

ABCs of Certification

Annual GAVCO Conference

March 28 – 30, 2010

Rick Middleton, ELR



EDUCATION CONTACT GUIDE
Education Services Unit (ESU) Staff

Linda McAllister, Chief Education Liaison Officer

(404) 929-3109 - E-mail: linda.mcallister@va.gov

Rick Middleton, Education Liaison Representative

(404) 929-3003 - E-mail: richard.middleton1@va.gov

Michael Rogers, Education Compliance Survey Specialist

(404) 929-3006 - E-mail: michael.rogers1@va.gov

Hazel Burke, Education Compliance Survey Specialist

(404) 929-3056 – E-mail: hazel.burke@va.gov

Fax Number (ESU) - (404) 929-5811

Education Claims: Vocational Rehabilitation: Request for VA Forms/Publications:

VA Regional Office

P. O. Box 10002

Decatur, GA 30031-7022

VA Regional Office

P. O. Box 100024

Decatur, GA 30031-7024

Attn: Publication (243B-1)

VA Regional Office

1700 Clairmont Road

Decatur, GA 30033-4032

Toll free: Education: 1-800-442-4551 (Education Inquiries) Direct Deposit: 1-877-838-277

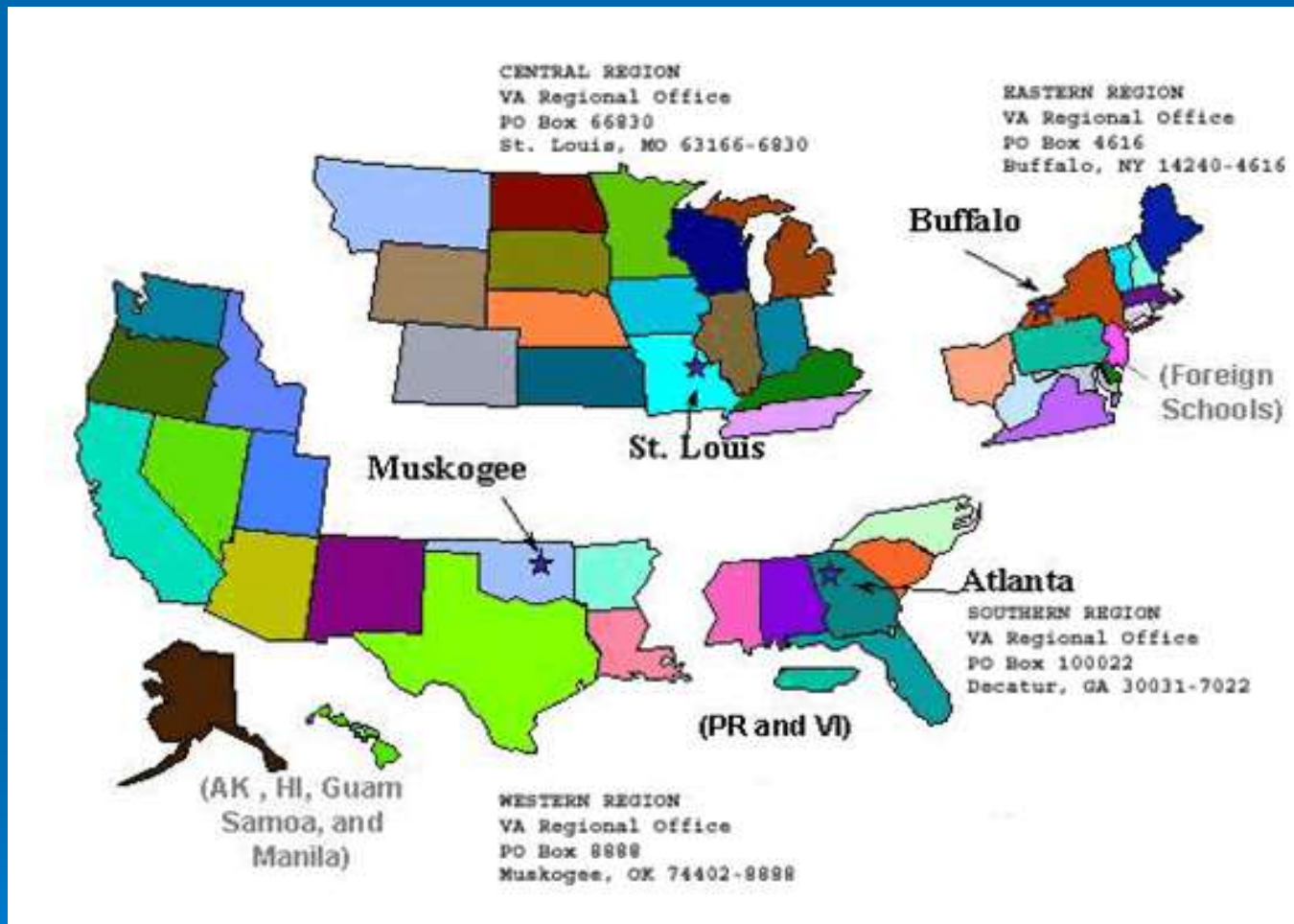
Monthly Verification: 1-877- 823-2378

Debt Mgmt Center: 1-800-827-0648

E-mail: DVA Education website: www.qibill.va.gov

WAVE (Web Automated Verification of Enrollment): <http://www.qibill.va.gov/wave/>

Education Processing Jurisdictions



Definitions

SCO: School Certifying Official

IHL: Institution of Higher Learning

NCD: Non-College Degree

Facility Code: Number assigned by VA to identify school

Program of Education: Combination of subjects or courses pursued which is generally accepted as necessary to meet a predetermined educational, vocational or professional objective.

Certifying Official's Objective

As VA School Certifying Official (SCO), you are the 'eyes and ears' for VA, the Education Division. The position has a great deal of responsibility that impacts DVA and the VA beneficiaries attending your school. The partnership between VA and the SCO requires constant interaction. Especially important is the monitoring of the continued pursuit of certified students during the certified period and timely reporting of any changes in enrollment status the student may make.

Certifying Official's Responsibilities

- Promptly certify VA students
- Monitor student's pursuit during the certified period & promptly notify VA of changes
- Maintain records for @ least three years & make them available to representatives of VA & SAA
