DISCLAIMER

THE BATES TECHNICAL COLLEGE VETERANS SERVICES OFFICE PROVIDES INFORMATION ABOUT BENEFITS AND SERVICES AVAILABLE TO STUDENTS WHO ARE VETERANS OR DEPENDENTS OF VETERANS. ALTHOUGH WE MAKE AN EFFORT TO DISCUSS AND/OR PROVIDE INFORMATION ABOUT ALL AVAILABLE BENEFITS AND SERVICES FOR WHICH A PARTICULAR STUDENT MAY BE ELIGIBLE, WE CANNOT PROMISE THAT ALL STUDENTS WILL BE INFORMED OF ALL BENEFITS AND SERVICES FOR WHICH THEY MAY BE ELIGIBLE. STUDENTS ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR ASKING QUESTIONS AND SEEKING INFORMATION, WHETHER FROM BATES TECHNICAL COLLEGE OR FROM ANOTHER STATE OR FEDERAL AGENCY OR OTHER ENTITY, REGARDING AVAILABLE BENEFITS OR SERVICES.

OUR ROLE IS TO ASSIST YOU IN PURSUING YOUR EDUCATIONAL AND PROFESSIONAL OBJECTIVES. WE ARE AVAILABLE TO ANSWER QUESTIONS ABOUT VETERANS’ EDUCATIONAL BENEFITS, CERTIFY ENROLLMENT WITH THE VA, AND MONITOR STUDENT DEGREE PLANS AND ACADEMIC PROGRESS. HOWEVER, THE VA IS THE FINAL AUTHORITY ON DISBURSEMENT OF FUNDS. PLEASE NOTE THAT THE CERTIFYING OFFICIAL AT BATES TECHNICAL COLLEGE IS NOT A VA EMPLOYEE. WE WORK TO ENSURE THAT THE REGULATIONS OF THE VA ARE SATISFIED. WE HAVE NO AUTHORITY TO MAKE JUDGMENTS REGARDING BENEFIT STATUS. PLEASE REFER TO THE VA WEBSITE FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION REGARDING YOUR EDUCATIONAL STATUS.

THIS HANDBOOK IS MEANT TO BE A GUIDE FOR STUDENTS AND IS NOT INTENDED TO BE ALL-INCLUSIVE OR THE FINAL AUTHORITY ON VA OR OFFICIAL BATES TECHNICAL COLLEGE POLICIES. IT MAY BE REVISED FROM TIME TO TIME TO REFLECT CHANGES IN VA REGULATIONS AND/OR SCHOOL POLICIES. IT IS THE STUDENT’S RESPONSIBILITY TO KEEP CURRENT OF THESE CHANGES. NEW EDITIONS OF THIS HANDBOOK ARE AVAILABLE FOR DOWNLOAD IN PDF FORMAT ON THE VETERANS CENTER PAGE ON THE BATES TECHNICAL COLLEGE WEBSITE (www.bates.ctc.edu/Veterans).
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WELCOME TO BATES TECHNICAL COLLEGE

Welcome to Bates Technical College and thank you for your service to our country. The Veterans Services office is here to assist you with navigating through the process of obtaining your GI Bill® benefits to use for your education. If at any time you have any questions regarding the GI Bill process, please contact the School Certifying Official, Andy Hall, at 253.680.7035 or at ahall@bates.ctc.edu. Thank you for choosing Bates Technical College to pursue your educational goals.

VA REGIONAL OFFICE

Any questions regarding specific benefits, payments, change of status, direct deposit, etc., should be directed to the VA Regional Office in Muskogee, Okla. The School Certifying Official cannot check the status of late or missing payments.

Mailing Address:
VA Regional Office
P.O. Box 888
Muskogee, OK 74402-8888

Phone: 1 (888) 442-4551 (8 a.m.- 6 p.m., CST, Monday – Friday)
Fax: (918)781-7863


NOTE: Certifying officials cannot request Certificate of Eligibility letters from the VA on behalf of the student. Any requests must be made to the VA by the student in writing. Students can go online to www.benefits.va.gov/giBill and can print that information using eBenefits. Other items containing student information also need to be requested by the student to the VA in writing.

The VA Regional Office will give the School Certifying Official school-related information on school debts, payments, etc., but student information must be requested by the student for privacy reasons.

If you have any questions about any letters you may receive from the VA, please feel free to bring them to the Certifying Official. It’s also highly encouraged that you keep copies of everything the VA sends you.

MEETING WITH THE CERTIFYING OFFICIAL

The School Certifying Official’s office is in the Veterans Resource Center (Room E304) at the Downtown Campus. Currently, the hours available for meeting with the Certifying Official are:

- Monday and Thursday—9 a.m. – 4 p.m.
- Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday—9 a.m. -Noon
While the Certifying Official makes every effort to see students on a walk-in basis during the posted
times, there are times when this may not be possible, due to workload demands. Due to the heavy
caseload of VA and L&I students, it is highly recommended that if you need to meet with the Certifying
Official that you make an appointment in advance. You can call Andy Hall at 253.680.7035 or email him
at ahall@bates.ctc.edu to schedule an appointment.

Please feel free to contact the Veterans Services office if you have any questions. If you are dropping off
paperwork or need basic questions answered, the Veterans Services office often has a work study on
duty who can accommodate you.

FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITY
You are ultimately responsible for any expense incurred while attending Bates Technical College, both to
the school and the VA. This includes any tuition, fees, or expenses not covered by VA, as well as
overpayments by VA. Please use VA funds for the purposes for which they are intended. Please note
that the VA pays in arrears for your schooling (i.e., you’ll receive September’s payment in October, and
October’s payment in November). There is no pay over breaks, so it is very important to be financially
prepared for the summer and winter breaks, when school is not in session. The VA pays for only the
time you are attending school, and you will be paid a pro-rated amount for the month. For instance, if
fall quarter begins on September 22, you will only be paid from the 22nd to the 30th for your first
month. These are things to carefully consider as you budget your funds while attending school. While it
may be possible to live off only of your benefits while going to school, don’t depend on it.

If you are a Chapter 33 (Post 9/11) student, the VA may only be responsible for a percentage of your
tuition. Your Certificate of Eligibility Letter will tell you what percentage the VA will pay. If the VA pays
70%, you are responsible for paying the other 30%.

With other Chapters, such as 30, 35, 1606, and 1607, the VA pays the student directly every month. It is
the responsibility of the student to pay his or her tuition, books, and other expenses.

VA students are highly encouraged to apply for financial aid while attending Bates Technical College to
see if they qualify for other types of funding. Federal Title IV financial does not affect VA benefits. It is
your responsibility, however, to report to the Certifying Official any additional funding you may receive
for school. Failure to do so could negatively impact your VA benefits.

Some examples of expenses that the VA does not cover include, but are not limited to, application fees,
graduation fees, background checks, and professional organization dues. Also be mindful that some
programs may cost more than others due to specialized tools, equipment, and supplies. Please make
sure you have the funds to take a program.

STUDENT INFORMATION
You are responsible for keeping the Veterans Services office informed of any change in address, phone
number, or email address. The Veterans Services office is not responsible for not being able to contact a
student if the student hasn’t provided the correct contact information. Your information is protected by
the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).
WHICH GI BILL® CHAPTER AM I?

Your Certificate of Eligibility Letter will specify which VA Educational Benefits you may be eligible for and the details VA Educational Benefits come in different types, depending on what you are qualified for:

- **Chapter 30, Montgomery GI Bill (MGIB)**—Veteran of fulltime active duty Armed Forces.
- **Chapter 31, Vocational Rehabilitation & Employment Program**—Veteran of Armed Forces who is receiving disability at 30% or higher.
- **Chapter 33, Post 9/11 GI Bill**—Veterans of Armed Forces serving active duty time after 9/11/01 or dependents of eligible service members.
- **Chapter 35, Dependent's Educational Assistance (DEA)**—Dependents or spouses of 100% disabled or deceased veterans. Students under Chapter 35 may also qualify for a Tuition Waiver at Bates Technical College.
- **Chapter 1606, Montgomery GI Bill- Selected Reserve (MGIB-SR)**—Actively a member of Reserves or National Guard.
- **Chapter 1607, Reserve Educational Assistance Program (REAP)**—Actively a member of Reserves or National Guard with deployment.

**Note:** Veterans Retraining and Assistance Program (VRAP) ended on March 31, 2014.

VA educational benefits are not subject to federal taxes.

It is possible for a student to be qualified for more than one chapter under the GI Bill, however, federal law states that you can only use one chapter at a time. In order to use Chapter 33 (Post 9/11), the VA will make you revoke any other chapters you may be qualified for, except for Chapter 31 (Voc-Rehab). If you have any questions regarding eligibility, please call the VA at 1 (888) 442-4551. Under no circumstances will the School Certifying Official counsel any VA student on which chapter a student should choose. The student is responsible for making his or her own decision after carefully weighing the options and discussing it with the VA and his or her Voc-Rehab counselor, if applicable.

If you do change your chapter, you are to immediately notify the School Certifying Official so you can be properly certified for benefits, prior to the start of the quarter of your new chapter. Once you are certified for a quarter under a certain chapter, you cannot be certified under a new chapter until the next quarter.

**MOST COMMON CHAPTERS**

**CHAPTER 33 INFORMATION**

Most VA students at Bates fall under the Post 9/11 GI Bill (Chapter 33). Under this Chapter, tuition is paid directly to the school. The amount may be pro-rated by a percentage depending on factors such as time in service. For example, you may qualify for Chapter 33, Post 9/11 GI Bill benefits at 80%. If this is the case, the VA will pay 80% of the tuition, and you are responsible for the remaining 20% of the Bill.
Chapter 33 benefits may be transferred by an active duty service member to a spouse or dependent, called a transfer of eligibility.

Costs not covered under the Post 9/11 Gi Bill include, but are not limited to application fees, graduation fees, background checks, tools, supplies, and professional or fraternal association dues. It is your responsibility to pay any costs not covered under the Post 9/11 Gi Bill.

The student receives a monthly stipend for living expenses, equal to E-5 BHA rate with dependents. BHA rates can be found at [www.defensetravel.dod.mil/site/bah.cfm](http://www.defensetravel.dod.mil/site/bah.cfm). This is paid at the beginning of the month for the previous month and is prorated according to the number of days the student was enrolled during the month, as well as the student’s rate of pursuit (i.e., number of credits taken). The housing allowance is paid if the student’s rate of pursuit is more than 50%. BHA is not paid during breaks.

