

VETERANS INFORMATION BOOKLET



BC3 107 College Drive, Butler, PA 16002

Purpose:

This booklet is intended to help you when enrolling and applying for your veterans' educational benefits at BC3. We urge you to read this brochure carefully. The Veterans Coordinator is located in the financial aid office in the Student Success Center Building. In support of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) this office provides information about college services, referral information and enrollment certification. If you have questions regarding your veteran's benefits, call Stella Smith at 724.287.8711 ext. 8509 or email at stella.smith@bc3.edu. Our office hours are Monday through Friday 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

If you have served in our nation's Armed Forces, you'll find a lot of people are ready to serve you at BC3. You'll also find a large number of fellow veterans in our student body. We understand the challenges veterans can sometimes face in making the transition to civilian job markets, and we are honored to be able to help you meet those challenges with opportunity.

We also want to help you get the education you've earned under the guidelines of your Veterans Benefits certification. Those guidelines are constantly changing, so it's important that you meet in-person with your advisor each semester before you enroll.

Mission Statement Veterans Office

The mission of the Veterans Office at BC3 is to assist veterans in pursuing their educational objectives. The Office serves as a liaison between enrolled veterans and dependents of veterans and the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. The Veterans Office staff is available to answer questions concerning veteran educational benefits, certification of enrollments for the Department of Veterans Affairs, and monitor students' degree plans and academic progress.

VA Contact Information:

Department of Veterans Affairs Pittsburgh Regional Benefits Office 1000 Liberty Avenue Pittsburgh PA 15222 1.800.287.1000

GI Bill Website: http://www.ya.gov/ or https://www.va.gov/

Education Inquiries: 1.888.442.4551 Enrollment Verification: 1.877823.2378

Address/Direct Deposit

Change 1.877.838.2778
Other Benefits: 1.800.827.1000
TTY: 1.800.829.4833

Military Transcripts

Information about military Joint Services Transcripts and how transcripts may be requested by current and former members of the Army, Coast Guard, Marine Corps, and Navy can be found at: https://jst.doded.mil/jst/

Selecting your VA Chapter:

Here are brief descriptions of current VA benefit programs, known as chapters. Please refer to the VA website at https://www.va.gov/ for more information. Please note benefits are subject to change.

| G.I. Bill Benefit | Post-9/11 GI Bill or Chapter 33 | MGIB-AD or Chapter 30 | MGIB-SR or Chapter 1606 | Chapter 35 Dependents Educational Assistance | Veteran Readiness and Employment (VR&E) or Chapter 31 |
|------------------------------|--|---|--|---|---|
| Minimum Length of Service | 90 days of Active or Aggregate service (after 9/10/01) or, 30 days continuous Service if discharged for Service- Connected disability | 2yrs of continuous service of 3yr service contract, 3yrs of continuous service for a 4yr contract or, separated due to a Service-Connected Disability after 30 days service (interpretation of minimum duty varies by service date, branch, etc.) | 6 yr. commitment (after 6/30/85) | Not applicable | Not Applicable; however, character of discharge must have been other than dishonorable. |

| Maximum # months 2 | *36 months unless the veteran him/herself receives additional entitlements from another veteran family member via the Transfer of Eligibility (ToE). They may receive TOE transferred entitlement + 36 months of earned entitlement based on their own military service. | *36 or less. Not completing the full-service contract as a result of special Separation reasons may result in receiving less. | 36 | 45 | *48 |
|-----------------------|--|--|---|---|--|
| How Payments Are Made | Tuition & Fees (T&F): Paid to school on behalf of Student – 100% paid for Public Schools. Private schools limited to Academic Year (AY) Cap. Schools can enter Yellow Ribbon contract with VA to pay ½ of the difference in T&F charges that exceed the AY CAP. VA agrees to pay the other half in the form of Yellow Ribbon payments. | Statutory Rate: paid directly to student. Rates change each fiscal year. Students must Certify enrollment via Web Automated Verification of Enrollment (W.A.V.E) VBA website each month to activate pay. | Statutory Rate: paid directly to student. (Rates change each fiscal year. Students must Certify via Web Automated Verification od Enrollment (W.A.V.E) VBA website each month to activate pay. Percent of the Statutory Rate of Pay is determined by the student's <1/4, 1/4, 1/2, 3/4 or Full Time Training level. | 100% flat rate paid directly to Dependent each month. | Tuition & Fees (T&F): Paid to school on behalf of student – 100% paid up to \$35,000 per calendar year. Higher cost schools require additional approval prior to enrollment. |
| | | Percent of the Statutory Rate of Pay is determined by the student's <1/4, 1/4, 1/2, 3/4 or Full Time Training level. | | Certify school attendance via W.A.V.E. VBA website each month to activate pay. Percent of the Statutory Rate of Pay is determined by the student's <1/4, 1/4, 1/4, 1/4, 1/4, 1/4, 1/4, 1/4, | |

