

Veterans Academic Resource Center

On behalf of the Veterans Academic Resource Center (“VARC”), we welcome you and your student(s) to UCF! We also thank you for your military service and sacrifices. Parents often have a lot of questions about how their child will use their GI bill dependent benefits. This handout is designed to answer most of the questions you may have. We ask that you keep in mind that federal laws prohibit us from releasing certain information to anyone beside the student themselves. Therefore, we ask that the student contact us directly with any questions or concerns regarding their specific situation. Our email is varc@ucf.edu and our phone number is 407-823-2707.

Q: Where do I begin? How do I start this process?

A: The first step in your child being able to use benefits is for the service member to transfer the benefits to the child. This is done thru a process called Transfer of Educational Benefits (“TEB”). You will go to this website and complete that process: <http://milconnect.dmdc.mil>. Once you have completed this, you will receive a confirmation message and the status at the top of the page will change to *submitted*. It will stay this way until the VA approves, rejects, or sets your request to a pending status. You can continue to log in and check back until the status changes to *approved* with an approval date. The military member’s part in the process is now done. *****Everything from this point on will be done by the student who is actually going to use the benefit.*****

Q: Okay, my status says approved. Now what?

A: Your dependent, the student who is going to use the benefit, will need to apply for a Certificate of Eligibility (“COE”). Your dependent should visit: <http://www.va.gov/education/how-to-apply> complete the online application. Please note: a paper application is available; however, the online process is much faster and more efficient.

Once your child completes the application for benefits, they will receive an email confirmation. It is important that the student keeps this email until they receive the paper COE in the mail. They can apply to use their benefits before the COE comes in the mail IF they have the confirmation number from their application for benefits.

Q: My dependent completed the application and received the COE. Now what?

A: Your dependent will bring the COE into the VARC, located in the bottom of the CFE Arena on main campus, across the street from the Barnes and Noble on East Plaza Drive. The dependent will come in and tell the staff that they are using their benefits for the first time. The VARC staff will then walk the student through the process and go over a checklist of items, 1-to-1 so that the student understands and the staff member can answer any questions.

Q: I understand the privacy laws, but can’t I come in with my dependent?

A: If your dependent would like you to come in with them for the initial certification so that you can offer moral support, that is fine. However, the benefit now has been transferred to the student, so that is the person we need to be working with. It is important for the student to know what to do and how to do it as they will need to complete the process each semester they wish to use benefits. We appreciate your understanding in that we cannot speak with the parent without the student present due to federal privacy laws and we value your student’s privacy.

Q: I am concerned about how my dependent will spend the money. Can I have that money sent to my own bank account?

A: This is an issue for you and your dependent to resolve. The VARC does not get involved in any financial discussions. The benefit belongs to the dependent, and they will be telling the VA- not the VARC- where they would like that money to be deposited. The dependent needs to set up an e-benefits account (<https://www.ebenefits.va.gov> or Google “E-benefits”) to tell the VA where to deposit the money.

Q: My dependent didn't get the amount of money I think he/she should have. Do I have my dependent call the VARC?

A: No. The VARC is basically an intermediary for the VA, but has no role in the actual disbursement of funds. Your dependent will call the VA at 1-888-GIBILL1 with any payment questions, but their first step would be to check their e-benefits account for pending payments or payment amounts. Keep in mind that the VA pays for a month of attendance after the month is over and only for the days the student was physically in school; therefore, the first and last month of a semester will always be less money. For example, a student will not get paid for August until September, and only for the days they were physically in school. Weekends do not count, nor do holidays/breaks.

Q: When should my dependent certify?

A: Your dependent should certify each semester they wish to use benefits, as early as possible. Typically, the VARC starts accepting certifications approximately 60 days before that semester begins. The best way to find out the date is to go to our website: <http://varc.sdes.ucf.edu/> and look at the front page under "News and Announcements". The other quick way is to check our Facebook page: UCF Veterans Academic Resource Center. Feel free to "like" us on Facebook! We process certifications in the order that they are received, so the earlier they submit their certification, the better. This also helps ensure that the time the benefit is interrupted is minimal.

Q: What if my dependent certifies early, then changes their schedule?

A: No problem! Your dependent would simply submit another certification form (the VSC form) with the updated information. Their place in the process is "saved" from the time they first certified.

Q: What is "tuition deferral"?

A: As long as the student submits their certification to the VARC by the end of the add/drop period (which is always the first Friday after that particular semester starts, excluding holidays), their due date will be "deferred", or moved to, a later date to give the VA time to make the payment. *However, please note that your student needs to stay on top of this date and if the payment has not been received within 1-2 weeks of the new due date, they need to contact the VARC immediately and make sure everything has been processed.* The VA will NOT pay for late fees; it is the student's responsibility to arrange a payment plan if the VA has not paid by the due date.

Q: What exactly does the VA cover?

A: That depends on which benefit your dependent is using. Please go to this website for more information: www.benefits.va.gov/gibill. There is a FAQ section on the right-handed side.

Q: Who should my dependent ask for when they call the VARC?

A: All of the VARC front-desk staff are either veterans or dependents using benefits themselves, so they are a great resource and have all been trained on all chapters of the GI bill. If for some reason they are unable to address your dependent's issue, they will involve a professional staff member to assist.

IMPORTANT REMINDERS:

- Dependent must certify every semester they wish to use benefits
- E-benefits account will show payments, entitlements remaining, pending payments- VARC will not know
- Tuition deferral deadline is the first Friday after classes start each semester
- VA phone # for benefit related information: 1-888-GIBILL-1
- VARC phone 407-823-2707 VARC email: varc@ucf.edu VARC website: www.varc.sdes.ucf.edu
- Not sure of forms needed: VARC website → "Forms" tab → "What forms do I need?" on right hand side
- The student is the ONLY person our staff can discuss information with in accordance with FERPA.

The Veterans Academic Resource Center thanks you for your military service!