



Statement of Understanding (SOU)

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All information below is needed to process your benefits. **FAILURE TO COMPLETE THIS FORM IN ITS ENTIRETY MAY RESULT IN PROCESSING DELAYS.** Please return the completed First Sheet to vmaforms@ua.edu with **ALL** other applicable paperwork.

The VA School Certifying Official (SCO) assists veterans, reservists, guardsmen, dependents and survivors of veterans in processing their education benefits for use at The University of Alabama. The SCO will certify enrollment to the VA for those students who are utilizing Federal VA Educational Benefits.

Students must read this Statement of Understanding (SOU) and sign acknowledging receipt of the Student Reference Guide for VA Educational Benefits at UA to use VA Educational Benefits at UA. They may also download a copy of Student Reference Guide for VA Educational Benefits at vets.ua.edu.

For Enrollment Certification for VA, I understand that:

- This document is subject to change, as VA policy may change.
- UA School Certifying Officials (SCO) must have all appropriate documents stating my educational benefits.
- Only courses required for my declared program of study at UA will be certified.
- I must attend all classes in which I am enrolled. Any change in enrollment will be reported to the VA.
- Class beginning and ending dates, as well as the number of credit hours registered, will affect my monthly housing allowance (BAH).
- For timely processing with the VA, paperwork should be turned in prior to the first week of classes.
- Required Student Documents for certification will be processed in the order in which they are received.

For CH30 (MGIB), I understand that:

- I must verify my attendance at the end of each month while enrolled in school. I do so by calling 1-888-442-4551 or going Online to www.gibill.va.gov
- I understand that my BAH is prorated and paid in arrears based on the number of hours and days that I am enrolled.

For CH31 or Vocational Rehabilitation & Employment (VR&E), I understand that:

- My VR&E case manager must provide form 1905m to student for approved required supplies www.universitysupplystore.com/site_ARCharge.asp.
- My VR&E case manager will inform me of the amount of approved supplies. (Standard amount is \$75 per semester)
- I should opt out of Dining Dollars unless residing in Dorm. Complete Dining Dollars Exemption Form at www.bamadining.ua.edu/dining-dollars/

For CH33 or Post 9/11, I understand that:

- The VA will send my book stipend directly to me not the school.
- I must pay any expense not covered per entitlement listed on Certificate of Eligibility (COE) letter from VA.
- My BAH is prorated and paid in arrears from the number of hours I am enrolled, days I am enrolled, **and** my percentage of entitlement.

For CH35 (DEA), I understand that:

- My BAH is prorated and paid in arrears from the number of hours and days that I am enrolled in school.
- I understand that my GI Bill does not pay my tuition up front and I am responsible for covering my tuition and fee cost.
- Monthly VA verification required.

For CH1606 (MGIB-SR) I understand that:

- I must verify my attendance at the end of each month while enrolled in school. I do so by calling 1-877-823-2378 or going online to www.gibill.va.gov
- I understand that my BAH is prorated and paid in arrears based on the number of hours and days that I am enrolled.
- I understand that my GI Bill does not pay my tuition up front and I am responsible for covering my tuition costs.

I have read and understand this Statement of Understanding. Also, I have received a copy of Student Reference Guide for VA Educational Benefits at The University of Alabama.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

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The University of Alabama Veteran and Military Affairs

3000 Houser Hall Box 870251 Tuscaloosa, AL 35487

Phone: (205)-348-0983 Fax: (205)-348-5804 Email: vma@ua.edu

Reference Guide for Federal VA Educational Benefits

All information below is needed to process your benefits. FAILURE TO COMPLETE THIS FORM IN ITS ENTIRETY MAY RESULT IN PROCESSING DELAYS. Please return the completed form to vmaforms@ua.edu.

Student Veterans Only: You must submit your official military transcripts to The University of Alabama Registrars office upon admission to The University of Alabama using the links provided below. Evaluations of all prior transcripts with credit applied appropriately must be completed prior to the first certification of UA education benefits.

