

# Frequently Asked Questions

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[Can I receive college credit for my military training?](#) Any military training you received that may qualify for college credit is evaluated by the Drake State Office of Admissions. While credits earned for military-related training do not factor into the admissions process, the academic dean for the program you major in may accept some or all of that credit and apply it toward your degree requirements. Provide the Admissions office with your official military transcripts, which may be ordered through [this website](#), along with a copy of your DD214 (military discharge document).

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[How do I get a copy of my DD214?](#) Request a copy through [this website](#) and note that the Member 4 copy, which shows the character of your discharge, is preferred for most educational purposes. **After obtaining your DD214, be sure to keep this document in a safe place.** Also note that it is not advisable to register for your DD214 through a county courthouse since doing so makes the process a public record, which could then lead to identity theft.

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[What is the process for veterans applying for admission to Drake State?](#) The admission process is the same for veterans as it is for every other student and it's best to review the [admission requirements](#) before applying. Admission applications for all types of Drake State applicants (freshman, transfer, graduate, etc.) are [here](#), and applications may be completed and submitted online.

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[Is there a discounted tuition rate for veterans?](#) Federal and state laws extend the in-state tuition rate to honorably discharged veterans, veteran dependents, and members of the National Guard and Reserve, regardless of their state of residency, provided they are living in Alabama while they attend Drake State.

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[Veterans Affairs \(VA\) educational benefits are divided into different “chapters.” How do I know which chapter I qualify for?](#) An outline of the different VA educational-benefit chapters may be found toward the bottom of this [VA web page](#). **Note, however, that the exact VA education benefit(s) you qualify for – and you**

**may qualify for more than one, and will need to decide which one it would be best for you to accept – can only be determined by the VA.** However, the Drake State Veterans Affairs Coordinator can provide assistance (contact information is at the bottom of this web page).

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[What documents do I need to submit to the Drake State Veteran Services office to receive my VA educational benefits?](#) Refer to the instructions for the educational benefits chapter you intend to use, which are located at Prospective Student>Educational Benefits and Enrolled Students>Educational Benefits. Chapter 33 (Post 9/11 G.I. Bill) is the benefit most student-veterans qualify for and detailed Chapter 33 information is here. Contact the Drake State Veterans Affairs Coordinator with any questions (contact information is at the bottom of this page).

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[How many months of VA educational benefits \(or entitlement\) do I have left?](#) You can access your remaining entitlements by going to the [VA eBenefits page](#) and working through these steps:

- Login to your existing account or register for an account (be sure to write down your username and password)
- When a security warning pops up while navigating through the site, follow these steps:
  - Choose “I understand the risk”
  - Choose “Add Exception”
  - Confirm security exemption
- At the “Create your DS logon today” section, answer the questions, then begin “Basic Registration Lev. 1”
- Once your registration has been completed, upgrade your account and go through Remote Proofing
- When proofing has been completed, go to eBenefits and click Manage Benefits, then Education
- At that point, Chapter 33 Post 9/11 recipients should be able to view and print your Post 9/11 GI Bill Enrollment Info, which will serve as your Certificate of Eligibility (COE).  
Should you have trouble completing steps 5-6, try logging out and logging back in.

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[Do I need to reapply for my VA educational benefits every semester?](#) After your initial registration for educational benefits has been completed, you will only need to resubmit a [Drake State Certification Enrollment Request](#) form for benefit usage **each semester**.

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[How can I determine what classes I should take?](#) The [Drake State Catalog](#) outlines the Departments & Programs (majors) and their respective course requirements. You may view the [class schedule](#) to determine the course offerings for each term.

Important things to know when selecting your courses:

- The current catalog that **corresponds to the academic year of your Drake State enrollment** lists the courses you must complete to fulfill the requirements of your major.
- The courses you select must align directly with those outlined for your major in the Catalog.
- **VA educational benefits will only cover (pay for) courses required for your major**; so, for example, if you major in accounting and take a music class, the VA will not pay for the music class since it is not required for graduation in the accounting program, unless there are general electives or other classifications (100/200 level coursework, for instance) that you need to satisfy the university's graduation requirements.
- To resolve any questions or issues, refer to your academic advisor and/or the dean's office for your academic program.

