

The Basics

DUTIES OF A SCHOOL CERTIFYING OFFICIAL



What is a School Certifying Official (SCO)?

A SCO is...
a person
responsible for
providing
certifications to
VA





VA Regional Processing Office
2012 CONFERENCE

School Certifying Official



Handbook

<http://www.gibill.va.gov/school-certifying-officials/sco-training-resources/handbook.html>



INQUIRIES

Education Call Center – 1-888-442-4551
Muskogee, OK 7 am – 7 pm CST M-F

Call the toll-free line for:

- Hardship cases
- Status of claim questions
- Questions on individual student payment issues

Call your ELR for:

Approval issues

- Certification questions
- VA-Once technical questions

INTERNET RESOURCES

- GIBILL: <http://www.gibill.va.gov/>
 - Use “Ask a Question” Feature
- Training: <http://www.gibill.va.gov/training>
- VAONCE:
http://www.gibill.va.gov/school_info/once

What Does VA Do?

- Determines veteran, dependent, or reservists eligibility to the education benefits
- Contracts with each state to approve certain programs
- Reviews approvals submitted by SAA



What Does an ELR Do?

- Conducts compliance surveys
- Review approvals received from the SAA and approves those programs for which the SAA declines approval authority
- Conducts liaison with school officials (i.e. answers technical questions, conducts liaison visit, conducts annual school workshops)



Certifying Official's Basic Responsibilities

- Keep VA informed of the enrollment status of veterans and other eligible persons
- Keep SAA informed of new programs, changes in programs, institutional changes, etc.
- Apprise internal supervisors of any internal problems with may affect service to VA students
- Keep up to date on current VA rules and benefits
- Maintain records of VA students and make available for inspection

Keeping VA Informed of Each Student's Enrolment Status

- **Basic forms to use are:**
 - Enrollment Certification (VA Form 22-1999)
 - Notice of Change in Student Status (VA Form 22-1999B)
 - Amended Enrollment Certification (VA Form 22-1999AM)
- Report all enrollments and changes within 30 days.
- Use paper forms or electronic enrollment (VA-ONCE).
- Must monitor unit subjects pursued to certify to VA only those subjects that apply to the student's program.
- Must monitor student's grade(s) to insure (s)he is making satisfactory progress and report unsatisfactory progress.
- Must monitor student's conduct and report when student is suspended/dismissed for unsatisfactory conduct.

Keeping VA Informed: Academic Probation

- **Must monitor student's conduct and report when placed on academic probation:**
 - On June 14, 2011, Education Service published a procedural advisory stating the VA must track and report the names of claimants who are placed on academic probation to Central Office
 - **Certifying Official's Duty:** Submit documentation through the internet inquiry system, Right Now Web (RNW) indicating a student has been placed on academic probation

Keeping VA Informed: Post 9/11 GI Bill

- Must be able to monitor **financial aid use by Post-9/11 GI Bill students** and be able to differentiate between tuition and fee payments from other sources in order to properly certify tuition and fees to VA.
- Must administer and monitor the **Yellow Ribbon Program** (YPR) at schools that participate.



Keeping SAA Advised of School Changes

- The following does not apply to Public or Not-for-Profit IHLs:
 - New programs and changes in current programs:
 - Changes in tuition and fees
 - Changes in academic policies and procedures.
 - Changes of address, phone numbers, certifying officials.
 - Any other information the SAA requires.



Keeping Supervisors Apprised of Internal Problems

- Failure of records office to inform you of grades, grade changes, academic problems, etc.
- Failure of instructors to inform you of attendance/attendance problems.
- Failure of other offices to inform you of new programs, changes in current programs, changes in tuition and fees, etc
- Failure of mail distribution center to forward appropriate mail to your office.
- Failure of Bursar's or Financial Aid Offices to promptly inform you of tuition and fee payments from other sources and to fully identify those sources

Keep Informed of VA Rules & Policies

- Keep up to date on current VA rules and benefits:
 - Provide e-mal address to VA Education Liaison Representative (ELR)
 - Read and maintain VA bulletins provided by your ELR
 - Read and maintain updates to the School Certifying Official Handbook (1st Edition 05/15/11)
 - Attend VA training
 - Enroll in VA on-line training
 - Keep checking the website for updates:
<http://www.gibill.va.gov/school-certifying-officials/>

Assist VA Students

- Maintain copies of appropriate application forms
- When asked, help veterans and dependents fill out and send in applications
- If student cannot resolve payment problems, assist through VA channels designated for school officials
- Disseminate and/or post information on VA education benefits and programs, and contact points
- Insure that VA students are fully aware of their responsibilities to the school and VA

Maintain Student VA Records & Make Available

- Retain file of VA papers submitted and records of academic progress, program pursuit, etc.
- Maintain records for at least three years following the student's last date of attendance.
- Insure that your records are kept in a safe place and that the privacy of your VA students is protected.
- Make all VA and non-VA school records available to the SAA and VA.



What Should a School's VA File Contain?

- **Retain copies of all VA paperwork, including:**
 - School's transcript, Grade reports, Drop slips
 - Registration slips (for courses dropped during drop/add)
 - Tuition and fee changes
 - Transcripts from previous schools with evaluations
 - Student's school application
 - Records of disciplinary actions
 - Program outline, a curriculum guide or graduation evaluation form
 - Any other pertinent forms

What Should a School's VA File Contain?

- **For NCD Schools:**
 - Include monthly attendance reports (including the first and last day attended)
 - Copies of documentation for excused absences
 - Class schedules, etc

Maintain Yellow Ribbon Documents

Additional responsibilities required of a Yellow Ribbon school include:

- Certify in accordance with the school's Yellow Ribbon agreement
- Maintain these additional records
- Track the number of students enrolled under Yellow Ribbon
- Track the annual amount of tuition and fees
- Develop and document a process for the first-come first-serve enrollment of students into the Yellow Ribbon Program

Questions?