-<https://jst.doded.mil/jst>

-<https://www.airuniversity.af.edu/CCAF>

All Students using GI Bill® benefits: I understand that all GI Bill® benefits are subject to approval by the Federal Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and that I must meet all requirements determined by them in order to receive such benefits. It has also been made clear to me that The University of Alabama Veteran and Military Affairs Office (VMA) is a liaison between me and the VA, that the UA VMA Office works for The University of Alabama and is not the VA itself.

WE DO NOT GUARANTEE PAYMENT: Furthermore, I understand that if I have issues with approval of benefits or the amount of money allocated to me, by the VA, I may seek assistance from VMA. I understand that any such issues aside from the correction of hours and fees being reported to the VA are outside the control of the University of Alabama Veteran and Military Affairs Office.

Contact Information: I understand that should I experience any issues with my GI Bill® benefits, I will contact the VMA office first. If the VMA is unable to assist me with my issue, I will contact the National Call Center located at the VA Regional Office in Muskogee, Oklahoma 1-888-442-4551 or go to www.gibill.va.gov "Ask a Question" to send them an email. For emails from the VA, you must return to this website and log-in to read your answer.

Checklist: I understand that I must complete and turn in all forms required on my GI Bill® related checklist posted on vets.ua.edu before I can receive VA benefits. I understand that all forms must be turned in together, as VMA will not accept forms unless all documents are completed and together.

Certificate of Eligibility (COE): The COE is proof that I am eligible for VA benefits. I must apply for my benefits on vets.gov. Once I have applied for benefits I will print the web page containing my Confirmation Number and submit it by email to vmaforms@ua.edu (with all additional required documents) until I have received my COE in the mail. We will process your certification for one semester with proof of your confirmation page. To continue certification processing after your first semester you MUST submit your certificate of eligibility or a copy of your DEA letter.

Coursework: I understand my VA Education Benefits *will only pay for coursework REQUIRED as part of my academic program as core subjects or approved electives. My degree program is my major on record with the University of Alabama Registrar's Office which is reflected in my student record. Furthermore, I realize that it is my responsibility to know what classes count toward my degree. If I should take classes/ outside my degree's curriculum it will be at my own expense.* All Graduate students must set up and follow their graduate plan of study or temporary plan of study before courses can be approved for VA pay purposes.

Revised

Advising Sheet : I understand that I must turn in this form every semester that I wish to use VA benefits. I understand that my schedule will be approved by my Dean's designated academic advisor, who may not always be my advisor in my degree program. It is this academic advisor that is authorized to approve class schedules for VA pay purposes. *I understand that it is my responsibility to contact my academic advisor and to know what classes count toward my degree program and those that do not.* Graduate Students must follow their respective Graduate Plans of Study.

Minors: I understand that *unless a minor is EXPLICITLY required in my curriculum for my chosen degree, the VA will not finance the pursuit of a minor.* However, I may obtain a minor through creative use of required electives with the help of my academic advisor. If I decide to pursue a non-compulsory minor I will first speak with the VMA office to understand any financial obligation I may have.

Double/Dual Majors: I understand additional paperwork will be required and advanced notice will need to be given to VMA to ensure the degree combination meets VA and the University of Alabama guidelines. Failure to meet requirements will result in the suspension or denial of benefits and/or require repayment of benefits already received in one or both majors. I must list BOTH majors on my Advising Sheet every semester.

Change of Major: I understand that should I chose to change my major, I MUST notify VMA and provide a Change of Major Form, new academic schedule, new Student Information Sheet, and Advising Sheet reflecting the new major change. It is usually best to change your major in a future term. Failure to complete the required VMA forms and paperwork will suspend or terminate your VA educational benefits.

Repeating Courses: I understand that if I fail a course (receiving a D or F grade) AND minimum C (or higher) grade is required to move forward in my degree program, the VA will pay for the course to be repeated.

Grades: I understand that I must attend my classes. Failing or dropping a course AFTER the drop period may result in a debt to the VA.

