

# **VETERAN’S STUDENT HANDBOOK**

## **BLADEN COMMUNITY COLLEGE**

**“Bladen Community College shall comply with the provisions of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and other acts banning discrimination because of race, national origin, color, religion, sex, disability, age, veteran status, or political affiliation.”**

**Revised: July, 2021**

### **DIVISIONAL MISSION STATEMENT**

**Student Services shall assist all adults seeking to further their education by helping them establish sound educational goals.**

**Student Services shall provide guidance and counseling to all students which will assist them in educational and societal achievement.**

**Student Services shall function as an integral part of the total institution in assuring that students will be recognized as individuals with needs, interests, and abilities.**

### **DEPARTMENTAL MISSION STATEMENT**

**Veterans’ Services shall treat all veterans and their dependents with the tolerance, compassion, dignity, and understanding we would expect to receive ourselves in similar circumstances;**

**Veterans’ Services shall assist veterans in correctly completing Veterans’ Administration forms, and applications for educational benefits;**

**Veterans’ Services shall assist all veterans and their dependents with benefit claims and to serve as a liaison with the Veterans’ Administration;**

**Veterans’ Services shall function as an integral part of the Student Services division and of the total institution in assuring that students will be recognized as individuals with needs, interests, and abilities.**

## **Military Recruitment and Marketing Practices**

**Bladen Community College, its agents, and its employees are prohibited from providing anything more than that of nominal value to any person being recruited to enroll at Bladen Community College. This prohibition shall apply to gratuities, favors, discounts, entertainment, hospitality, loans, transportation, lodging, meals and any other item having monetary value. This prohibition shall not limit the College's ability to grant scholarships to its students.**

**BCC recruitment activities shall refrain from using high-pressure recruitment tactics, this would include when contacting by phone, email, or in-person,. BCC will not engage in same-day recruitment and registration for the purpose of securing Service member enrollments.**

**Employees understand and do not engage in such practices.**

The role of the Veteran's Services Department at Bladen Community College is to assist the student in pursuing their educational, professional or vocational objectives. The VA Director is available to answer questions about educational benefits, to certify enrollments for the Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA) and monitor student degree plans and academic progress.

BCC's VA Director is Mr. Carlton Bryan. He can be reached Monday thru Friday during regular college hours. Mr. Bryans' office is located in Building 8 Room 4. Contact information for Mr. Bryan is 910-879-5524 or email [cbryan@bladencc.edu](mailto:cbryan@bladencc.edu) .

Although BCC works to ensure DVA regulations are satisfied, the College has no authority to make judgments regarding benefit status. The eligibility of individuals for veteran educational benefits and approval of payment of benefits is made solely by the Department of Veterans Affairs.

The National Toll-Free number for the Department of Veterans Affairs for educational benefits is **1-888-442-4551**. All other VA inquiries should be directed to **1-800-827-1000**.

Contact information for local Veterans Service Officers is as follows:

<b>Bladen County Veterans Service Office</b>	<b>(910) 862-6950</b>
<b>Columbus County Veterans Service Office</b>	<b>(910) 640-6638</b>
<b>Cumberland County Veterans Service Office</b>	<b>(910) 677-2970</b>
<b>Lumbee Tribe Veterans Service Office</b>	<b>(910) 522-2210</b>
<b>Robeson County Veterans Service Office</b>	<b>(910) 671-3070</b>
<b>Sampson County Veterans Service Office</b>	<b>(910) 592-2862</b>

## **How to Get Started**

Before claiming your benefits from the Department of Veterans Affairs, please be sure to complete the application process in the Bladen Community College Student Services Building. Submit official transcripts from high school or other colleges, official copies of GED or Adult High School transcripts to the admission's department. Once your application for admission has been submitted, see Mr. Carlton Bryan to schedule and complete the placement test.

## **Military Credit**

Any courses completed during the student's military service that the student wishes to be considered for college credit may be submitted to the Registrar at Bladen Community College's Admissions Office. The transcripts must be official copies in a sealed envelope.

Military website for transcript requests:

Joint Services – JST System -- <https://jst.doded.mil/jst/>

## **VA Benefit Programs and Requirements**

The Department of Veterans Affairs has different programs which are determined by the veteran's military service. The application process for these programs may vary.

### ***Chapter 30 – Montgomery GI Bill***

Individuals entering military service on or after July 1, 1985, and elected to have their basic pay reduced by \$100 per month for 12 months of their service may be eligible for this program.

### ***Chapter 31- Vocational Rehabilitation***

This benefit is designed to assist veterans with a service-connected disability in obtaining and maintaining employment. A service-related disability rating of 20% or more is required as part of the eligibility requirements.