The student also receives a book/supply stipend under the Post 9/11 Gi Bill. The rate is $41.67 per credit certified, up to 24 credits for the academic year. The maximum stipend is $1,000 per academic year. The book stipend may not fully cover your annual book/supply expenses, so budget accordingly.

Bates Technical College does not participate in the Yellow Ribbon Program.

**CHAPTER 31 INFORMATION**

Chapter 31 benefits are available to veterans with a service-connected disability rating. Once approved eligible by the VA, a student is assigned a Voc-Rehab counselor who will assist in setting vocational goals and making a plan to achieve those goals. Under Chapter 31, the counselor will submit a VA Form 28-1905 to the school which specifies what the VA will pay for while attending school, the duration of the enrollment period, and any limitations. Tuition, books, equipment, and supplies are usually covered under this chapter. All tool and equipment purchases $100 or over must be approved by the student’s Voc-Rehab counselor, and the counselor must submit written approval for the tool or equipment purchase to the School Certifying Official prior to ordering or purchase. *If an expense is not specified on the 28-1905, the VA will not pay for it*. If you feel that an expense needs to be covered by the VA that is not specified on the 28-1905, please notify your Voc-Rehab counselor.

Any issues with pay should be addressed to your Voc-Rehab counselor instead of the VA, since the Voc-Rehab program is administered differently than other VA chapters.

**Note:** Expenses are monitored by the School Certifying Official and suspicious purchases are reported to the student’s Voc-Rehab counselor.

**CHAPTER 35 INFORMATION**

Dependents between the ages of 18-26 or spouses of permanently disabled or deceased veterans may qualify for Chapter 35 benefits of the GI Bill. They also may be eligible for a tuition waiver. Applications for tuition waivers are due 30 days prior to the start of the quarter for which the student is applying. Tuition waivers cannot be used retroactively. For example, if you apply for a tuition waiver for winter quarter, it cannot be applied to the previous fall quarter. The tuition waiver is approved by the school,
not by the VA or the School Certifying Official (SCO), and is not automatically given when Chapter 35 benefits are applied for. Having Chapter 35 benefits does not guarantee a tuition waiver and vice versa. Dependents need to bring the veteran’s DD-214 (Member 4), Certificate of Eligibility, along with proof of relationship to the veteran—for example, a spouse will need a marriage license, a child will need a birth certificate, etc. Documentation of a veteran’s permanent service-connected disability, death while on active duty, or POW or MIA status is also required for consideration of a tuition waiver.

Payment under Chapter 35 is made directly to the student, who is responsible for paying all costs of school. The monthly payment is prorated according to the course load you take. For example, if you are taking a three-quarters load, your payment will be three quarters of the fulltime amount. If you only take one class, Chapter 35 will pay only for that class with no monthly payments.

Due to the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), we cannot divulge certain information regarding a student over the age of 18 or attending a post-secondary institution, even to the veteran sponsor of the Chapter 35 benefits, without a written release of information form on file with the Veterans Services Office. This information includes, but is not limited to, grades and attendance.

**CHAPTER 30 INFORMATION**
The Montgomery GI Bill pays a monthly payment for a set amount (currently $1,717 for fulltime, as of Oct. 1, 2014), and the student is responsible for all costs of schooling. The monthly payment is prorated according to the course load taken. For example, if you are taking a three-quarter load, your payment will be three quarters of the fulltime amount. If you only take one class, Chapter 30 will pay only for that class with no monthly payments. You are also required to verify your school attendance every month to get paid. You may verify your attendance by phone at 1 (877) 823-2378, or at www.giBill.va.gov, and follow the link to the WAVE program.

**WHAT YOU NEED TO GET STARTED—DOCUMENTATION**
The best thing you can do to make the enrollment process as easy and stress-free as possible is to be prepared and start the process as far in advance as possible. Don’t wait until the last moment to decide to go to school or submit any paperwork. It could take from 10-12 weeks for the VA to process your GI Bill claim. You should have all your documentation in hand to start your VA benefits when you first visit Bates.

The deadline for first time VA users is six weeks prior to the beginning of the quarter.

To apply for your GI Bill benefits, go online to http://www.vabenefits.vba.va.gov/vonapp/default.asp to complete the Veterans Online Application (VONAPP). It could take the VA up to 10-12 weeks to process your application, so start this process early. After applying online, you should receive your Certificate of Eligibility Letter from the VA in about three to six weeks, which will indicate the Chapter you qualify for, how long you can receive benefits, etc. You must submit your Certificate of Eligibility to the Veterans Services Office in order to be certified for benefits.

**For Chapters 30, 33, 1606, and 1607:** If you have used your benefits before at another school, you will also have to fill out a VA Form 22-1995, Request for Change of Program or Place of Training form. This
can be done online as well (VONAPP), or see the Veterans Services Office to obtain a copy to mail or fax in to the VA Regional Office in Muskogee, Okla.

For Chapter 35: If you have used your benefits at another school, you will have to fill out a VA Form 22-5495, Dependents’ Request for Change of Program or Place of Training form. You can complete this form online (VONAPP), or see the Veterans Services Office to obtain a copy to mail or fax to the VA Regional Office in Muskogee, Okla.

Then, visit the Veteran Services Office at Bates for an intake. The following documents are necessary to be certified for VA benefits:

- Your DD-214 (Member 4) copy. This MUST be a Member 4 copy showing the type of discharge you received. If you are still active duty and have not yet received your DD-214 (Member 4), please bring a copy to the Veterans Services office as soon as you get it.
- Your most recent Certificate of Eligibility Letter that you received from the VA telling us what benefits you are eligible for.

