



2024-25

Student Veteran & Military Handbook



Veterans Services Office
Southwestern College

Updated



Welcome to Southwestern College! We are honored that you have chosen Southwestern College as you begin your academic career, after having served the United States of America through military service. This handbook was designed to help you understand Veterans programs, services, and guide you through the educational benefits process.

Our Veterans Services team consists of the Veterans Services Office and Veterans Resource Center Staff, as well as our dedicated Veterans Counselors. These skilled and committed staff/faculty members, many of whom are Veterans and/or dependents, are here to assist you as you begin the next chapter of your life.

Veterans' Services Office www.swccd.edu/veterans
Cesar Chavez Center (Bldg. 68), First floor
619.482.6324
Hours: (Spring/Fall) M/T 8am - 6:30pm, W/TH 8am - 5pm Fridays: 8am-3:00pm

The Veterans' Services Office provides assistance to Veterans, Active Duty, and Military affiliated students wishing to use their educational benefits here at Southwestern College. This office is staffed by our DVA School Certifying Officials, Veterans Services Specialist, Veteran Student Services Assistant, and our VA work-study students.

Veterans' Resource Center www.swccd.edu/vrc
Room 62-A-102, 619.482.6548
Hours: (Spring/Fall) M/T 8am - 6:30pm, W/TH 8am - 5pm Fridays: 8am-3:00pm

The Veterans' Resource Center (VRC) provides a place for students to find resources on VA educational benefits, assistance registering for classes, employment opportunities, peer to peer networking, free book exchange, computer lab with free printing, student lounge, conference room, and regularly scheduled tutoring sessions/various workshops. The VRC also provides additional information and resources related to Veteran benefits and other local community resources. Your VRC is a sanctuary for you and your family, providing a welcoming, safe, and supportive environment which is dedicated to giving the very best assistance available. Your academic success and wellness is our primary goal as you pursue your educational goals.

Counseling Center www.swccd.edu/counseling
Cesar Chavez Center (Bldg. 68), Second Floor
619.421.6700, x 5240

We have two Part Time Counselors and they are here to assist and support your academic success.

We thank you for your service and want you to know that we are committed to providing you with the very best support and resources available. We wish you the best of luck with your academic career and thank you sincerely for choosing Southwestern College.

Suzanne Woods
Suzanne Woods
Director, Financial Aid and Veterans' Services

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Getting Approved for Benefits at SWC

Get approved for benefits	3
Get admitted to SWC.....	3
Getting checked in and enrolled.....	4
Getting processed to receive your benefits.....	5

Student Responsibilities	6
--------------------------------	---

Course Selection and Approval	7
-------------------------------------	---

Guest Students/Parent School Letters	8
--	---

Rate of Pursuit and Training Time.....	9
--	---

Payment & Benefit Status.....	11
-------------------------------	----

Education & Benefits Programs

Montgomery GI Bill® Active Duty (Ch. 30)	12
Veteran Readiness and Employment (VR&E) (Ch. 31)	13
Post-9/11 GI Bill® for Active Duty and Dependents (Ch. 33).....	15
Marine Gunnery Sergeant John David Fry Scholarship (Ch. 33).....	16
Dependents Educational Assistance Program (Ch. 35)	17
VA Work Study.....	17
Montgomery GI Bill®-Select Reserve (Ch. 1606)	18
Reserve Educational Assistance Program (Ch. 1607)	18
Tuition Assistance (TA) Program for Active Duty students	19
College Tuition Fee Waivers for Veterans' Dependents (Cal Vet).....	20

Frequently Asked Questions	21
----------------------------------	----

Resources for Veterans & Military Affiliated students at SWC	23
--	----

Contact Information.....	24
--------------------------	----

Appendix I: Student Veteran Checklist	25
---	----

Appendix II: Student Veteran Contract	26
---	----

Appendix III: Chula Vista Campus Map	27
--	----

Appendix IV: 2019-2020 Academic Calendar	28
--	----

Appendix V: Approved programs for VA Benefits	29
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GETTING APPROVED FOR BENEFITS AT SOUTHWESTERN COLLEGE

➤ GETTING APPROVED FOR BENEFITS

- Complete the application for your Veterans Affairs (VA) Education Benefits via the Veterans Online Application at <https://www.va.gov/education/how-to-apply/>. You'll get a Certificate of Eligibility (COE) or Award Letter in the mail (30-45 days) if your application was approved. If your application was not approved, you'll get a denial letter in the mail.
 - Are you a Veteran? Submit VA Form 22-1990.
 - Are you a dependent using transferred Post 9/11 GI Bill® benefits? Submit VA Form 22-1990E: <http://www.vba.va.gov/pubs/forms/VBA-22-1990e-ARE.pdf>
 - Are you a dependent of a 100% disabled or deceased veteran? Submit VA Form 22-5490: <http://www.vba.va.gov/pubs/forms/VBA-22-5490-ARE.pdf>
 - Have you previously used your benefits at another institution? If you are a veteran, Submit VA Form 22-1995: <http://www.vba.va.gov/pubs/forms/VBA-22-1995-ARE.pdf>
 - Are you a dependent? Submit VA Form 22-5495: <http://www.vba.va.gov/pubs/forms/VBA-22-5495-ARE.pdf>

• GET ADMITTED TO SWC

1. Submit an online application by visiting www.swccd.edu, click on "Admissions" then, "New Student" then simply follow the instructions provided. Please allow 24-48 hours to receive a student ID number. You will be notified of your status via email.
2. Determine your residency status. Effective fall 2015 forward, nonresident tuition exemption shall be granted to students who qualify under Section 702 of the 2014 Veterans Access, Choice and Accountability (VACA) Act. For more information or for questions, please contact Admissions & Records at <https://swccd.craniumcafe.com/group/admissions-and-records/lobby>
3. Submit official transcripts from all previously attended colleges and universities, including military transcripts such as Joint Services Transcripts (JST), Community College of the Air Force (CCAF) and SMARTs, as well as CLEP, DANTES, IB and AP.

***Official transcripts may not be hand delivered – they must be mailed directly from the issuing college, university or agency.** After transcripts are received, please complete the Online transcript

evaluation form at www.swccd.edu/transcripteval so that your transcripts can be evaluated and transfer credit posted to your record. This is not an automatic process, transcripts will not be evaluated until we receive your request!

Have your transcripts sent (via mail) to:

Admissions & Records Office
900 Otay Lakes Road
Chula Vista, Ca 91910

Or directly emailed to Admissions@swccd.edu

4. Complete Student Success and SSSP.
 - a. Take English and math assessments Placement Survey. Visit <https://www.swccd.edu/student-support/assessment-testing/what-math-should-i-take.aspx>
Complete Online Orientation/Advisement at <https://sso.comevo.com/swccd-onaourse/launch/3959>

➤ GET CHECKED IN & ENROLLED

You are required to create a file by submitting the following documents to the Veteran's Services Office visit <https://www.swccd.edu/student-support/more-services/veterans-services/benefits-and-programs.aspx> Under General Documents and Student information Sheet.