- Keep SAA apprised of institutional changes, such as new programs, new catalogs, calendars, etc.
- Try to keep up-to-date on VA rules

Manual

- Go to www.gibill.va.gov.
 - => “Information for Education Professionals,”
 - => “Information Resources”
 - => “Atlanta Certifying Official’s Handbook”

Education Chapters

Ch 32: Veterans Education Assistance Program (VEAP)

Ch 30: Montgomery GI Bill – Active Duty

Ch 1606: Montgomery GI Bill – Selected Reserve

Ch 1607: Reserve Education Assistance Program (REAP)

Ch 35: Dependents Education Assistance (DEA)

Ch 31: Vocational Rehabilitation

Ch 33: The Post-9/11 Veterans Education Assistance Act of 2008

Education Chapters

Chapter 32 (VEAP)

- Initially entered ad between 1/1/77 and 6/30/85
- Contributed up to \$2,700.00 (Non-refundable)
- VA contributed \$2 for every \$1 (maximum of \$8,100.00 in program)
 - Maximum of 27 months benefits
 - 10 Year delimiting date
 - Month rate determined by amount contributed & length of contributions

Chapter 35 - DEA

- * Spouses, surviving spouses & children of veterans:
 - * If Living: 100 PT disabled due to service-related disabilities
 - * If deceased: Died on active duty, or death related to a service-related disability

Ch 35 (Continued)

- 45 Months of eligibility
- Basically, 8 years of eligibility

Note: No individual VA file numbers. Dependents use veteran's file number. Each dependent is provided a unique payee number. Spouse (10), Children, (41-A), (42-B), etc.

Chapter 30 – Montgomery G MI Bill - AD

- Entered service on/after 7/1/85
- Entered service before 1/1/77 & established Ch 34 eligibility
- Enrolled during open windows
- Agreed to participate & contributed \$1,200 (Non-refundable)
- 10-Year delimiting date
- 36 months of benefits

CH 1606 - Montgomery GI Bill – SR

- On/After 7/1/85, enlist, reenlist, or extend an enlistment in the selective reserves or Guard for a period of not less than 6 years
- 14-year delimiting date (**from date of eligibility)
- 36 months of benefits

Chapter 1607 - REAP

- Reservists & Guardsmen ordered to AD in response to a war or national emergency
- Serve on AD for @ least 90 consecutive days on/after 9/11/01
- 36 Months of Benefits
 - No delimiting date (as long as with unit)
 - Monthly rate = percentage of high Ch 30 rate
 - 90 days, but less than 1 year = 40%
 - 1 year, less than 2 years = 60%
 - 2+ years = 80%

The Post-9/11 GI Bill (chapter 33 of title 38 U.S.C.)

