Ask VA "AVA" FAQs

Scenarios	Answers
I am an SCO, but I am not a Veteran. How can I access AVA to assist my students?	As a non- Veteran you will have business access, only. You can access Ask VA here: Home · Custom Portal (va.gov)
I am not a Veteran. How do I access AVA?	Tou can access Ask vA nere. Home Ouston Fortal (va.gov)
Is there a way to separate personal contact information (home mailing address) from work stuff on AVA?	
I am an SCO, but not a Veteran. Why is my Social Security Number required in ID.me?	You must have a VA.gov account to access "Ask VA." To create a VA.gov account, you must first verify your identity. The current VA policy is to use ID.me as the secure choice to verify your identity. These resources may help with
I do not feel comfortable linking my person email to my professional. Is there a reason why the VA cannot use Login.gov as a method to sign into Ask VA? This would allow many of us to use our school email to access.	questions about the account verification process: Privacy And Security On VA.gov Veterans Affairs ID.me Support
Is there a time frame on how long before we should get an Ask VA response to an inquiry?	VA is committed to responding to a question submitted through AVA within 5 business days.
Does Ask VA take the place of the SCO Hotline?	The SCO Hotline remains prepared to assist SCOs. The AVA email process is another way to secure a response from VA. As a reminder, if reporting a claimant hardship, calling the SCO Hotline is the quickest way for resolution. For non-hardship specific claim related questions, using AVA is a great tool. Also, please remember both the SCO Hotline and AVA are focused on claims related assistance. Specific questions regarding SCO related concerns should be referred to your ELR.
Will schools be able to submit changes in SCO via Ask VA instead of sending to their ELR directly?	You should submit any changes in SCOs to your ELR, along with a new VA Form 22-8794 and SCO Training Certificates of Completion, if required. If submitted through AVA, the change must be routed to the appropriate ELR, potentially increasing processing time.

Ask VA "AVA" FAQs

Scenarios	Answers
Where do we update our profile?	You have access to your profile in the AVA system and should make any updates there.
When it comes to AVA, it always asks for more information that what you have shown on these slides. I am registered, so am unsure why I am being asked all these questions.	With the new Person/Business experience, the data entry process for inquiries in the GI Bill category were streamlined. There should be a very limited amount of information being requested now.
Who can move from my personal contact to Business contact? Who do you want us to contact if there are Business inquiries in the Personal tab for AVA?	You can submit an inquiry to any Agent requesting inquiries to be moved. You can select any GI Bill category/topic for this. Be sure to include the inquiry numbers that should be transferred.
AVA will not let me respond to VA once I submit an inquiry.	There is a known issue with the "Reply" button. A fix to this issue will be published as soon as possible. The work-around for this issue is to submit a new inquiry for the reply.
Ask VA has some of my questions showing up under business and some under personal. How are you determining which has gone to which?	AVA has been updated to allow only other claimant questions to be sent to the business account. Remember when sending a question, you must follow the training received to submit as a business account. Only questions regarding your own claim should show up in the personal account.
If I don't see a differentiation between personal and business inquiries in AVA, is it because my account is only set up for business?	As soon as you submit an inquiry using the new GI Bill process and select one of the professional relationships (School Certifying Official, Work Study Site Supervisor, OJT/Apprenticeship Supervisor), you should see the two tabs for personal and business. If no tabs are showing, the account is personal only.

