

**PALO ALTO COLLEGE
COLLEGE PROCEDURES**

Procedure Number: S 12.2
Procedure Title: Veterans Affairs (VA)
Relevant Board Policy: [F.6.1 Student Success](#)
Originating Unit: Veterans Affairs
Maintenance Unit: Vice President of Student Affairs

1. Purpose: Many federal and state benefits are available to advance the education of Veterans and active duty service-members in our nation's Armed Forces. Spouses and family members may also be eligible for assistance through VA educational benefits and/or the Texas Hazlewood Exemption. The VA Office provides a "one-stop shop" where students can file their VA and/or Texas Hazlewood claims, and receive information on other VA benefits and programs.

Program Description:

Since the passage of the GI Bill, known originally as the Serviceman's Readjustment Act of 1944, it has evolved and new programs have emerged. While the VA office may not deal directly with all VA and Texas educational programs, the office is familiar with the many ways our student veteran population can receive educational benefits. Each program or "Chapter" affords benefits for a specific population and carries with it set requirements of eligibility. The VA Office certifies enrollment, and updates, to the different federal and state agencies so that veterans, if eligible, may have their tuition and fees paid, and their monthly stipend issued. The official source for information on processing VA educational benefits is the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs School Certifying Official Handbook.

Types of Projects:

The following VA programs relate to current benefits for higher education:

Chapter 30:
Montgomery GI Bill
Chapter 31: Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Program
Chapter 33: Post 9-11 GI Bill
Chapter 35: Survivors' and Dependents' Educational Assistance Program
Chapter 1606: Montgomery GI Selected Reserves
Chapter 1607: Reserve Educational Assistance Program

The following State of Texas programs relate to current exemptions for higher education:

Hazlewood Exemption
Hazlewood Legacy Act

There are some cases where veterans and family members may use a federal and state benefit concurrently.

I. Procedure Statement:

- A. The PAC VA Office must keep the VA and the State of Texas informed of the enrollment status of veterans and other eligible persons. Some of the basic forms used to keep the VA and the State of Texas informed include:
- a. Enrollment Certification (VA Form 22-1999) to report required enrollment.
 - b. Notice of Change in Student Status (VA Form 22-1999b).
 - c. Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Program (VA Form 1905).
 - d. Texas Hazlewood Act Exemption Application.
- B. The VA Office is responsible for:
- a. Monitoring the subjects pursued by a student and to certify only those subjects that apply to the student's program.
 - b. Monitoring student's grades to ensure s/he is making satisfactory progress; report when a student was terminated due to unsatisfactory progress.
 - c. Monitoring student's conduct and report when student is suspended or dismissed for unsatisfactory conduct.
 - d. Keeping up-to-date on current VA rules and benefits, and Texas Hazlewood Act.
 - e. Maintaining records of VA students and make all records available for inspection.
 - f. Ensuring a school's file for a VA student contains: copies of all VA paperwork; school's transcript; grade reports; drop slips; registration slips; tuition and fee charges; transcripts from previous schools with evaluations of same; student's school application; records of disciplinary action; program outline; a curriculum guide or graduation evaluation form; and any other pertinent forms.
 - g. Assisting students in applying for education benefits.
- C. Benefit Payments
- a. Monthly benefit payments (or Monthly Housing Allowance for Chapter 33) are made directly to the students by the VA. The payment is made to the student for the number of days the student is certified for the month. If a student is certified for a whole month, the full monthly payment is paid. If the student is only certified for part of the month, the benefit is prorated.
 - b. If a student asks to be certified retroactively for enrollment periods that have not been previously certified, the VA office will certify the student. The VA will determine if the date of eligibility and the beginning date from which benefits can be paid.
 - c. Hazlewood recipients do not receive benefit payments.
- D. Retention of VA records
- a. VA students' records must be kept in the VA office in a secured file for three (3) years following the ending date of the last period certified to VA. Records need to be kept longer than 3 years only if a written request to keep the records longer is received from the Department of Veterans Affairs or the General Accounting Office 30 or more days before the end of the 3-year period.
 - b. Although VA requires that records be kept for 3 years, record retention regulations for individual states may require that VA records be kept more than 3 years.
- E. Compliance Surveys
- a. The law requires that periodic surveys be conducted at educational institutions. The two main purposes of these surveys are to:
 - i. Ensure that VA payments going to the school and students enrolled at the school are based upon proper and correct enrollment information as furnished by the school; and
 - ii. Assist school and training officials and students in understanding the requirements of the law in order to prevent deficiencies or violations which could develop because of misunderstandings or misinterpretations of the law.

F. Review of School Records

- a. Schools that have sought and obtained approval to provide training under 38 U.S.C. are required by law (38 U.S.C. 3690(c) and 38 C.F.R. 21.4209) to maintain certain records and to make these records available for examination by authorized representation of the government. All records and accounts of schools pertaining to veterans and eligible persons, as well as the records of other students that are necessary to determine compliance with the law, must be available for examination.
- b. The law (38 U.S.C. 3690 (c)) provides that records and accounts must be made available for review by authorized representatives of the government “notwithstanding any other provision of law.” The effect of this provision is to allow VA to examine necessary records that may be restricted under laws regarding privacy of student records such as PL 93-380 (Buckley Amendment) or other provisions of the law. Failure to make records available may result in discontinuance of educational assistance benefits.

G. Reporting Fees

- a. At the beginning of each calendar year, a listing of students who were receiving assistance during the previous calendar year is printed by the VA for each Alamo College institution. Based on the number of students who were certified to VA at least once during the year and who received VA educational benefits, the PAC VA office is compensated at the rate of \$12 for each student.
- b. PL 111-377 requires that reporting fees must be used for the purpose of certification. This money is to help schools cover the cost of administering their VA programs, including, but not limited to attendance at VA sponsored training conferences.

H. Hazlewood Report

- a. PAC is required to report to the Texas Veterans Commission data related to the eligible persons who receive exemptions under the Hazlewood Exemption. The reporting deadlines are:
 - i. January 31st of each year for the fall semester
 - ii. June 30th of each year for the spring semester
 - iii. September 30th of each year for the summer session

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Approved: (signed: Dr. Mike Flores)
President