



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Non-college Degree (NCD) Programs: Certification Process

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Date: July 7, 2025

Survey

WAVES

Non-college Degree Programs:

Certification Process



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Disclaimer

The information in this presentation should be considered talking points for discussion and information sharing. More comprehensive information may be available through other VA resources. Information in this presentation was current and correct on the date given.



Annual Training Credit

This conference session qualifies for annual training credit.



As required by Section 305 of the [Harry W. Colmery Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2017](#), School Certifying Officials (SCOs) at Covered Educational Institutions must complete [annual training](#) administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA).

A [Covered Educational Institution](#) is an educational institution that has enrolled 20 or more VA students using assistance under Title 38 United States Code during a calendar year.

OVERVIEW

Non-college Degree (NCD) Programs typically include training in the trades industry, such as cosmetology, plumbing, electrical and automotive/truck repair. Throughout this presentation you will learn more about your responsibilities when it comes to certifying enrollments at your NCD facility.



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LEARNING OBJECTIVES



Describe the methods for measuring courses at an NCD facility



Identify policies that must be followed when certifying benefits at an NCD facility



Explain the certification process for VA education benefits including weekly clock hour variances



Recall how entitlement is charged when using VA education benefits



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MEASUREMENT OF COURSES



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NCD Course Measurement



- Definitions of Hour Type
- Clock Hours
- Credit Hours
- Rate of Pursuit (RoP)
- Training Time



CLOCK HOURS

SCOs must certify the actual number of clock hours per week the student is scheduled to attend

Certified hours will be compared with those listed on the enrollment agreement and class schedules



No averaging of clock hours is allowed



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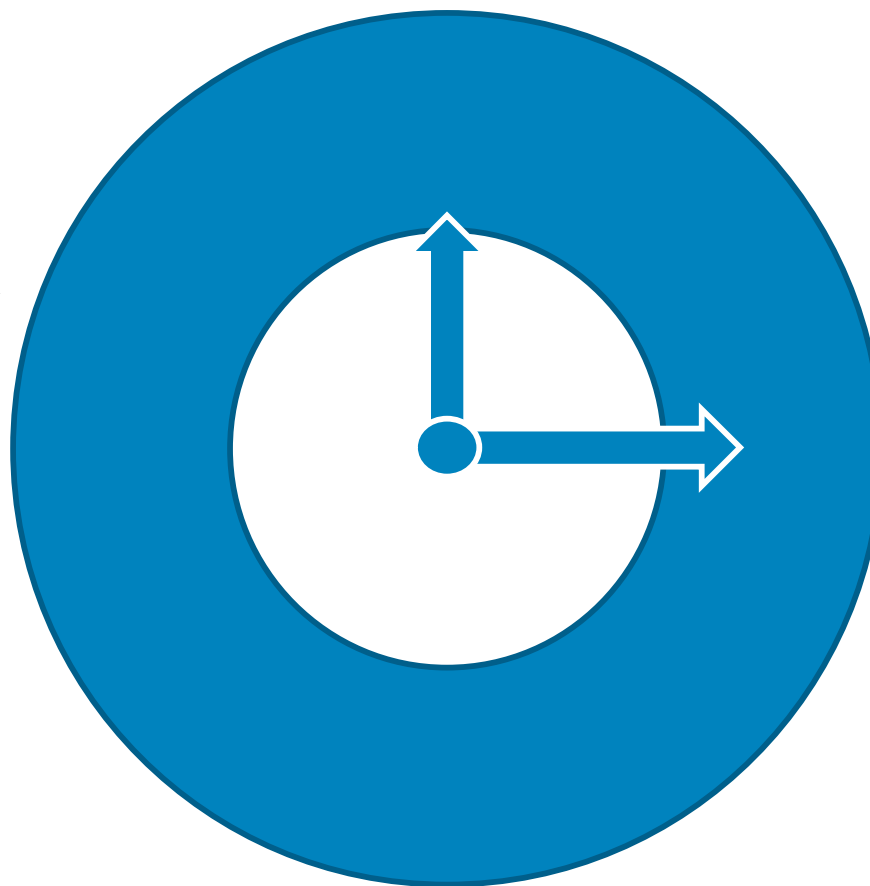


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DEFINITIONS

Clock hours:

Actual hours per week a student spends attending class or other instructional activities that count toward completing a program of study.



Credit hours:

The number of credits a student receives for enrolling in and successfully completing a given course.

CLOCK HOURS

Classroom Theory Rules

- Rest breaks scheduled during class are excluded from net hours of instruction
- 10 minutes allowed to change classes or subjects each hour can be included in total hours of instruction

Shop/Practice Rules

- 15-minute morning and afternoon breaks can be included in total hours of instruction
- Shorter breaks are allowed for part-time enrollment

Lunch Break Rules

- All clock hours reported to VA must exclude any lunch or meal breaks
- 15-minute morning and afternoon breaks in predominately shop practice courses may not be combined for a half hour lunch

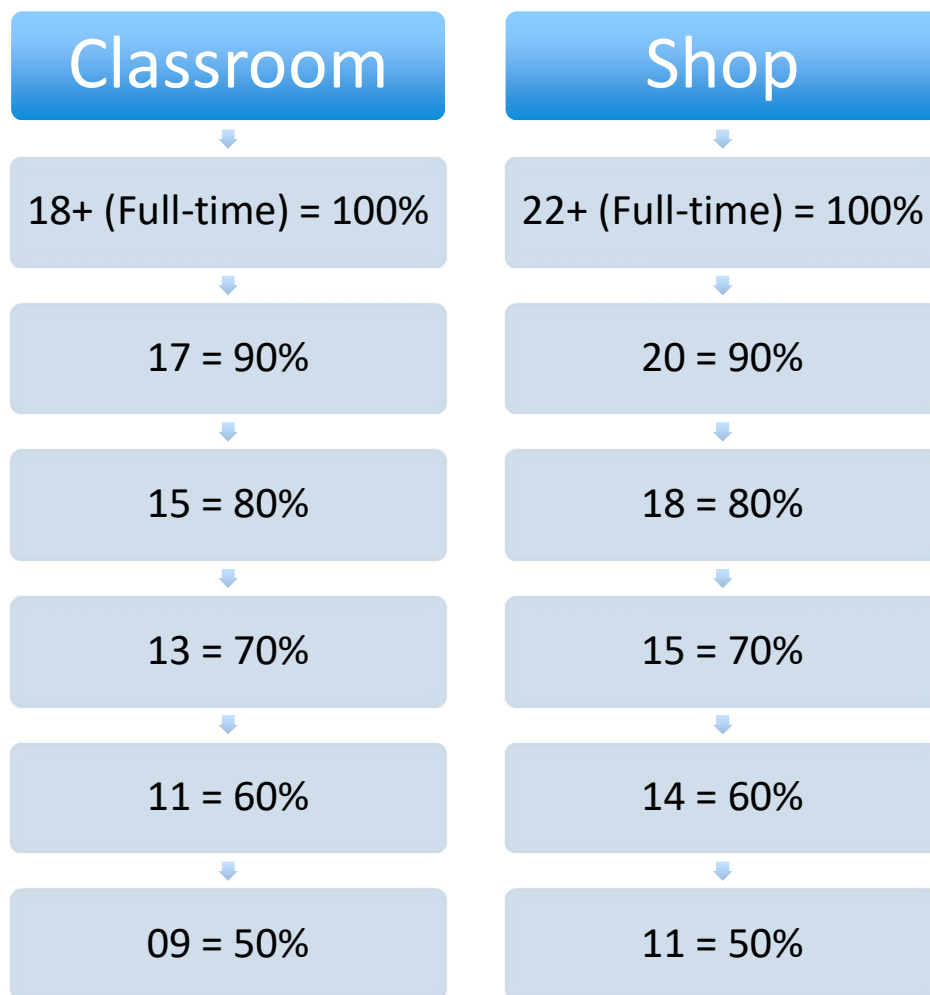
RATE OF PURSUIT (ROP) CLOCK HOUR MEASUREMENT (CHAPTER 33)