1. DD-214 (member 4) or Notice of Basic Eligibility (NOBE) for Reservists (if applicable)
2. Documentation of VA benefit eligibility (one of following items):
 - a. Certificate of Eligibility (COE) or
 - b. eBenefits Education Enrollment Status or
 - c. VA benefit application (VA Form 22-1990, 22-1990E, or 22-5490) or
 - d. VA Form 22-1995 or 22-5495 (only if you've previously used your benefits at another institution)
3. VA Form 22-1995 (Veterans) or 22-5495 (dependents), if not submitted as part of your benefit eligibility documentation. If submitted in addition to the above documents, you do not need to complete the financial information. This document is used to determine your selected major.
4. Meet with the Veterans Counselor and create an *Comprehensive Student Education Plan*. Schedule an appointment with a Veterans Counselor to develop a *Comprehensive Student Education Plan (SEP)*. Identify yourself as a student receiving VA benefits. <https://www.swccd.edu/student-support/counseling-and-career-advisement/> or call 619.421.6700 x5240 for an appointment.

It is your responsibility to submit a copy of your comprehensive Student Education Plan to the Veterans Services Office within your first semester or an interruption/delay in VA educational benefits may

occur. <https://www.swccd.edu/student-support/more-services/veterans-services/benefits-and-programs.aspx>

Determine your enrollment date and enroll in classes. If you are currently in the military or were discharged within the last 15 years, you *may* be eligible for priority registration. Check with the Veterans Services Office for eligibility requirements and deadlines to submit required documentation. You may request priority registration status by submitting a copy of your DD-214 Member 4 or your active duty military ID card. **You must complete matriculation (see above) to be eligible for priority registration.**

Meet with a Veterans Counselor to create an *Comprehensive Student Education Plan*. All students using VA benefits (including dependents) should seek advisement at the Veterans Information Center, rather than at General/Transfer Counseling. To schedule an appointment, please visit <https://www.swccd.edu/student-support/counseling-and-career-advisement/> or call 619.421.6700 x 5240. Unofficial transcripts can be used for your *Abbreviated Education Plan* only. Enroll in classes. Use the Southwestern College class schedule (available online) to determine class listings and availability. **Courses must apply toward completion of a degree or approved Certificate of Achievement program and the courses you select must be on your Student Education Plan/Abbreviated Education Plan to be approved/certified to the VA.** Refer to the *Southwestern College Catalog* for degree programs and required courses.

Elective Courses: Elective courses will not be certified to the VA until it is determined they are required for the stated major. Do not enroll in classes previously taken at another institution until transcript evaluation and a comprehensive Education Plan have been completed. If you are certified for a repeated course prior to transcript evaluation and comprehensive *Student Education Plan* development, the Veterans' Services Office will adjust your certification and you will be responsible for any subsequent debts or repayment amounts to the VA.

All Classes with 500 designators are considered TRUE intended online classes. Example: ENGL 101-522 represents a class that is and was always intended to be taught online. "522" is the course designator and is in the "500's" therefore identified by the VA as Online/Distant.

All other course designations are intended to be Resident/In person classes, but due to remote operations will be taught via online. At this time, the VA will recognize these courses as Resident/In person for the purposes of certification. Example: ENGL 101-322. Please be sure to enroll in at least one course that is designated Resident/In person if your benefits depend on this.

1. Chapters 30, 35, and 1606 - Students receiving benefits under these chapters are required to pay within five days of enrollment. Failure to pay will result in your courses being dropped. You must still complete a Course Declaration to be certified for your enrollment.

Post 9/11 and Residency: Be advised that the VA does **NOT** pay nonresident tuition. If you are not initially classified as a California resident you should contact Admissions & Records and let them know that you are receiving benefits. Section 702 of the VACA permits California Community Colleges to exempt nonresident students who are receiving benefits and who meet certain criteria from the nonresident tuition fee. For those assessed nonresident fees who do not meet VACA criteria, you may submit a California Tuition Waiver for Veterans and Dependents.

➤ GET PROCESSED TO RECEIVE YOUR BENEFITS

After the appropriate VA application is completed, the veteran will receive a COE (Certificate of Eligibility) which outlines the percentage of benefits that will be received and the number of months associated with the benefit. It is the responsibility of the veteran and or dependent to bring this document, along with other supporting documents (i.e. DD-214 Member 4 and information sheet) to the Veterans Services Office so that a student file may be created.

Complete the online Enrollment Declaration Form at www.swccd.edu/veterans, then click on “Declaring Classes”. This cannot be done PRIOR to enrolling in a course but must be done immediately following course enrollment. We recommended that you complete this requirement as soon as possible, making sure to fill the form out correctly and identify the correct term for which you are requesting benefits.

In order to receive VA educational benefits after your first semester, you **must** have a Comprehensive *Student Education Plan* (SEP) on file that leads to an **Associate Degree**, a **Certificate of Achievement**, or **transfer program approved by the state of California State Approving Agency/VA**. If this is your first semester at Southwestern College, you must meet with a Veterans Counselor **before** the end of your first semester to receive a Comprehensive Student Education Plan (SEP).

Monthly Verification for Chapter 33: Beginning with courses starting after December 17, 2021 all Post 9/11 GI Bill users are required to verify their enrollment to the VA each month. If you fail to submit your monthly enrollment verification for two consecutive months, your Monthly Housing Allowance will be stopped until you verify your enrollment. Please contact the VA Education Call Center to ensure your information is updated: 1-888-442-4551. If you are already signed up for text you should be receiving text messages from 1-855-933-1416.

***** The online declaration form must be completed at the beginning of each term, after your register, your intend to use your Veterans benefits! *****

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

Comprehensive Student Education Plan

- You must have a comprehensive Student Education Plan (SEP) on file by the end of your first semester or an interruption in VA educational benefits may occur.
- You are required to notify the Veterans Services Office if you change your major. A new comprehensive SEP must be developed by a Veterans Counselor and immediately submitted to the Veterans Services Office. **Important** – changing your major can impact your eligibility for benefits, since you may only receive payment for classes required to complete your declared major.



Prior Credit

- VA regulations require that all previous education be reported including: prior colleges/universities, CLEP, DANTES, AP and IB test scores, as well as all military coursework (JST, SMART).
- **If it is determined a course(s) or course equivalent taken at another institution was successfully completed, the course(s) will not be paid for by the VA if repeated at SWC.**
- It is your responsibility to ensure that all official transcripts are on file with the college as soon as possible, no later than the end of your first semester. After transcripts are received, please notify us via swcveterans@swccd.edu to so that we can begin the evaluation process.

Course Selection

- All courses are subject to approval and must meet prerequisite or course requirements as listed on your Student Education Plan (SEP).
- Courses not meeting the requirements of your SEP will be denied and will not be included toward your rate of pursuit/training time calculated for awarding monthly education benefits.
- **Failure to take the proper courses may result in an overpayment and reduction or termination of benefits and you assume full liability for any overpayment of all VA educational benefits.**



Course Declaration

- Each semester, you are required to report your enrollment by completing the online Benefit Declaration Form at <https://www.swccd.edu/student-support/more-services/veterans-services/declaring-classes.aspx>. Failure to complete this form will result in a delay in the processing of your VA benefits. **Courses will not be submitted to the VA for processing if you do not submit a Benefit Declaration. Email swcveterans@swccd.edu to check if you file has been created.**
- If using the Post 9/11 GI Bill®, your Benefit Declaration Form must be completed the same day as enrollment to give adequate time to flag your account to avoid being dropped for non-payment.



