



Veterans “Frequently Asked Questions” Post 9/11 GI Bill

1. Will Excelsior College wait for the Post 9/11 payment from the VA and allow the Veteran to start classes?

Yes, payments for tuition and fees will be waived based on the percentage of your Post 9/11 GI Bill eligibility while you take classes. Please be sure you fax a copy of your Certificate of Eligibility (COE) statement to 518-464-8777 and on the cover sheet put to the attention of “financial aid” or email to VAFA@excelsior.edu. A COE is required but, if you are still waiting for your COE from the Veterans Administration, you can submit your unofficial DD 214 just to get started via fax or email mentioned above. The Department of Veteran Affairs will send payment directly to Excelsior College. Please feel free to contact our Financial Aid Office at VAFA@excelsior.edu

2. Is the monthly housing allowance (MHA) available to students taking classes solely on-line?

As of October 1, 2011, students using the Post 9/11 and pursuing classes through distance learning may now receive the monthly housing allowance (MHA). The solely online housing allowance is half the national average BAH for an E-5 with dependents (the rate will be \$714.50 for 2013). This is subject to prorating based on the number of credits being taken. A student who wants to receive the full monthly housing stipend must attend college full time. Attendance less than full time but, greater than half time will provide veteran students with a prorated rate housing stipend, rounded to the nearest tenth.

3. I am active duty, if I use the Post 9/11, will I receive the MHA?

Active duty military personnel will **not** receive the MHA. Military personnel already receive a monetary allowance towards their housing costs because they have to live where the military sends them. A certain amount of money is designated by the military and provides personnel additional monies to help them be able to live in that area.

4. How do I apply for VA education benefits?

If you have never used your VA benefits you should go to: <http://www.gibill.va.gov/> to apply online using VONAPP or down load and use VA form 22-1990. If you have used your VA benefits before fill out VA form 22-1995 for a change of schools and choose Excelsior College.

On the VA website enter the form number in the search area to locate the documents and mail to the Eastern Region: VA Regional Office, PO Box 4616, Buffalo, NY 14240-4616. The VA will

mail you a certificate of eligibility (COE) which you will email to **VAF@excelsior.edu** or fax to **518-464-8777** and on the cover sheet put to the attention of “Financial Aid”.

While you are waiting for your COE, you may provide a copy of your DD-214 to **VAF@excelsior.edu** or fax to **518-464-8777** and on the cover sheet put to the attention of “Financial Aid”. Financial aid will set up your Excelsior College account for the Post 9/11 at your payable percentage and email you within 24 – 48 hours instructing you to enroll in your degree program or register for classes.

5. I am active duty, if I use the Post 9/11, will I receive the book stipend?

The answer is yes! Beginning October 1, 2011, active duty personnel and their GI Bill eligible spouses will soon be able to get funding for books and supplies at the rate of \$41.67 per credit hour as part of the Post-9/11 G.I. Bill. Active duty members and their spouses can receive up to \$1,000 for books and supplies, per academic year, when using the Post-9/11 G.I. Bill. Additional benefits include reimbursement of fees for exams used for admission to colleges and reimbursement for more than one licensing or certification examination. The new change in law also affects payment eligibility, and now accounts for active duty service performed by National Guard members under Title 32. Initially, a student will pay for their books and supplies and receive the book stipend from the VA at a later date.

6. How do I receive the MHA taking classes using both online and traditional classes?

You can receive the MHA if you take classes from Excelsior College **and** take a class from a local in-residence, traditional college in your area at the same time. The MHA you receive will be based on the zip code of the local traditional college. All the courses you take must apply to your Excelsior College degree and be approved by your academic advisors. Excelsior College advisors are prepared to discuss the classes you can take in your local area that will apply to your degree while you are taking classes with Excelsior College.

You must be attending college **more** than 50% or **more than half time** for the MHA. As of August 1, 2011 a student who wants to receive the full monthly housing stipend must attend college full time. Attendance less than full time but, greater than half time will provide veteran students with a prorated rate housing stipend, rounded to the nearest tenth.

Undergraduate Example 1: taking 15 week courses:

If you were taking 12 credits (or 4 classes each worth 3 credits) for 15 weeks that would be considered full-time (100%).

If you were taking 9 credits (or 3 classes each worth 3 credits) for 15 weeks that would be considered three-quarters time (75%).

If you were taking 6 credits (or 2 classes each worth 3 credits) for 15 weeks that would be considered half-time (50%).

Undergraduate Example 2: taking 8 week courses:

If you were taking 6 credits (or 2 classes each worth 3 credits) for 8 weeks, that would be considered full-time (100%).

If you were taking 3 credits (or 1 class worth 3 credits) for 8 weeks that would be considered half-time (50%).

Graduate Level Example 1: taking 15 week courses:

If you were taking 6 graduate level credits in a 15 week term that is considered full-time. (100%)

Graduate Level Example 2: taking 8 week courses:

If you were taking 3 graduate level credits in an 8 week term that is considered full-time. (100%)

Remember, each term or semester, to get the full MHA, you must take classes from Excelsior and a traditional college at the same time at the full time rate of pursuit. Also, the VA will look at every day in the month so be sure you were taking at least **more than 50%** course load. If you are **not** taking 51% or more every day of that month than you will not get the prorated housing allowance rounded to the nearest tenth.

You must be attending college full time between your local college and Excelsior to get the full MHA.