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[Will VA educational benefits cover the cost of remedial or deficiency courses?](#) Most VA educational benefit programs (or "chapters") cover the cost of remedial or deficiency courses, but only if a placement test indicates that you need to take that type of course, or if the course is required as a prerequisite for another course in your major. Remedial/Deficiency courses nor textbooks for those courses are not covered by the Alabama GI Dependent Scholarship

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[What happens if I change my schedule after I submit my Drake State Enrollment Certification Request form?](#) Notify the Veterans Affairs coordinator

right away via [email](#) or in person so your new schedule can be reviewed to (1) make sure the replacement course(s) are applicable to your major (VA educational benefits only cover courses that fulfill the degree requirements for your major), and (2) avoid any overpayment situations.

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[What is the deadline for submitting my Drake State Enrollment Certification Request form?](#) You have up to one year after the start of a semester to submit your form. However, if you wish to receive federal and state educational benefits, or have the VA pay for your tuition (the latter applies only to those who qualify for Chapter 33 and Chapter 31 educational benefits), the sooner you submit your form the better. Remember certification of benefits can be completed up to 120 day prior to the beginning any term. Veteran and Veteran Dependents are encouraged to utilize early-registration periods to arrange and finalize your schedule well in advance.

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[When do I start to receive my VA educational benefits?](#) The VA will process your benefits as quickly as possible but this can take several weeks from the first time you apply. Once you are in the VA system, though – and if you submit your **Drake State Enrollment Certification Request** before the start of each semester – your benefits should be provided to you continuously (with any monthly stipends paid at the end of each month during a semester).

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[I qualify for Chapter 33 benefits. When can I expect to receive my textbook stipend and housing allowance?](#) The textbook stipend is paid as soon as your claim is processed so you should not wait for the stipend to arrive before ordering your textbooks. The Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH), meanwhile, and all other monthly stipends are paid at the end of each month during a semester. Keep in mind that partial months are paid at a prorated rate. For example, if a fall semester begins on August 26, your BAH payment will only be for the four days between August 26 and August 30 (provided your BAH certification was submitted in advance of August 26).

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[How many credit hours do I need to take to be classified as a fulltime student?](#) Drake State requires students to take a minimum of 12 credit hours a semester

to be classified as fulltime. However, you should also check the credit-hour requirements to be classified as fulltime by the VA educational benefits program through which you receive your benefits, as well as for any financial aid purposes.

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What level of VA educational benefits am I entitled to if I'm not classified as a fulltime student? The VA calculates your benefit amount based on this "rate of pursuit" formula:

<b>Chapter 33 (Post 9/11 G.I. Bill)</b>	<b>All other VA educational benefits (or Chapters)</b>
11 credit hours = 90% of all educational benefits	12 credit hours or more = Fulltime
10 credit hours = 80%	9 to 11 credit hours = Three-quarter time
9 credit hours = 80%	6 to 8 credit hours = Half-time
8 credit hours = 70%	4 and 5 credit hours = Less than half, more than one quarter
7 credit hours = 60%	1 to 3 credit hours = Quarter-time

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How are VA educational benefits calculated during summer semesters at Drake State? During the summer, Drake State considers full-time to be equivalent to 12 credit hours. The Department of Veteran Affairs calculates this term as an accelerated term and is illustrated by the chart below. Seven hours is considered full time while 4 hours is considered equivalent to greater than 50%. You must be enrolled greater than 50% to qualify for 50% of the BAH (Basic Allowance for Housing) during any given term.