Ask VA "AVA" FAQs

Scenarios	Answers
Should we be promoting AVA to our students?	VA has provided multiple lines of communication regarding AVA. It is now the only source of questions to VA through a secure email system. If students select "Ask a Question" on the GI Bill website, they will be directed to AVA. Advising student to submit their inquiries through AVA is always encouraged.
Is there a way to look at tickets on AVA after they have been closed? They seem to disappear.	This issue should be resolved.
How do we look up tickets that are "closed" in AVA?	Use profiles for impacted accounts have been updated. If you experience this issue, please email EDUTRAINING.VBACO@va.gov and your inquiry will be sent to the appropriate person for review.
All of my AVA tickets have disappeared. How do I get them back?	to the appropriate person for review.
I am a Work Study Site Supervisor, who has an assistant that does the Work Study administration for me. Can she set up an ID.me account and send inquiries even though she is not an SCO?	I order to submit on behalf of Work Study students, the assistant will need to become an approved supervisor as well. The Work Study site can submit a VA Form 22-10219 with the assistant's information to be added to the Work Study Management System. Once approved, the assistant can create their own AVA business account and make submissions.
Can I ask VRRAP questions on the Ask VA website or should I only ask via the VRRAP email?	There is one team within Education Service dedicated to answering VRRAP questions and concerns. You are welcome to submit the questions through AVA, however, there may be a slight delay in response to ensure the correct team receives the message. For more direct answers on VRRAP, the original email address provided is still a valuable and efficient source.
There is not a selection for VRE or other VA employee. Does that mean that any "submit a question" inquiry will populate in the personal topic section and not business, if we select "Other"? If so, will there be changes in the future?	VA has received feedback on other types of business relationships that should be available and is working to add those to the next AVA release. The work-around is to select one of the other 3 business relationships (School Certifying Official, Work Study Site Supervisor, OJT/Apprenticeship Supervisor) to make sure the inquiry gets slotted to the business profile.

Section 1010 – Student Monthly Verification FAQs

Scenarios	Answers
Would the email option for Section 1010 be the email the student has on file with the VA from when they originally applied for GI Bill benefits, or would it be the email on file in VA-ONCE? Are the emails and phone numbers for student for verification of attendance pulled from VA-ONCE? For enrollment verification, do we need student phone numbers entered in VA-ONCE or is that information collected elsewhere?	VA-ONCE contact information is not being used for enrollment verification. VA uses the email address and other contact information provided directly to VA from the beneficiary on their application for benefits or any subsequent direct contact. When no contact information is readily available from education sources, the VCE will review other internal VA sources, such as Compensation or Vocational Readiness & Employment databases. As a last resort, a letter is mailed to the student.
Where is the information that use to contact students taken from? Their own entered info in their VA portal or what we have in VA-ONCE?	It is important for beneficiaries to notify VA immediately when any of their contact information changes.
During the initial set-up, I have seen that the student waits for the first text from the VA to start the process. I have also seen that the student needs to call the Education Call Center to get the process started. Which, if either, is correct?	The system will automatically release a Text Opt-in message when the beneficiary becomes an impacted beneficiary after their enrollment is processed by VA. If the beneficiary does not have a valid mobile (cell) number of record with VA, they will be auto-enrolled into receiving enrollment verification messages via email. If the
Do students need to do anything to initiate the Chapter 33 enrollment verification process, or will they be contacted by the VA first?	VA does not have either a valid mobile number or email address, the beneficiary will need to contact the Education Call Center each month to verify their enrollment.
How will students register for opt-in/opt-out options for the Chapter 33 enrollment verification text messages?	If a beneficiary is enrolled in training at an IHL facility beginning December 17, 2021, or at a NCD facility with training beginning on or after August 1, 2021, have
My students are asking how to get text notifications. I am guessing something will be sent to have them opt-in. It would be great if there was somewhere we could send them to take of this so they will remain compliant.	received an award letter but have not received any messages, they should contact the Education Call Center to update their contact information and Text Opt-in status, unless they prefer to call the VA each month.
Was told Chapter 33 students had to call to opt-in to text messages for verifying. The PowerPoint states Veterans will receive a text. Which is correct?	

Section 1010 – Student Monthly Verification FAQs

Scenarios	Answers
So, December 1 it said students were to call in or text for enrollment, but our semester ends December 16, so technically wouldn't it start in Jan for the new semester, or should they be calling or texting in right now for FA2021?	Correct, enrollment verification will begin at the end of January. This would also be true if your Fall term at an IHL facility started anytime before December 17, 2021, regardless of the enrollment end date.
Are Chapter 31 VR&E student required to verify enrollment monthly? Is there anything separate for OJT/Apprenticeship rules/guidelines?	Student monthly verification is currently only applicable to Chapter 33 enrollments at IHL and NCD facilities.
Our institution is on the quarter system. Our winter quarter began November 29. Our next quarter begins March 14. Thus, our students will not have to verify their enrollment until our Spring quarter begins. Is that correct.	Correct.
Will IHLs get a fact sheet for enrollment verification for Chapter 33 students? I am not able to find a link to the IHL monthly enrollment toolkit. All my searches	The primary resources available for NCDs and IHLs are the Toolkits, How to Verify Infographics, and the Frequently Asked Questions. The links below contain helpful information:
pull up the NCD toolkit.	IHL Enrollment Verification Communication Toolkit Section 1010 IHL Process Infographic (va.gov) Microsoft Word - Enrollment Verification FAQs_112921 (va.gov) Enrollment Verification - Education and Training (va.gov)

