

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Veterans Benefits Administration



SURVEY OF VETERANS and SERVICEMEMBERS SATISFACTION with the VA EDUCATION BENEFITS CLAIMS PROCESS

Thank you for your help with this important project. This booklet contains questions about your recent experience with filing for VA education benefits. Please base your answers only on your experience with the education claim identified in the space below.

Please read and answer the following question first.

According to their records, VA received an education claim from you, you are currently receiving education benefits, or you have received them in the past. Is this true?

- Yes** (Continue to instructions on the next page of the booklet, complete the rest of the questionnaire as soon as possible, and mail it in the enclosed postage-paid envelope.)
- No** (STOP. You do not have to complete the rest of this questionnaire, but please return the questionnaire in the enclosed postage-paid envelope.)

Again, we thank you for helping VA provide better service to veterans and their dependents.

PLEASE DO NOT WRITE IN THIS AREA



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INSTRUCTIONS

This survey will take about 20 minutes to complete. Please follow these instructions.

- 1 Use a soft lead pencil.
- 2 Fill in only one answer circle for each question unless it tells you to "Mark all that apply."
- 3 When you are finished, place the questionnaire in the enclosed postage-paid envelope and put it in the mail.

All questions ask you to fill in a circle. For example:

17. Did VA let you know your application had been received?

- Yes
 No

In addition, at the end of the form there is space for you to give us any additional comments concerning how VA could improve the way education benefits are handled.

Please watch for "SKIP" instructions -- they tell you when to skip over a group of questions that you do not need to answer.

OMB Control Number: 2900-0569 Public Reporting Burden Statement

VA may not conduct, sponsor, or require the respondent to respond to this collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB Control Number. All responses for this collection are voluntary. Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 20 minutes per response, including the time necessary for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Failure to furnish the requested information will have no adverse effect on any VA benefit to which you may be entitled.

The information you supply will be confidential and protected by the Privacy Act of 1974 (5 U.S.C. 522a) and the VA's confidentiality statute (38 U.S.C. 5701) as implemented by 38 CFR 1.526(a) and 38 CFR 1.576(b). Disclosure of information involves releases of statistical data and other non-identifying data for the improvement of services within the VA benefits processing system and associated administrative purposes. If you have comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspects of this collection of information, call 1-800-827-1000 for mailing information on where to send your comments.



PREPARING FOR YOUR EDUCATION BENEFITS

1. Are you currently on active-duty in the U.S. Armed Forces?

- Yes
- No

2. When did you first LEARN about VA's education benefits program?

- Before recruitment
- At the time of recruitment
- Soon after joining
- Six months or more after joining
- Shortly before separation
- At or after separation

3. Where did you first LEARN about VA's education benefits program?

- Commercial or advertisement
- Recruiter
- VA information pamphlet
- Another person in my unit
- Military base or unit Education Office
- Friend or family
- VA's website on the Internet
- School
- Other

4. Looking back, how much of what you NEEDED TO KNOW did you get from this source?

- All
- Most
- Some
- Little
- None

GO TO TOP OF NEXT COLUMN

5. How accurate was the information you received?

- Very accurate
- Somewhat accurate
- Neither accurate nor inaccurate
- Somewhat inaccurate
- Very inaccurate
- Don't know

6. When did you begin to PLAN the use of your education benefits?

- Before active-duty service
- Six months or more before separation from active-duty service
- Less than six months before separation from active-duty service
- At separation from active-duty service
- Less than six months after separation from active-duty service
- Six months or more after separation from active-duty service

7. Which of the following information sources did you find useful in PLANNING for the use of your education benefits?

Mark all that apply

- VA information pamphlet
- VA's website on the Internet
- Military base or unit Education office
- Another person in my unit
- Friend or family
- School
- Other
- None of the above

8. While on active-duty, were you offered the opportunity to attend any briefings or sessions that provided information regarding your education benefits?

- Yes (CONTINUE with Q 9, page 2)
- No (SKIP to Q 12, page 2)

GO TO NEXT PAGE

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9. Did you attend any briefing or sessions that provided information regarding your education benefits?