JULY 2008

This presentation will provide you with the following:

- An overview of the Post-9/11 GI Bill benefit
- An understanding of how this program differs from and impacts other VA education benefits



Eligibility Criteria

Individuals who served on active duty after 09/10/01 will be eligible for the Post-9/11 GI Bill if the individual—

- Served at least 30 continuous days and was discharged due to a service-connected disability, or
- Served for an aggregate period ranging from 90 days to 36 months.



Eligibility Criteria

Service Requirements (after 9/10/01 an individual must serve an aggregate of)	% of Maximum Benefit Payable
At least 36 months	100
At least 30 continuous days on active duty (Must be discharged due to service-connected disability)	100
At least 30 months, but less than 36 months	90
At least 24 months, but less than 30 months	80
At least 18 months, but less than 24 months	70
At least 12 months, but less than 18 months	60
At least 06 months, but less than 12 months	50
At least 90 days, but less than 06 months	40

Eligibility Criteria

Qualifying active duty does not include the following:

- NOAA, PHS, Title 32 AGR; or
- Service Academy Contract Period; or
- ROTC contract period under 10 U.S.C. 2107(b); or
- Service terminated due to an erroneous or defective enlistment; or
- Service used for loan repayment; or
- Selected Reserve Service used to establish eligibility under 30, 1606, or 1607.

Eligibility Criteria

In order to retain eligibility, after meeting the service requirements, an individual must—

- Continue on active duty; or
- Be honorably discharged from Armed Forces; or

Eligibility Criteria

- Be honorably discharged for further service in a reserve component; or
- Be discharged or released for EPTS, HDSP, or CIWD.
- Be honorably discharged and placed on retired list, temporary disability retired list, or transferred to Fleet Reserve or Fleet Marine Corps Reserve; or



Period of Eligibility

In general, individuals will remain eligible for benefits for 15 years from the date of last discharge or release from active duty of at least 90 continuous days.



Entitlement

Individuals will generally receive 36 months of benefits. However, individuals are limited to 48 months of combined benefits under educational assistance programs administered by VA.

NOTE: Individuals transferring to the Post-9/11 GI Bill from the Montgomery GI Bill (chapter 30) will be limited to the amount of remaining chapter 30 entitlement.

Benefit Payments

- Monthly Housing Allowance
- Established Charges
- Stipend for Books and Supplies