Note: Your file will not be considered complete without these documents and your VA claim may be delayed until these documents are provided.

Additional documents may be necessary to receive VA benefits:

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<tr>
<th>Chapter 30</th>
<th>Certificate of Eligibility</th>
<th>Marriage License</th>
<th>Birth Certificate</th>
<th>NOBE (DD 2384-1)</th>
<th>Voc-Rehab Paperwork (28-1095)</th>
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* Depending on relationship to veteran.

Please see the Veterans Services office for any other situations not covered. If you are an active member of the Reserves or National Guard (Chapter 1606), please submit your Notice of Basic Eligibility (NOBE) to the Certifying Official.

Students transferring from other schools will also need a copy of VA Form 22-1995, Request for Change of Program or Place of Training form (or VA-Form 22-5495, Dependents’ Request for Change of Program or Place of Training, for Chapter 35 students), and official transcripts from previously attended schools to be submitted for evaluation.

**GETTING YOUR CERTIFICATE OF ELIGIBILITY**

Students receiving GI Bill benefits, except Chapter 31 (Voc-Rehab), are required to have a copy of their Certificate of Eligibility on file with the Certifying Official. Due to privacy reasons, the Certifying Official
can no longer request Certificates of Eligibility from the VA on behalf of students. Requests must be made by the student in writing and mailed or faxed to:

VA Regional Office  
P.O. Box 888  
Muskogee, OK  74402-8888  
Fax: (918)781-7863

You can also request one online at [vabenefits.vba.va.gov/vonapp/default.asp](vabenefits.vba.va.gov/vonapp/default.asp), by completing the Veterans Online Application (VONAPP). It can take up to 8-12 weeks for the VA to mail your Certificate of Eligibility, so please start the process early.

It is the student’s responsibility for obtaining their Certificate of Eligibility and providing it to the School Certifying Official. Student files are periodically checked for completeness, and if a Certificate of Eligibility is not found, you will be requested to provide one.

Periodically, the VA will send you an updated Certificate of Eligibility. Please bring any new ones by the Veterans Services office so a new copy can be placed on file.

**GETTING YOUR DD-214 (MEMBER 4)**

All chapters of the GI Bill, except Chapter 31 (Voc-Rehab) and Chapter 1606 (Montgomery GI Bill Selected Reserve) are required to submit a copy of their DD-214 (Member 4) to the Certifying Official in order to obtain benefits. If you do not have your DD-214 (Member 4), you can get a copy by going to [www.ebenefits.va.gov/ebenefits-portal/ebenefits.portal](www.ebenefits.va.gov/ebenefits-portal/ebenefits.portal) and creating a premium account. This will give you access to your military documents, including your DD-214 (Member 4). You can also get a copy by going to [www.archives.gov/veterans/](www.archives.gov/veterans/) and requesting it.

If you are in the process of getting out of the military and haven’t received your DD-214 (Member 4), please provide a copy to the Certifying Official as soon as you get one.

If you are a Chapter 35 student, please submit a copy of your sponsor veteran’s DD-214 (Member 4), in addition to a birth certificate or marriage license, depending on relationship to veteran.

**TRANSFER STUDENTS AND TRANSCRIPTS**

If you attended another college or training facility, the VA requires that you submit official transcripts from those schools to Bates for an official evaluation, regardless of whether you graduated from them or whether or not you received VA benefits. This is to avoid repetition of college courses. It is YOUR responsibility to ensure that Bates receives official transcripts from all colleges or training facilities you attended.

Official transcripts must be in a sealed envelope. If the envelope is opened, it is no longer an official transcript. Once Bates receives all of your transcripts, you must also fill out a Request for Credit Evaluation of Courses from Other Institutions form to have your transcripts evaluated. This form can be found at the Registration office or online at [www.bates.ctc.edu/registration](www.bates.ctc.edu/registration). After you have completed
this, please notify the Veterans Services office that you are having transcripts evaluated so that we may obtain a copy of the evaluation for your records.

**Note:** As per VA regulations, if you do not have your transcripts evaluated by your 24th week of attendance at Bates, you cannot be certified for further GI Bill benefits until your transcript evaluations are done.

Due to the high volume of transcripts, it can take up to six weeks to have your transcripts evaluated, so please have them done as soon as possible.

The VA no longer requires that prior credits from other institutions be reported, but they still have to be evaluated and be on file. VA will not pay for you to retake a class you already passed.

If you have attended another school utilizing your VA benefits, we cannot request that your VA records from another school be sent to us in lieu of proper documentation. You are responsible for ensuring that the Bates Technical College Veterans Services office has current copies of the documentation required of you.

**HOW LONG DOES THE PROCESS TAKE?**
The earlier you start, the better. It could take the VA up to 12 weeks to process your benefits if you’ve never used your benefits before. It is important that you provide all of the required documentation to the School Certifying Official to complete your file.

The Veterans Services office will monitor each case in a timely manner to ensure that processing on our end is done as quickly as possible, but we can make no guarantee as to when the VA will pay you or the school. It is important that you provide all of the required documentation to the School Certifying Official before the deadlines—six weeks prior to the start of the quarter for new students, and 30 days for returning students.