- No (SKIP to Q 12)
- Yes (CONTINUE with Q 10)

10. Looking back, how much of what you **NEEDED TO KNOW** did you get from these sessions?

- All
- Most
- Some
- Little
- None

11. How accurate was the information you received?

- Very accurate
- Somewhat accurate
- Neither accurate nor inaccurate
- Somewhat inaccurate
- Very inaccurate
- Don't know

12. Within the past year, did you receive a VA pamphlet about your education benefits through the mail?

- No (SKIP to Q 14)
- Yes (CONTINUE with Q 13)

13. How much of what you **NEEDED TO KNOW** did you get from the pamphlet?

- All
- Most
- Some
- Little
- None

APPLYING FOR BENEFITS

14. To whom did you submit your application for education benefits?

- School
- VA directly by mail or visit
- VA directly on-line through VA's website
- Don't recall

15. Did you find anything to be difficult or confusing about the application?

- No (SKIP to Q 17)
- Yes (CONTINUE with Q 16)

16. What specifically did you find to be difficult or confusing about the application?

Mark all that apply

- Print size was hard to read
- It was too long
- Some questions were not clear
- Some instructions were confusing
- Asked for information VA should have already had
- Asked for information that was hard to supply
- Not clear why all the information was needed

17. Did VA let you know your application had been received?

- Yes
- No

18. How completely did VA keep you informed of the status of your application?

- Completely
- Mostly
- Somewhat
- Only a little
- Not at all
- Didn't need status information

GO TO NEXT PAGE

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19. How long did it take VA to process your application?

- 1 week
- 2 weeks
- 3 weeks
- 4 weeks
- 5 weeks
- 6 weeks
- 7 weeks
- 8 weeks
- 9 weeks
- 10 weeks or more

20. How long do you think is REASONABLE for VA to process your application?

- 1 week
- 2 weeks
- 3 weeks
- 4 weeks
- 5 weeks
- 6 weeks
- 7 weeks
- 8 weeks
- 9 weeks
- 10 weeks or more

CONTACTING VA BY TELEPHONE

21. Did you PHONE VA about your recent education claim?

- No (SKIP to Q 32, page 4)
- Yes (CONTINUE with Q 22)

22. How many times did you phone VA about your recent claim?

- 1 time
- 2 times
- 3 times
- 4 times
- 5 times or more

23. Why did you call VA?

Mark all that apply

- Get information before I applied for benefits
- Apply for education benefits
- Check on the status of my education claim
- Change the status of enrollment
- Verify enrollment to VA
- Check on my remaining education benefits
- Check on payment
- Correct a payment problem
- Get other information

GO TO TOP OF NEXT COLUMN

24. How easy was it to get through to VA when you called?

- Very easy
- Somewhat easy
- Neither easy nor difficult
- Somewhat difficult
- Very difficult
- Never got through (SKIP to Q 32, page 4)

25. Which of the following happened to you when you called VA?

Mark all that apply

- Got through on the first try
- Got a busy signal
- Experienced a reasonable wait time
- Waited over a minute for call to be answered
- Hung up, couldn't wait for call to be answered
- Call disconnected before it was answered
- Call got misdirected
- Other, specify _____
- None of the above

26. How much of what you NEEDED TO KNOW did you get from your telephone contact with VA?

- All
- Most
- Some
- Little
- None

27. Generally, were you able to get this information on the first call?

- Yes
- No

28. Was your question answered by the automated system or did you speak with a VA employee?

- Automated system (SKIP to Q 32, page 4)
- VA employee (CONTINUE with Q 29, page 4)
- Both

GO TO NEXT PAGE



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29. How responsive was the person you talked to?

- Very responsive
- Somewhat responsive
- Neither responsive nor non-responsive
- Somewhat non-responsive
- Very non-responsive

30. How courteous was the person you talked to?

- Very courteous
- Somewhat courteous
- Neither courteous nor discourteous
- Somewhat discourteous
- Very discourteous

31. Were VA employees able to give you information about your particular education claim on the phone?

- Yes
- No
- Didn't need claim information

GO TO TOP OF NEXT COLUMN

VISITING VA'S WEBSITE AND CONTACTING VA BY INTERNET OR E-MAIL

32. Within the past year, did you VISIT VA's Internet website [www.gibill.va.gov] about your education benefits?

- No (SKIP to Q 37, page 5)
- Yes (CONTINUE with Q 33)

33. Why did you visit VA's website [www.gibill.va.gov]?

Mark all that apply

- Get information before I applied for benefits
- Apply for education benefits
- Verify enrollment to VA
- Send an inquiry to VA
- Get other information about VA education programs
- Couldn't get through on a toll-free phone number
- Download a form
- See what is available on the website
- Other, specify _____

34. In general, how much of what you were looking for did you find on VA's website?

- All
- Most
- Some
- Little
- None

35. Did you find anything difficult or confusing about the website?

- No (SKIP to Q 37, page 5)
- Yes (CONTINUE with Q 36, page 5)

GO TO NEXT PAGE

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36. What specifically did you find difficult or confusing about the website?