Overpayments and Underpayments

- All adds, drops, and withdrawals must be reported to the Veterans' Services Office. This may be done via email, phone call, or in person. Changes may result in an overpayment or underpayment of monthly benefit payment. Remember, you assume full liability for any overpayment of VA education benefits.
- You **MUST** attend class and participate (both on campus and online) or it may result in an instructor withdrawal and a subsequent adjustment to your original enrollment certification. The adjustment can result in a student debt to the VA, including any accruing interest until the debt has been resolved.
- **Educational benefits will be discontinued if you cease to make satisfactory progress toward completion of your training objective.** Lack of satisfactory progress occurs immediately after two consecutive semesters of probation. Education benefits at Southwestern College will not resume until you are in 'Good Standing.' Email Veteran Services for questions swcveterans@swccd.edu.

COURSE SELECTION AND APPROVAL



Only courses that apply toward completion of your declared major at Southwestern College can be certified and submitted to the VA to receive educational benefits

Refer to Public WEAMS for approved Programs <https://inquiry.vba.va.gov/weamspub/buildViewOrg.do>

Courses **Approved for Payment** by the VA

- Courses required for your major and general education requirements.
- Electives **as needed to meet the overall unit requirement for program completion.**
- **Required** prerequisite courses (*recommended* courses are **not** the same as *required* courses).
- Remedial courses (English or math), if applicable per assessment results. These must be taken **on campus (not online or hybrid)** to be certifiable.
- *Some* repeat courses (courses in which a 'C' or better grade is required for graduation). There are college restrictions on allowable repeats. See the *Southwestern College Catalog* for further details.

Courses **Not Approved for Payment** by the VA

- Courses outside of your major or general education requirements.
- Electives in excess of the overall unit requirement for program completion.
- Recommended courses (VA pays for *required* courses, not recommended courses).
- Courses that do not apply toward the completion of your major.
- Repeat courses (any class you have previously taken and received a passing grade). Remember, a grade of 'D' is considered passing, **except** for courses in which a grade of 'C' or better is required for graduation.
- Online remedial courses (English or math).

Dropping or Adding Classes, Withdrawals

The Veterans' Services Office must report unit changes immediately to the VA. Student enrollment is monitored closely and changes in enrollment reported weekly.



Important! Adding, dropping or withdrawing from classes can affect your eligibility and compensation.

GUEST STUDENTS

If you are pursuing your degree at another college or university, but wish to take a course (or courses) at SWC, you are considered a **Guest Student**. The school that will grant your degree is your primary or parent school. All others schools are considered secondary. VA can pay benefits for courses taken at secondary schools, as long as the course applies to your specified degree/certificate program at your primary school.

To request certification as a Guest Student:

1. Complete an online Course Declaration after course enrollment. This form is available in the SWC Veterans Services Office. Be sure to identify yourself as a Guest Student.
2. Contact the Veterans Affairs Office at your primary school for their policies and procedures. Southwestern must receive a *Parent School Letter* from your primary school prior to certification of any coursework.
3. You will be certified only for the exact courses) on the Parent Letter from your parent school. No exceptions.

Contact the Veterans Affairs Office of your primary school for further questions.

PARENT SCHOOL LETTERS

If Southwestern is your primary school and you wish to take a course (or courses) required to complete your program of study at another school, you'll need to request a **Parent School Letter**. VA can pay benefits for courses taken at secondary schools, as long as the course applies to your declared and approved SWC academic program at your primary school.

1. Submit an online course declaration for the appropriate term, if enrolled at both SWC and the secondary school for the intended term.
2. Complete a *Request for Parent School Letter* at <https://www.swccd.edu/student-support/more-services/veterans-services/benefits-and-programs.aspx> under General Documents and Parent Letter.
 - a. Proof of enrollment (Ex. Enrollment Summary):
 - b. Course Information (subject and course number)
 - c. Course Schedule (start and end dates)
 - d. Contact information for the secondary School Certifying Official
 - e. Copy of the course description from the secondary college's catalog
3. **If the course is determined to be equivalent and applicable to your Southwestern degree/certificate program**, a Parent School Letter will be sent to your secondary school and a copy sent to you.
4. Contact the Veterans Affairs Office at your secondary school for their policies and procedures. You may be required to submit additional documentation to their office and processing times may vary.
5. If the start/end dates for your secondary school course differ from your primary school enrollment dates, rate of pursuit/training time may be affected.
5. Upon completion of approved course(s), you are required to submit official transcripts **no later than one month after the completion of the semester/session** to:

Southwestern College
Admissions & Records
900 Otay Lakes Road
Chula Vista, CA 91910

Important: Failure to submit transcripts from your secondary school will result in the delay of future enrollment certifications for VA education benefits.

RATE OF PURSUIT AND TRAINING TIME

*Training time and rate of pursuit are provided for reference only.
Variations in full-time equivalency may exist and
only the Department of Veterans Affairs can make a final determination.*

Training Time for Standard Semesters

Chapters 30, 31, 35, and 1606 Standard Semester

In a standard semester (spring and fall), training time is measured as follows:

12 units	=	Full-time
9-11 units	=	$\frac{3}{4}$ -time
6-8 units	=	$\frac{1}{2}$ -time
4-5 units	=	less than $\frac{1}{2}$ -time ($<\frac{1}{2}$ -time)*
1-3 units	=	$\frac{1}{4}$ -time or less ($<\frac{1}{4}$ -time)*

*Payment equals tuition and fees only

Rate of Pursuit for Standard Semesters

Chapter 33 (Post 9/11 GI Bill®) Standard Semester

In a standard semester (spring and fall), rate of pursuit is measured as follows:

VA calculates rate of pursuit by dividing the number of units being pursued by the number of units considered to be full-time by the school. The resulting percentage is your rate of pursuit.

Examples: If full-time is considered 12 units, then rate of pursuit for:

- 6 units is 50% ($6 \div 12 = 50\%$)
- 7 units is 60% ($7 \div 12 = 58\%$)

The housing allowance is paid only if the student's rate of pursuit is more than 50%.

Rate of pursuit determines whether a student receives or doesn't receive the housing allowance. If pursuit is more than 50% the student receives the housing allowance. If the rate of pursuit is 50% or less, then the student doesn't receive the housing allowance. Remember, the housing allowance is also prorated by the student's length of service percentage and rate of pursuit.

Active duty personnel (including those on terminal leave) and their spouses utilizing transferred entitlements are not eligible for the housing allowance.

Training Time for Summer Semesters

Chapters 30, 31, 35, and 1606 Summer

Summer training time is different from spring and fall. Training time is based on the number of weeks the class meets, as well as the number of units required for the course. Most (not all) summer classes are either six or eight weeks in length.

6 Week Class

- 4 units = Full-time
- 3 units = $\frac{3}{4}$ -time
- 2 units = $\frac{1}{2}$ -time
- 1 unit = less than $\frac{1}{2}$ time (tuition and fees only for Chapters 30 & 35)

8 Week Class

- 6 units = Full-time
- 5 units = $\frac{5}{4}$ -time
- 4 units = $\frac{3}{4}$ -time
- 3 units = $\frac{1}{2}$ -time
- 2 units = less than $\frac{1}{2}$ time (tuition and fees only for Chapters 30 & 35)

Rate of Pursuit for Summer Semesters

Chapter 33 (Post 9/11 GI Bill®) Summer

6 Week Class

- 4 units = Full-time

8 Week Class

- 6 units = Full-time

Please see the Veterans' Services Office for information on training time for sessions shorter than six weeks or longer than eight weeks.