The Veterans Services office does not keep incomplete paperwork or documentation for students. For instance, if you bring your DD-214 but don’t have your Certificate of Eligibility letter, you will be asked to retain your documents until you have all the documentation required. Also if you submit a form that is partially filled out, you will be asked to keep the form until it is properly filled out before submitting it to the Veterans Services Office for processing. This will eliminate the possibility of lost or incomplete paperwork on the part of the Veterans Services Office.

**YOUR PROGRAM**
VA regulations state that students are to be enrolled in VA-approved programs in order to receive benefits. Every college has their own list of programs that are VA-approved, so because a program is approved at one college doesn’t necessarily mean it will be approved at Bates. If you have any questions regarding your program, please ask the Certifying Official.

The program advisor at Bates will guide you through the admissions and registration process, get you enrolled in your program, and will also give you a list of classes that are necessary to fulfill your program.
The VA will only pay for classes that are officially specified for your program on that list, outside of required academic classes.

CHANGE OF PROGRAM
You must immediately contact the Veterans Services office if you change your program. You must also complete a Request for Change of Program or Place of Training form (VA Form 22-1995) either online at www.giBill.va.gov or from the Veterans Services office to mail in to the VA Regional Office. Any change in program must be made in accordance with Bates’ academic regulations, and a credit evaluation (all previous credit and Bates’ credit) for the new program should be completed. It is solely the student’s responsibility to get this done as well as to investigate any possible impact changing programs may have.

You cannot change programs once an academic quarter has started or once you have been certified with VA for a particular quarter. Any change in program will apply to the upcoming quarter.

Changing your program can affect your benefits due to how much benefits you have left versus how the length of your new program. It is possible to run out of benefits before completing a program. If you have any questions regarding how much benefits you have left, contact the VA Regional Office.

CLASSES
Your program advisor gave you a list of classes necessary to fulfill your program’s requirements. VA benefits will only pay for those classes on the list, along with any necessary academics.

VA will not pay for you to retake a class you already passed unless your program requires a higher grade.

VA will not pay for audited classes, continuing education classes, or Adult Basic Education (ABE) classes.

If you take an online or arranged course, you may not receive your full benefits from the VA (see Non-Standard Terms, next section).

If you have any questions about which classes VA will pay for, please contact the Certifying Official.

NON-STANDARD TERMS (ONLINE CLASSES)
Some programs do not begin on the first official day of class or end on the last official day of the quarter. Online, self-paced, hybrid, or independent study classes may fall into this category. It is your responsibility to immediately notify the School Certifying Official if you are enrolling in a non-standard term, online, arranged study, hybrid, or self-paced class. Chapter 33 (Post 9/11) students will have their BHA adjusted according to the online classes taken. If a Chapter 33 student is enrolled only in online classes, the BHA rate will be one-half of the national average. Delay or failure to notify the Scholl Certifying Official may result in a debt from VA. If a class you are taking is found to be non-standard term, it will be reported to the VA and amended accordingly, which means you may lose benefits. Be advised that taking these classes may result in incomplete funding from VA, which is beyond our control at Bates.
**ADDING/DROPPING CLASSES**
Avoid adding or dropping classes, if at all possible. Be sure when you register that you are registering for all of the classes you need to take. Adding or dropping classes may result in overpayment or underpayment from the VA, which you will be responsible for. If you do add or drop a class, you must notify the school's certifying official immediately to change your certification with VA. Bates Technical College will not be responsible for any overpayment or underpayment that incurs when a student adds or drops classes.

It is possible for instructors to drop students who have stopped attending classes. For VA purposes, these will be considered the same as if a student dropped a class.

**ACADEMIC PROGRESS**
All VA students are required to meet the academic standards established by Bates Technical College. VA regulations require that students placed on academic probation or academic suspension be reported to the VA. The law requires that educational assistance benefits to veterans and other eligible persons be discontinued when the student ceases to make satisfactory progress toward their training objectives. The grades reported by the instructors will be the grades that are reported to the VA. Any grade disputes will be resolved between the instructor and the student, and at no time will the Certifying Official become involved in a grading dispute. If a grade is changed at a later date, the new grade will be reported to VA.

If a student receives an “I” (Incomplete) in a class, he or she will have one quarter to complete the course and earn a grade, or as agreed between the student and instructor, in accordance with Bates policy. If a grade is not recorded by the end of the next quarter, the student will be charged with an overpayment from the VA. It is the student’s responsibility to notify the School Certifying Official when the “I” is changed to a grade. The School Certifying Official will in turn notify the VA.

Students who receive an unsatisfactory or failing grade (“F” or “U” or equivalent) will be charged with an overpayment from VA if that grade is a result of non-attendance or non-participation.

Students receiving a “W” grade will be charged with an overpayment from VA.

If there are mitigating circumstances that need to be explained to the VA, students may submit a Statement in Support of Claim form (VA Form 21-4138), or may use personal correspondence directly to the VA. If a student uses personal correspondence, he or she should include full name (printed), Social Security Number, VA File Number, date, a daytime phone number, and signature. Any supporting evidence should also be included with the form or correspondence. As when sending anything to the VA, always keep copies of what you submit. Mail them to the VA Regional Office (address is found in front of this handbook).
WITHDRAWING FROM SCHOOL
You must go through the proper administrative process at Bates to withdraw from school. If you simply stop going to classes without officially withdrawing, VA will create a debt based on your last date of attendance. You may also be liable for the cost of class if you officially withdraw, depending on the date that you withdraw. You may also be responsible for paying back your book/supply stipend, and also BHA. If you withdraw, you must immediately notify the School Certifying Official. The official withdraw date will be the date reported to the VA.