Mark all that apply

- System down or not working
- Information displayed was hard to read
- Information displayed was hard to understand
- Didn't understand where to go to retrieve the information I wanted
- Website didn't have the information I was looking for
- It was hard to move about within the website
- Other, specify _____

37. Within the past year, did you use the Internet or e-mail to CONTACT VA about your education benefits?

- No **(SKIP to Q 41)**
- Yes **(CONTINUE with Q 38)**

38. Why did you contact VA using the Internet or e-mail?

Mark all that apply

- Get information before I applied for benefits
- Check on the status of my education claim
- Report a change in the status of my enrollment
- Check on my remaining education benefits
- Check on payment
- Correct a payment problem
- Couldn't get through on a toll-free number
- Sent an e-mail to get information after visiting the VA website
- Other inquiry, specify _____

39. What response did you get to your Internet or e-mail inquiry?

Mark all that apply

- Received an acknowledgment of my inquiry
- Received a complete answer to my inquiry
- Received an answer, but not all the information requested
- Inquiry was sent to another office
- Never received an answer from VA - **(SKIP to Q 41)**
- Other, specify _____

GO TO TOP OF NEXT COLUMN

40. In general, how much of what you NEEDED TO KNOW did you get from your contact with VA using the Internet or e-mail?

- All
- Most
- Some
- Little
- None

OTHER SOURCES OF INFORMATION

41. Within the past year, did you receive information about your education benefits from any of the following?

Mark all that apply

- State or county Veterans Service Organizations
- VA representative on military base
- Reserve unit
- Friends, family, co-workers
- School
- Congressional office
- Other, specify _____
- None of the above

GO TO NEXT PAGE



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VERIFYING ENROLLMENT TO VA

42. Have you used VA's automated phone system [1-877-823-2378] to verify your enrollment for your recent claim?

- No (SKIP to Q 45)
- Yes (CONTINUE with Q 43)

43. Did you find anything to be difficult about using VA's automated phone system to verify enrollment?

- No (SKIP to Q 45)
- Yes (CONTINUE with Q 44)

44. What specifically did you find to be difficult about verifying your enrollment when you used VA's automated phone system?

Mark all that apply

- Telephone number was frequently busy
- System didn't have my VA record
- Call was disconnected before verification completed
- My PIN didn't work
- Other, specify _____

45. Have you used VA's Web Automated Verification of Enrollment (WAVE) at www.gibill.va.gov to verify your enrollment for your recent claim?

- No (SKIP to Q 48)
- Yes (CONTINUE with Q 46)

46. Did you find anything to be difficult about using VA's Web Automated Verification of Enrollment (WAVE) to verify your enrollment?

- No (SKIP to Q 48)
- Yes (CONTINUE with Q 47)

GO TO TOP OF NEXT COLUMN

47. What specifically did you find to be difficult about using VA's Web Automated Verification of Enrollment (WAVE) to verify your enrollment?

Mark all that apply

- Unable to log-on to verification website
- Information on VA Internet website form is confusing
- Information on VA Internet website form is inaccurate
- System didn't have my record
- Not sure if Internet verification was completed successfully
- Couldn't remember my PIN
- System wouldn't accept my PIN
- Other, specify _____

48. Have you phoned 1-888-GI-BILL-1 [1-888-442-4551] and spoken to a counselor to verify your enrollment for your recent claim?

- No (SKIP to Q 50, page 7)
- Yes (CONTINUE with Q 49)

49. Why did you speak to a counselor to verify your enrollment?

Mark all that apply

- Experienced difficulty with telephone verification when I called 1-877-823-2378
- Experienced difficulty with Internet verification on VA's website
- System didn't have my record
- My PIN didn't work
- Don't have access to the Internet
- In general, rather speak to a person
- Believe I'll get paid faster
- Don't trust automated systems
- Not sure if automated verification was completed successfully
- Other, specify _____

GO TO NEXT PAGE

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50. Which method did you use most often when verifying your enrollment?