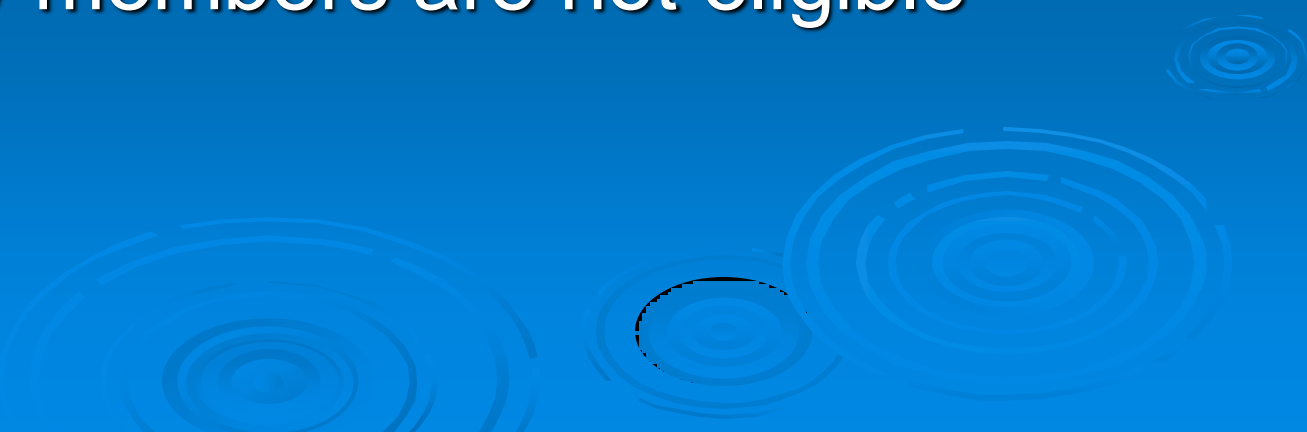
Established Charges

- Individuals are eligible for the applicable percentage (based on aggregate active duty service) of the lesser of—
 - Established charges; or
 - Highest amount of established charges for full-time, undergraduate training at a public IHL in the State the student is attending.

Monthly Housing Allowance

- Equivalent to BAH for an E-5 with dependents
 - Amount determined by zip code of the IHL where the student is enrolled
 - Prorated based on the percentage of the maximum benefit payable
 - Active duty and anyone training at ½ time or less, and those pursuing distance learning are not eligible for the monthly housing allowance

Books and Supplies Stipend

- Up to a \$1,000 per year
 - Paid proportionally for each quarter, semester, or term attended
 - Prorated based on the percentage of the maximum benefit payable
 - Active duty members are not eligible
- 

Yellow Ribbon Program

- IHLs may voluntarily enter into an agreement with VA to pay established charges not covered under chapter 33
- VA will match each additional dollar funded by the school
- The combined amounts may not exceed the full cost of the school's established charges
- Only individuals entitled to the 100 percent benefit rate (based on service requirements) may receive this funding

Chapter 33 Elections

An individual who has met the requirements to establish eligibility under chapter 33 and, as of August 1, 2009 is

- Eligible for either chapter 30, 1606, or 1607; or
- A member of the Armed Forces and making the basic \$1200 contribution toward chapter 30; or
- A member of the Armed Forces who previously declined to elect chapter 30

must make an *irrevocable* election to use benefits under chapter 33.

Approved Programs

- All programs approved under chapter 30 and offered at an IHL
- Individuals who were previously eligible for chapter 30, 1606, or 1607 may continue to receive benefits for approved programs not offered by IHLs (i.e. flight, correspondence, APP/OJT, preparatory courses, and national tests)

Refund of Contributions

- A proportional amount of the basic \$1200 contribution will be included in the last monthly housing allowance payment when chapter 33 entitlement exhausts.
- Individuals who do not exhaust entitlement under chapter 33 will not receive a refund of contributions paid under chapter 30.
- Refund of \$600 additional contributions is not authorized.

Transfer of Entitlement

- On or after August 1, 2009, DoD may allow an individual to elect to transfer entitlement to one or more dependents if he/she—
 - Has served at least 6 years in the Armed Forces; and
 - Agrees to serve at least another 4 years in the Armed Forces
- DoD determines eligibility for transferability and may, by regulation, impose additional eligibility requirements and limit the number of months transferable.

Chapter 33 Effective Date

August 1, 2009

Chapter 33 benefits can be paid for training pursued on or after August 1, 2009. No payments may be made for training pursued before that date.

Ch 31 – Vocational Rehabilitation

- Rehabilitation program for veterans with service-related disabilities
- Contact Voc. Rehab. Unit in Atlanta
(404) 929-3152.

Ch 33 – Post-9/11 Veterans Education Assistance Act Of 2008

- Effective: 9/1/09
- For: Individuals who served on active duty on/after 9/11/01
- Training pursued on/after 8/1/09
- Eligibility: At least 30 days active duty after 9/10/01
- Entitlement: 36 Months
- Military can offer opportunity to transfer benefit to spouse or children

Ch 33 (Continued)

Monetary benefit:

- T&F not to exceed most expensive state Institution
(to school)
- Monthly housing allowance equal to amount paid to
military E-5 (to claimant)
- Up to \$1000 annually for books & supplies (to claimant)

Tuition Assistance Top-up

- Ch 30 benefit only
- Student is on Active Duty
- Student using Military Tuition Assistance
- Military not paying 100% of the cost
- Student requests difference from VA
- **YOU DO NOT CERTIFY THE STUDENT**
- Student submits TA form & Statement