Section 1010 – Two Certification Requirement FAQs

Scenarios	Answers
If we certify before the course starts and a student adds a class or changes their enrollment, do we have to wait until the drop/add period to add the course or make the changes?	The process of certifying the change does not change under the new two certification rule. If the change is certified during the add/drop period, that change does not satisfy the "certification after drop/add" requirement. You are still required to certify again after the add/drop period. However, if you wait until after the add/drop period to certify the change within the established time limit, it will satisfy the "certification after add/drop" requirement **Note: The 30-day reporting rule is still in place when deciding to wait to report changes.
Do we have to notify our VA students about their 2 required enrollment certifications?	That is up to you. You may wish to do so, especially if you have VA-ONCE set up to automatically email the student when a certification or change has been submitted to VA.
We have a set add/drop period but for courses that begin later in the term, they have their own census date. Am I correct that the 2 nd certification should be submitted after the add/drop period for those off-term courses?	Yes. If the school's catalog/published information indicates separate add/drop dates for non-standard terms, you will be required to report the 2nd submission in accordance with the individually published dates. Keep in mind the due date for the 2 nd submission is based on the academic OR financial penalty date, whichever comes first.
Can someone clarify what it is that I have to verify for the second enrollment verification if I have no change in the student status?	If the school has no changes to make to the enrollment or tuition and fees for a term, a second enrollment certification is still mandated. In VA-ONCE, this should be done by amending the enrollment, making no changes, and submitting the term. Comments or remarks should be avoided (unless necessary) on these "unchanged" amendments to allow the greatest likelihood of automation by VA. Schools which have not chosen to use VA-ONCE must still submit a second certification, marked "no changes" in remarks.
When it says that the enrollment certifications must be submitted within 30 days of the beginning of the term, does that mean 30 days BEFORE or AFTER the start of the term?	It means within the 30 days following the first day of term.
Are two certifications required for terms where no tuition is submitted?	Yes. You will still "Amend" or "Adjust" to fulfill the dual certification.

Section 1010 – Two Certification Requirement FAQs

Scenarios Scenar	Answers
We are a clock hour NCD school, do we still need to submit 2 enrollment certifications?	Section 1010 requires that educational institutions submit an additional certification of enrollment after the last day a student can withdraw from the course or program of education without penalty, generally known as the add/drop
We only have to submit dual certification for Chapter 33, correct? Does it cause issues if dual certifications are submitted for Chapter 1606, VRRAP, VR&E, etc.?	period. This requirement was effective August 1, 2021, for IHL and NCD facilities and is applicable to only Chapter 33 students (including STEM).
Is there anything separate for OJT/Apprenticeship rules/guidelines?	This requirement does not currently apply to OJT/App facilities, nor does it currently apply to Vocational Flight Schools. However, if your school also has
Do STEM recipients need to have a dual certification submitted as well?	approved NCD programs such as Air Frame or Powerplant, those will require a 2 nd submission. VA prefers you do not submit 2 nd submissions for non-33 students;
Am I right in understanding that the 2-step verification does not currently apply to vocational flight schools?	these will require review by a VCE, only to learn no action is needed, potentially delaying other certifications that do require action.
We are an NCD with a 5-week program. No drop periods. For the 30-day second enrollment, does that include weekends?	For schools that do not have a drop/add period: 1. Submit the initial enrollment certification.
What should schools do for the two-certification requirement if the institution's drop date is after the 60-day window?	No less than 30 and no more than 60 days from the first day of the enrollment, submit your second enrollment certification. If there are no changes in the enrollment, amend in VA ONCE, make no changes (no remarks) and hit Submit.
What if the drop/add period is beyond the 60 days?	Changes (no remarks) and the Submit.
	For schools with a defined add/drop period, the second certification should be received no later than 30 days after the school's add/drop period OR 60 days from the first day of the enrollment period, whichever occurs first. For schools without a defined add/drop period, the second enrollment certification must be received within 60 days from the first day of the enrollment period.
	Please keep in mind that financial penalty is also considered. For example: Your school offers a 100% tuition refund through the 1 st week of the term, followed by a 75% T&F refund for the next week. The 2 nd certification is due within 30 days of the 8 th day of the term. VA considers the penalty beginning on the 8 th day, even if your academic drop period allows courses to be dropped without academic penalty much later into the term.

