

Procedural Advisory: Utilization of the VA Enrollment Certification (VA Form 22-1999) for Tuition Assistance Top-Up under the Montgomery GI Bill – Active Duty Program.

September 04, 2015

BACKGROUND: Section 3014(b) of title 38, United States Code, authorizes VA to award Montgomery GI Bill – Active Duty (MGIB – AD) benefits to cover all, or a lesser amount if desired by active duty beneficiary, of the costs of a course not fully covered by Federal Tuition Assistance (TA). Since approval for Tuition Assistance Top-Up (TATU) requires approval for Federal Tuition Assistance, but not approval for GI Bill benefits, Servicemembers were historically able to receive TATU benefits for enrollment in non-approved programs (i.e. at schools without VA Facility Codes or School Certifying Officials). Consequently, VA required MGIB – AD beneficiaries to request TATU by submitting a copy of a TA authorization form, as opposed to having the information submitted by the school.

ISSUE: In 2014, the Department of Defense (DoD) changed its rules regarding TA (DoD Instruction 1322.25, Change 3). First, DoD now requires GI Bill approval in order to qualify for Federal TA. Second, TA is limited to tuition charges (i.e. not fees) for post-secondary programs, even though such associated fees may be covered by MGIB – AD benefits under TATU. Following these changes, it has been reported that some TA authorization forms do not include fees and, therefore, not all payable out-of-pocket costs are displayed on the forms submitted to VA.

CHANGE: In the next revision of the School Certifying Official (SCO) Handbook, expected to be released on September 04, 2015, SCOs will be instructed to use VA Form 22-1999 (including the electronic version in VA-ONCE) to certify those classes for students on active duty using the following additional procedures:

- Only include those classes for which Federal TA is paying for some, but not all, of the tuition and fee charges
- Only report the remaining “out-of-pocket” charges for tuition and fees, or a lesser amount if desired by the Servicemember
- Enter “Top-Up” into the Remarks field

This will allow Servicemembers to receive reimbursement for the full out-of-pocket charges.

Note: If a Servicemember also wishes to receive “regular” MGIB – AD benefits for enrollment in classes not supported by TA, you must certify those classes on a separate VA Form 22-1999.

EFFECTIVE IMMEDIATELY: Veterans Claims Examiners (VCEs) will no longer process TATU awards based on receipt of a TA authorization form. If such a form is

received, the VCE should contact the School Certifying Official and request submission via VA Form 22-1999 utilizing the procedures detailed above.

VCE REVIEW: Veterans Claims Examiners (VCEs) should be sure to review the Remarks section of VA Enrollment Certifications submitted for MGIB – AD benefits to see if “Top-Up” has been entered. If TATU is being requested, the claim should be routed accordingly for benefits processing. This is vital in order to ensure that the benefit award, and associated entitlement charge, are processed in accordance with TATU requirements, rather than those associated with “normal” MGIB – AD awards processed in the chapter 30 Benefits Delivery Network system.

QUESTIONS: If you have any questions, please direct them to the National Training Team at [VAVBAWAS/CO/225A](#).

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: M22-4, Part V, Chapter 10 will be updated to reflect these changes in the near future.

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