Transient Students: I understand that should I choose to study outside of UA at another school or college as a guest student I MUST provide the VMA office with a copy of Departmental and Registrar approved forms.

UA Study Abroad: I understand I **MUST** contact VMA at the earliest time possible to coordinate use of my benefits. Approved UA Study Abroad paperwork (example - UA Study Abroad forms and course description(s) dates and subjects covered is required. Courses taken during UA Study Abroad **MUST be a UA Study Abroad Program and required degree course(s) for your major in order to graduate, not elective courses!!** The VA will not pay for travel or extracurricular activities. Not all study abroad programs are approved for VA pay purposes. Non UA operated study abroad programs are not authorized the use of VA benefits. There are currently NO UA Study Abroad Programs that are required for degree completions. See VMA for more information and instructions.

VA Not-Dependable: I understand that I should **NOT** depend on my VA checks for any vital living expenses (**rent, car payment, Student Account Services Bills etc.**). While VA checks should come on a regular basis, this is not guaranteed by VMS or the VA Regional Office.

Pay Check-Possible Waiting Period: I understand that my benefits will be processed over a period of time by the Regional VA Office in Muskogee, OK. I also understand that it may take several weeks, after UA has sent my enrollment certification, before I will begin to receive any VA money.

I understand that I **MUST REPORT TO THE UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA VMA OFFICE ANY OF THE FOLLOWING CHANGES **IMMEDIATELY!**** Failure to do so may result in the reduction of benefits or suspension or denial of future benefits, and/or require repayment of VA benefits already received:

1. **Resignation or Withdrawal** from school.
2. **Drop** one or more classes.
3. **Add** one or more classes.
4. **Change of major.** Please fill out the Change of Major Form on our website.
5. **Register for classes** each term (Complete a Advising Sheet.)
6. **Substituted courses & required remedial/prerequisite courses.** This **MUST** be verified by your Academic Advisor's signature on your schedule. You must bring the approved schedule to our office and the paperwork will be placed in your VA file.
7. **Changes in Address** must be reported to VA Regional Office and VMA.

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Residency For Tuition Purposes

For purposes of admission and tuition, The University of Alabama shall consider that the term “resident student” includes any of the following:

A. One who, at the time of registration, satisfies one of the following conditions:

1. Is a member, or the spouse or dependent child of a member, of a qualifying Federal service (see II. Definitions above) for more than 30 days whose domicile or permanent duty station is in Alabama¹;
2. Has been a member of the Alabama National Guard for a period of at least 2 years immediately preceding the academic term in which the student qualifies for resident tuition, and continues to be a member of the Alabama National Guard while enrolled at the The University of Alabama;
3. Is receiving or entitled to receive benefits under the Post-9/11 GI-Bill ® or Montgomery GI-Bill ® programs, or other federal law authorizing veterans' educational benefits, and is physically present in the state of Alabama (as evidenced by documentation of one's physical address in Alabama while enrolled) and satisfies at least one of the following conditions:
 - a. A Veteran receiving an honorable discharge, from a period of active duty service of 90 days or more;
 - b. A spouse, dependent child, or qualifying foster child using transferred benefits from the transferor's honorable discharge, from a period of active duty service of 90 days or more;
 - c. A spouse, dependent child, or qualifying foster child using benefits under the Marine Gunnery Sergeant John David Fry Scholarship;
 - d. A spouse, dependent child, or qualifying foster child using benefits transferred by a member of the uniformed service who is serving on active duty.
4. Is a veteran of the Armed Forces of the United States, not eligible under subsection 3 above, provided that the veteran is physically present in the state of Alabama (as evidenced by documentation of one's physical address in Alabama while enrolled) and satisfies at least one of the following conditions:
 - a. The veteran has served on active duty for a continuous period of time, not less than 2 years, and has received an honorable discharge as verified by a United States Department of Defense Form 214 within 5 years of enrolling at The University of Alabama;
 - b. Has been a member of a reserve component of the Armed Forces of the United States for a period of at least 2 years immediately preceding the academic term in which the student qualifies for resident tuition and continues to be an active drilling member of their respective Reserve Unit while enrolled at The University of Alabama;
 - c. The veteran has been assigned a service-connected disability by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs.
5. Effective August 1, 2022: is a “covered individual” as defined by the Department of Veterans Affairs who is a dependent spouse or child, or the surviving spouse or child, of a veteran AND receiving United States Department of Veterans Affairs Chapter 35 education benefits.