NOTE ON TERM DATES

Different beginning and ending dates are considered to be separate terms. Southwestern reports actual beginning dates, ending dates, and number of credits. **The DVA makes the determination of the conversion, not the school.**

PAYMENT AND BENEFIT STATUS

Paying tuition and fees

If using Chapter 30, 35, or 1606, you are responsible for your own tuition and fees, which are due upon registration. However, the Southwestern College Veteran's Services Office offers an optional one-time only tuition deferment. This defers tuition only and is payable when you receive your first check from the VA. You are still responsible for all mandatory fees upon registration. See our office for details.

If you are Chapter 33 and a California resident, the VA will pay mandatory **in-state** fees based on your VA benefit percentage. If you are not initially classified as a California state resident, you should contact Admissions & Records and let them know that you are a Veteran, receiving benefits. The newly passed Section 702 of the VACA permits California Community Colleges to exempt non-resident students who are receiving benefits and who meet certain criteria from the non-resident tuition fee. An optional one-time only tuition deferment is available to assist with nonresident fees. See our office for further details.

Processing time

Upon completing your initial application for VA educational benefits, processing can take up to 2-4 weeks. After SWC certifies your coursework, VA processing usually takes an additional 30 to 45 days. **During peak periods, such as the start of the semester, VA educational benefit paperwork may take longer for the school and VA to process.**

Receiving payment

Once the VA processes your paperwork, you will receive monthly payments based upon your satisfactory attendance in classes. Payment is made directly to the student via direct deposit (see below). **Monthly payments are distributed by the VA at the beginning of each month, for the preceding month.** For example, you will receive payment at the beginning of October for course attendance in the month of September.

If using Chapter 33, 30, or 1606, you MUST verify your enrollment the last day of each month, or after, to receive payment. This verification can be done either by using the Web Automated Verification of Enrollment (WAVE) application at www.gibill.va.gov/wave or by calling 1.877.823.2378. The only exception to monthly payment are the book and supplies stipends for Chapter 33, which are issued when your courses are certified.

Beginning with courses starting after December 17, 2021 all Post 9/11 GI Bill users are required to verify their enrollment to the VA each month. If you fail to submit your monthly enrollment verification for two consecutive months, your Monthly Housing Allowance will be stopped until you verify your enrollment. Please contact the VA Education Call Center to ensure your information is updated: 1-888-442-4551. If you are already signed up for text you should be receiving text messages from 1-855-933-1416.

Direct Deposit

You may request direct deposit when you apply for benefits by either: 1) attaching a voided check to your application or 2) providing your financial information on the application. You may also establish direct deposit by calling the VA at 1.888.442.4551. Those using Chapter 30, or 1606 may complete this action using the Web Automated Verification of Enrollment (WAVE) at www.gibill.va.gov/wave.

Questions about your VA educational benefits payments?

The Veterans' Services Office does not have access to individual payment information regarding education benefits. **Please contact the VA directly at 1.888.442.4551 for all pay status inquiries.**

- Download a DD-214
- Check Post-9/11 GI Bill® entitlement
- Check enrollment
- New benefit status

You may research, access, and manage your benefits and personal information using the Veterans Benefit Administration's eBenefits website at: <https://www.ebenefits.va.gov>.

Click "Register Now" and select a free Premium account for unlimited access to:

EDUCATION AND BENEFIT PROGRAMS

Chapter	Title
30	Montgomery GI Bill® – Active Duty (MGIB-AD)
31	Vocational Readiness and Employment (VR&E)
32*	Post-Vietnam Veterans' Educational Assistance Program (VEAP)
33	Post 9/11 GI Bill®
35	Dependents Educational Assistance Program (DEA)
	VA Work Study
1606	Montgomery GI Bill® – Selected Reserve (MGIB-SR)
	Tuition Assistance
	Cal Vet Tuition Waiver for Veterans' Dependents

*VEAP is not highlighted in this document. For more information on VEAP, please visit:

<http://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill>

CHAPTER 30 - MONTGOMERY GI BILL® - ACTIVE DUTY (MGIB)

Eligibility

- Active duty members who enroll and pay \$100 per month for 12 months are then entitled to receive a monthly education benefit once they have completed a minimum service obligation.
- Veteran has received an honorable discharge.
- For detailed information on eligibility requirements, please visit: <http://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill>

Benefits

- Provides up to 36 months of education benefits.
- Benefits expire 10 years from the date of discharge/separation (MGIB delimiting date).
- Students are paid a monthly stipend (based on approved units) at the beginning of the month for the previous month's enrollment certification.
- For current payment rates, visit:
http://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/resources/benefits_resources/rate_tables.asp

\$600 Buy-Up Program

- Service members may contribute up to an additional \$600 to the GI Bill® to receive increased monthly benefits. View the current payments rates (link provided above) to determine the increased rate.

Remedial and Refresher Courses

- Remedial and refresher courses may be approved based upon English and math assessment results. These courses must be taken on campus, **not online or self-paced**, to be eligible.

Monthly Enrollment Certification - Last day of each month

- All Veterans receiving Chapter 33 and Chapter 30 you must verify their enrollment with the VA on the last day of each month in order to receive payment for that month. Your enrollment can be verified by using the Web Automated Verification of Enrollment (WAVE) at <https://www.gibill.va.gov/wave> or by calling the VA toll-free Interactive Voice Response (IVR) at 1.877.823.2378.

Application Process

1. Go to <http://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill> and click on "Apply for Benefits."
2. Submit VA Form 22-1990.

CHAPTER 31 - VOCATIONAL Readiness and Employment (VocRehab)

Eligibility

- Have received, or will receive, a discharge that is other than dishonorable.
- Have a service-connected disability rating of at least 10%, or a memorandum rating of 20% or more from the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Benefits

- Services may include: vocational counseling and rehabilitation, education and training, assistance finding and keeping a job, and supportive rehabilitation services including case management, counseling, and medical referrals.

Application Process

- Complete *VA Form 28-1900, Disabled Veterans Application for Vocational Rehabilitation* and mail to the VA Regional Office or visit:
VA Regional Benefit Office
8810 Rio San Diego Drive
San Diego, CA 92108
- You can also apply online through <https://www.vba.va.gov/pubs/forms/VBA-28-1900-ARE.pdf>

Remedial and Refresher Courses

- Remedial and refresher courses may be approved based upon English and math assessment results. These courses must be taken on campus, **not online or self-paced**, to be eligible.

Did You Know?

- You may be entitled to Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) services if you are rated 10% disabled; however, it must be determined that you have a serious employment handicap.
- Regardless of your service-connected disabilities rating percentage, you may have longer than 12 years to use your VR benefit if certain conditions prevented you from participating in a VR program or it is determined that you have a serious employment handicap.

Getting Started

- *VA Form 22-1905* must be sent from your assigned Case Manager at the San Diego VA Regional Office to the college prior to processing your semester enrollment for VR benefits. If not on file, you will need to contact your VR Case Manager.

Books

- All paperwork from your Case Manager must be submitted to the Veterans' Services Office before the book authorization will be released to the college bookstore.
- The bookstore authorization will be available in the college bookstore one week prior to the start of the semester or session.
- If submitting paperwork within one week or after the start of the semester or session, the book authorization will be available in the bookstore 72 hours after paperwork has been submitted to the Veterans Services Office.

Supplies for Vocational Readiness Students

In general, the Department of Veterans Affairs Vocational Readiness & Employment Division (VR&E) will authorize Chapter 31 students to charge **only** those books and supplies that are **required by all other students in the same program**. Your local VA Case Manager will audit each invoice and disallow items not authorized for payment.

