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Guide to Veterans Benefits

SANS Technology Institute

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GI Bill® is a registered trademark of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). More information about education benefits offered by VA is available at the official U.S. government Web site at www.benefits.va.gov/gibill.



Introduction

This Guide to Veterans Benefits provides you with explanations for how your veterans benefits will work relative to the master’s degrees and graduate certificate programs SANS Technology Institute (STI). In addition to this guide, we recommend that students review STI’s [Course Catalog](#) and [Student Handbook](#), which contain additional academic and student conduct policies.

Background information on Veterans Benefits and STI Programs

STI programs are delivered in a format that differs from the ‘standard’ graduate school experience. Because we serve full-time, working professionals, our programs are designed to maximize the flexibility by which a student can engage in the coursework required to complete the graduate program. Rather than taking courses on-campus during fixed semesters, our programs are delivered through a series of courses taken via a mix of modalities (primarily at a student’s option) with rolling enrollment start dates. All students enrolled in a degree program will need to satisfy the same requirements, but the timing of individual student progression may differ according to individual schedules and the availability of courses.

Program Characteristic	Standard Graduate School	SANS Technology Institute Programs
Enrollment Period	Typical semesters	Rolling start dates
Standard Terms	15-19 weeks	Varying course-term lengths depending upon course
Course Modality	Either on-campus, in-person classroom instruction or 100% online	Mix of in-person and at-a-distance modalities, at the student’s option

The flexible structure of STI programs – rolling start dates, the mix of in-classroom and at-a-distance options, the varying terms for courses, their associated credit hours, and calculated pace of progress – impacts how payment benefits are calculated by the VA. As a result, there may be significant fluctuations in the payments you receive throughout the course of your program. This is not to suggest that total available benefits are enhanced or diminished, but simply that our structure may cause a variability in payments at different times as you enroll in courses, experience gaps between courses, and engage in different instructional modalities. The resulting payments will be different and less consistent than they would be if you were to attend a traditional, brick-and-mortar graduate school with fixed semester terms and standard credit hour assignments per course.

At this time, STI is approved and eligible to receive veterans benefits only in the State of Maryland. Because of this, veterans may apply their benefits only to courses where the instruction element is delivered live at an approved location in Maryland, or delivered at-a-



distance through SANS OnDemand, vLive, or Simulcast. In person course offerings in Maryland vary each year; however, we expect at least two learning events per year with additional events being offered depending upon need. Students will work with an advisor before starting the program to plan their course of study at STI.

The VA requires students to be enrolled in one of our degree-seeking or certificate programs in order to use GI Bill benefits to pay for classes. Therefore, students taking single courses in a non-matriculated status are not eligible to use their GI Bill benefits.

Because the rules and processes associated with VA educational benefits are complex, a full description is beyond the scope of this guide. However, we will generally distinguish between Post 9/11 GI Bill® and other Chapters in this guide, and how your benefits will be paid out based on STI coursework.

Chapter 33 – “Post 9/11 GI Bill®”

For Chapter 33 benefits, tuition and fees are sent directly to the school to pay for courses that have been certified. It also provides a monthly housing allowance and book stipend which are described below.

Housing Allowance

The Basic Allowance for Housing (also referred to as the ‘BAH’) is paid directly to the student on the 1st of the month, based upon calculations related to the previous month. BAH will be paid:

- For periods when a student is enrolled in at least one course and
- The student is earning credits at a ‘rate of pursuit’ greater than half-time and
- The student is not on active duty

The calculation of the Housing Allowance is impacted by the following considerations:

1. Course Modality

- Students who take a course in-person (in Maryland) will be paid per the calculation determined by the BAH for an “E-5 with Dependents” using the ZIP code of the SANS Technology Institute, 20852.
- Students who take a distance education course will be paid a housing stipend at the online rate, set as one-half the national average.

2. The “Rate of Pursuit” – See also “*STI Courses and Rate of Pursuit*” below

- “Full-time” is set by STI as 12 credit hours earned per year and “half-time” is 6 credits per year.
- The “rate of pursuit” is a ratio of credits earned over months in an enrollment period. For example, a 3-credit course taken over the 3-month period is considered full-time (3/3), while a 1-credit course taken over that same 3-month period is less than half-time (1/3).



- The VA will calculate the prorated BAH amount based upon a student's benefit level, the rate of pursuit, and the number of days in a month the student was enrolled in a course.
- Students may complete coursework earlier than the targeted timeframe and STI will adjust the certification to reflect the actual time taken to complete the course. These adjustments may impact BAH payments.

Books and Fees Stipend

The book stipend is a lump sum paid directly to the student for each enrollment certification processed, up to an annual cap. The stipend pays \$41.67 per credit certified, and is prorated by your qualification percentage. The annual cap re-sets the 1st of August each year.

Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment

Similar to the Post 9/11 GI Bill®, Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (VR&E) benefits pay the school directly for 100% of tuition and fees. It also provides monthly housing allowance based on the students' rate of pursuit (full-time, ¾ time, etc.).

Other GI Bill® Chapters, including Chapter 30 - Montgomery GI Bill®

Other GI Bill® Chapters (30, 35, 1606) send monthly stipend payments directly to the student based on their rate of pursuit (full-time, ¾ time, etc. See "*STI Courses and Rate of Pursuit*" below), who then must pay the school for tuition and fees. Eligible students who are certified for these VA benefits do not have to remit the full tuition payment at the time of registration. However, students using benefits under these chapters will be required to pay their tuition to STI by the end of their course terms.

Yellow Ribbon Program

STI does not participate in the Yellow Ribbon Program at this time.