Section 1010 – Two Certification Requirement FAQs

Scenarios Answers

Why do we have to certify each term twice? This has never been adequately explained and is a LOT of extra work.

When will we be able to apply for a waiver for dual certification?

Please review *PL 116-315 Section 1010, Isakson and Roe Veterans Health Care and Benefits Improvement Act of 2020*, effective <u>August 1, 2021</u>. The intent of the law is to reduce student overpayments by requiring additional reporting from the school; the student verification process is included for the same purpose.

There is not a waiver for the two-certification requirement.

Section 1018 FAQs

Does Isakson & Roe section 1018 require the institutional refund policy found in the Principles of Excellence?

Where can I find an example of a shopping sheet?

Section 1018 codifies in statute the following requirements:

- Schools must provide a covered individual with a personalized shopping sheet, now known as the "College Financing Plan." This is an example form used by the Department of Education: Financial Aid Shopping Sheet (ed.gov)
- Personalized shopping sheets must be provided within 15 days after tuition and fees are determined for the academic year, if there is a change.
- Schools must have policies that inform enrolled, covered individuals of the availability of Federal financial aid not administered by VA that is offered by the institution, alert the individual of potential eligibility for other Federal financial aid before packaging/arranging student loans or alternative financing, prohibit automatic renewal of covered individuals in a course and/or program, ensure each covered individual approves of the enrollment in a course, allow enrolled members of the Armed Forces (including reserve components and National Guard) to be readmitted if such members are temporarily unavailable or must suspend enrollment to serve in the Armed Forces, and accommodate short absences for such services in the Armed Forces.
- Schools must provide covered individuals the requirements for graduation and a graduation timeline
- Accredited educational institutions agree to obtain approval of the respective accrediting agency for each new course or program.
- Schools must designate an employee of the institution to serve as contact for covered individuals and family members seeking assistance with academic counseling, financial counseling, disability counseling, and other information regarding completing a course of education at the education institution.

COVID Regulations Ending and Public Law 117-76 FAQs

Scenarios	Answers
COVID has brought a new modality to offer courses through Zoom. Zoom is a live class that has an on-campus classroom but can be attended through Zoom, is this considered resident or distance to use the Zoom section?	When a course is taken solely online (through distance learning) the course must be certified to VA as distance training. Distance learning is training which uses one or more technologies to deliver instruction to students who are separated from the instructor and to support regular and substantive interaction between the students and the instructor, synchronously or asynchronously. Conversely, courses taken through CCTV (the instructor is not present in the classroom, but the students are in a classroom - with attendance taken - and there is live two-way interaction with the instructor) are considered in-residence training for VA purposes. Please reference the SCO Handbook, here: School Certifying Official Handbook
Where does a school have to go to get certified as online/hybrid?	You should contact your SAA for the following: Program revisions; new/suspended/cancelled programs Updated catalogs and related publications School address updates; including branch and extension locations Changes in accreditation status Change of ownership
If HR 5545 is signed into law, will we need to go back and redo all Spring 2022 certifications that have already been submitted? Can winter terms that start before the December 21 deadline be certified as COVID online?	Effective December 21, 2021, HR 5545 became PL 117-76, which extends the COVID-19 protected period through June 1, 2022. This means that terms that begin prior to June 1, 2022 can be reported as COVID online, however, if the COVID period is not extended beyond June 1, 2022, students will need to return to resident training to receive the full resident housing rate.
Once President Biden signs this bill, will there be further guidance issued to the school?	You should review each certification to ensure they meet the COVID rules. This law does not change anything relating to flat rate or the two-certification requirement.
Once President Biden signs this bill, will there be a waiver policy put into place for schools that use a flat rate tuition regarding submission of a second verification in VA-ONCE?	You can review the set of FAQs provided to SCOs here: https://benefits.va.gov/gibill/covid19faqs.asp

Monthly Housing Allowance (MHA) FAQs

Scenarios Answers

If students are in a hybrid course schedule, some online courses, some in-person – will their BAH be pro-rated or will they automatically qualify for the ½ rate?

