



# Guide to Veterans Benefits

## SANS Technology Institute

Version 2017

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/qibill](http://www.benefits.va.gov/qibill).



## Introduction

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

## Background information on Veterans Benefits and the SANS Technology Institute

The SANS Technology Institute 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 engage in courses taken 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 program will need to satisfy the same requirements, but the timing of individual student progression may differ per individual schedules and the availability of courses.

Program Characteristic	'Standard' Graduate School	SANS Technology Institute Programs
<b>Enrollment Period</b>	Typical semesters	Open-enrollment program and rolling start dates.
<b>Standard Terms</b>	15-19 weeks	Varying course-term lengths depending upon course.
<b>Course Modality</b>	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 nature of STI programs impacts how payment benefits are calculated by the VA. As such, 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.



## GI Bill® at the SANS Technology Institute

At this time, the SANS Technology Institute 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 out their course of study at STI.

There are multiple chapters related to veterans educational benefits, and each applies to our programs differently.

- Chapter 33 (typically referred to as the Post 9/11 GI Bill®) pays tuition and fees directly to the SANS Technology Institute, up to an annual cap. Additionally, veterans using this benefit receive separate payments for a monthly housing allowance and stipend for books.
- Chapter 30 (typically referred to as the Montgomery GI Bill®), makes standard monthly payments directly to the student regardless of the actual tuition, fees or other costs incurred by the veteran. All students are responsible for full payment of tuition and fees, but payment due dates will be delayed for those students using veterans benefits. **The full balance must be paid by the end of the course term and students will not be allowed to register for their next course until their tuition balance is paid.**
- Chapter 31 (typically referred to as Vocational Rehabilitation) pay tuition and fees directly to the SANS Technology Institute, as well as separate payments to the veteran for housing.
- Because the rules and processes associated with these educational benefits are complex, a full description is beyond the scope of this guide, and resources for more information are located at the end of this document.

### 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 housing allowance and book stipend which are described below.

The Monthly Allowance for Housing (also referred to as the 'MAH') is paid directly to the student on the 1<sup>st</sup> of the month, based upon calculations related to the previous month. BAH will be paid:

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

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

1. Course Modality
  - a. Students who take a course in-person (in Maryland) will be paid according to the calculation determined by the BAH for an "E-5 with Dependents" using the ZIP code of the SANS Technology Institute, 20814.
  - b. Students who take a distance education course will be paid a housing stipend set at one-half the national average.

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 1<sup>st</sup> of August each year.

### Chapter 30 – *Montgomery GI Bill®* and other benefit chapters

The primary distinction between Chapter 33 ('Post-9/11 GI Bill®') and the other Chapters is that the Post-9/11 GI Bill® process makes payments of tuition and fees directly to the school, while the other Chapters make payments solely to the veteran, who must pay the school for tuition and fees. Students who are certified to receive benefits under Chapters other than Chapter 33 will be required to pay their tuition on delayed terms (see below under *Registering and Paying for Courses*), and will receive payments from the VA according to the VA's normal process.

Chapter 30 and Chapter 1606 students will need to report their enrollment monthly through the W.A.V.E. or the Web Automated Verification of Enrollment system.

<https://www.gibill.va.gov/wave/index.do>

### Chapter 31 – *Vocational Rehabilitation*



Chapter 31 (typically referred to as Vocational Rehabilitation) pay tuition and fees directly to the SANS Technology Institute, as well as separate payments to the veteran for housing.

Chapter 31 students must ensure that their VA Form 1905 from their Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor, which authorizes the veteran's program, is submitted as a part of the admissions process before the student can register for courses.

### Rate of Pursuit

"Full-time" is set by the SANS Technology Institute as 12 credit hours earned per year and "half-time" is 6 credits per year.

1. 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 a 1.5 month period is part-time. (1/1.5).
2. 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.
3. 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 will impact payments.
4. Similarly, if students are approved for a 30-day "incomplete" period, STI will adjust the certification to reflect the actual time taken to complete the course. These adjustments will impact payments (likely generating a debt to compensate for overpayment).
5. Most of our graduate courses are considered full-time. Your advisor will indicate on your academic plan which courses are less than full-time.

### Yellow Ribbon Program

The SANS Technology Institute does not participate in the Yellow Ribbon Program at this time.

### Registering and Paying for Courses

- 1) Once you are ready to begin taking courses please follow the registration instructions provided to you by your student advisor including the indication of



“using GI Bill” that should be included on the special comments line of the registration.

- 2) STI will certify your enrollment to the VA one week before the course’s start date.
- 3) Students needing to cancel a course registration must do so before the first day of the course. Cancellations or withdrawals after the course starts will result in the student owing tuition, and will receive a debt letter. STI does not have a “drop period.”
- 4) SANS Technology Institute will leave your STI 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.
- 5) **Chapter 30 (Montgomery Bill) students have up until the end of the course to pay tuition or else they will not be able to register for their next course.**

Please note the following:

- The VA will pay veterans only for the courses listed in the catalog that are required for a degree and for programs that have been approved for study by the VA.
- If students take courses in addition to those listed for their approved program, they will not be entitled to receive VA benefits for them.
- Students who do not complete a course that has been certified by the VA, or do not submit adequate evidence for a mitigating circumstance, may have to pay back tuition and fees to the VA.
- Students are expected to maintain satisfactory academic progress as outlined in STI’s Institutional Catalog.

Student veterans do not need to use education benefits for every course throughout the program and can instead elect to use it for only certain courses. **Therefore, students need to indicate each enrollment period in which they would like to utilize their benefits.**

## VA Requirements of the SANS Technology Institute

### 1. Monitor Course and Program Progress

STI will monitor your course activity to ensure that you are progressing appropriately. Additionally, you will be required to follow the Satisfactory Academic Progress policy as mandated by the SANS Technology Institute to remain in good standing with the institution.



**2. Certify Enrollments (VA Form 22-1999)**

STI will submit and maintain enrollment certifications (VA form 22-1999) one week before the first day of the enrollment period for any course.

**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.

The Department of Veteran Affairs will:

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. **You are responsible for keeping your address with the VA current.**
2. For MGIB-AD, MGIB-SR, DEA, and REAP: deposit money directly into the bank account you have provided to them.
3. For Post-9/11 BI Bill (Chapter 33): Send funds for tuition and fees to the SANS Technology Institute, 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. **Any questions should be directed to 1-888-GIBILL-1 (1-888-442-4551).** 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/>  
Veterans Online Application System:



<https://www.vets.gov>

VA Education Forms hard copies:

[http://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/handouts\\_forms.asp](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](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](http://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/post911_gibill.asp)