Divide scheduled clock hours per week by full-time requirement

- 18 for Classroom Theory
- 22 for Shop Practice

Anything at or above 18 CT or 22 SP will result in 100% ROP

For chapter 33 benefits, Monthly Housing Allowance is paid if rate of pursuit is greater than 50%.



TRAINING TIME IN CLOCK HOURS (NON-33 CHAPTERS)

Classroom Theory

Clock Hours net instruction per week	Training Time
18+	Full-time
13-17	$\frac{3}{4}$ time
09-12	$\frac{1}{2}$ time
05-08	Less than half; more than $\frac{1}{4}$ time
01-04	$\frac{1}{4}$ time

Shop Practice

Clock Hours net instruction per week	Training Time
22+	Full-time
16-21	$\frac{3}{4}$ time
11-15	$\frac{1}{2}$ time
06-10	Less than half; more than $\frac{1}{4}$ time
01-05	$\frac{1}{4}$ time

Policies



VA Guidelines and Certification Policies



- Standards of Progress (SoP)
- Attendance Standards
- Prior Credit
- Length of Courses
- Refund Policy
- Mandatory Fees
- VA as “Last Payer”
- 85/15
- Section 1018 of Public Law 116-315
- Contracted Courses



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STANDARDS OF PROGRESS (SOP)



A school's policy and regulations must define:

1

The school's attendance policy

2

The school's grading system

3

The minimum satisfactory grade level

4

Description of any probationary period

5

Conditions for interruption of training

6

Conditions for dismissal due to unsatisfactory conduct

7

Conditions for re-entrance or readmission

To be eligible for VA benefits, schools are required by law to maintain and enforce standards of progress and conduct.



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ATTENDANCE STANDARDS

Schools offering nonaccredited programs are required by federal law to have attendance standards.

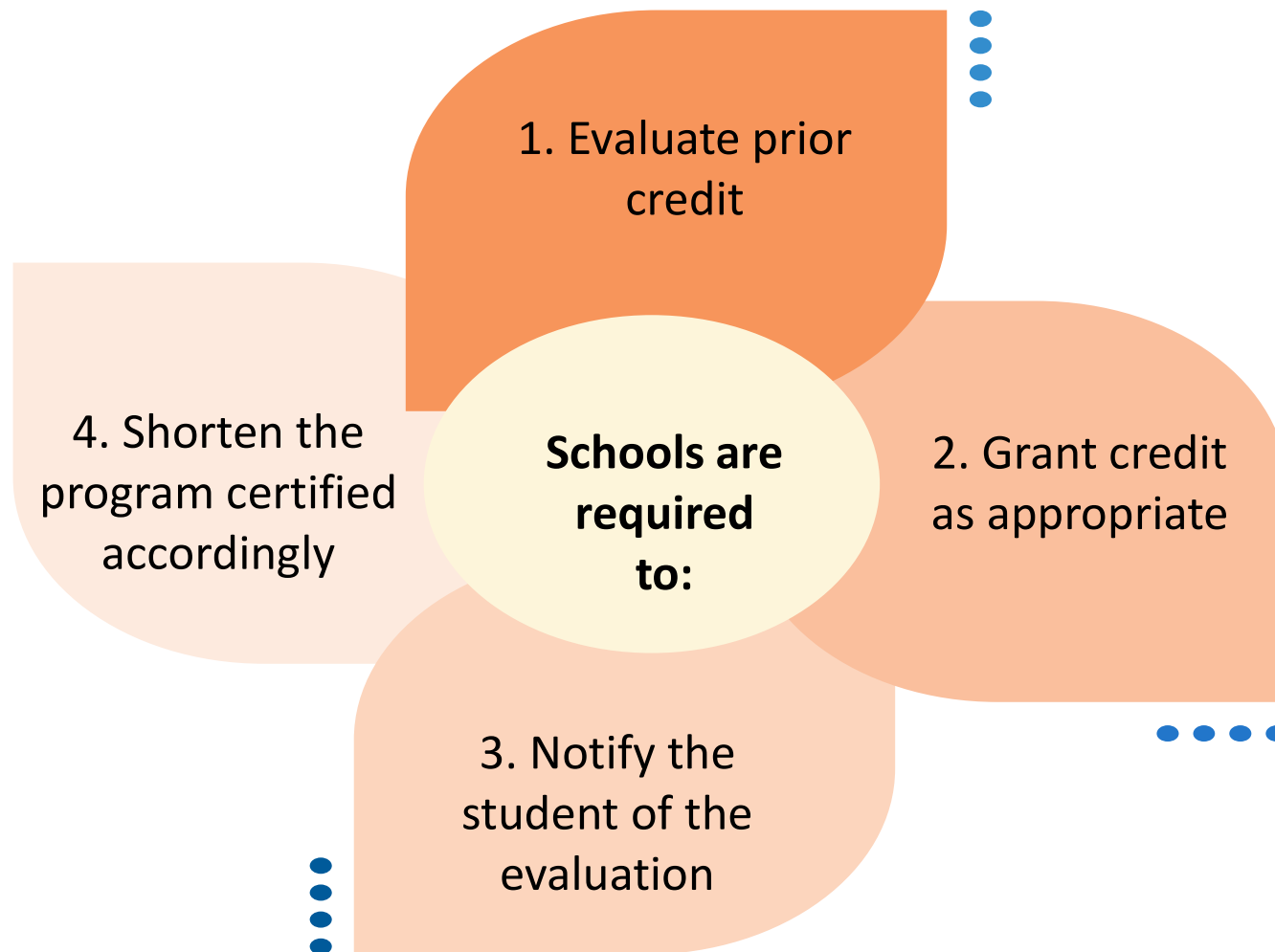
These standards must be stated plainly in the school's catalog or bulletin.