*Veterans should apply for vocational rehabilitation through the County Veterans Service Office and must follow guidelines from the Vocational Rehabilitation and Counseling Division of the DVA regarding application and admission requirements.*

### ***Chapter 33- Post 9/11 GI Bill***

Individuals who have served at least 90 aggregate days on active duty after September 10, 2001 may be eligible for this program. Individuals who were in the selected reserve component and served on active duty on or after September 11, 2001 for at least 90 consecutive days may be eligible for this program.

***Be Aware:*** Once you apply for (or switch to) the Post 9/11 GI Bill, you cannot go back to the Montgomery GI Bill. You may want to exhaust your Montgomery GI Bill, then apply for Post 9/11 benefits.

### ***Chapter 35 – Survivors and Dependent’s Educational Assistance***

Surviving spouses and children of veterans who meet the following criteria may be eligible for this program:

- Suffered a service-related death,
- Died as a result of a service-related disability or
- Receive a 100% permanent and total service-related disability.

### ***1606 – Selected Reserve Educational Assistance Program***

Individuals who have agreed to serve six years, on or after July 1, 1985, or extended an enlistment for a period of at least six years in the selected reserve may be eligible for this program.

### ***Chapter 33 - TOE – Transfer of Entitlement***

Individuals who served on active duty or as a member of the selected reserve for at least six years and agreed to serve four more may transfer their basic educational benefits to:

- The individual's spouse
- One or more of the individual's children, or
- A combination of both.

## **Fry Scholarship – Named for Marine Gunnery Sergeant John David Fry**

Available for children and spouses of Service members who died in the line of duty after September 10, 2001. Eligible beneficiaries attending school may receive up to 36 months of benefits at the 100% level.

More about VA Benefits can be found at: <https://www.va.gov/education/how-to-apply/>

*Note: You may qualify for more than one benefit. Determine which program would be more beneficial for you. The DVA website can help with your decision regarding which benefits to use. Visit <https://benefits.va.gov/gibill/> select "Apply for Benefits" then choose "Road Map for Success". Programs may be used consecutively for a maximum of 48 months.*

## **How to Apply For Veterans Educational Benefits**

To apply online, visit the Department of Veterans Affairs at <https://www.va.gov/education/how-to-apply/>. Before attempting to complete the online application you will need to gather your personal information. This includes your DD214, transcripts for all periods of education after high school, Kicker Contract, and a routing or transit number for your bank account because Direct Deposit is mandatory. The online application will require approximately 30 minutes.

Fill in all questions accurately and completely in order to ensure that your application is processed quickly.

DO NOT file for the same claim by mail and online. When you apply online you will receive a confirmation number for your application. If you are unsure whether or not your claim was submitted, you may call **1-888-422-4551** for assistance.

Once you receive your Certification of Eligibility from the Department of Veterans Affairs, you will need to submit a copy to Mr. Bryan at Bladen Community College.

NOTE: VA Educational Benefits are non-taxable.

**GoArmyEd** – Tuition Assistance (TA) Program available to Active and Reserve Army Soldiers.

**MyCAA** (Military Spouse Career Advancement Accounts) – Provided educational assistance for spouses of Active Duty, Guard and Reserve Members.

## **Other Financial Aid**

Check with the Bladen Community College Financial Aid Office for both federal and state financial aid programs which may be available to assist you with your educational expenses. The Free Application for Federal Financial Aid (FAFSA) is used to determine financial need for all forms of federal aid, as well as most scholarships. If eligible, you may receive both VA and financial aid funds during the same semester.

## **Certifying Enrollment**

Certification is the process by which the college verifies to the VA a student's dates of attendance, degree program, and number of credit hours taken. **The VA will NOT pay any student without receiving this certification.** Therefore, **YOU** must bring your schedule to Mr. Bryan in the VA office at BCC upon the completion of registration for **each** semester.

NOTE: All courses taken must be in your selected program. VA students will not be certified for, nor paid by the VA, for courses that are not in their program, audited classes, withdrawals, or non-required classes. Continuing Education courses are only eligible when they are required for the student's Program of Study. For example, although the CNA I course is a Continuing Education class, it will be covered **if** the student's program of study is Practical Nursing or ADN.

## **Monthly Enrollment Verification for Ch. 30, and 1606**

Students receiving the GI Bill under Chapter 30 and 1606 must verify enrollment with the VA at the end of every month they attend class. Chapter 33 and 35 recipients are not required to certify with the VA unless enrolled in a Non-College Degree (NCD) program measured in vocational/clock hours. To verify enrollment, students can call **1-888-422-4551** or access the VA's website at [W.A.V.E](http://W.A.V.E) and log-in. (First time users can follow instructions highlighted in blue.) Once you have logged in, select "Verify Monthly Enrollment Status".