| | Monthly Housing (MHA) Stipend: Paid for greater than (>) ½ time training comparable to the AD Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH) pay for an E-5 with Dependents calculated: (MHA Rate x Rate of Pursuit x Benefit %). A maximum of one-half MHA Rate paid if 100% of classes are enrolled online. | | | | Subsistence Allowance Stipend: Paid directly to student. Pay is determined based on ½, ¾, or Full- Time enrollment, plus an additional amount for each dependent. Eligible students may be able to select payment at the Post- 9/11 G.I. Bill BAH rate. |
|----------------------|--|---|---|--|--|
| | Books & Supplies: A flat \$41.67 per credit-hr. paid upon enrollment into each term. | | | | Books & Supplies: All required books and supplies are 100% covered and may be paid to the school on behalf of the student, purchased on behalf of the student with a government purchase card, reimbursed to the student for expenses paid out-of-pocket, or any combination thereof. |
| Duration of Benefits | 15 years from last release from active duty date if release was before January 1, 2013. If last release from active duty date was on or after January 1, 2013, veteran falls under the Forever GI Bill law that illuminated the time limitation to use benefits (a.k.a The Forever GI Bill). | Generally,10 years, one day from last day of the most recent active duty service period | Ends on the day the Member separated from the Selected Reserve Component or, when VA is notified of any Suspension imposed by the Service Component. The Service Component determine eligibility. | Spouse: 10 - 20 years 3 | 12 years from the date you received notice of your separation from active duty, or the date you received your first VA service-connected disability rating. However, this basic period of eligibility may be extended if a Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor finds that you have a serious employment handicap (SEH). |
| | *In cases of ToE Transferred benefits, beneficiaries may be limited by the date the Veteran chooses to have entitlements terminated. | | | Child: from age 18 and terminates at Age 26. | NOTE: For individuals discharged from active duty on or after January 1, 2013, the 12-year basic period of eligibility does not apply and there is no time limit on your eligibility. |
| Degree Training | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |

| Non-College Degree Training | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
|---|-----|-----|-----|-----|------|
| On-the-Job & Apprenticeship Training | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Flight Training | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Yes* |
| Correspondence Courses | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Licensing & Certification | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| National Testing Programs | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Work-Study Program | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes* |
| Tutorial Assistance 5 | | | | | |

NOTE: Items identified with an Asterix (*) indicate special circumstances

- 1. Amount of time varies according to when the Veteran enlisted and entered active duty.
- 2. You may receive a maximum of 48 months of benefits combined if you are eligible for more than one VA education program.
- 3. Spouses are generally eligible to receive benefits for 10 years. However, spouses of individuals rated total and permanent within 3 years of discharge and spouses of individuals who die on active duty are granted a 20-year eligibility period.
- 4. The Individual Ready Reserve (IRR) is a category of the Ready Reserve of the Reserve Component of the Armed Forces.
- 5. VA can pay the difference between the total cost of tuition and fees and the amount of Tuition Assistance paid by the military.

Attention all POST 9/11 Applicants: You must submit a Certificate of Eligibility Letter to the VA Coordinator at BC3 to apply Post 9/11 benefits towards your tuition.

The specific amount you'll receive will depend on how much active service you've had since September 10, 2001. We'll calculate this amount based on a percentage of the maximum benefit.

