

Unsatisfactory Attendance: Unsatisfactory attendance in courses may result in an administrative withdrawal. An administrative withdrawal is reported to the VA Regional Office and education benefits for the course(s) are discontinued at that time. Students must be in contact with their instructors if they are struggling with attending class and submitting assignments. Students will be marked as stopped attending if there is no activity per the syllabus. If a student is marked as stopped attending the VA certification will be reduced by the number of credits for the class(es) the student stopped attending. This may result in a reduction of benefits **Students need to contact Military Families and Veterans Services office if they have excessive absences and/or have stopped attending.**

Satisfactory Progress: Students receiving VA education benefits need to maintain a minimum cumulative grade point average (GPA) of 2.0 to be considered making satisfactory progress

Unsatisfactory Progress, Probation: Students who fail to achieve a cumulative GPA of 2.0 are placed on probation of Veterans education benefits for the next semester. Students will be notified by email at the end of the semester if they are on VA Probation or Suspension of education benefits. Students on probation are required to attend an On Track meeting with a Counselor in the Center for Military Families and Veterans during the probationary term before they can be certified. If at the end of one semester on Probation the cumulative GPA is not at 2.0 or above, student will be placed n VA Suspension of education benefits.

Unsatisfactory Progress, Suspension: If a student on VA probation fails to achieve a cumulative GPA of 2.0 at the end of the first probationary semester, the student is reported to the Veterans Affairs Regional Office as terminated due to unsatisfactory progress. The student is placed on suspension of Veterans Affairs education benefits. Students will be notified by the student's Central Piedmont email at the end of the semester if they are on Suspension of VA education benefits. The student is no longer eligible for certification until the cumulative GPA is at 2.0 or above. The

Department of Veterans Affairs discontinues VA education benefits for any student reported for unsatisfactory progress. These standards are in accordance with the Department of Veterans Affairs Code of Federal Regulations, Title 38, Part 21, Subpart D, Section 21.4277.

Failing Grades: Students using VA education benefits who attend the entire course but earn a grade of "F" may still receive VA benefits. Any student who does not complete the final exam and does not attend class through the last scheduled day receives an unearned grade of "F." The VA Regional Office is notified of any student who fails to attend class and fails to take the final exam and the date the student last attended class. Such students may be classified as having received an overpayment of funds if payment has been received for time the student was not attending class. Any overpayment is the student's responsibility. VA students may receive benefits to retake a required course if they previously received a failing grade.

Note: Courses completed with a grade of "D" cannot be re-certified if the college accepts the grade toward graduation.

Graduation: Students applying for Graduation must inform the Military Families and Veterans Services once they have verified they are in their last semester at the college.

Changes to: Address/Phone Information, Enrollment Status, Program of Study

Changes to Address/Phone Number

To report a change of address/phone number, students using Veterans Affairs education benefits should update their address/phone number through the Student Records Department or at mycollege.cpcc.edu. Students are also to contact Military Families and Veterans Services at 704.330.6552 and the VA Regional Office at 1.888.442.4551 to report changes to address/phone number.

Students using VA education benefits are responsible for and required to notify Military Families and Veterans Services immediately of any withdrawals, attendance issues, pending or approved program changes, course substitutions, and/or waivers for graduation.

Change of Enrollment Status

- **Withdrawn, Non-Attendance:** It is the student's responsibility to report all withdrawals or attendance issues to the Central Piedmont Center for Military Families and Veterans immediately to prevent overpayments. Students are required to complete and submit a **VA Schedule Adjustment form** within one business day of the enrollment change. The instructor must verify the last date of attendance for all withdrawals. Student using VA education benefits are allowed a one-time penalty exclusion by the VA Regional Processing Office for officially withdrawing up to six credit hours. Students can be paid up to the last instructor-confirmed date of attendance for those six hours. This exclusion must be approved and processed by the Department of Veterans Affairs. If the student attends classes throughout the semester and receives a "W" (non-punitive) grade, this must be reported to the VA Regional Processing Office and is not part of the six-hour, one-time exclusion - even if a student can document attendance through the last day of class. Students are responsible for overpayments resulting from non-punitive grades. Failure to notify the

Central Piedmont Center for Military Families and Veterans Services of withdrawals and continued acceptance of educational funds may be considered fraud. Students are encouraged to register only for those classes they know they can complete.

- **Withdrawn, Never Attended** - A grade of "WN" is assigned when a student registers for a class and never attends the class before the census date. "WN" grades are not included in the SAP calculation as attempted credit hours or assigned any GPA rating. The Department of VA does not pay education benefits for any courses assigned a "WN" grade.

Change in Program of Study

Changes in the program of study must be submitted to the VA Regional Processing Office by the Veterans Affairs Certifying Official when certification is completed. This is necessary because the re-evaluation of all prior credits earned must be completed to ensure their full utilization. Students using VA education benefits can be certified only for courses fully accepted for their program of study as reflected in the college catalog. Students using VA education benefits desiring a program change should contact a VA Academic Advisor first. However, all program changes are initiated through Academic Counseling Services or a counselor in Center for Military Families and Veterans Services. Students using VA education benefits should not change their program in the middle of the semester since classes already certified may no longer be part of the new program. The classes certified that are not in the new program may need to be terminated and payment received returned to the VA. Students using VA education benefits are responsible to the US Department of Veterans Affairs and/or the college for repaying overpayments.

VA forms available at benefits.va.gov/gibill/ are:

- VA Form 22-0296 - Direct Deposit Enrollment
- VA Form 22-1995 - Application for Change of Program or Place of Training – Veterans, National Guard/Reservists, Transfer of Entitlement
- VA Form 22-5495 - Application for Change of Program or Place of Training for Survivors' and Dependents' Educational Assistance, Fry Scholarship

Websites for Further Information

American Legion: legion.org/
 Apply for financial aid: studentaid.gov
 DD 214 online request: vetrecs.archives.gov
 Department of Veterans Affairs: va.gov/
 Disabled American Veterans: dav.org/
 Education Benefits online application: va.gov/education/how-to-apply
 GI Bill Programs, Pay Rates, Applications, Forms: benefits.va.gov/gibill/
 Returning service members: oefoif.va.gov/
 Veterans' Benefits Administration: benefits.va.gov/benefits