- **Text Books and Supplies (as listed on syllabus)**
The VA will approve payment for books and supplies that are required for the course and listed on the instructor's syllabus. **The VA will not pay for "Optional" or "Recommended" books or supplies.**

Additional Supplies

The VA Vocational Readiness program will also cover the following:

- **Each standard term, not to exceed \$55 per term (\$100 per term if purchasing ink):**
 - Ream of Computer Paper
 - Folders
 - Pencils/Highlighters/Pens (not to exceed \$3 each)
 - Package of Post-its
 - Report Covers
 - Spiral Notebooks or Note Paper
 - CD-RW Disks
 - Scantrons & Blue Books
 - Black Ink
 - Paperclips & Index Cards
 - Non-electric Pencil Sharpener
- **One-time purchase during the course vocational training:**
 - Dictionary and Thesaurus
 - Calculator - not to exceed requirements of program (usually less than \$25)
Note: A more expensive calculator will be covered if specifically required for a course and the syllabus is provided
 - Book Bag/Backpack (not to exceed \$50)
 - Flash Drive

Color ink cartridges are only reimbursable if listed as a requirement on your class syllabus.

ALL OTHER ITEMS REQUIRE WRITTEN PRE-APPROVAL BY YOUR CASE MANAGER PRIOR TO PURCHASE.



CHAPTER 33 - POST 9/11 GI BILL®

Eligibility

- Service member must have completed at least 90 days of aggregate days on active duty on or after September 11, 2001 or be honorably discharged with a service-connected disability after 30 days.
- Veteran has received an honorable discharge.
- Benefits expire 15 years from the date of discharge/separation.
- For detailed information on eligibility requirements, please visit: <http://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill>
- Post-9/11 GI Bill® Rate Increase for August 2017:
http://www.benefits.va.gov/GIBILL/resources/benefits_resources/rates/ch33/ch33rates080117.asp

Transfer of Entitlement (TOE)

- The Post 9/11 GI Bill® allows service members (officer or enlisted, active duty or Selected Reserve), on or after August 1, 2009, to transfer unused education benefits to immediate family members (spouse and/or children). The service member must have at least 6 years of service, and commit to an additional 4 years of service in order to transfer benefits to a spouse or child. Because of the potential impact of this benefit on recruiting and retention, transfer policy is determined by the Department of Defense (DoD) and the military services.

Benefits

- Post 9/11 GI Bill® benefits may include in-state tuition and required fees, a monthly housing allowance, a stipend for books and supplies, and a possible "kicker" college fund payment (if eligible):
 - Effective August 1, 2010, the Post 9/11 GI Bill® will no longer pay for nonresident tuition. If you are not initially classified as a California state resident you should contact Admissions & Records and let them know that you are receiving benefits. Section 702 of the VACA permits California Community Colleges to exempt non-resident students who are receiving benefits and who meet certain criteria from the non-resident tuition fee.
 - After VA payment is received for tuition and fees, any remaining balance will be your responsibility.
 - Students will only be certified for approved courses as identified on the Education Plan on file. For current payment rates, please visit <https://www.benefits.va.gov/compensation/rates-index.asp>

Monthly Housing Allowance (MHA)

- A monthly housing allowance is paid directly to the student at the beginning of each month for the previous month's enrollment. The housing allowance is prorated by the student's length of service and rate of pursuit.
- To be eligible for the monthly housing allowance, rate of pursuit must be **greater than 50%**.
- Active duty members and their spouses are not eligible for the housing allowance.
- The monthly housing allowance is equal to the Department of Defense Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH) for an "E-5 with dependents" and the zip code of the main campus (91910). To view the current BAH rate, please visit <http://www.defensetravel.dod.mil/site/bahCalc.cfm>

Distance Learning and BAH

Students enrolled exclusively in distance learning (online courses) are eligible for monthly housing allowance equal to 50% of the national BAH average and your rate of pursuit. If a student's enrollment is a combination of distance learning and on-campus courses, and the rate of pursuit is greater than 50%, you may be eligible to receive the local (91910) BAH rate.

Remedial and Refresher Courses

Remedial and refresher courses may be approved based upon English and math assessment results. These courses must be taken on campus, **not online or self-paced**, to be eligible.

Application Process

1. Go to <http://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill> and click on "Apply for Benefits."
2. Complete the appropriate application:
 - Are you a veteran? Submit *VA Form 22-1990*.
 - Are you a dependent using transferred Post 9/11 GI Bill® benefits? Submit *VA Form 22-1990E*.

CHAPTER 33 - POST 9/11 GI BILL®: MARINE GUNNERY SERGEANT JOHN DAVID FRY SCHOLARSHIP**Eligibility**

- Children of an active duty member of the Armed Forces who has died in the line of duty on or after September 11, 2001. The child may be married or over the age of 23 and still be eligible.
- Beginning November 3, 2014, the VA began accepting applications under the newly expanded eligibility criteria to include surviving spouses of service members who died in the line of duty after September 10, 2001.

Benefits

- Full tuition and fees paid directly to the school for all public school in-state students. For those attending private or foreign schools, tuition and fees are capped at a statutory maximum amount per academic year.
- A monthly housing allowance.
- A books and supplies stipend.
- Students are entitled to up to 36 months of benefits at the 100% level.
- Students who are eligible for the Fry Scholarship may also be eligible for Dependents' Educational Assistance (DEA). Although the benefits cannot be used at the same time, a student may be eligible for up to 48 months of benefits between the two programs.

Application Process

1. Go to <http://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill> and click on "Apply for Benefits."
2. Submit *VA Form 22-5490*. Paper versions of the form may also be printed.

CHAPTER 35 - DEPENDENTS' EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Eligibility

- You must be the son, daughter, or spouse of:
 - A veteran who died or is permanently and totally disabled as the result of a service-connected disability. The disability must arise out of active service in the armed forces.
 - A veteran who died from any cause while such permanent and total service-connected disability was in existence.
 - A service member missing in action or captured in line of duty by hostile force.
 - A service member forcibly detained or interned in the line of duty by a foreign government or power.
 - A service member who is hospitalized or receiving outpatient treatment for a service-connected permanent and total disability and is likely to be discharged for that disability (change effective 12/23/2006).
 - If you are the son or daughter and wish to receive benefits, you must be between the ages of 18 and 26, with some exceptions. Marriage does not preclude you from this benefit.

Benefits

- Up to 45 months of educational benefits.
- Students are paid a monthly stipend (based on approved units) at the beginning of the month for the previous month's enrollment certification.
- Current payment rates can be viewed online at http://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/resources/benefits_resources/rate_tables.asp

Remedial and Refresher Courses

Remedial and refresher courses may be approved based upon mathematics and English assessment results. These courses must be taken on campus, **not online or self-paced**, to be eligible.

Application Process

1. Go to <http://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill> and click on "Apply for Benefits."
2. Submit VA Form 22-5490.

VA WORK-STUDY

Eligibility

- Must be receiving VA education benefits.
- Must be attending college $\frac{3}{4}$ time or more.
- Be in good academic standing with a 2.0 or higher GPA.
- VA Work Study students may only work 25 hours per week and only during periods of attendance at SWC.

Benefits

- Pay is based on the higher of the federal minimum wage or the State minimum wage.
- VA work-study pay is non-taxable. It is not required to claim VA work-study income on your taxes.