Registering and Paying for Courses

Once you have completed New Student Orientation and your initial advising appointment, you will then be ready to register for your first class and request to be certified with the VA. Here is an outline of the process:

1. After your initial advising meeting, your student advisor will email registration instructions which will prompt you to indicate "using GI Bill" in the special comments line of the



registration form. This provides STI with your consent to be “certified” with the VA for the course.

2. Select “check” as your payment method to submit your registration without making a payment.
3. STI will leave your invoice as “unpaid” until payment has been received from the VA. You may see another invoice in your SANS portal listed as “comped” to order the associated SANS components.
4. Students using Ch 33 at less than 100% eligibility, or students using other Chapters, have up until the end of the course to pay tuition. You will be unable to enroll in your next class or receive a transcript until the balance is paid-in-full.

Please note: Student veterans do not need to use VA benefits for every course throughout the program but can instead elect to use it for only certain courses. Therefore, students need to indicate on each course registration form (as indicated in step 1 above) if they would like to utilize their benefits.

STI Courses and Rate of Pursuit

Most of our graduate courses are considered 100% full time rate of pursuit. Courses like ISE/M 6300 (NetWars Continuous) or ISE/M 5550 & 5900 are less than full time rate of pursuit, will likely not pay a housing allowance (less than half time rate of pursuit) and the VA will only deduct a prorated amount of benefits for those courses. NetWars is usually taken by itself, and ISE/M 5550 & 5900 usually overlap with another course.

The VA is the final authority in determining the rate of pursuit for a given course, and any changes in the enrollment period (completing a course 2 weeks or more ahead of schedule, or approval for 30-day incomplete period) will impact one’s rate of pursuit for a given course. Students are welcome to ask their advisor for feedback on experiences with other students.

Students are also responsible for monitoring their payments from the VA. If they notice an overpayment has occurred, the student should not spend that money, as the VA will likely seek to re-coup that money.

VA Requirements of GI Bill Users

Here are the VA’s requirements for students using GI Bill:

1. Students who desire to use GI Bill or VR&E must first apply for benefits online at vets.gov and submit official documentation to STI (i.e. Certificate of Eligibility or VR&E Authorization Form) at the time of admission to STI.
2. The VA will only pay for courses listed in the catalog that are required for a degree and for programs that have been approved for study by the VA.



3. If students take courses in addition to those listed for their approved program, they will not be entitled to receive VA benefits for them.
4. Students who do not complete a course that has been certified by the VA, or do not submit adequate evidence for a mitigating circumstance, will owe tuition and fees back to the VA.
 - **If you fail a course**, there are 2 different F grades, as far as the VA is concerned. If you participate in the course (view all OnDemand material, take practice tests, comment in Canvas Discussion Board, submit written assignments, etc), failing your course will not result in the VA recollecting tuition or applicable housing allowance.
 - **If you fail a course because you did not participate in that course** (stopped viewing OnDemand material, no practice tests, no activity in Canvas, etc), then we will report your non-attendance failure to the VA, as well the last date of course activity. The VA will seek to recollect tuition and applicable housing allowance for the entire course duration.
5. Students are expected to maintain satisfactory academic progress as outlined in [STI's Institutional Catalog](#).

VA Requirements of SANS Technology Institute

Here are the VA's requirements for STI:

1. **Monitor Course and Program Progress**

STI will monitor your course activity to ensure that you are progressing appropriately. We track course activity by checking OnDemand progress, activity in Canvas, practice test performance, etc. Additionally, you will be required to follow the Satisfactory Academic Progress policy as mandated by STI to remain in good standing with the institution.
2. **Certify Enrollments (VA Form 22-1999)**

STI will submit VA form 22-1999 (Enrollment Certification) on the first day of class for courses taken in-classroom or via our vLive or Simulcast modalities, and on the 1st or 15th of the month for OnDemand courses. *Please note refunds are not given after classes begin for in-person/vLive courses and after date of registration for OnDemand courses.*
3. **Report Enrollment Information**

STI is required to report any changes in your enrollment status to the VA. Enrollment changes could include withdrawals, change course date, change delivery modality, etc. These changes could affect your rate of pursuit which could impact your stipend and/or benefits payments. We also report academic progress (including academic probation or dismissal), and certify graduation/program completion.



4. **Review of School Records by VA and Maryland State Approving Agent**

By law, STI is required to maintain and make available student records (such as enrollment periods, grade information, student application, etc.) to authorized representatives of the government. STI will retain your records for a minimum of 3 years following the termination of your enrollment.

In return, here is what's expected of the VA:

1. Mail an award (benefit) letter to you showing we certified you and indicating the amounts you will receive during the course enrollment period/term.
2. For Montgomery GI Bill (Chapter 30): deposit money directly into the bank account you have provided to them.
3. For Post-9/11 GI Bill (Chapter 33): Send funds for tuition and fees to STI and deposit funds for the book stipend and BAH to you.

VA Resources and Contact Information

While STI will make every effort to help you navigate your benefits, it is ultimately your responsibility to understand your benefits. We cannot advise students on eligibility of benefits, as we do not represent the Department of Veterans Affairs. The following resources are available to help you find the information you need:

- VA GI Bill Official Web Site: <http://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/>
- Online benefits application portal: <https://www.vets.gov/>
- VA Education Forms hard copies: http://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/handouts_forms.asp
- VA GI Bill FAQ: <https://gibill.custhelp.com/app/answers/list>
- Payment Rates and Comparison Tool:
http://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/comparison_tool.asp
- VA Post-9/11 GI Bill Summary: http://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/post911_gibill.asp
- Education Benefits Phone Number: 1-888-GIBILL-1 (1-888-442-4551)