For example: If you had 90 days of active service since September 10, 2001, you would qualify for 40% of the maximum amount. If you served for 3 years, you would qualify for 100% of the benefit. So, if your school charges \$22,000 for in-state tuition and fees, you would receive \$8,800 if you had 90 days of active service and the full \$22,000 if you had 3 years of active service.

Note that this will change August 1, 2020. In this example, 90 days of active service would qualify you for 50% of the maximum amount as of August 1, 2020.

Chapter 33- Transfer of Post 911 Benefits to Eligible Dependents

You may be eligible to transfer education benefits if you're on active duty or in the Selected Reserve and you meet all of the requirements listed below.

All of these must be true:

- You've completed at least 6 years of service on the date your request is approved,
 and
- You agree to add 4 more years of service, and
- The person getting the benefits has enrolled in the Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System (DEERS)

If the DoD approves the Transfer of Entitlement (TOE), your spouse or dependent children can apply for up to 36 months of benefits, and may be able to get money for:

- Tuition
- Housing
- Books and supplies

Spouses

- May use the benefit right away
- May use the benefit while you're on active duty or after you've separated from service
- Don't qualify for the monthly housing allowance while you're on active duty
- May use the benefit for up to 15 years after your separation from active duty

Children

- May start to use the benefit only after you've finished at least 10 years of service
- May use the benefit while you're on active duty or after you've separated from service
- May not use the benefit until they've gotten a high school diploma (or equivalency certificate), or have reached 18 years of age
- Qualify for the monthly housing allowance even when you're on active duty
- Don't have to use the benefit within 15 years after your separation from active duty, but can't use the benefit after they've turned 26 years old.

Your dependents may still qualify even if a child marries or you and your spouse divorce. However, service members and Veterans can revoke (cancel) or change a TOE at any time.

If you want to totally revoke transferred benefits for a dependent and you're still in the service, please turn in another transfer request for the dependent through milConnect. If a dependent's transfer eligibility (ability to get a TOE) has been totally revoked, you can't transfer benefits again to that dependent.

Once you leave active duty, you can still provide a future effective date for when the TOE can be used, change the number of months transferred, or revoke the TOE by submitting a written request to VA through milConnect.

Enrollment Verification

Starting in the 2021-2022 school year, Post-9/11 GI Bill® students who receive Monthly Housing Allowance (MHA) and/or kicker payments are required to verify their enrollment to continue receiving their payments. Read below to learn more about the enrollment verification requirement and verification methods.

What is enrollment verification?

Enrollment verification is a new requirement for Post-9/11 GI Bill students to verify that they have remained enrolled in the same courses or training every month. Students who receive MHA/kicker payments will have their payments withheld if they fail to verify or report that they are no longer enrolled in their courses or training. To streamline the process, VA is providing the option to verify enrollment easily and securely via text message. Read more below.

This requirement is only for Post-9/11 GI Bill and does not impact other benefit programs, such as the Montgomery GI Bill (MGIB), Veteran Employment Through Technology Education Courses (VET TEC), Survivors' and Dependents' Educational Assistance (DEA), Veterans Rapid Retraining Assistance Program (VRRAP), or the Edith Nourse Rogers STEM Scholarship. This requirement also does not currently apply to GI Bill students in on-the-job, apprenticeship, flight, or correspondence training.

If you are an MGIB student, this new requirement does not represent a change for you, as MGIB students are already required to verify enrollment.

When does enrollment verification start?

It will become effective in phases. Currently, the monthly verification requirement is only being applied to Post-9/11 GI Bill students at Institutions of Higher Learning (IHL) and certain Non-College Degree (NCD) facilities who also receive MHA and/or kicker payments.

All students, including students who do not receive MHA/kicker payments, will be provided with more information before the enrollment verification requirement applies to them.

NOTE: If you are taking multiple classes and **any of them** start after the effective date of this requirement, you will be required to verify enrollment even if your other classes started earlier.

How do I verify enrollment?