Application Process

- Complete the *Application for Work-Study Allowance* (VA Form 22-8691).
- Check with the Southwestern College Veterans' Services Office, the Southwestern College Veterans' Resource Center, the VA Regional Office and VA hospitals/clinics, and local Veterans Centers for available positions.

Eligibility

- Any Select Reserve member who meets the eligibility requirements
- Montgomery GI Bill®– Selected Reserve (MGIB-SR) – Chapter 1606
 - For Reservists with a six-year obligation in the Select Reserve who are actively drilling.

Benefits

- Students are paid a monthly stipend (based on approved units) at the beginning of the month for the previous month's enrollment certification.
- Current payment rates can be viewed online at http://benefits.va.gov/GIBILL/resources/benefits_resources/rate_table.s.asp

\$600 Buy-Up Program

- Service members may contribute up to an additional \$600 to the GI Bill® to receive increased monthly benefits. View the current payments rates (link provided above) to determine the increased rate.

Remedial and Refresher Courses

- Remedial and refresher courses may be approved based upon mathematics and English assessment results. These courses must be taken on campus, not online or self-paced, to be eligible.

Monthly Enrollment Certification-Last day of each month

- All veterans receiving MGIB-Select Reserve (Chapter 1606) must verify their enrollment with the VA on the last day of each month in order to receive payment for that month. Your enrollment can be verified using the Web Automated Verification of Enrollment (WAVE) at <https://www.gibill.va.gov/wave> or by calling the VA toll-free Interactive Voice Response (IVR) at 1.877.823.1278.

Application Process

1. Go to <http://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill> and click on "Apply for Benefits."
2. Submit VA Form 22-1990.

TUITION ASSISTANCE (TA) FOR ACTIVE DUTY STUDENTS

In accordance with the Department of Defense (DoD) Voluntary Education Partnership Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), this policy sets forth the stipulations by which the institution will adhere to return any unearned tuition assistance (TA) funds on a proportional basis through the 60% point of an academic course. TA funds are earned proportionally during an enrolled period with the unearned funds returned to the military branch from which the funds were provided, if the student's last day of attendance is on or before the 60% attendance date.

One hundred percent of the tuition assistance will have been earned by the institution should the student's last date of attendance pass the 60% completion mark. Calculation of these dates includes weekends during the course period, but not scheduled breaks of five consecutive days or more (e.g. Spring Break). A student's official withdrawal date is determined when a student requests to be dropped from a course or no longer meets the attendance requirements to remain eligible to TA funding. The Last Date of Attendance (LDA) is provided by the course instructor when a student officially withdraws from the class or receives a "W" grade for the class.

The standard formula for determining the amount of TA earned by the institution is calculated on a percentage basis, as follows:

8-week Course - withdrawal submitted and LDA confirmed:

Before or during week 1	100% return
During week 2	75% return
During weeks 3-4	50% return
During week 5	40% return
During weeks 6-8	0% return (more than 60% of course is completed)

16-week Course - withdraw submitted and LDA confirmed:

Before or during weeks 1-2	100% return
During weeks 3-4	75% return
During weeks 5-8	50% return
During weeks 9-10	40% return
During weeks 11-16	0% return (more than 60% of course is completed)

This calculation, if less than the 60% completion rate, determines how much TA the student has earned and for how much the military branch may be invoiced. Should there be any remaining TA funds prior to the 60% period of a course, these funds will be reimbursed directly to the military branch from which the funds were provided, not to the student.

Southwestern College (SWC) will begin the Return of Unearned Tuition Assistance Funds calculation process when a tuition assistance recipient withdraws from a course. In some cases, this process may result in a student owing the school for unpaid tuition and fees. Though a student may withdraw from the college at any time through WebAdvisor, it is highly recommended that the student notify the Veterans Services or Cashiering Office prior to withdrawing.

If a service member stops attending due to a military service obligation, SWC will work with the affected service member to identify solutions that will mitigate any student debt the student might have had through the Return of Unearned Tuition Assistance Funds process. Please contact the Cashiers Department for questions.

CAL-VET TUITION FEE WAIVER FOR VETERAN DEPENDENTS

Qualifying students are eligible for a waiver of mandatory tuition and fees at any State of California Community College, California State University, or University of California campus. All students must meet California residency requirements and required to reapply for the benefits **each year** prior to the beginning of the academic year.

PLAN A

The spouse, child, unmarried surviving spouse, or California certified registered domestic partner of a Veteran who is **totally** service-connected disabled or who has died of service-related causes, may qualify. A dependent of any veteran who has been declared missing in action, captured in the line of duty by hostile forces, or forcibly detained or interned in the line of duty by a foreign government or power is also eligible. The veteran must have served during a period of war declared by Congress, or been awarded a campaign or expeditionary Medal. This program does not have an income limit. **A child must be under 27 years of age to receive the fee waiver benefit.** The age limit is extended to 30 years of age if the child is also a veteran. There is no age limit for a spouse, surviving spouse or California certified registered domestic partner.

PLAN B

The child of a Veteran who has a service-connected disability, or had a service-connected disability at the time of death, or died of service-related causes is eligible. The child's annual income, which includes the child's adjusted gross income, plus the value of support provided by a parent, may not exceed the annual income limit. The current academic year entitlement is based upon the previous calendar year's annual income. Under Plan B, wartime service is not required and there are no specific age requirements. **Children are the only dependents eligible under this plan.** There is no prohibition against receiving concurrent VA Chapter 35 benefits.

PLAN C

Any dependent of any member of the California National Guard, who in the line of duty while on active service, was killed, died of a disability resulting from an event that occurred while in active service to the state, or is permanently disabled as a result of an event that occurred while in the service to the state is eligible. Surviving spouses or registered domestic partners who have not remarried are also eligible.

- "Active service to the state," for the purpose of this benefit, means a member of the California National Guard activated pursuant to Section 146 of the Military and Veterans Code. A copy of those orders pursuant to Section 146, not Section 143, must be furnished to establish eligibility.

PLAN D

Medal of Honor recipients and children of Medal of Honor recipients under the age of 27 may qualify. Benefits under Plan D are limited to undergraduate studies only, and applicants are subject to both income and age restrictions. There is no prohibition against receiving concurrent VA Chapter 35 benefits.

Cal-Vet Application Process

- Contact your local County Veterans Service Office or go to www.cacvso.org to obtain an application. Certain dependency documents may be required to establish your relationship with the veteran.
- Once complete, submit your application to your local County Veterans Service Office (CVSO) for processing.
- We recommend that you also [apply for the CCPG Fee Waiver](#), then print the confirmation page and submit it to the Veterans Services Office with the CalVet approval letter for processing. CCPG may afford you more benefits than the Cal Vet Waiver.

This information is provided for reference only. For more detailed and up-to-date information, refer to the Cal-Vet website: <https://www.calvet.ca.gov/VetServices/Pages/College-Fee-Waiver.aspx>

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Why must I complete all of this paperwork?

Required documentation establishes your education file at Southwestern as well as your VA file in Muskogee, OK and allows us to certify your benefits. Once your file is created, you will typically only need to use the online Course Declaration form each semester to continue benefits. If you change your major, or complete coursework at another college, additional documents will be required.

Who should I notify if I move or change my contact information?

If you change your mailing address, telephone number, or e-mail address, you must update your information on your WebAdvisor Account **and** update the VA at 1.888.442.4551. Those using Chapter 30, or 1606 may notify the VA of their address change via WAVE at www.gibill.va.gov/wave.

Why do I have to declare a major?