- Phone VA's automated phone system at 1-877-823-2378
- The Internet, Web Automated Verification of Enrollment (WAVE) at www.gibill.va.gov
- Speak to a counselor at 1-888-GI-BILL-1 [1-888-442-4551]

GO TO TOP OF NEXT COLUMN

RECEIVING YOUR BENEFIT PAYMENTS

51. From the time your application was submitted to VA, how long did it take to get your first check?

- | | | |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|--|
| <input type="radio"/> 1 week | <input type="radio"/> 6 weeks | <input type="radio"/> 11 weeks |
| <input type="radio"/> 2 weeks | <input type="radio"/> 7 weeks | <input type="radio"/> 12 weeks |
| <input type="radio"/> 3 weeks | <input type="radio"/> 8 weeks | <input type="radio"/> 13 weeks or more |
| <input type="radio"/> 4 weeks | <input type="radio"/> 9 weeks | |
| <input type="radio"/> 5 weeks | <input type="radio"/> 10 weeks | |

52. From the time your application was submitted to VA, how long do you think is REASONABLE for you to receive your first check?

- | | | |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|--|
| <input type="radio"/> 1 week | <input type="radio"/> 6 weeks | <input type="radio"/> 11 weeks |
| <input type="radio"/> 2 weeks | <input type="radio"/> 7 weeks | <input type="radio"/> 12 weeks |
| <input type="radio"/> 3 weeks | <input type="radio"/> 8 weeks | <input type="radio"/> 13 weeks or more |
| <input type="radio"/> 4 weeks | <input type="radio"/> 9 weeks | |
| <input type="radio"/> 5 weeks | <input type="radio"/> 10 weeks | |

53. Did you find anything to be difficult about the benefit payment process?

- Yes
 - No
 - Don't know
- } (CONTINUE with Q 54)
} (SKIP to Q 55, page 8)

54. What specifically did you find to be difficult about the benefit payment process?

Mark all that apply

- Payments didn't arrive when needed
- Payments didn't arrive at the same time each month
- Have had to contact VA (in addition to enrollment verification) to get payment
- No explanation of the amount
- No access to direct deposit
- Problem with direct deposit

GO TO NEXT PAGE



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55. Have you received an inaccurate payment on your recent claim?

- No (SKIP to Q 57)
- Yes (CONTINUE with Q 56)

56. Was the inaccuracy resolved in a timely manner?

- Yes
- No

57. For your recent claim, have you had to borrow or pay out-of-pocket expenses in order to enroll or stay in school because VA didn't complete your paperwork on time?

- Yes
- No

58. For your recent claim, have you had to delay enrollment because VA didn't complete your paperwork on time?

- Yes
- No

GO TO TOP OF NEXT COLUMN

OVERALL IMPRESSIONS

59. All things considered, how satisfied are you with the way VA has handled your education benefits claim?

- Very satisfied
- Somewhat satisfied
- Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- Somewhat dissatisfied
- Very dissatisfied

60. Do you plan to use all of your benefits for this education program?

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

GO TO NEXT PAGE

GENERAL INFORMATION

61. What is your gender?

- Male
- Female

62. What is your current age?

- 19 years old or younger
- 20 to 24 years old
- 25 to 29 years old
- 30 to 34 years old
- 35 to 39 years old
- 40 to 49 years old
- 50 years old or older

63. What is your current marital status?

- Never been married
- Married
- Separated
- Divorced
- Widowed

64. Aside from the classes you are currently taking, what is the highest level of education you have completed?

- High school graduate or GED
- Some college
- College graduate
- Some graduate work
- Graduate or professional degree

65. In what type of education program are you currently enrolled?

- On-the-job training or apprenticeship program
- Certificate/license program
- Two-year academic college program
- Four-year academic college program
- Post-graduate degree program

GO TO TOP OF NEXT COLUMN

66. Do you have access to the Internet?

- No (SKIP to Q 68, page 10)
- Yes (CONTINUE with Q 67)

67. Where do you have access to the Internet?

Mark all that apply

- At home
- At my place of work
- At school
- At a friend's or relative's home
- At a commercial establishment
- At a public library
- At a military base or reserve unit
- Other, specify _____

GO TO NEXT PAGE