You can verify enrollment via text or email. See more details below:

By Text Message:

- opt in: Students with a U.S. mobile phone number can use text messages as a simple, quick option for verifying monthly enrollment. As your enrollment approaches, you will receive a text informing you that you've been registered to receive texts for enrollment verification. Then, about 24 hours later, you'll receive the following opt-in text: "Post-9/11 GI Bill housing and kicker payments now require monthly enrollment verification. Would you like to submit yours via text? Please reply YES or NO." Reply "YES" to opt in. The text message link will expire 14 days after receipt, so please respond within that time frame.
- Verify: After opting in, you can verify your enrollment every month simply by responding to the following text message from VA: "Did you remain enrolled in your courses in MONTH YEAR as certified? Please reply YES or NO. If you have dropped all your courses, you must reply NO." Reply "YES" to verify enrollment for the previous month. If you don't reply within 6 days, the conversation will expire and you will need to call the Education Call Center (ECC) at 1-888-GIBILL-1 (1-888-442-4551) domestically or 001-918-781-5678 internationally to verify your enrollment.

NOTE: When responding to opt-in or verification texts, it may take up to a day to receive a confirmation text in response. Be assured that your response has been received. Texts will be sent from 44354.

Enrollment verification via text message is safe and secure. VA will **never** ask for your personal information, such as social security number or bank account information, via text. VA strongly recommends text message verifications for verifying your reenrollment. By Email:

- If you opt out of text messages, can't verify by text, or do not have a US mobile phone number, you will be **automatically enrolled** in email verification at the email address on file with VA.
- After being opted into email verification, you will receive an email from do-not-reply@notifications.va.gov with the subject line, "Confirmation: You've been enrolled into VA's email verification!"
- On the last day of each month, you will receive an email with the subject line, "Action Required: Verify Your Monthly Enrollment". **Select "Yes, my enrollment is the same"** to

verify your enrollment. After selecting your response, you will be taken to a confirmation page thanking you for verifying your monthly enrollment.

- If you don't select a response **within 14 days**, the links in your email will expire and you will need to call the ECC to verify your enrollment.
- If your enrollment status has changed, select "No, my enrollment has changed." Please contact your SCO to ensure your enrollment record with VA has been adjusted.

By Phone:

If you are unable to verify via text or email, you will need to contact the ECC at 1-888-GIBILL-1 (1-888-442-4551) and ask a representative to verify your enrollment. NOTE: ECC wait times may be high due to the number of students verifying enrollment each month. If you're not sure if VA has your mobile phone number and/or email on file, you can contact the ECC to update your contact information and ensure you can verify via text or email.

What happens if I fail to verify my enrollment?

If you fail to verify enrollment for two consecutive months, your MHA/kicker payments will be placed on hold. In order to have your payments released, you will need to call the ECC to verify your enrollment. When you call the ECC to release your payments, you may also enroll in text message verification at that time.

Why am I being required to verify my enrollment?

By regularly verifying your enrollment, you protect your GI Bill entitlement by preventing charges for classes or training you did not attend. Though this new requirement is an additional step, enrollment verification is easy to do and will help you better manage and access your earned benefits, as well as help prevent overpayments.

Do these benefits expire?

This depends on when you were discharged from active duty.

If your service ended before January 1, 2013, your Post-9/11 GI Bill (Chapter 33) benefits will expire 15 years after your last separation date from active service. You must use all of your benefits by that time or you'll lose whatever's left.

If your service ended on or after January 1, 2013, your benefits won't expire thanks to a new law called the Forever GI Bill - Harry W. Colmery Veterans Educational Assistance Act.

Forms Required by BC3

- Every semester all students must complete and return <u>VA Enrollment Form</u>
- Certifying Official at BC3. One will be emailed to your BC3 email. If you do not receive one, email the certifying official at stella.smith@bc3.edu.

NOTE: If you contributed to the "Buy Up" Program through Chapter 30 or 1607 please provide documentation to BC3. If you are eligible for a "kicker" please provide copy of signed contract.