The VA requires you to declare an objective (major) or goal, so that we can ensure the coursework you are completing will support the completion of your academic objective. At SWC, options include an Associate's Degree (A.A or A.S.), Transfer Degree, or approved Certificate of Achievement as listed in the catalog. **If your declared major does not match the major on your SEP, certification will be put on hold until the conflict is resolved.**

Can I have more than one major at a time?

Yes, you may pursue up to **2** majors concurrently, as long as they lead to **one** educational objective. Your dual major must be reviewed and approved by a counselor and you must have a SEP on file for both.

Why must I have a Student Education Plan (SEP)?

The VA requires all benefit recipients to have a Student Education Plan which lists courses are approved toward their program. If you change your major, you **MUST** see a Veterans Counselor to have your SEP updated so you know the required coursework to complete your new program. A copy of your updated SEP must be submitted the new plan to the Veterans' Services Office upon completion. Please update it once a year.

Can I get a certificate instead of an AA or AS?

Yes, as long as it is an approved certificate program. Certificates of Achievement are the only approved certificate programs at Southwestern College. Certificates of Proficiency are not approved for VA benefits.

Why do I have to provide transcripts from the military and/or previous institutions?

All prior credit must be reported to the VA. If you have completed coursework at any other college or institution, including military training, you have one semester in which to have official transcripts sent to Southwestern College for evaluation. The arrangements for obtaining official transcripts are your responsibility, not the responsibility of the Veterans' Services Office. **In the event that transcripts for all prior coursework are not received by Southwestern College within one semester, the college will withhold certification until all transcripts are on file.**

Why am I not getting paid for all of my current classes?

Only major classes, general education requirements, or electives (as needed), are payable classes. An exception to this would be required prerequisite classes and remedial level English or math classes, which are shown to be needed through assessment testing. Remember, remedial courses (MATH 20 and ENGL 49) must be taken on campus to be certifiable. **Repeat classes (any class you have previously taken with a passing grade) or a class outside of your major are not payable.**

Why did I receive approximately half the amount of money I normally get?

Have you dropped classes? Are you in a short session class which ended before the end of the rest of the semester? Could an instructor have dropped you for non-attendance? These are a few reasons that could impact pay. First, check your enrollment. You may also contact our office to request a file review. swcveterans@swccd.edu

I dropped a class. What should I do?

We monitor enrollment changes but also appreciate it you phone, email, or stop by the Veterans' Services Office to let us know. We will adjust your units as appropriate and submit any changes to the VA. If you are using Chapter 33, 30, or 1606, you also need to notify the VA during your monthly self-verification via the Web Automated Verification of Enrollment (WAVE) Please redeclare so we know you dropped the class.

Are online classes payable?

Yes, if they are required for your major, with one major exception: **remedial courses must be taken on campus (MATH 45 and ENGL 114) to be certifiable. The VA does not pay for online or hybrid remedial coursework.** If you are a Post 9/11 GI Bill® (Chapter 33) recipient, your rate of pursuit must be greater than 50% to receive your monthly housing allowance. To receive the local (91910) housing rate, at least one course must be on campus. For those enrolled solely in distance learning, the housing allowance payable is equal to half the national average BAH for an E-5 with dependents. **Remember, most hybrid courses (courses taught partially on campus and partially online) are considered as 'Distance Learning' (online) according to VA guidelines.**

It's been six weeks; what steps should I take to inquire about the status of my payment?

Depending on the backlog at the VA Regional Office in Muskogee OK, six weeks may be a reasonable amount of time for processing. Check with our office to initiate a file review or contact the VA directly at 1.888.442.4551.

Can I also apply for financial aid?

Yes, we encourage you to do so. VA educational benefits do not count as income when determining your eligibility for federal financial aid. For more information, please contact the Financial Aid Office by email at financialaid@swccd.edu or on the web at <http://www.swccd.edu/financialaid>

I'm not a veteran but am using VA benefits. Do I still have to meet with a Veterans Counselor for development of my Student Education Plan (SEP)?

Yes, all students receiving VA benefits should develop their SEP with a Veterans Counselor. The Counseling Office is located on the second floor of the Cesar Chavez building (1400) at the Chula Vista campus and appointments can be made by phone at 619-757-2121, x6981. Identify yourself as a student receiving VA benefits. Remember to provide the Veterans' Services Office, with a copy of your SEP when complete.

I'm using the Post 9/11 GI Bill®. What costs might I be accountable for?

Based on your eligibility percentage, the VA will pay for required courses. For example, if you are 100% eligible and taking all required courses, the VA should cover 100% of your tuition and mandatory fees (health fee, student center fee, and certain class fees) as long as you still have benefits remaining and have not reached your delimiting date. However, if you're only 70% eligible, then the VA will only pay 70% of those costs, leaving you to pay the remaining 30%. **Regardless of your eligibility percentage, the VA will never pay for courses that are not required; any course that is not required will be the financial responsibility of the student.**

Nonresident fees are also the responsibility of the student. The newly passed Section 702 of the VACA permits California Community Colleges to exempt non-resident students who are receiving benefits and who meet certain criteria from the non-resident tuition fee. You are also responsible for certain optional fees, such as the cost of your parking pass and Student I.D. card.

What is Round Out?

In your last term, you can round out your schedule with courses within your curriculum to bring your course load up to a full-time schedule. This allows you to continue receiving benefits at the full-time rate in the last term of enrollment, even though fewer credits are required to complete your program. **This procedure can only be done once per program.** In rounding out a full-time schedule, you may use any credit hour subject, including a subject that has previously been successfully completed (received a passing grade). See a Veterans Counselor to request Round Out approval. Once approved the Veteran's counselor will alert Certifying Officials for certification of benefits.

RESOURCES FOR VETERANS & MILITARY AFFILIATED STUDENTS AT SOUTHWESTERN COLLEGE

Veterans Resource Center (VRC)

The VRC provides a place for students to find resources on VA educational benefits, Southwestern Student Services, community organizations that are dedicated to assisting veterans and resources on issues such as employment, counseling, housing and healthcare. The VRC also provides a place for students to relax, study, and meet with friends and receive peer-to-peer tutoring.

Location: Building 62 A (across from Devore Stadium)
Website/Phone: www.swccd.edu/vrc 619.482.6548
Office Hours: M/T 8:00am - 6:30pm, W/TH 8:00am - 5:00pm., Friday 8:00am -3:00pm

Student Veteran Organization (SVO)

Our award-winning Student Veteran Organization (SVO) is a chartered student organization dedicated to the support of student veterans at SWC and serving the local veteran community.

Contact Information: Stop by the VRC for current SVO information.

Disability Support Services (DSS)

Southwestern College is committed to providing educational opportunities to diverse populations. It is the goal of the college to offer mainstream education whenever possible. Since independence is encouraged, no student is obligated to accept supportive assistance; however, the college is committed to providing support services when and if such support is needed and requested. Students needing assistance, even on a temporary basis, are urged to make use of the Disability Support Services.

Location: Cesar Chavez Center, First Floor, Office S108
Website: <https://www.swccd.edu/student-support/disability-support-services-dss/>

Personal Wellness

The overall purpose of the Personal Wellness Services at Southwestern College is to provide high quality behavioral health care to students in order to support the student's emotional well-being, academic success, and retention at the college. Walk-ins are available

Location: Cesar Chavez Center, Second Floor, Office S205
Website/Phone: <http://www.swccd.edu/index.aspx?page=3257> / 619.482.6512
Office Hours: Monday – Friday 8am – 4:30pm (closed Fridays in the summer)

Financial Aid

Southwestern College is committed to providing educational opportunities to diverse populations. It is the goal of the college to offer mainstream education whenever possible. Since independence is encouraged, no student is obligated to accept supportive assistance; however, the college is committed to providing support services when and if such support is needed and requested. Angel Salazar (asalazar@swccd.edu) is the Financial Aid Specialist responsible for providing support and service to veterans and active duty military students.