Facilities with attendance standards as part of their Standards of Progress must enforce those standards for GI Bill beneficiaries.

If a program is measured in clock hours, benefits are paid based on the scheduled clock hours of attendance per week.



PRIOR CREDIT



LENGTH OF COURSES

Schools cannot
certify a program
for more hours
than the SAA has
approved

Improper program
length
certification can
result in denial of
payment



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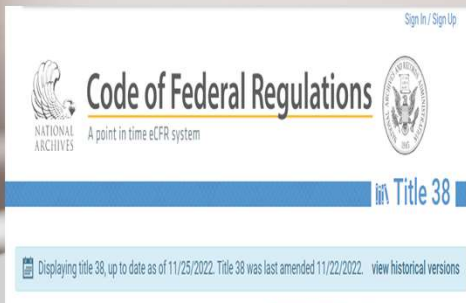
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REFUND POLICY- NONACCREDITED PROGRAMS



38 CFR 21.4254 (c)(13):
Facilities may request approval for nonaccredited programs but must meet the minimum pro rata requirements of 38 CFR 21.4255, for those programs.

38 CFR 21.4255:
A refund policy meets these requirements, if it provides that tuition, fees, and other charges for a portion of the course do not exceed the approximate pro rata portion of the total charges for tuition, fees, and other charges for the length of the completed portion pertaining to the total length of the course.



MANDATORY FEES

Mandatory means the charge is assessed to all students without exception. If there is an exception, the charge is not considered mandatory and is not reimbursable for any GI Bill beneficiary.



Mandatory fee Example:

A parking fee is assessed to all students regardless if they drive to the facility or not.

Non-Mandatory fee Example :

A parking fee is assessed to only students with cars.



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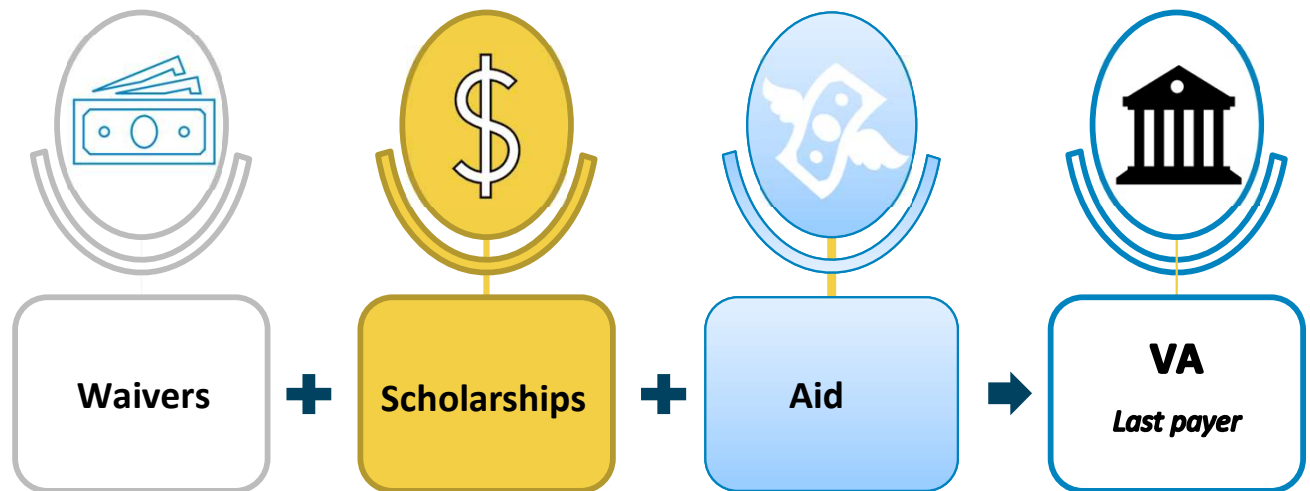
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VA AS “LAST PAYER”

Before assessing charges to VA, facilities must apply tuition only specific:



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85/15

The 85/15 rule (85/15) requires that a minimal number of self-funded students find a program worthwhile and valuable or the payment of Federal funds to Veterans who enroll in the program will not be authorized.

VA cannot award benefits to any newly enrolling beneficiary if the ratio of GI Bill and institutionally funded students exceeds 85 percent

Students maintaining continuous enrollment may continue to receive benefits for that program

Students receiving benefits under chapters 31 or 35 may enroll in programs that exceed 85 percent support students

For additional information on the 85/15 rule, please visit our website. We recommend you begin with a visit to the 85/15 frequently asked questions webpage https://benefits.va.gov/gibill/85_15_faqs.asp.

SECTION 1018 OF PUBLIC LAW 116-315

Section 1018 codifies in statute:

1

Schools must provide a covered individual with a personalized shopping sheet, maintain certain policies, provide graduation information, seek appropriate accreditation approval, and designate a point of contact.

2

The State Approving Agency must act when a school violates specific provisions of the law.



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SECTION 1018 OF PUBLIC LAW 116-315

Schools must provide a covered individual (a student using benefits under chapter 30, 31, 32, 33, or 35 of title 38, U.S.C., or chapter 1606 of title 10, U.S.C.) with a personalized shopping sheet that contains:

- Estimated total cost of the course that includes tuition, fees, books, supplies and any other additional costs.
- Estimated cost of living expenses.
- Amount of costs above that are covered by VA Education Benefits.
- Other types of Federal financial aid, not administered by VA that is offered by the institution, that the individual may be qualified to receive.
- Estimated amount of student loan debt the individual would have upon graduation.
- Information regarding graduation rates.
- Information regarding job-placement rates for graduates, if available.
- Information regarding the acceptance of transfer credits including military credits.
- Any additional requirements including training, experience, or examinations that are required to obtain a license, certification or approval for which the course of education prepares the individual.
- Other information to facilitate comparison by the individual about aid packages offered by different educational institutions.

CONTRACTED COURSES

Must be

specifically approved

by the SAA

Example of a Contracted Course:



CDL program where the school does not own the trucking company, instructors, or equipment.