****DD 214 – Discharge Paperwork (always submit member copy 4)

****NOBE (Notice of Basis Eligibility) Ch. 1606/1607 - contact your unit to receive a copy.

| | CH. 30 Active Duty Discharged /Retired | CH. 31 | CH.1606/ 1607 Nat 'Guard Reservists | CH. 33 Post 911 | CH. 33/ TEB Dependents Post 911 Transfer | CH 35 Dependent / Disabled Deceased Vet. |
|-----------------------|---|---|--|---|---|---|
| New Student | 22-1990, DD214 | 28-1905 | 22- 1990 , DD2 14, NOBE, call – up orders | 22-1990, DD214, Certificate of Eligibility (COE) | 22-1990e, proof of transfer | 22-5490 |
| Transfer Student | 22-1995, DD214 | 28-1905 | 22-1995, DD214, NOBE, call-up orders | 22-1995, DD214, COE | 22-1995, proof of transfer | 22-5495, COE |
| Continuing Student | Enrollment Certification Form (ECR) | ECR | ECR | ECR | ECR | ECR |
| Guest Student | Approval Letter from Parent School | Approv al Letter from Parent School | Approval Letter from Parent School | Approval Letter from parent school | Approval Letter from parent school | Approval Letter from parent school |

When will the College notify the VA of your enrollment?

At BC3, your enrollment certification will be forwarded to the VA 2 to 3 weeks after the Enrollment Certification Form is submitted with ALL supporting documentation.

When will you get your money?

Generally, first time users will have to wait at least 8 weeks; however, continuing and returning students may to have to wait 6 weeks after the VA receives your enrollment certification from your school.

Paying your tuition at BC3

All students with the **exception** of Chapter 31 (vocational rehabilitation) and Chapter 33, Post 9/11, applying for benefits through the VA must pay in full or set up a payment plan through the Finance Office by the published deadline.

How do you receive payment?

VA education benefits follow a post-payment plan. You are paid approximately the first or second week of a given month for your enrollment period for the previous month. In order for this to happen it is important that you enroll and turn in ALL paperwork at the beginning of the enrollment period.

To receive payment if you are using Chapter 30, 33, 1606 and 1607 benefits, you must verify your enrollment monthly on the last day of the month.

How much will you receive?

Active duty personnel and student enrolled less than half-time receive tuition and fees only. Chapter 1606 will either receive a proportionate monthly rate for less than half-time or tuition and fees whichever is less of the two amounts. Veterans are paid according to their enrollment status – full-time, ¾ time, half-time or less than half-time. The amounts for each category vary considerably according to your chapter, number of dependents, applicable bonuses and kickers. Base payment rates can be found at:

https://www.benefits.va.gov/GIBILL/resources/benefits_resources/rate_tables.asp

Degree Programs and Payment for Courses

VA expects you to work toward a degree or certificate program approved by them. The college catalog is sent for approval upon the issuance of the updated college catalog. Currently, no additional non-credit classes have been approved for VA benefits. VA does not permit enrollment as a non-degree seeking student. Carefully select your degree program when you apply for admission. The degree program you select on your application will determine the courses you will need to register for in order to complete your degree program. Every course for which you register will be approved or denied for payment of VA benefits based on whether or not it is required by that degree program according to the catalog under which you were admitted. Electives are allowed, but only up to the number of elective credits allowed in the published degree program. If you wish to change your degree program, you must fill out a student update form for your degree program change to be reflected in the BC3 computer system. The change of school VA form must be filled out online through the WAVE system (Form 22-1995/veterans or 22-5495/dependents) as well as, notify the Certifying Official of the degree change by noting on the Enrollment Recertification (Change) Form(s).

Developmental Courses

To be paid for developmental courses, you must test into these courses (such as English and Math courses). Test scores must be entered in the BC3 computer system for verification of eligibility.

Repeating a Course

Courses that are failed or for which the grade does not meet 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 a program requires a higher grade than achieved, that course may be repeated. For example, if Nursing requires a "B" or better in Biology, then that course may be repeated if a "B" was not earned.

Required vs. Elective Courses

After your Enrollment Certification Form and supporting documentation is submitted to the Certifying Official each semester, it is the college's responsibility to submit to the VA, **only** the courses you are taking that will count toward the program you are following. You may take electives only to the extent they are allowed in your degree program. The college cannot submit enrollment for courses which might count toward an eventual 4-year degree (unless they are needed for your degree at BC3 or you are admitted to a 4-year school and are degree seeking). We are also unable to certify (submit) courses you take for fun or personal enrichment unless they also count in your degree program.