What is the minimum number of credit hours required for in-person in order to receive the housing stipend? I have a student who will be taking three classes online and one class in-person.

Will the '1 hours in residence" still apply for Chapter 33 benefits to receive housing allowance, if all other hours are online?

Question regarding MHA for on-campus classes taken online. Our institution is approved for resident and online courses. Since most of our students are taking classes online, we have limited on-campus courses available. How can we accommodate for the Veteran students?

VA calculates rate of pursuit (RoP) by dividing the <u>total (residence and distance)</u> <u>credit hours</u> (or credit hour equivalents) being pursued by the number of credit hours considered to be full-time by the school.

Example: If full-time is 12 credits, then RoP:

- 6 credits (or credit equivalents is 50% (6 ÷ 12 = 50%)
- 7 credits (or credit equivalents is 58% (7 ÷ 12 = 58%)

The MHA is paid if the student's RoP is more than 50%. Rate of pursuit determines whether a student receives or doesn't receive the housing allowance. If pursuit is more than 50%, the student receives the housing allowance. If the RoP is 50% or less, then the student doesn't receive the housing allowance. (Active-duty personnel receiving Chapter 33 benefits or spouses of active-duty personnel receiving Transfer of Entitlement (ToE) benefits are not eligible for the housing allowance.)

Effective October 1, 2011, individuals ONLY enrolled in distance learning courses were eligible for an MHA equal to 50% of the national average of all BAH rates.

For terms beginning on or after August 15, 2019, you will certify most <u>courses</u> which contain an in-residence component as in-residence training. "Hybrid" training with combines residential and distance learning will be certified as in-residence when the following are met:

- Hybrid training must have at least one session that meets the definition of a standard class sessions (i.e. one 50-minute class), but doesn't have to meet weekly
- Your school's approval must specifically include residence and distance learning to report "hybrid" course to VA.

Veteran students should always be certified correctly, whether the class is online(distance) or resident. Due to the extension of the COVID protected period, the MHA will be protected until June 1, 2022.

Scenarios	Answers
Can only Chapter 33 round out? Can Chapter 35 recipients also round out?	Rounding out applies to all GI Bill beneficiaries.
I hear that was an email about the changes in updating VA-ONCE for Adjustments, but I didn't get the email.	There was a change to VA-ONCE in late October 2021 that blocked the ability to amend adjustments in VA-ONCE. Schools that were using "Amend" on "Adjustments" were utilizing an unintended "loophole" in VA-ONCE that created certification issues due to the legislation for two certifications.
All of my SCOs have been having problems with VA-ONCE in Internet Explorer.	No known changes have been made to VA-ONCE that should affect browser effectiveness.
I work at a school with 10-15 VA students. Can you provide examples on how other schools use these monies for their VA students? Also, is there a deadline to use these funds?	There is no stated deadline to use the fund. If you save the funds for several years, it's a good idea to have a written plan for the intended funds to present during a compliance survey.
	Most expenditures used for the students are acceptable, such as a VA student pizza party, equipment upgrade to a dedicated space on campus for VA students, a commemorative plaque for deceased Veteran(s) placed on school grounds, special tassels for graduating VA students, plant a Veteran tree, etc. The list is endless.
How long does it take for a Veteran to receive communication from the VA for mitigating circumstances?	Unsure on this question. If mitigating circumstances are presented on a claim, current timeliness for supplemental claims is about 7 days. The student would receive a letter advising if the mitigating circumstances were accepted or not.