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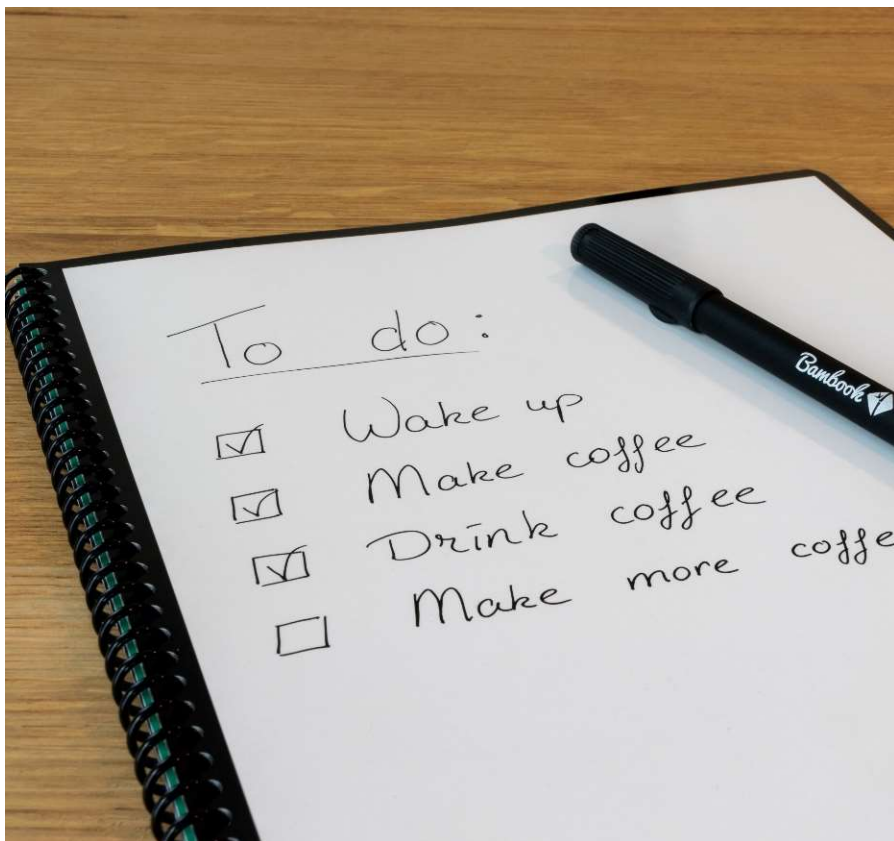


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How to Certify



NCD Certification Process



- VA Form 22-8794
- Timeliness
- Tuition for Non-33 Chapters
- Tuition and Fees for Chapter 33
- Weekly Clock Hour Variance
- Public Law 116-315, Section 1010

VA FORM 22-8794

- Each facility will designate at least one VA School Certifying Official (SCO) to carry out reporting requirements.
- It is **required** that a new VA Form 22-8794 be submitted anytime an SCO is added or removed.
- VA Form 22-8794 will be submitted through the Upload Portal.

[illegible]

*Locate most recent version
on [Resources for Schools Webpage](#)

TIMELINESS

Chapters 30, 32, 35,
and 1606:

Can be submitted
120 days before the
term begins

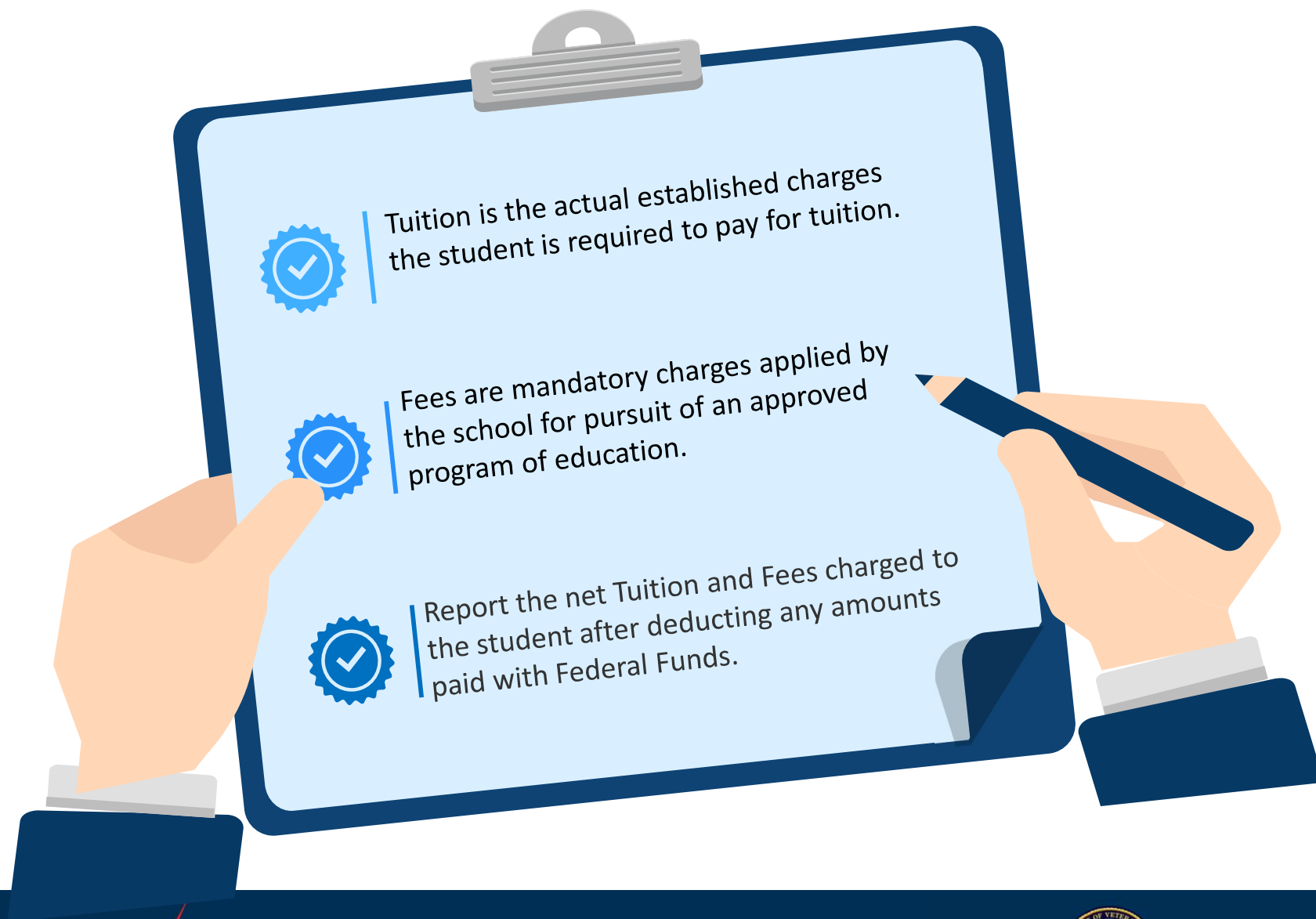
Chapter 33:

Submit certifications as
early as possible. Please
note: Enrollment
Manager only allows
certifications to be
submitted up to 180
days before the term
begins.