B. To be eligible for resident tuition as provided for in subsection A, and to maintain eligibility, the student shall:

1. Have secured admission to and enrolled full-time or part-time at The University of Alabama
2. Maintain full-time or part-time enrollment at The University of Alabama
3. Satisfy the admission and retention standards at The University of Alabama

C. A student who has previously met the requirements of this section shall continue to be classified as a resident student as long as the qualifying student maintains physical presence in the State of Alabama while enrolled at The University of Alabama. If an individual provided for in subsection A is released or discharged dishonorably, such release shall be grounds for revocation of in-state resident status for tuition purposes.

1 A member, or the spouse or dependent child of a member, of a qualifying Federal service who pays tuition as determined by the University and remains continuously enrolled at the University shall continue to be considered a “resident student” under Section IV.A.1 of this Policy even if there is a subsequent change in the permanent duty station of the member outside of Alabama.

Federal Tuition Assistance (TA) and CH 33: Active duty and National Guard/Reserves students cannot receive TA & CH 33 at the same time for the same courses. (Ex: If TA has paid for tuition/fees then there is no tuition/fees payment to request for CH 33 and vice versa.) There must be a tuition and fees bill for the student to have either of these programs to pay tuition and fees. If there is an unpaid portion of the bill not covered by TA, the VA will pay "Top-Up" to cover the unpaid portion of the bill.

OVERPAYMENT of Benefits: The student veteran or dependent is responsible for any overpayment incurred as a result of not completing courses or courses for which they received VA pay that are not in their degree program as core subjects or approved electives. The University of Alabama's established refund policies will be followed and the student is still responsible to the University and VA for any overpayment made to the student or indebtedness incurred by the student. **BOTTOM LINE:** Tuition and fee payments are paid to the school on behalf of the veteran, overpayment's of tuition and fees will be charged to the student.

KICKERS previously used under MGIB and MGIB-SR: Individuals eligible for a kicker under other benefits may receive the KICKER under CH 33. The monthly kicker amount will be prorated based on the individual's rate of pursuit. Payments of KICKERS will be issued directly to the student each term the student is eligible for benefits and the student is entitled to a monthly housing allowance, BAH. **NOTE:** the \$600 Buy-Up is not payable under CH33 Post 9/11.

Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH) Rates: All BAH rates are based off the current DoD rates based on the zip code where you are attending classes at the E5 with dependent rate. Current DoD BAH rates can be found at <https://www.defensetravel.dod.mil/site/bahCalc.cfm>

Undergraduate Course Loads: FULL TIME = 12 to 19 hours

Total Hours	12-19	11	10	9	8	7	6
BAH Rate	100%	90%	80%	75% Round up to 80%	70%	60%	0%

Graduate Course Loads: FULL TIME ≥ 9 hours

Total Hours	9	8	7	6	5	4
BAH Rate	100%	90%	80%	60%	60%	0%

**Full time will be determined by the Graduate School or Department for special programs such as Executive MBA & Law.

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**Distance Learning students will receive a BAH rate set by the VA. It is not based upon zip code. Please call the VA for current rates.

Breaks between Terms and Monthly Prorated BAH: I understand that all breaks between academic semesters are periods in which the **VA WILL NOT PAY BAH**. I acknowledge that the beginning period of each semester will be the first day of class and the last day of the semester will be the last day of exams at the University. The months beginning and ending the semester are months in which I will only receive BAH for the days school was in session. Any days outside of that will not be covered by BAH. BAH payments are prorated on the number of days of school for that term in any given month (ex: August is the beginning of Fall term and is only 2 weeks long, therefore, I will receive only 2 weeks of BAH for the month of August). You must complete the month to be paid for the month (ex: September 1st – 30th pay day will be on or around October 1st).