Scenarios	Answers
Are late certifications accepted after 30 days past the start of a semester specifically if a student had not turned in their COE prior?	Late certifications will be accepted.
Is there a way to look at a spot that has all the GovDelivery emails?	Not currently. However, this is a great suggestion and has forwarded to the appropriate team.
Where does the VA get student addresses to send COEs and other communications? Why is the VA still relying on mail when many students have complicated living situations and changing mailing addresses? Why not switch to email?	The law (section 5104) specifically states VA must mail notices through the United States Postal Service. VA collectively is aware this law seems antiquated but is tied to it. The addresses currently come from the student's original application and subsequent correspondence form the student. Within the next year or so, more opportunities will avail themselves so students should be able to receive at least copies of letters through a managed portal service. More information will be provided on this as it is available.
What is the policy for non-supported students in the same cohort as the 85% supported/Veteran students that do not want to return to the learning center after 12/21/21. Can they continue online through the end of their program (a month or two to go)? Please advise for the non-supported students (15%) who do not want to return to resident training with their 85%.	Supported or non-supported students who leave the cohort shouldn't be counted with that cohort for the next reporting period. Changes made during a reporting period that is already underway don't impact that report. Remember that enrollment ratios for programs that vary in length, cost, equipment, or objective must be reported separately.
For 85/15 – are outstanding balances included in supported students from that current semester or only from previous terms.	If students carry forward into the current enrollment period a balance on a payment plan from that of a previous enrollment period, they must be counted as supported students for the purpose of 85/15 calculations.
Trying to download Form 22-10215 and I keep getting a message that says I don't have the correct version of Acrobat. Can I get the form from another source?	We believe this problem has been corrected on our website. Additionally, your ELR should be able to provide you with the form.

Scenarios	Answers
Where can I find PL Isakson & Roe in Spanish?	Public Laws are not published by VA, they are published at govinfo.gov U.S. Government Publishing Office. They may have information about the availability of legislation in other languages.
The education hotline gives conflicting information. How do you suggest we navigate those situations?	Examples would need to be provided. The Education Call Center has received all guidance and very specific scripts to assist with caller's questions. Another option is to submit the question through AVA or correspondence with your ELR (if appropriate). This provides an answer in writing. If you follow that guidance and it later is deemed incorrect, you'd have evidence you followed VA instruction. This method also allows VA to follow-up with the individual providing incorrect information since there is a record of the discussion.
Having trouble finding a way to ask for credit for this session.	Click on the URL below or Copy and Paste in your web browser https://vba-tpss.vbatraining.org/assess/trkSignIn?refid=XSCO
I'm new and I still don't understand where to certify my hours. I did scroll to the bottom of the link. Is there another link after that?	 New Users must create an account. Existing users, enter your email address and eight (8) digit facility code, then click Next Scroll down and click the Conference/Workshop/Virtual Training tab Select the applicable training session from the list of topics that appears on the right side of the screen by clicking Begin To enter Conference/Workshop/Virtual Training Title, click the dropdown arrow, select SCO Virtual Training Session and click Submit Enter the start date and the end date Enter your Facility Name, City and State (Main Campus) and click Submit Certify your attendance by clicking Agree and then submit Print your training certificate and keep for your records

Scenarios	Answers
So, I am at an OJT school, so do I need one module? If so, how do I get my certificate?	 Click on the URL below or Copy and Paste in your web browser https://vba-tpss.vbatraining.org/assess/trkSignIn?refid=XSCO New Users must create an account. Existing Users must enter their email address and eight (8) digit facility code, then click Next Scroll down, click the New or Existing SCO Training tab (whichever applies) Select the applicable training session from the list of topics that appears on the right side of the screen by clicking Begin Complete the module Print your training certificate and keep for your records
I have a question about the 22-8794 – the date that the form is asking in "Please provide the date the Section 305 training requirement was met" – what training is that? Is that the training to become an SCO?	New SCOs will enter the date they completed the SCO Training Portal, here: School Certifying Official (SCO) Training - Education and Training (va.gov) Existing SCOs will enter the date they completed the annual training. SCOs at facilities that are not "covered institutions" will enter "exempt".
How can we receive the FAQ that was presented during this webinar? Will we be able to receive the live version of this presentation for review later? I missed the first portion of the webinar due to technical issueswas it	The FAQs are part of the PowerPoint. The PowerPoint is included in the download pod. The SCO Monthly Office Hours are not currently recorded, but following the Office Hours, all PowerPoint presentations will be available here: Education Service Webinars and Training - Education and Training (va.gov)
recorded? Will it be emailed to participants? Where do you find the FAQs?	addition convice violand and ridining and ridining (valger)