Must be submitted
no later than 30 days
after the start of the
term or enrollment
period.



TUITION AND FEES FOR CHAPTER 33



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TUITION FOR NON-33 CHAPTERS

Tuition and Fees must be reported for enrollment periods when:



Training time is less than ½ time
(Applies to Ch 30, Ch 1606 and Ch 35)



The student is on active duty
(Applies only to Ch 30)



Accelerated payment is requested
(Applies only to Ch 30)



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NET CHARGES FOR TUITION AND FEES (CHAPTER 33)

Certify the **actual** amount of tuition charged (at the in-state rate) less any scholarships, discounts, or other payments paid directly to or by the school and **designated solely for tuition and fees**

Do **not** include any Title IV payments

Do **not** include third-party payments intended to cover the cost of tuition and other educational costs



TUITION-SPECIFIC SCHOLARSHIPS AND AID (CHAPTER 33)

Examples of tuition-only specific scholarships or aid may include, but are not limited to:



- Employer payments to schools specifically for tuition and fees
- Private scholarships paid directly to school for tuition and fees
- ROTC scholarship (where payments specified for tuition and fees)
- Military Spouse Career Advancement Accounts (MyCAA)
- Heath Professional Scholarship Programs (HPSP)
- Military tuition assistance



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EXAMPLES OF NON-SPECIFIC SCHOLARSHIPS OR AID THAT YOU MAY NOT DEDUCT (CHAPTER 33)

- Employer payments to schools when not specified for tuition and fees **only**
- Private scholarships paid directly to school when not specified only for tuition and fees
- ROTC scholarship (where payments are specified for other than tuition and fees)
- Some state programs (prepaid tuition programs, state 529 plans)

These examples are not all inclusive but do provide an idea of what is deducted from costs.

KEY

Payments are not designated solely for tuition and fees, but can also be used for other specific or general school related expenses

TUITION WAIVER BY THE SCHOOL (CHAPTER 33)

Any portion of tuition and fees waived by the school cannot be reported to VA in the net charges.

For example, if a VA student is eligible for Chapter 33 benefits at less than the 100% level, and the school or other entity has a non-Title IV program to pay for the student's unmet need, then any such payment must be deducted from the total charges certified to VA.

Example:

A student is eligible at the 50% level and total tuition and fees charges are \$5,000. VA would pay \$2,500.

But if the school then waives the remaining \$2,500 so the veteran does not have to pay any tuition and fees; then

The school must deduct the amount the school waived to ensure the enrollment to VA reflects total charges of \$2,500 for tuition and fees. VA would then pay \$1,250.

VA will only pay 50% of the net charges certified as the student's benefit level is 50%.

CERTIFYING TUITION AND FEES (CHAPTER 33)

Title IV

In no instance is an award of federal financial aid under **Title IV** deducted from net charges for tuition and fees. These include, but are not limited to:

- Unsubsidized and Subsidized Federal Family Education Loans (FFEL)
- Unsubsidized and Subsidized Federal Direct Stafford Loans
- Federal Perkins Loans
- FFEL Parent (PLUS) Loans, Federal Direct PLUS Loans
- Federal Pell Grants
- Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant

VALIDITY OF FEES (CHAPTER 33)

Before a fee can be certified to VA, it must meet ALL the requirements stated below:

- Be listed in the school's approved catalog as a fee;
- Be listed on the student invoice/payment ledger as a fee;
- Be listed in the enrollment agreement/contract between the student and school as a fee;
- Not be considered a preadmission or penalty fee; and
- Be ***mandatory*** or otherwise **required** of all students, **without exception**.

If unsure, please email your [ELR Regional Mailbox](#) or submit an inquiry using [Ask VA](#).

VALIDITY OF FEES (CHAPTER 33)

Examples (not all-inclusive) of:

Fees that **can** be included

- Student services fees
- Technology fees
- Lab fees
- *Mandatory* graduation fees
- Health insurance premiums (if not waived)

Fees that **cannot** be included

- Application fees (a.k.a., preadmission fees)
- Books*
- Fees for transportation, food, lodging
- Penalty fees, e.g., late registration, late course changes, fees for makeup hours

Unless the books are required of everyone to be purchased from the school (no exceptions)



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PRORATING TUITION

Tuition and fees must be spread across enrollment periods to allow for VA to calculate the correct amount of a payment/overpayment should there be a change in the enrollment.

When to Prorate: Programs scheduled to operate across several terms, enrollment periods, or modules.

- Tuition and fees certified for each term
- If, as is the practice of some schools, all tuition and fees are billed up-front, then tuition and fees must be prorated (or spread across) each enrollment period. The section on entitlement charge identifies the reasons for doing this.

PRORATING TUITION

When a school charges all tuition up-front

Tuition certified to VA should be **prorated across enrollment periods**

Important because **entitlement** is charged based on tuition and fees charged.

- If one enrollment period lists all tuition and fees for an entire program up-front, entitlement charged based on tuition and fees certified
- If subsequent enrollment periods are certified with \$0.00 in tuition and fees, entitlement will be charged based on the rate of pursuit (results in VA student's entitlement getting hit twice)

CERTIFYING TUITION AND FEES WITH PRORATION

- Tuition certified to VA should be **prorated across enrollment periods**.
- Desktop IT Specialist is approved for 150 clock hours.
- Tuition and fees is \$750

Program	Begin	End	Res	Dist.	R/D	Clock	T & F
Desktop IT Specialist	08/05/24	08/16/24	0.0	0.0	0.0	25.0	\$250
Desktop IT Specialist	08/19/24	08/30/24	0.0	0.0	0.0	25.0	\$250
Desktop IT Specialist	09/09/24	09/20/24	0.0	0.0	0.0	25.0	\$250

Each enrollment period above represents one of the three two-week long modules required to successfully complete the Desktop IT Specialist program.

CERTIFYING TUITION AND FEES

If a school does not charge all tuition up-front

Tuition certified to VA should be submitted in the same *increments* as which it is billed to the students

- **Important** because if the school bills in increments, certifies all charges to VA up front, then the student drops, VA will create a large debt for tuition and fees that have not actually yet been charged.
- **Important** because it impacts entitlement charge.