CLASS ATTENDANCE AND PERFORMANCE
Every student is expected to maintain satisfactory classroom attendance and maintain a satisfactory grade in the class. Students are also expected to attend class until the official end of the quarter. Instructors may withdraw students who are not attending class. If a VA student is withdrawn, whether by self or by instructor or administratively, the student could owe the VA the cost of that class. Students who fail classes due to non-attendance or poor attendance or lack of participation will have to pay VA back the cost of that class, and possibly part of the book/supply stipend, and possibly BHA. The official date of last attendance as found in the school records will be the date reported to the VA. The School Certifying Official will not become involved in any disputes between students and instructors regarding attendance.

GETTING CERTIFIED FOR VA BENEFITS
A student is certified for VA benefits after the student registers for his or her classes for the quarter. The number of credits and the tuition will be reported to VA. If you are currently receiving VA benefits, you will automatically be certified for the next quarter, if registered. All students who attended school the previous quarter will be checked to see if they are registered for classes for the upcoming quarter, so usually there is nothing you need to do to be certified for the next quarter if you are currently attending. However, if you add or drop classes or stop attending school, you must follow the proper procedures outlined by Bates Technical College, and it is your responsibility to contact the School Certifying Official immediately so proper adjustments can be made to mitigate possible overpayment from the VA.

If you are going to miss a quarter, please inform the Veterans Services Office so your file can be flagged for future certification. If you don’t notify us, and we find you are not registered for the quarter, your file will be put in an inactive status, and you won’t be automatically certified for future VA benefits until you contact us and let us know you’re returning to school. Failure to contact the Veterans Services Office will result in delay in payment from the VA.

GRADE/ATTENDANCE CHECKS
VA student records are checked quarterly once grades are available to ensure that academic standards are being met, and that the student is properly certified for VA benefits by ensuring he or she hasn’t added or dropped or withdrew from any classes without notifying the Certifying Official. Any grades that may impact a student’s academic progress or any changes in a student’s certification will be reported to the VA and may create a debt situation for the student. The Certifying Official will not become involved
in any grading dispute between a student and instructor. The official grade as it stands will be reported to the VA. If the grade is changed, the VA will be notified of the change.

Bates Technical College does not require that instructors verify VA students’ class attendance; however, VA students are required to attend classes in a satisfactory manner. If a VA student is dropped from a class, either voluntarily or involuntarily, a debt situation with the VA may be created.

ORDERING TOOLS AND EQUIPMENT (CHAPTER 31 ONLY)
All students are responsible for ordering and acquiring their own tools and equipment. Don’t wait until the last minute to order tools and supplies, as it may take some time to process and ship. Chapter 31 (Voc-Rehab) students must submit a price list of tools and equipment of $100 or over to their Voc-Rehab counselors for approval prior to ordering. Written approval of the order from the student’s Voc-Rehab counselor must be submitted to the Veterans Services office prior to ordering. Failure to do so may result in the student being responsible for any cost that cannot be paid by the VA.

The VA will only pay for the required basic tools and equipment, at the discretion and approval of the Voc-Rehab counselor.

Tools and equipment will be ordered through the Bates Campus Store, where the School Certifying Official will set up an account to pay for the purchase. Tools and equipment may be ordered through vendors with which Bates Technical College has established accounts.

If you choose to purchase tools or equipment from a third party source, you must purchase them out-of-pocket, and be reimbursed for them. You will only be reimbursed for tools and equipment that have been previously approved by your Voc-Rehab counselor. You must also submit the original receipts for your purchase, as outlined in the Reimbursements (Chapter 31) section of this handbook.

REIMBURSEMENTS (CHAPTER 31 ONLY)
Chapter 31 pays for books and supplies outlined by the Voc-Rehab counselor on the student’s VA Form 28-1905. Only those items will be reimbursable. The original receipts must also be submitted before a reimbursement request can be submitted. Copies of receipts cannot be accepted. Items purchased through third party vendors such as Amazon.com must be presented to the Veterans Services office to ensure the items were received before a reimbursement request can be submitted to ensure that the student received the items.

Due to high volume during certain times, it could take up to three weeks for the Finance department to process reimbursements. The Veterans Services office will not check into the status of reimbursements until more than three weeks has passed. If there is an issue with your reimbursement, the Finance department will notify the Veterans Services office, who in turn will notify you.

ORDERING BOOKS FROM FOLLETT (CHAPTER 31 ONLY)
All students are responsible for ordering their own books and tools through Follett, the Bates campus store, or whatever source they choose. While the Veterans Services office may assist students in ordering their books and tools as needed, it is the responsibility of the students to ensure that the
correct books and tools are being ordered. Book orders will be delivered directly to the student’s home or other address, NOT the Veterans Services office. For liability reasons, the Veterans Services office will not warehouse books waiting for students to pick them up. Students are also responsible for returning any items to the vendor in accordance with the vendor’s return policies.