## **Initial VA Benefit Check for First Time Students**

The monthly VA educational award may be prorated if necessary. For example, if the first term of your enrollment begins on the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month, the monthly rate will be divided by 30 (days in a standard month) and the daily rate is multiplied by the number of days you attended class that month. This is the amount of your check for the first month of attendance. It may take 8 to 12 weeks after classes begin to receive the first check.

*Payment is made at the beginning of each month for the previous month's attendance.*

### **Standard Spring or Fall Semester (16 weeks)**

<i>Credit Hours</i>	<i>Training Time</i>	<i>Monthly Rate of Pay</i>
12 or more	Full time	Maximum allowance
9-11	$\frac{3}{4}$ time	75% of maximum
6-8	$\frac{1}{2}$ time	50% of maximum
5 or less	below $\frac{1}{2}$ time	tuition and fees

### **Summer Semester (8 weeks)**

<i>Credit Hours</i>	<i>Training Time</i>	<i>Monthly Rate of Pay</i>
6 or more	Full time	Maximum allowance
4 or 5	$\frac{3}{4}$ time	75 % of maximum
3	$\frac{1}{2}$ time	50 % of maximum
1 or 2	below $\frac{1}{2}$ time	tuition and fees

### **Changes to Your Schedule**

All add/drop changes should be reported by the student to Mr. Bryan as soon as possible. Withdrawing or adding classes may change the eligible monthly rate received by the student, and if not reported in a timely manner, could lead to an under- or over-payment of benefits. If an over-payment occurs, the student will be responsible for its repayment.

In the event that the student must drop a class due to mitigating circumstances, please see Mr. Bryan **immediately**. In some cases, Mr. Bryan may be able to assist the student so that he/she is not held liable. Evidence must be provided to support claims. The VA defines mitigating circumstances as “the unanticipated and unavoidable events that interfere with the student’s pursuit of a course.” Examples the VA may accept are:

- Prolonged illness or serious injury.
- Severe illness or death in the student’s immediate family.
- Unscheduled changes in the student’s employment that are beyond the student’s control.
- Unanticipated difficulties with child care arrangements made for the purpose of allowing the student to go to school.
- Recall to active duty or deployment.

## **Changing Your Program of Study**

Students must report a change of their Program of Study to Mr. Bryan when this change occurs. Students will be required to complete a change of program request, either VA Form 22-1995 for Chapters 30, 33, and 1606 or VA Form 22-5495 for Chapter 35.

## **Standards of Satisfactory Progress**

Students must maintain satisfactory academic progress and conduct to continue to receive VA education benefits. An eligible person is placed on academic warning if the student's GPA falls below a 2.0 in any semester. Education benefits will be suspended for failure to achieve academic progress if their GPA falls below 2.0 for a second consecutive semester. Benefits will be suspended until the student completes one semester without VA education benefits and attains a minimum GPA of 2.0.

Benefits will not be paid for repeating classes in which a passing grade ('D' or above) is received. An exception to this rule is if the course requires a 'C' or higher to successfully complete the course.

Students must regularly attend classes. Bladen Community College requires that a student miss no more than 20% of class time in order to remain enrolled in the course. If a student misses more than 20% of class time, the student will be withdrawn from the course. If the student is withdrawn from the course, the last day of attendance will be reported to the VA, affecting their education benefits.

## **Readmission for Military Service Members**

Bladen Community College acknowledges that students may be temporarily unable to attend classes or be required to suspend their studies in order to perform military service. Bladen Community College encourages such students to resume their education once a military service obligation has ended and adopts this policy to ensure the timely readmission of such students.

In accordance with federal regulations, 34 C.F.R. 668.18 and the Department of Defense (DOD) Voluntary Partnership Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), the college will promptly readmit service members who seek readmission to a program that was interrupted due to a uniformed service obligation.

## **Student Responsibility**



The student must provide oral or written notice of a uniformed service obligation to the Veterans Service Center as far in advance as possible, unless precluded by military necessity. Such notice does not need to indicate when the student will return to the college.

## **Tuition and Fees**

A returning student must be charged the same tuition and fees in effect during the last academic year the student attended, unless veteran's education benefits or other service member education benefits will pay the amount in excess. For subsequent academic years, the returning student may not be charged tuition and fees in excess of what other students in the program are charged.

## **Readmission Requirements**

A returning student will be permitted to re-enroll in the next semester scheduled in the same academic program, unless the student requests a later date of re-enrollment or agrees to a different program. A returning student will be readmitted into the same academic program the student was enrolled in prior to the military service or the student requests admission to a different program.

If the college determines that a returning student is not prepared to resume the program or is unable to complete the program, the college must make reasonable efforts to enable the student to resume or complete the program at no additional cost to the student. If such efforts are unsuccessful or place an undue hardship on the college, the college is not required to readmit the student.