Program	Begin	End	Res	Dist.	R/D	Clock	T & F
Esthetician	08/26/24	12/05/23	0.0	0.0	0.0	30.0	\$1600
Esthetician	01/13/25	04/28/25	0.0	0.0	0.0	30.0	\$1450

This is a 900-hr program offered at a public vocational technical school with non-standard terms and open enrollment. Each enrollment period above represents one of the two 450-hour billing cycles across which this program is offered.

Scheduled Weekly Clock Hour Variance



REPORTING A SCHEDULED WEEKLY CLOCK HOUR VARIANCE

Benefits are paid based on the scheduled number of clock hours per week. The amendment effective date, ending date, and number of clock hours a student is scheduled to attend each week must be reported.

If clock hours per week vary, the variance must be reported for calendar weeks, Sunday through Saturday.

- Do not report changes caused by published school closures or holidays.
- Do not submit amendments for absences that are allowed within the school's approved attendance policy. Certifying Officials must monitor VA students' attendance, and for poor attendance, enforce the attendance policy for failure to meet attendance standards.
- Do not extend enrollment for students who need additional hours simply because of absences. If a student failed a portion of the course and must repeat it, that portion may be re-certified if the student continues to meet the Standards of Progress.

Note: The standard accepted legal U.S. definition of a calendar week is Sunday through Saturday and is the definition used for reporting clock hour variances. This rule is different when determining the start date for courses in a program that operates on a term basis (change in rule).



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EXAMPLE 1 OF VARIANCE OF HOURS

Student is attending a Cosmetology school.

Student is scheduled to take 25 clock hours per week.

Full-time for the program is 22 clock hours per week.

Attendance policy is that the student cannot miss 4 consecutive days of class.

- 1) Week One: Student attends class regularly for 25 clock hours.
- 2) Week Two: Student is ill, missing part of a day and a full day of class.
Attends 15 clock hours.
- 3) Week Three: Student attends class regularly for 25 clock hours.
- 4) Week Four: Student attends class regularly for 25 clock hours.

Variance does not need to be reported.

EXAMPLE 2 OF VARIANCE OF HOURS

Student is attending an Emergency Medical Technician program.

Student is scheduled to attend part-time at 20 clock hours per week.

Full-time for the program is 22 clock hours per week.

For one week per month this student participates in field training and their schedule increases from 20 clock hours per week to 25 clock hours for that week.

- 1) Week One: Student attends class regularly for 20 clock hours.
- 2) Week Two: Student attends class regularly for 20 clock hours.
- 3) Week Three: Student participates in field training for 25 clock hours.
- 4) Week Four: Student attends class regularly for 20 clock hours.

Variance does need to be reported.

EXAMPLE 2 OF VARIANCE OF HOURS CONTINUATION

Week 1

No variance.

No additional action beyond routine certification submission to VA via Enrollment Manager.

Week 2

No variance.

No additional action needs to be taken based on the student's schedule.

Week 3

Variance must be reported to VA.

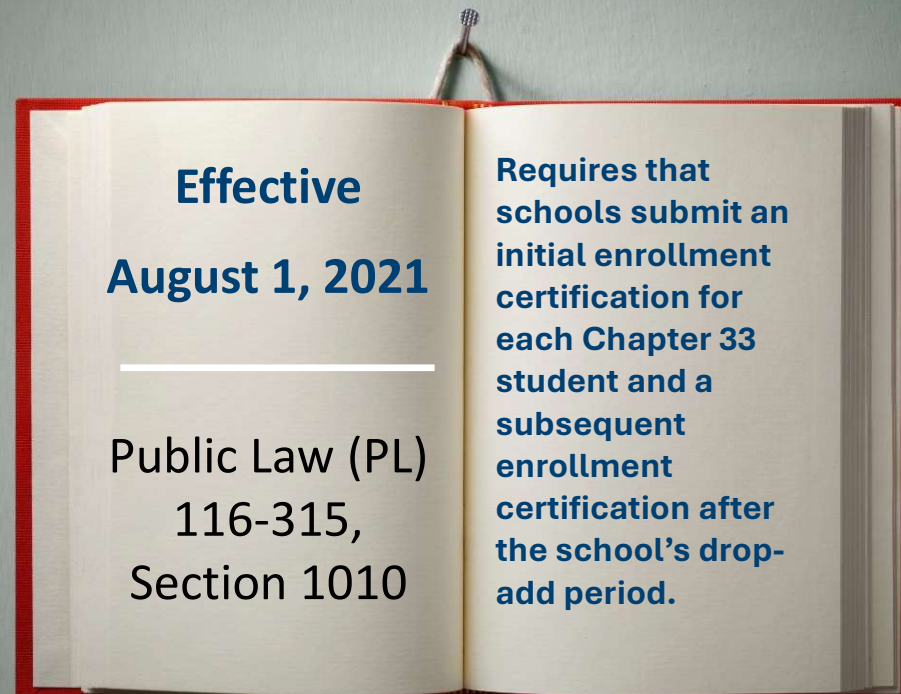
Submit amendment (VA Form 22-1999b) to VA via Enrollment Manager to increase scheduled weekly clock hours to 25 hours

Week 4

Variance isn't reported, but amendment is still required.

Submit amendment to decrease weekly clock back to 20 hours. Absences allowed within the school's approved attendance policy, are not reported.