Students receiving Chapter 31 (Voc-Rehab) benefits are to purchase their books from Follett. If you choose to order your books or tools from another source (i.e., Amazon), you will have to purchase them out-of-pocket and be reimbursed for the expense. In order to be reimbursed for any books or tools you purchase, you must submit the original receipts. Copies will not be accepted. Books and tools will be delivered directly to the student, and you may need to bring the books or tools you purchased to our office to verify that you did receive them before reimbursement can be submitted. Please keep in mind that it can take up to three weeks to be reimbursed, if there are no issues from the Finance department (see Reimbursements).

To order from Follett:

1. If you are a Chapter 31 (Voc-Rehab), ensure that your funding is in place. Notify Andy Hall, the VA Certifying Official/L&I Analyst, that you will be ordering books and the approximate amount you will need to purchase your books. You can contact Andy at 253.680.7035, by email at ahall@bates.ctc.edu, or personally by visiting the Veterans Services office in Room E304 at the Downtown Campus. Your account won’t be set up until you do this.

2. Go to the Bates webpage (www.bates.ctc.edu), and click on’ Books’ from the drop down Quick Links menu at the top of the page, or go to: www.bkstr.com/batetechnicalcampusstore/home, and select the ‘Start Here’ box.

3. Select the term for which you are buying books in the’ Select Your Term’ scroll box. For example, Summer 2015.

4. Another scroll box, ‘Select Your Department’, will appear. Select your program. For example, Information Tech Specialist. NOTE: If you are looking for books for any Math, English, Psychology, Biology, or Communication classes, you will find them under “General Education.”

5. The next scroll box, ‘Select Your Course’, will appear. Select the course for which you are ordering books. For example, INFO 107.

6. Thenext scroll box will appear, ‘Select Your Section’. Choose the appropriate one, then hit the ‘Submit’ button.

7. On the next page, the book(s) for the selected class will appear. Please verify that you are ordering the correct book. Note: Select Required Texts only. Chapter 31 will NOT pay for Recommended Texts.
8. If the option is given to buy new or used, select used books if available. **NOTE: Do not rent textbooks if you are a Chapter 31 (Voc-Rehab) student. Books must be purchased.**

9. Ensure the book is the correct one you need, then select ‘Add to Cart’, and hit ‘Select Another Course’ to order more books, if necessary.

10. When you have selected all of your books, click on ‘Go to Cart’ to checkout. The next page will show all the books you have ordered. **Please ensure that your order is correct.** Choose the statement to REPLACE your textbook with the condition available, which is the recommended preference. Then click on the red ‘Checkout’ button.

11. If you are a returning customer to Follett, log in with your email address and password. If you are a new customer, hit ‘Create Account’ or ‘Continue as Guest’.

12. Under Delivery Options, have your order delivered to your home or address of choice. For liability reasons, the Veterans Services office will not accept any book orders from students. After entering your address, hit the ‘Next’ button to show the Shipping Options.

13. Under Shipping Options, if you are funded through Chapter 31, choose the Ground shipping option. **Have the books shipped to your home address,** then hit ‘Next’ to proceed to the Payment Methods page.

14. If you are not Chapter 31 (Voc-Rehab) use the payment method of your choosing.

15. If you are funded through Chapter 31 (Voc-Rehab), under the Alternate Forms of Payment scroll down menu, choose the FlexPay option. Under User Name, type in CH31XXXXXXXX (CH31 and your student ID number with no dashes). In the Password box, type in your birthdate, using two digit month, day, and year. For example, if your birthday is 5/21/72, your password will look like 052172. Hit the ‘Apply’ button to move to the Review & Order screen.

16. On the right side of the page, halfway down is a check box next to “Any special instructions to us?” Check the box, then type “VA FUNDED, CHAPTER 31. NO TAX.” in the comment box.

17. Review your order to ensure accuracy, then click on ‘Place Order’. You will receive an email confirmation with your order number.

18. **If you need any assistance, contact Follett at (877) 827-2665.**

**Backordered Items**—If your book is backordered, complete your order and the book will be shipped to you when it becomes available.
Out of Print or Missing Items—If one of your textbooks shows up as being Out of Print or you can’t find it online, immediately notify your instructor to find an alternative text.

Returning Items—It is the student’s responsibility to return any items. If you have to return an item, return it promptly to Follett in accordance with their return policy stated on your packing list. Your account will be charged for any items that are not returned to Follett in accordance with their return policies.

ADVANCE PAY
Bates Technical College does not participate in advance pay of GI Bill benefits. The decision to utilize advance pay is at the discretion of the school. At some colleges, students receiving VA benefits under Chapters 30, 35, and 1606 may request advance payment of their benefits for their first term of attendance. Chapters 33 (Post 9/11) and 1607 are not eligible for advance pay.

BREAK PAY
The VA does not pay for any breaks in instruction for more than eight (8) days in duration. For example, if winter break in December is eight days, the VA will only pay for 22 days (VA always counts a month as 30 days, regardless of the actual number of days in the month).

Note: There is a break between summer and fall quarters of approximately six weeks that the VA will not pay for. It is your responsibility to prepare yourself for this break and others, if necessary.

FINANCIAL AID AND OTHER FUNDING SOURCES
VA students are strongly encouraged to apply for financial aid. The Bates Technical College Financial Aid office, Downtown Campus, Room M-208, 253.680.7020, can direct students on guidelines and deadlines for the FAFSA form. Information can also be found at www.bates.ctc.edu/financialaid. It is the responsibility of the student to keep the Certifying Official informed of any additional funding, such as Worker Retraining funds, non-Title IV scholarships, etc. Failure to do so could negatively impact a student’s VA benefits.