In accordance with federal regulations, returning students who receive a dishonorable or bad conduct discharge from the Armed Forces (including the National Guard and Reserves) are not eligible for readmission under this document. However, service members who receive dishonorable or bad conduct discharge may remain eligible for readmission even though they will not be entitled to the benefits outlined in this document.

## **Tutoring**

In some cases, the VA will pay for tutorial services to be provided. Benefits can be paid for up to \$100.00 per month, for a maximum benefit of up to \$1200.00. This policy is based on the specific Chapter a person filed under and funding that is available. In all cases, the person must pay for the service first and then be reimbursed by the VA. There are rules and regulations pertaining to who can be approved for the purpose of tutorial services, so it is advised to check with Mr. Bryan before hiring a tutor. All Bladen Community College students, currently enrolled, are eligible for tutoring at no charge through the Learning Enhancement Center.

## **Extending Your VA Benefits**

If the student is using Chapter 30, 33, or 35, they may be eligible for an extension of their benefits. If the student has at least one day of benefits remaining at the beginning of any new semester, they may request an extension of their benefits from the VA Regional Office.

## **Work Study Program**

The Department of Veterans Affairs Work Study Program permits eligible veterans to perform services for DVA in return for monetary allowance equal to the higher of State or Federal minimum wage. The maximum number of hours a student may work will be based upon 25 times the number of weeks in the student's enrollment period. Work study services may be performed at:

- DVA Regional Offices
- DVA Medical Facilities
- Educational Institutes
- National Cemeteries
- Other organizations approved for outreach activities

The Work Study service must be DVA related. To be eligible, the student must be pursuing programs of education or training at  $\frac{3}{4}$  time rate or more. Chapters 30, 31, 32, 33, 35, and 1606 are eligible. Note: VA Work Study allowances are non-taxable.

## **VA Student Agreement for BCC**

**I understand that to be certified and receive VA Educational Benefits the following steps must be taken and procedures complied with:**

- 1) I must choose a major/program and meet all admission criteria established by BCC for that program as well as meeting all VA requirements. These include:
  - An **official** high school transcript or GED (to be official it must be in a sealed envelope)
  - **Official** transcripts of **all** colleges attended and an **evaluation for transfer credit**
  - Completion of any required **placement testing**
  - Completion of VA 1990 or 5490 (if you have used VA before a VA 1995 (5495) replaces the VA 1990 **or** a Certificate of Eligibility
  - Copy of DD 214 (prior active duty) or NOBE (Notice of Basic Eligibility for guard/reserve)

**NO CERTIFICATION CAN BE MADE UNTIL ALL THE ABOVE ARE COMPLETED**

- 2) Once application/admission steps are made I must make satisfactory progress toward my goal and meet all academic standards of progress for BCC. **Only classes that meet specific requirements for my program can be certified for VA benefits.** VA will not pay for:
  - Any **class previously passed** (D or better); any **class for which transfer credit was given; any audited class**
  - Any **optional remedial class**; or any class that does **not meet specific requirement for my VA approved curriculum**
- 3) For normal Spring and Fall sessions **full benefits** will be paid for **12** or more credit hours,  $\frac{3}{4}$  **for 9-11** credit hours, and  $\frac{1}{2}$  **for 6-8** credit hours. Unless specifically requested, no certification will be made for less than  $\frac{1}{2}$  time (1-5 credit hours in a standard term). For Summer or any other non-standard term, VA will compute payments based on credit hours and term length. For BCC's Summer session (8 weeks) six hours is full-time. Mini-sessions (5 or 8 weeks) will change this computation.
- 4) It is **my responsibility to notify the VA certifying official of any changes** that may affect my VA benefits; changes such as **adding or dropping a class**. I must also notify Student Records, the VA certifying official, and the VA of changes of address and telephone number.
- 5) I am aware that a **program change must be done in writing** with the VA certifying official and will require an official evaluation of all previous credits before I can be certified in the new program. Note: dual majors are currently not allowed.
- 6) **Class attendance is essential**, failure to attend may result in a W or WF by the instructor, which will mean a change in VA entitlement and may result in over-payment. For Chapters 30 (former active duty), and
- 7) 1606 (guard/reserve). **I must verify attendance each month at www.gibill.va.gov/wave or by calling 877-823-2378. This can be done the last day of each month.**
- 8) These requirements and procedures involve only certification and continuation in a VA approved program at BCC and does not relieve me of **my responsibility** of complying with other VA rules and procedures covered in appropriate laws, regulations, and VA pamphlets. If there is any doubt or question, ask!!!

By signing below, I agree to **all** terms and conditions listed above.

Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Signed Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_