CH33 Books and Supplies Rate: \$41.67 per hours you are taking not to exceed \$1,000 per year.

Ex: If a student is taking 15 hours in Fall they will receive \$625.05 (15 x 41.67), and in the Spring they will receive \$374.95 (1000 - 625.05).

CH33 does NOT cover:

- Admissions Deposits
- Meal Plan/FLEX/Drink Card
- Parking Permit
- Traffic/Parking Fines
- Library Fines
- Football Tickets
- OIT Fees
- Other fees determined by VA policy
- ID Cards
- Dorm Charges & Fees
- **Fees not identified on Student Bill**

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CH 30 (MGIB), CH 35 (DEA), CH 1606 (MGIB-SR), CH 1607 (REAP) Recipients ONLY:

Monthly Allotments: I understand that under these Chapters of the GI Bill I will receive only monthly allotments from the VA based on, “prorated on”, the number of hours taken during a given semester at the end of every month. These payments are also prorated on the number of days of school for that term in any given month (ex. August of the beginning of **Fall term is only 2 weeks long, therefore, I will receive on 2 week of VA benefits on or around September 1st**). The maximum authorized allotment is reached when taking hours equivalent to full time student status or greater as deemed by the VA. I also realize that all allotments are paid directly to me and that the University will not authorize delayed payment of bills due to late receipt of payments to me from the VA.

Breaks & Break Pay: I understand that all breaks between academic semesters are periods in which the VA Will NOT Pay MONTHLY allotments. I acknowledge that the beginning period of each semester will be the first day of class and the last day of the semester will be the last day of exams at the University. The months beginning and ending the semester are months in which I will only receive my allotment for the days school was in session and any days outside of that will not be covered for VA pay purposes.

CH 30, 1606, 1607 Only: Monthly Verification of Attendance – Last Day of the Month I understand that if I am a CH 30 (veteran or active duty), CH 1606, or CH 1607 recipient I MUST contact the VA to verify my hours of enrollment each month. Upon proper verification of hours to the VA, the VA will issue payment of monthly educational benefits to me. I understand that I can verify my hours to the VA on: WAVES, Web Automated Verification of Enrollment at www.gibill.va.gov.

ACTIVE DUTY: I must notify VMA if I require them to submit Tuition and Fees to the VA.

CH 31 Vocational Rehabilitation & Employment Recipients Only:

Case Manager and UA VMA: I understand that I need to stay in contact with my case manager and VMA to discuss with them any and all changes concerning coursework and major changes.

Breaks between Terms and Monthly Prorated BAH: **I understand that all breaks between academic semesters are periods in which the VA WILL NOT PAY BAH.** I acknowledge that the beginning period of each semester will be the first day of class and the last day of the semester will be the last day of exams at the University. The months beginning and ending the semester are months in which I will only receive BAH for the days school was in session. Any days outside of that will not be covered. BAH payments are prorated on the number of days of school for that term in any given month. (Ex. August is the beginning of Fall term and is only 2 weeks long, therefore, I will receive only 2 weeks of BAH for the month of August.)

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Additional References:

VA Forms can be found online at www.gibill.va.gov

- 22-1990 Application for VA Educational Benefits (Chapters 30, 33, 1606)
- 22-1995 Change of Program or Place of Training (Chapters 30, 33, 1606)
- 22-1990e Dependent Application for Post 9/11 transferred benefits
- 22-5490 Application for Survivors and Dependents (Chapter 35)
- 22-5495 Change of Program or Place of Training (Chapter 35)

Important Phone Numbers:

- 888-442-4551 VA Education Call Center
- 877-823-2378 VA Monthly Attendance Verification Call Center
- 800-827-0648 VA Debt Management Center
- 800-827-1000 Other VA Benefits