PUBLIC LAW 116-315, SECTION 1010



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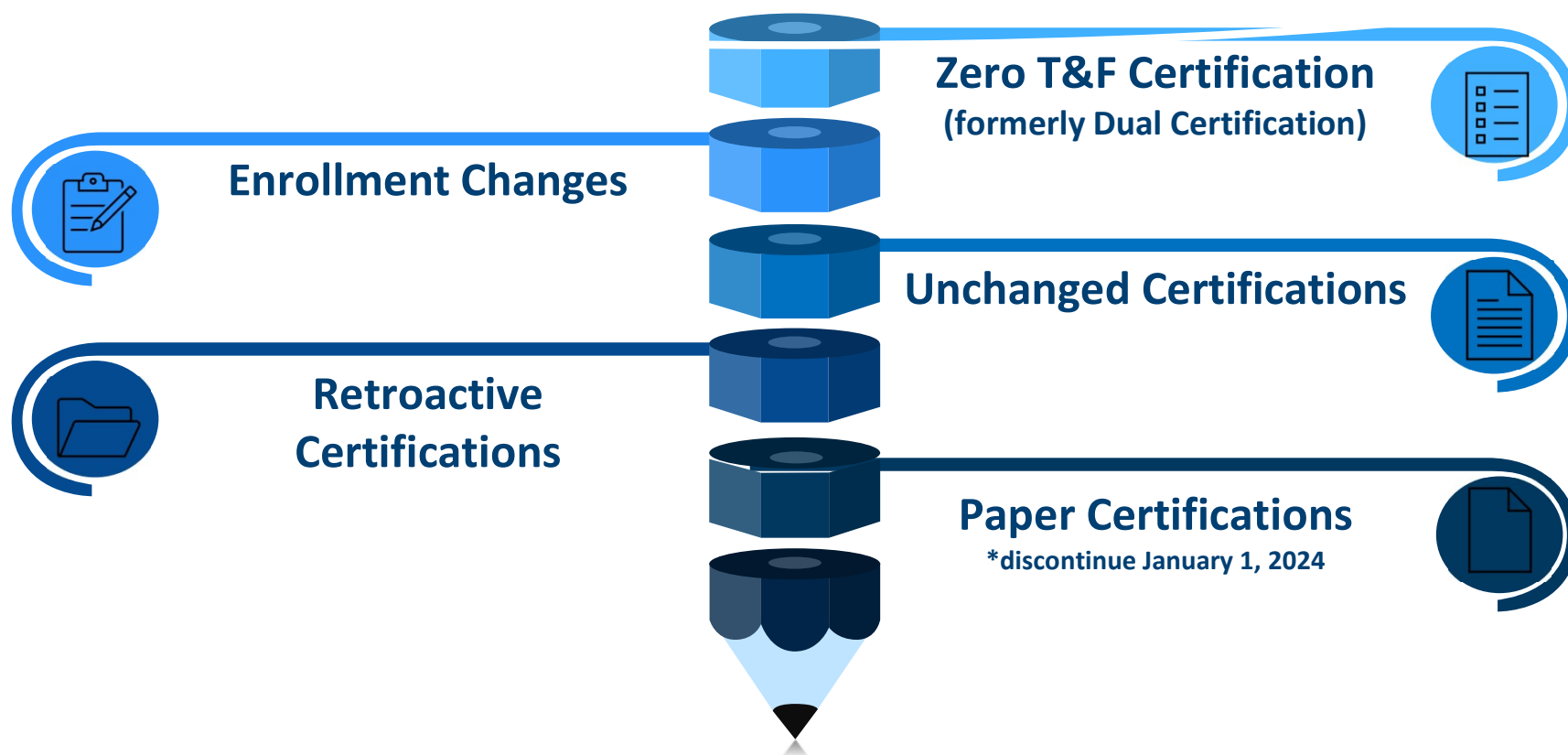
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PUBLIC LAW 116-315, SECTION 10102

A second certification must be submitted using:



NCDs and Zero T&F Certification Dual Certification

Issue:

For NCD stand-alone schools, submitting \$0.00 tuition and fees for the initial certification can potentially lead to issues with entitlement charges.

Explanation:

At a stand-alone NCD, entitlement is charged based on tuition and fees paid. When the initial certification with zero tuition and fees is received, entitlement is calculated based on Rate of Pursuit and the student is advised of the entitlement charge. Once the amended certification with the tuition and fees is submitted, entitlement is recalculated based on the tuition and fees paid and the student is then notified of the corrected entitlement charge.

What should you do?

It is recommended that if an NCD school chooses to initially certify with \$0.00 tuition and fees, that they make their students aware that they will not receive the correct entitlement charge information until the tuition and fees are submitted to VA.

Entitlement Charge for NCD Programs



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Entitlement Charge



- What is entitlement?
- How is entitlement charged for NCD programs?

WHAT IS “ENTITLEMENT”?



Entitlement is the months of VA education benefits a person has earned.

Picture a roll of tickets when..

Each roll of tickets equals a month of benefit.

The tickets in the roll combine to equal 30 days of benefits.

Some tickets have an expiration date (called the delimiting date), and some don't.

ENTITLEMENT CHARGES UNDER CHAPTERS 30, 1606, OR 35

- **Entitlement** is charged 1 day for every day of full-time training.
 - When training at full-time for one month, the student is charged one month of entitlement.
 - When training at one-half time for one month, the student is charged at 15 days of entitlement.
- **Formula:** Multiply training time x the number of days in the term (all months are counted as 30 days regardless of actual number of days in the month) equal amount of entitlement charged (in days).

Example:

Enrollment Period	08/15/23 to 09/14/23	30 days
Training time	Student is attending at $\frac{3}{4}$ time	75% of fulltime
Calculation	30 days x 75% (or .75)	22 days

This student is charged 22 days of entitlement for this enrollment period.

HOW ENTITLEMENT IS CHARGED FOR PROGRAMS OFFERED AT STANDALONE NCD SCHOOLS



Chapter 33 entitlement is based on the amount of tuition and fees paid out of the student's annual cap for a specific program.

- A one-month long program that costs **\$28,937.09** (the 24-25 annual cap) will cost the student one year of entitlement regardless of the length of the program.
- Conversely, an 18-month program that costs **\$2,411** will cost the student only one month of entitlement but pay full housing and books and materials for the entire period.

ENTITLEMENT CHARGE UNDER CHAPTER 33

If Tuition and Fees are paid:

The daily rate is computed as:

The certifiable tuition and fees divided by the yearly cap – this is the daily rate

Daily Rate multiplied by 360

The result is the amount of entitlement charged (in days)

Example:

A program that costs **\$10,000.00** will cost this student 4 months and 4 days of entitlement regardless of the length of the program.

Certifiable Tuition and Fees Divided by Yearly Cap	$\$10,000.00 \div \$28,937.09$	0.34558
Daily Rate \times 360	0.34558×360	124 days Entitlement Charged

ENTITLEMENT CHARGE UNDER CHAPTER 33

If only Housing is paid – no Tuition and Fees are paid:

Entitlement is charged according to rate of pursuit:

- For example, if the student is training at full-time (100% rate of pursuit) for one month, they will be charged one month of entitlement.
- For example, if the student is training at half time (50% rate of pursuit) for one month, they will be charged at 15 days of entitlement. *MHA is only paid at more than 50% rate of pursuit.

Enrollment Period	08/12/24 to 10/11/24	60 days
Rate of Pursuit	Enrolled 15 clock hours per week 18 clock hours is full time	80% of full time
Calculation	60 days x 80% (or .8)	48 days of entitlement



Knowledge Check

Knowledge Check

Which of the following do you deduct when certifying net tuition and fees?
(Select all the apply)

- a. Title IV aid
- b. Prepaid College funds
- c. Tuition-only scholarship
- d. Scholarship designated to be used to offset the cost of tuition and fees



Knowledge Check

Which of the following do you deduct when certifying net tuition and fees?
(Select all the apply)

- a. Title IV aid
- b. Prepaid College funds
- c. Tuition-only scholarship
- d. Scholarship designated to be used to offset the cost of tuition and fees



Knowledge Check

Which of the following do you deduct when certifying net tuition and fees?