Accelerated Payment

- Lump sum payment of 60% of t&f for certain high cost, high tech programs
- Ch 30 benefit only
- Student must be pursuing a program leading to employment in a high tech occupation in a high tech industry
- Tuition & fees must exceed 200% of the normal Ch 30 benefit payable for the period

Accelerated Payment (Continued)

VA-ONCE Certification:

- Obtain Student's signed request for school record for each term requested
- One term at a time
- Provide tuition & fees (if any) for term
- On VA-ONCE "CERT" screen, check "Accelerated Payment"
- Confirmed enrollment, i.e., cannot certify until term has commenced

Accelerated Payment (Continued)

Paper Certification:

- One term at a time
- Remarks: “I request accelerated payment,” student’s signature and date, and:
“I certify that I intend to seek employment in a high technology industry as defined by VA – I have read VA’s list of high technology industries.”
- Provide tuition & fees (if any)

Advance Payment

- Benefit payment intended help students defray expenses associated with beginning of term
- School must have agreed to participate
- Student must project to enroll @ least ½-time
- Certification (application if needed) must be sent 120-30 days prior to term begin date
- **VA-ONCE:** Student provides a written request & the block on “CERT” screen is checked
- **Paper:** Student signs and dates in blocks 14A & 14B on VA Form 2201999

Advanced Payment (Continued)

- Payment represents first two months benefits
- VA Sends payment to school
- School delivers check to student at time of registration (not more that 30 days before school begins)
- School returns check to Treasury or VA if student reports for check & has registered for courses that constitutes less than ½-time
- VA Form 22-1999v sent to school to confirm

Application Forms

- 22-1990 - Initial application/veteran
- 22-1995 - Request COP/School -Veteran
- 22-5490 - Initial application/Dependent
- 22-5495 - Request CoolOP/School - Dependent

Available: Toll-free number & @ www.gibill.va.gov

Options: Download and send to VA

Submit electronically via VONAPP

**Recent change: VA no longer requires
applicant's signature**

Initial claim

- VA Form 1990
- DD 214(s) – Veteran
- Kicker Contract
- NOBE (DD Form 2384) – Reservist or Guardsman
- VA Form 1999

Note: **IF** dependent has a copy of the disability rating or letter from VA stating veteran is totally & permanently disabled, this may expedite claim. Also, for children, a copy of the birth certificate may also help.

Supplemental Claim

- Student changing schools/programs (both)
 Veteran – 22-1995*
 Dependent – 22-5495*

** VA rules allow you to have the student complete application form above and maintain the form in your record and alert VA that you have the completed form on VA-ONCE

Certification Process

When can I certify the student?

- Chapters 30, 1606 & 1607:
Up to 120 days before terms begins
 - Chapters 32 & 35 (Original Certification):
Up to 30 days before term begins
 - Chapters 32 & 35 (Supplemental Certification):
Up to 120 days before the term begins
- **Students attending less than half-time: Confirmed, i.e., enrollment certification dated and signed (submitted) on/after first day of term

Certification Process

For how long may I certify the student?:

- **Schools Operating on terms, quarters, semesters, etc:**
Term-by-term or multi-term (up to 1 year)
- **Schools not on terms:**
Entire length of program

Certification Process

➤ Do NOT certify the following:

- Programs which have not been specifically approved
- Courses not required of major (unless rounding out of terms)
- Audited courses
- Remedial courses that are not required based on admissions testing
- Repeated courses, unless student failed the course, failed to make a satisfactory grade or rounding out

Certification Process

Program:

- Be sure program approved (Must be approved through State approving Agency)
- If degree program & major not selected, can certify the general degree, i.e., “BS Degree,” but certify only core courses and report major as soon as selected.
- use exactly the name as it appears on your approval
- Be careful with abbreviations

Certification Process

- All courses certified are required for student's program
- No course certified is a repetition of any course previously satisfactorily completed, except as permitted by VA
- Rounding out of terms: During degree-seeking student's last, (i.e., graduating) term, student needs @ least one course required for program, may take ANY course(s) for qualify for full-time.
- Remedial/Deficiency courses: Required by school

Certification Process

Enrollment effective dates:

- Term basis: Each term or session certified individually
- Begin date: First day of classes
- Ending date: Last day of final exam period
- Non-degree: First and last day of classes

Note: Breaks of 7 or more days (inclusive of weekends) during the term should be reported in remarks.