VA educational benefits are not affected by Federal Title IV aid, such as Pell Grants. Non-Federal, non-Title IV scholarships may affect VA educational benefits. For example, your local Rotary Club gives you a $500 scholarship for tuition. Such scholarships, including funding from sources such as Worker Retraining, should be reported to the School Certifying Official to avoid potential conflicts with VA benefits.

DEBT INFORMATION
Generally, overpayments of VA benefits are the responsibility of the student. However, there are instances under the Post 9/11 GI Bill when an over-payment is created on a school and funds need to be refunded to VA.

A debt is established on a school when:
• The student never attended classes for which he/she was certified regardless of the reason for non-attendance
• The student completely withdraws on or before the first day of the term. If student reduces, the debt is a student debt
• The school received payment for the wrong student
• The school received a duplicate payment
• The school submitted an amended enrollment certification and reported reduced tuition and fee charges. (Reductions based on student's action should be reported on a 1999B with the changes in the enrollment and will result in a debt to the student.)
• The student died during the term, or before start of the term
• VA issued payment above the amount certified on the enrollment certification that was used to process the payment (VA data entry error)

A debt is established on the student for tuition/fees when:

• The student withdrew after the first day of the term (FDOT)
• If the student completely withdrew on the FDOT, treat as if student never attended
• The student reduced hours whether the reduction occurred before or during the term
• If the student attended at least one day of any of the classes certified and a payment has been issued, any debt created by the reduction/withdrawal should be charged to the student
• The school submitted a change in enrollment (1999b) and reported a reduction in tuition/fees due to student action reducing or terminating training.
• If a student drops a course and adds a course so that there is no net change in training time, any change to tuition/fees, and/or is a student debt Schools must refund tuition and fee payments to students in accordance with their established refund policies, so that the students can resolve over-payments.

The information provided above is from the U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs School Certifying Official Handbook.

For information on what caused a debt, contact the Education Call Center at the VA Regional Office:

VA Regional Office
P.O. Box 8888
Muskogee, OK 74402-8888

Phone: 1 (888) 442-4551
Fax: (918) 781-7863

Education Case Managers are available 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Central Time, Monday through Friday. The system's automated functions can provide information about benefits, applications, etc., and are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
For Debt Collection Information, contact the VA Debt Management Center (DMC):

VA Debt Management Center
P.O. Box 11930
St. Paul, MN 55111-0930

Phone: 1 (800) 827-0648
www.va.gov/debtman

Business hours are 7:30 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. and 12:45 p.m. to 6 p.m., Central Time. Mondays and the first business day of the month are always the busiest. The best times to call on those days are 10:30 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. and 1:15 p.m. to 3 p.m., Central Time. If you cannot reach the DMC by phone, try later in the day or consider e-mailing: dmc.ops@va.gov. There is specific information about debt resolution on the DMC website.
STATEMENT OF RESPONSIBILITY

I understand that I am ultimately responsible for any monies owed to the school or overpayments due to the VA, including any tuition and/or fees or other expenses not covered by my VA benefits.

I will keep the Veterans Services office informed of any change of address, phone number, email, or any other information which may impact my VA benefits.

I will immediately report any classes added or dropped or class withdrawals to the Veterans Services office that may cause a debt situation with the VA.

I understand that VA funds are to be used for the purpose for which they are intended and that it is my responsibility to budget those funds and use them wisely.

I understand that I must be enrolled in a VA approved program to receive VA benefits, and the VA will only pay for the classes specified in my program. Taking non-VA approved programs or non-program classes may result in being decertified and an overpayment which will have to be paid back to VA.

It is my responsibility to keep the Veterans Services office notified of any additional funding I am receiving for my education, including, but not limited to, grants, scholarships, tuition assistance, Worker Retraining, etc. Failure to do so could result in delay of benefits or an overpayment which will have to be paid back to the VA.

If I change programs, I will immediately notify the Veterans Services office to fill out a Change of Program form to submit to the VA. Failure to do so could result in delay in payment.

I will notify the Veterans Services Office if I take a quarter or more off and notify them when I return to resume receiving VA benefits. Failure to do so may result in a delay of benefits.

I understand that I must maintain satisfactory academic progress and classroom attendance while receiving VA benefits, and that failing grades or withdrawals could adversely impact my VA benefits. It is also my responsibility to immediately report failing grades, incompletes, or withdrawals to the Veterans Services office.

I understand that VA only pays for the days in which I am in classes, and that the VA pays benefits in arrears (i.e., this month’s benefits will be paid next month). VA does not pay benefits during breaks.

I understand that in accordance with VA regulations, it is my responsibility to have an official transcript evaluation done for each school/institution I’ve attended, regardless of whether I graduated or not, or used VA benefits or not, and that the transcript evaluation must be on file
with the Veterans Services office no later than my 24th week (end of third quarter). **Failure to do so will result in not being certified for VA benefits until all transcript evaluations are completed.**

**Chapter 31:** I understand that I am responsible for ordering my own books, tools, and supplies to ensure that they arrive in a timely manner.

**Chapter 31:** I understand that all tool and equipment purchases of $100 or more must be approved by my Voc-Rehab counselor in writing prior to ordering or purchase.

**Chapter 31:** If required, I will turn in receipts to the VA Certifying Official in a timely manner to ensure proper credit will be given. **Note: Save your receipts! Only original receipts can be submitted.**