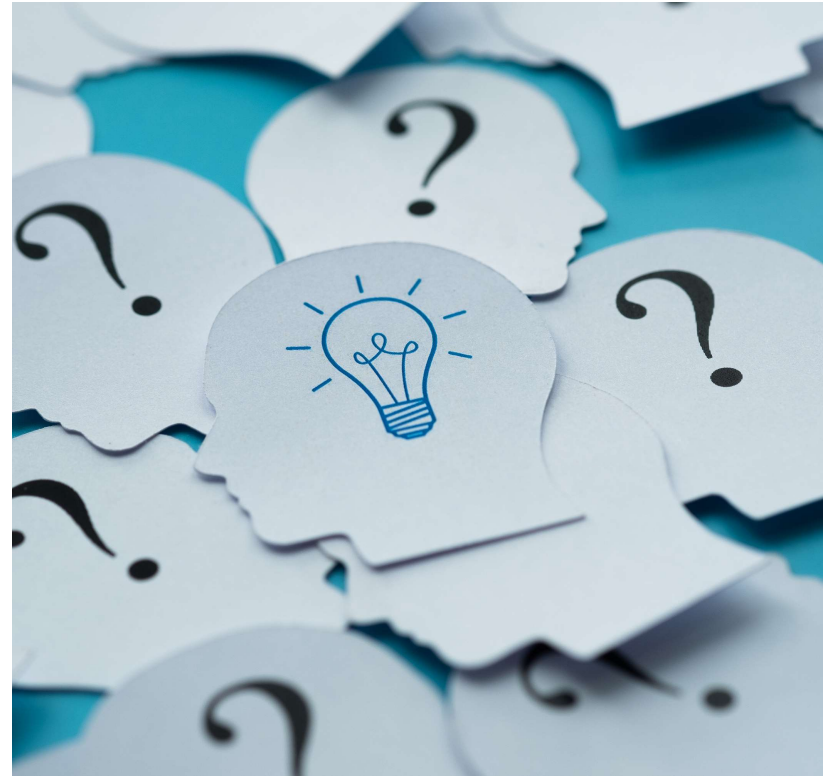
- a. Certify the actual number of clock hours per week on the student is scheduled to attend.
- b. Certify the average number of clock hours per week.
- c. Certify the average number of clock hours per month
- d. All the above depending on the program.



Knowledge Check

Which of the following do you deduct when certifying net tuition and fees?

- a. Certify the actual number of clock hours per week on the student is scheduled to attend.
- b. Certify the average number of clock hours per week.
- c. Certify the average number of clock hours per month
- d. All the above depending on the program.



Knowledge Check

What is the correct way to certify clock hours for an NCD program?

- a. Certify the actual number of clock hours per week on the student is scheduled to attend.
- b. Certify the average number of clock hours per week.
- c. Certify the average number of clock hours per month
- d. All the above depending on the program.



Knowledge Check

What is the correct way to certify clock hours for an NCD program?

- a. Certify the actual number of clock hours per week on the student is scheduled to attend.
- b. Certify the average number of clock hours per week.
- c. Certify the average number of clock hours per month
- d. All the above depending on the program.



Knowledge Check

Tuition certified to VA should be prorated across enrollment periods.

- a. True
- b. False



Knowledge Check

Tuition certified to VA should be prorated across enrollment periods.

- a. True
- b. False



Knowledge Check

For a stand alone NCD school, what is impacted by submitting zero tuition and fees on the initial certification?

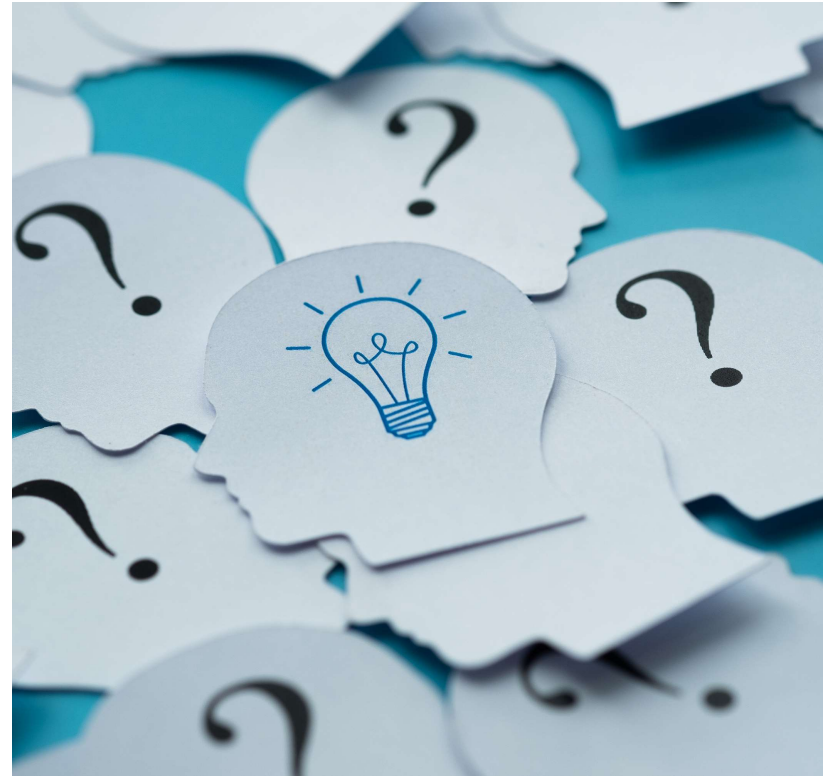
- a. Student's end date
- b. School's drop/add period
- c. Student's entitlement charge
- d. Student's tuition charge



Knowledge Check

For a stand alone NCD school, what is impacted by submitting zero tuition and fees on the initial certification?

- a. Student's end date
- b. School's drop/add period
- c. Student's entitlement charge
- d. Student's tuition charge



Summary



Describe the methods for measuring courses at an NCD facility



Identify policies that must be followed when certifying benefits at an NCD facility



Explain the certification process for VA education benefits including weekly clock hour variances



Recall how entitlement is charged when using VA education benefits



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Resources



[VA Education And Training Benefits | Veterans Affairs](#)

[School Certifying Official Handbook \(On-line\) \(va.gov\)](#)

[Resources for Schools Webpage](#)

[SCO Resource Matrix](#)



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