Certification Process

- Schools on **terms**:
Certify **“Credit”** hours
- Schools not offering college degrees:
Certify **“Clock-Hours”** of attendance per week
- Provide Tuition & Fees if student attending:
 - Student attending less than half-time
 - Student on active duty in the military
 - Accelerated payment being certified
- For undergraduate students, do not certify training time
- For Graduate level training, certify training time

Training Time

Credit-hour measurement

- Standard Quarter: 10-13 weeks in length
- Standard semester: 15-19 weeks in length
 - * 12+ hours = Full-time
 - * 9-11 hours = $\frac{3}{4}$ -time
 - * 6-8 = $\frac{1}{2}$ -time
 - * Less than 6 hours = Less than $\frac{1}{2}$ -time

Training Time

Clock-hour measurement

Theory: 18 Hrs = Full-time

13 – 17 Hrs = $\frac{3}{4}$ -time

9 – 12 Hrs = $\frac{1}{2}$ -time

Under 9 Hrs = less than $\frac{1}{2}$ -time

Shop: 22 Hrs = Full-time

16 – 21 Hrs = $\frac{3}{4}$ -time

11 – 15 Hrs = $\frac{1}{2}$ -time

Under 11 Hrs = less than $\frac{1}{2}$ -time

Accelerated Terms

Semester hours:

18 multiplied by the hours attempted, divided by the number of weeks in a term.

Quarter hours:

12 multiplied by the hours attempted divided by the number of weeks in a term.

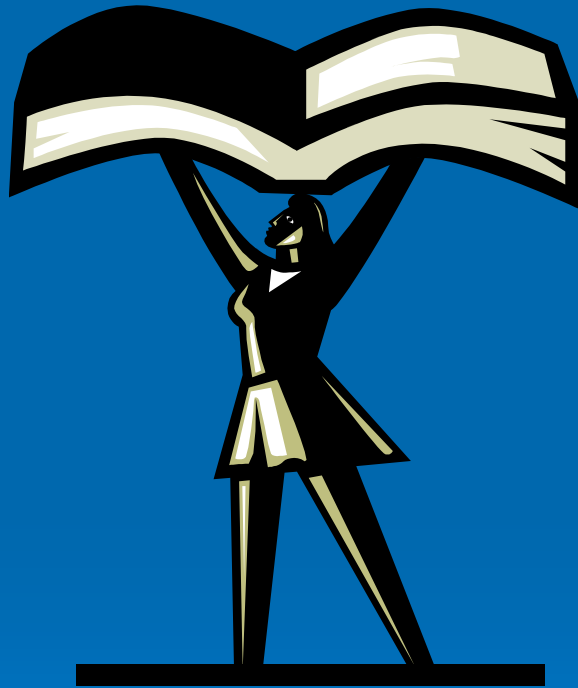
Example

5 SH: Standard length term = less than ½-time trng

5 SH taken during 14 week (accelerated) term:

- $5 \text{ SH} \times 18 = 90$
- $90/14$ (number weeks in term) = 6 (drop fraction)
- CHE = 6
- Student entitled to half-time benefits

Special Issues



Monthly Verification of Training

- Ch 32: No
- Ch 30: Yes (W.A.V.E. or 1-877-823-2378)
- Ch 1606: Yes (W.A.V.E. or 1-877-823-2378)
- Ch 1607: No at this time
- Ch 35: Non-degree programs (Return form)
- Ch 31: No
- Ch 33: Probably “yes”

Reporting Fee

- Annually, VA makes a payment to schools who certified students to VA during the previous calendar year.
- \$7.00 per student (\$11.00 if an advance payment was processed)
- Payment received late January/early February
- ELR will provide a list of students the payment represents

Processing Claims

- Allow a minimum of 30 days
- Peak season is fall – processing times are stressed – may take 45 days
- Ask students to allow sufficient processing time before contacting VA



Inquiries

- ELR cannot handle Claims/Payment inquiries
- Students should dial 1-888-442-4551
- E-mail: RightNow Web
 - ...www.gibill.va.gov
 - ...Click on “Ask a question”
 - ...Follow instructions

Questions?