Tutorial Assistance

The VA will provide money to help defray the cost of a tutor, with certain limitations. The maximum amount payable per month is \$100 with a maximum total amount for any one student of \$1200 per year.

Active Duty Tuition Assistance

This benefit tuition reimbursement is paid directly to the college through paperwork you submit at the time you register. There are no monthly benefits associated with this option. Your paperwork should be submitted to the Finance Office and not the VA Certifying Official.

National Guard and Reserve Tuition Assistance

It is recommended that you see your unit Retention or Education officer early for advice on eligibility, unit processes, and timeframes for requesting tuition assistance so that after you enroll in courses you can be prepared to present all payment related documents i.e., tuition assistance form, degree audit signed by an advisor and school bill to the Finance Office before the payment deadline.

Responsibilities of the Veteran

- You must submit a <u>VA ENROLLMENT FORM</u> to the Veteran's Certifying Official, each semester to have enrollment certified to the VA.
- Regardless of the courses you enroll in, the BC3 Veteran's Certifying Official can only
 certify to the VA enrollment in courses that are required for your degree/certificate as
 defined in the BC3 catalog.
- Once an area of requirement is met, no other classes can be certified for that area unless there is unmet general elective credit availability.
- Once an area requirement is met for specified degree; any classes taken in that area will be considered elective credit. Transfer credit from other institutions, including military credit, will be evaluated for credit and applied to your BC3 degree plan. Once
- Requirements are completed for each area then no other courses in this area will be certified to the VA.
- Audited courses cannot be certified to the VA.
- **Short term and late start classes are only certified for the period in which they meet.
 The VA will only count them in your total number of hours enrolled for the period they are in session. This can affect your enrollment status and your payment level. **
- To ensure the most prompt and accurate reporting of schedule changes, please submit an Enrollment Certification Change Form as you are changing your schedule.

Responsibilities of the Veteran, cont...

- If you drop or add classes, enroll in classes outside your BC3 degree program, repeat
 classes, enroll in short-term classes, or are dropped for nonpayment or
 nonattendance, your enrollment status may change and will be automatically
 reported to the VA. These changes can result in an overpayment as determined by the
 VA.
- You must attend class and make satisfactory academic progress as defined in the BC3
 Course Catalog. If you stop attending a class and do not officially withdraw from it
 and receive a failing grade, BC3 is required to report this information along with the
 last day of attendance in that class to the VA. The VA will consider this a reduction in
 enrollment and charge an overpayment against your VA education benefits.
- If you are placed on academic probation or suspension, BC3 is required to report this status to the VA.

Summary

The VA expects you to be serious about your pursuit of a degree objective. They expect consistent progress toward that objective, as defined by the college's curriculum and its academic standards. So as long as you realize that your entitlement to benefits carries with it some restrictions and reporting obligations, both on your part and the college's, then you should be able to successfully use your benefits for many semesters.

Other important information:

- The BC3 VA office corresponds via email system. It is your responsibility to check your Email account regularly.
- Chapters 30, 33, 1606 and 1607 recipients must verify attendance monthly (online via WAVE or by phone).
- The Post 9/11 GI Bill is the last payer which means that any tuition-specific funding such as military or employer tuition assistance and grants or scholarships that are for tuition purposes only must be deducted from the tuition reported on your enrollment certification. Failure to report this type of funding on the reverse side of this form may cause you to have a debt with BC3. This requirement does **NOT** include Financial Aid that you receive through the FAFSA such as Pell grants & student loans.
- Service members using TA must apply for this benefit separately from the GI Bill
 application and must submit an authorized approval to the BC3 Third Party
 Billing/Accounts Receivable Office. The Veterans Certifying Official does not process
 TA applications.

Your signature on the enrollment certification form authorizes BC3 to release yourinformation to the US Department of Veterans Affairs all of your student education records maintained by Butler Community College including, but not limited to your Social Security Number.