7. How do I get my book stipend?

Excelsior College will report (certify) your enrollment status to the Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA) as a student during the coming term. When the DVA processes your claim, they will make payment to Excelsior College for your tuition and fees and send you your book allowance which is \$41.67 per credit with the 100% benefit and prorated for lesser benefits. Initially, a student will pay for their books and supplies and receive the book stipend from the VA at a later date. \$1,000 is available per year for the book stipend.

8. What is Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH)?

Active duty military personnel receive a monetary allowance towards their housing costs because they have to live where the military sends them. Each area's amount for the allowance is based on the cost of living there. A certain amount of money is designated by the military and provides personnel additional monies to help them be able to live in that area.

The new Post 9/11 GI Bill will pay the veteran a Monthly Housing Allowance (MHA) if they attend school more than half time. So this can mean quite a bit of money for the Veteran if he/she complies with all the stipulations. The veteran will receive the same as an E-5 with dependents.

Basic Housing Allowance link - <http://www.defensetravel.dod.mil/site/bahCalc.cfm>

Example: Go to the link above and input the zip code of the local college you will be attending in your area and choose E-5 for pay grade. You will see the amount of money a veteran will receive, based on E-5 with dependents.

Exam Certification Changes for Students using VA Benefits

Effective July 1, 2012, there will be a change to the way Excelsior College exams will be certified for VA Benefit purposes. This affects all students using VA Educational benefits for Excelsior College Exams and will be of special interest to students in the Associate of Nursing program.

The following changes do **not** apply to students using the Ch 31/Vocational Rehabilitation Employment Benefit.

This change is mandated by the Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA).

For exams with a scheduled test date of July 1, 2012 and beyond, the term of study reported to the DVA will be the total numbers of days beginning with the date of exam registration, and ending with the date the exam was scheduled and attempted.

Important Note: *The DVA will use the day you register for the exam as the 'start date' of the semester/term and the day you take the exam as the 'end date' of the semester/ term.*

9. How does registering and scheduling an exam affect my VA benefit starting July 1, 2012?

Now when you register for an exam, that date will be the start date of your term and the day you schedule and take your exam will be the end date of your term. This new process will allow students to determine their rate of pursuit for their VA benefit.

For example, a student registers for a 3-credit exam on May 25 (start date) and schedules and takes the exam at a testing center of August 3 (end date). For VA Benefit purposes, Excelsior College will report a term of study of 70 days or **10 weeks, which is less than half time pursuit.**

However, if the exam has a registration date of May 25 and the exam is scheduled and taken on July 20 instead, the term reported will be 56 days, or **8 weeks, which is 60% rate of pursuit.**

10. How does the new exam process affect Chapter 33/Post 9-11 Students seeking the Monthly Housing Allowance (MHA)?

Students must study at a rate "greater than half-time to full-time" to be eligible for housing allowance consideration, so it's crucial that students do not register for an exam until they are ready to test in **8 weeks or less** from the registration date. Students who test longer than 8 weeks after registering for an exam will likely not qualify for the Monthly Housing Allowance (MHA). Active-duty students do not qualify for the MHA regardless of when they test.

11. Will this change in determining rate of pursuit affect students using Chapter 30, MGIB?

The change in using the registration date of an exam as the start date and the scheduling and taking of the exam date as the end date will also affect students using Chapter 30 (MGIB), or any other VA educational benefits, because monthly payment rates are based on a student's rate of pursuit.

For example, a student using Chapter 30 will qualify for the half-time monthly rate if he or she tests within 8 weeks of registration for a 3 credit exam. However, the DVA will pay at a lesser monthly rate when a student takes longer to test and will then lose his or her half-time status.

12. How will the VA know that I am taking classes at both Excelsior College and my local in-residence College for the MHA?

You should contact Excelsior College's Veterans Affairs office, vafa@excelsior.edu, and provide the name and address of your local in-residence school, the course number(s), title(s), the number of credits, and the VA representative's contact information including their fax number. Students should request course approval from their Excelsior College academic advisor prior to requesting a parent letter. Excelsior College's Veterans Affairs office will send your in-residence school a parent letter informing them that we will accept the credits you are taking from their institution. You will need to also provide your local college with a certificate of eligibility on your VA benefit. The VA will then forward you the MHA for which you qualify.

13. How do I request a parent letter if I am taking classes at both Excelsior College and my local college for the housing stipend?

If you take courses at another school (your "visiting" school), request a Parent Letter from Excelsior. It informs the visiting school that we will accept the credits you are taking from them. Follow these steps:

- Request course approval from your Excelsior Academic Advisor before requesting a parent letter.
- Provide Excelsior's VA office with the name and address of the visiting school, the course number(s) and title(s), the number of credits, and the visiting school's **VA representative contact information, including their fax number.**
- Provide the "request for a parent letter" by email to Vafa@excelsior.edu or fax to: 518-464-8777 and on the cover sheet put to the attention of "Financial Aid."

- You will need to repeat this process **each term** that you are taking classes at both Excelsior College and a college local to you.

Please feel free to contact our Financial Aid Office via email VAFA@excelsior.edu if you have additional questions or concerns.

For educational assistance and questions from military and veterans please call 888-647-2388, ext. 1352 or email military@excelsior.edu or veterans@excelsior.edu

*Thank you for
your military
service to our
country, it is
deeply
appreciated.*