Enrolled Credit Hours	Session Length (Weeks)							
	13	12	11	10	9	8	7	6
10								
9	12.5							
8	11.1	12	13.1					
7	9.7	10.5	11.5	12.6				
6	8.3	9	9.8	10.8	12			
5	6.9	7.5	8.2	9	10	13.5	12.9	
4	5.5	6	6.5	7.2	8	11.2	10.3	12
3	4.2	4.5	4.9	5.4	6	9	7.7	9
2	2.8	3	3.3	3.6	4	6.7	5.1	6
1	1.4	1.5	1.6	1.8	2	4.5	2.6	3

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Does not being classified as a fulltime student affect other VA educational benefits? If you a recipient of **Chapter 33** (Post 9/11 G.I. Bill) educational benefits, you must be registered for course credits that constitute at least 51% of fulltime status (for undergraduates, this is a minimum of 6.12 credit hours) to receive the Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH). Credit-hour totals that are based on multiple or overlapping sessions (like during the summer semester) must be approved by the Drake State Veterans

Affairs Coordinator to ensure they meet Chapter 33 BAH requirements. Also, in order to avoid a drastic reduction in BAH, at least one credit hour each semester must physically take place on campus. Recipients of **non-Chapter 33** educational benefits who take less than half the fulltime credit hours will have their tuition and fees only paid for by the VA (up to the monthly cap based on the rate of pursuit) either through a single payment for the semester or by providing a portion of the tuition and fees each month.

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[Do I have to maintain a certain GPA to keep my VA educational benefits?](#) All students utilizing VA educational benefits must maintain certain standards of progress as detailed in the Drake State Catalog. Students who are placed on academic probation are provided with VA educational benefits for up to two consecutive semesters. However, if the student's cumulative grade point average does not meet Drake State's published standards of progress after the second consecutive semester of academic probation, VA educational benefits will be terminated. Students who are reinstated to Drake State after dismissal for unsatisfactory progress and plan to use VA educational benefits must meet with the Veteran Affairs coordinator after their reinstatement.

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[If I fail a class, will I have to pay anything back to the VA?](#) No, you do not have to pay the VA back if you do not pass a course. You may repeat a course if it is required for your degree program and the VA will pay for it a second time. However, if you drop or withdraw from a class after the deadline for doing so, you will have to pay the VA back if you received money for that course.

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[How do I drop or withdraw from a class, and will doing so affect my VA educational benefits?](#) If you need to drop or withdraw from a course, consult the Drake State academic calendar to determine the last date you are able to withdraw. Note that there are two types of grades you can get from dropping a course – punitive and non-punitive. If you drop a class, withdraw from all classes, or are dropped by the instructor before the deadline date, you are assigned a non-punitive grade, which will not affect your GPA and that the VA treats as having a neutral effect on your transcript. If dropping a class changes your attendance status (for example, if you are then classified as a non-fulltime student), the VA will require repayment of any money you received for attendance in that class unless you have mitigating circumstances. If you feel you have a valid reason for dropping the class or withdrawing from a class, you can write to the VA and ask that you be

allowed to maintain your prevailing rate of pay, up to the last date of attendance in the course(s).

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What types of “mitigating circumstances” are acceptable to the VA for dropping a class or withdrawing from Drake State? Mitigating circumstances include (1) personal illness or injury, (2) the death, illness or serious injury of a family member, (3) relocation due to employment, (4) work-schedule conflict, or (5) hardships. If you claim a mitigating circumstance for dropping a class or withdrawing from Drake State, the VA will require in-depth statements and supporting documents before approving payment. If you have other reasons for dropping or withdrawing, you may also provide those in writing to the VA.

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What is a punitive grade and will getting one affect my VA educational benefits? If you drop a course, withdraw from all courses, or are dropped by an instructor after the last date to withdraw, you may be assigned a punitive grade. This grade will be figured into your grade point average as an “F” and the VA will only allow payment at the prevailing rate up to the last date of your attendance as reported by the instructor. After that date, the VA will begin a new rate of pay. With the implications that come from dropping a course, whether you receive a non-punitive grade or a punitive one (the latter affects your GPA), you should make every effort to avoid doing so.

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