Location: Cesar Chavez Center, First Floor, Office S104
Website/Phone: www.swccd.edu/financialaid , 619.482.6357
Office Hours: Monday – Thursday, 8am – 6:30pm, Fridays 8am – 3pm (closed Fridays in the summer)

CONTACT INFORMATION

Department of Veteran Affairs

By mail: Veterans Affairs Regional Office
P.O. Box 8888
Muskogee, Oklahoma 74402-8888

By phone: Education Benefits: 1.888.442.4551
All other benefits: 1.800.827.1000

Online:

- Online VA Education Benefits: www.benefits.va.gov/gibill
- Online VA Home website: www.va.gov
- Online VA (Other) Benefits: www.benefits.va.gov
- Web Automated Verification of Enrollment (WAVE):
www.gibill.va.gov/wave
- Principles of Excellence: <https://www.va.gov/education/choosing-a-school/principles-of-excellence/>

San Diego Regional Office

Disability Claims, Vocational Readiness, VA Work-Study Program, PTSD, Health & Well-Being

By mail: Veterans Affairs San Diego Regional Office
8810 Rio San Diego Drive
San Diego, CA 92108

By phone: 1.800.827.1000

Online: www.vba.va.gov/ro/sandiego

Southwestern College

By mail: Southwestern College Veterans Services Office
900 Otay Lakes Road
Chula Vista, CA 91910

By phone: 619.482.6324 (Veterans Services)
619.482.6548 (Veterans Resource Center)

Online: www.swccd.edu/veterans

Email: swcveterans@swccd.edu

swcvrc@swccd.edu

Appendix I

STUDENT VETERAN CHECKLIST

- ☐ Apply to Southwestern College and apply for Financial Aid (School Code **001294**)
- ☐ Submit a copy of your Certificate of Eligibility, DD-214 (member 4 copy) to the Veterans Services Office where they will create your file.
- ☐ Confirm your residency status with the Admissions & Records Office
- ☐ Have all transcripts mailed to (mailed from all previously attended colleges/institutions):

Southwestern College Admissions & Record Office

900 Otay Lakes Road

Chula Vista, CA. 91910

- ☐ Activate your SWC email address and check it frequently (at least once a week)!!!
- ☐ Complete SSSP requirements:
 - Online orientation – parts 1 AND 2
 - Assessment
- ☐ Schedule a meeting with the Veterans Counselor to create an Abbreviated Student Education Plan (SEP).
- ☐ Turn in a copy of the abbreviated SEP to the Veterans Service Office.
- ☐ Receive Enrollment Priority Registration -
 - Summer 2024 - April 22, 2024**
 - Fall 2023 - April 22, 2024**
 - Spring 2024 - Nov 4, 2024 *Dates are subject to change.**
- ☐ Register for courses and complete online Benefit Declaration Form
- ☐ Pay your fees, if necessary. (Only Chapter 33 personnel are exempt from upfront payments. All other veterans are required to submit their payments prior to the drop for non-payment deadline to avoid being dropped from classes).
- ☐ Complete Comprehensive Student Education Plan by following up with Counselor.
- ☐ Like us on our social media page.
- ☐ Check out the SWC Veterans Resource Center in Room 18A-101 and the Veterans Services Webpage at www.swccd.edu/veterans

Appendix II

STUDENT VETERAN CONTRACT

In order for Veterans Services to service your federally-legislated educational benefit properly, it is critical that you follow these mandatory steps as outlined and that you understand your rights and obligations.

Failure to do so will delay or deny your educational payments.

1. **Communication.** I will read and comply with all communications from Veterans Services regarding my benefit claims, including phone calls and emails. I will check my Southwestern College email account regularly and respond promptly to all requests. I agree to keep Veterans Services (and SWC) informed of my current telephone number, email address, and street address. () *initial here*

2. **Mandatory Placement and Counseling.** The DVA will only pay for courses that apply directly to your stated educational objective. It is **your** responsibility to ensure that you only take required courses: **you** are financially responsible for any courses that are determined not to be within your degree/certificate program. The DVA will not pay for classes for which you have tested out of or previously received credit. In order to ensure that you have the most up-to-date list of required classes, you must complete the following:

a. **Benefit Documentation.** You must meet with Veterans Services to begin your processing immediately upon registering. You must provide your Certificate of Eligibility (COE) from the DVA (or completed and submitted VA-Form 1990) and the Member-4 copy of your DD-214 (if you are no longer on active duty). Dependents need only bring the COE. () *initial here*

b. **Transcripts.** You must request that official transcripts from all other colleges or universities of attendance be mailed directly to SWC at the address listed on the Veterans Checklist. You are also required to submit your SMART/JST transcript directly to the school through the JST website (<https://jst.doded.mil/jst/>). **Your prior college academic transcript(s) MUST be on file with Admissions before we can process any benefit claim.** () *initial here*

c. **Placement Tests.** You must take the math, reading, and English placement examinations to determine which level of courses are required for your degree **prior** to enrolling in your English, math, or reading classes. Visit or call (619-421-6700 x6385) the Assessment Center in the Cesar Chavez Student Services Center for an appointment. Ensure you inform the clerk if you are a transfer student. () *initial here*

d. **Student Education Plan (SEP).** Once transcripts have been received and evaluated, and placement tests completed, you must schedule an appointment with the Counseling Center at the Cesar Chavez Student Services Center (619) 421-6700, Ext. 5240 or 5241 to develop your Student Education Plan. Please be sure to ask to meet with the Veterans counselor. **If you have any prior units completed, you must present your SEP to Veterans Services prior to your initial benefit processing.** If you are a first-time college student, you MUST provide Veterans Services a copy of your SEP prior to the start of your second term. Note: you are authorized by the DVA to change your degree program if you later determine your first choice was inappropriate. The DVA also allows you to pursue dual degrees (leading to a single educational objective) with counselor approval. Copies of any changed/new SEPS must be given to Southwestern College Veterans Services Office immediately. () *initial here*

3. **Class Declaration.** Continuation of benefits from term-to-term is not automatic. You are responsible for informing Veterans Services of the classes you initially register for, any added or dropped classes, and any other changes in your class load. All veterans must declare their intention to use veterans benefits each semester via the online form at www.swccd.edu/veterans, under "Term Declaration". The declaration can be made as soon as you have registered for classes. Failure to do so will delay receipt of education benefits and Chapter 33 students may be dropped from classes for non-payment. () *initial here*

4. **Overpayments.** Chapter 33 eligible veterans who experience changes in their class load may generate an overpayment to the College. These "refund" checks from the College should not be automatically considered additional benefits. The DVA may seek repayment of these funds from YOU, the veteran. Hold any such "refunds" for at least two months while the DVA re-adjudicates your record. For rapid determination of account status, you may call the DVA directly at 1-800-827-1000. () *initial here*

I have read and received a copy of this document and have received a copy of the SWC College Catalog and/or Student Veteran Handbook. I agree to abide by all applicable rules and regulations.

Signed: _____

Date: _____