



## TUITION ASSISTANCE, TUITION ASSISTANCE TOP-UP, AND VA BENEFITS

There are significant differences between Tuition Assistance, Tuition Assistance TOP-UP, and how Tuition Assistance interacts with VA benefits.

- **Tuition Assistance** benefits are a way for the military services to provide education benefits to Servicemembers on Active Duty. Tuition Assistance benefits are administered by each branch of service (each branch determines their own award amounts, eligibility, restrictions, and application process) and are typically earned based on service.
- **Tuition Assistance TOP-UP** was authorized by Public Law 106-398 and allowed VA Education benefits, to cover the out of pocket costs for courses partially paid by Tuition Assistance. Tuition Assistance TOP-UP can only be paid to claimants receiving the Montgomery GI Bill – Active Duty (MGIB-AD / Chapter 30) benefit.
- **Both Tuition Assistance and the Post 9/11 GI Bill (Chapter 33) benefit** can be utilized for applicable courses for approved programs of education.
  - This is not Tuition Assistance TOP-UP.
- **Tuition Assistance cannot be utilized with any VA benefits other than the Montgomery GI Bill Active Duty and the Post 9/11 GI Bill.** Students will have to decide whether they want to utilize VA benefits or Tuition Assistance for those courses.

### TUITION ASSISTANCE AND APPROVED PROGRAMS

The Montgomery GI Bill – Active Duty and Post 9/11 GI Bill benefits can only be paid toward courses when both the school and program are approved for VA benefits. You can determine if a school and program are approved by:

- Visiting the [GI Bill Comparison Tool](#)
- Visiting the [Public Web Enabled Approval Management System](#)
- Contacting their school's School Certifying Official

## **HOW DOES DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE TUITION ASSISTANCE WORK WITH TUITION ASSISTANCE TOP-UP?**

When you use Tuition Assistance and Tuition Assistance TOP-UP to pay for courses, the VA can pay up to 100% of your out of pocket tuition and fees costs, up to the Montgomery GI Bill – Active Duty [Veteran monthly rate at the applicable training time](#). Entitlement charges for Tuition Assistance TOP-UP is prorated based on the cost of the course(s). Entitlement is charged based on the following formula:

- Amount of Tuition Assistance TOP-UP payment / the Montgomery GI Bill – Active Duty full-time [Veteran monthly rate](#) = Months of entitlement charged (with fractional months being converted to days).

**NOTE:** Students are limited to 36 months of Tuition Assistance TOP-UP which is charged based on the length of the student's term (regardless of training time). This limitation is made separately then the Montgomery GI Bill – Active Duty entitlement charge and should be provided in all letters the student receives.

If you have questions about how much Tuition Assistance TOP-UP time you have remaining or if you have questions about how much remaining Montgomery GI Bill – Active Duty entitlement you have – you can always [contact the VA](#).

## **HOW DOES DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE TUITION ASSISTANCE WORK WITH THE POST 9/11 GI BILL BENEFIT?**

If both the school and program are approved, you should contact the facility's School Certifying Official, notify them that you are receiving Tuition Assistance, and have them certify your enrollment. The School Certifying Official will reduce the tuition and fees they report to VA by the amount received from the military service Tuition Assistance. The VA will then issue any remaining tuition and fees and books stipend that you are due. These payments will follow normal Post 9/11 GI Bill rules and entitlement, for more information on how entitlements are charged please visit [https://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/tuition\\_assistance.asp](https://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/tuition_assistance.asp)

## **WHAT DO I NEED TO DO TO BE ELIGIBLE FOR TUITION ASSISTANCE?**

- You need to request Tuition Assistance from your branch of service and
- See your Education Services Officer or Education Counselor.

## **WHAT DO I NEED TO DO IN ORDER TO USE VA BENEFITS TO SUPPLEMENT MY TUITION ASSISTANCE?**

You need to do the following;

1. You need to formally [apply for VA benefits](#)
2. You need to review your school and program to make sure they are approved to receive VA benefits.
3. You need to contact the School Certifying Official at your school and ask that they formally submit your enrollment for VA benefits.

## **IS THERE A “TA APPROVAL” FORM I HAVE TO SUBMIT?**

No. Previously the VA used a “TA Approval” form, but current procedures rely on your school submitting your enrollment information. If you are receiving Tuition Assistance, your School Certifying Official is responsible for providing the correct information to VA.

Our Education Call Center is available at 1-888-442-4551 (Monday-Friday, 7 a.m. -6 p.m. CST) for any questions about GI Bill benefits.

Join the conversation on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/gibillEducation](http://www.facebook.com/gibillEducation) and follow us on Twitter @VAVetBenefits.

GI Bill® is a registered trademark of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA).

More information about VA education benefits are available at [https://benefits.va.gov/gibill/education\\_programs.asp](https://benefits.va.gov/gibill/education_programs.asp)