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Guide to Veterans Benefits

SANS Technology Institute

Version 2019

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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 non-standard academic terms. 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.

<i>Program Characteristic</i>	<i>Standard Graduate School</i>	<i>SANS Technology Institute</i>
<i>Enrollment Period</i>	Typical semesters	Rolling start dates
<i>Standard Terms</i>	15-19 weeks	Varying course-term lengths depending upon course
<i>Course Modality</i>	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.

Additionally, students taking single courses in a non-matriculated status may not use GI Bill® for those single courses. GI Bill® benefits cover courses that are part of degree granting programs,



and since students taking single courses are in a non-matriculated status, they are thus not enrolled in a degree granting program.

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 will seek to point out where and how payment amounts you receive are determined by the courses you might be taking at the time.

Approved Live Training Sites for 2019

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, and here are the approved training sites for 2019:

SANS Baltimore:
Hilton Baltimore
401 W. Pratt Street
Baltimore, MD 21201

SANS Columbia:
Sheraton Columbia Town
Center
10207 Wincopin Circle
Columbia, MD 21044 US

Pen Test HackFest Summit:
Hyatt Regency Bethesda
One Bethesda Metro Center
7400 Wisconsin Ave
Bethesda, MD 20814

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. Students with questions regarding specific amounts for housing allowances are encouraged to reach out to the VA directly at the GI Bill® help line (888-442-4551) or online at <https://qibill.custhelp.va.gov/>

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 enrollment time in 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 per the calculation determined by the BAH for an “E-5 with Dependents” using the ZIP code of ***the live event attended***.



- b. Students who take a distance education course will be paid a housing stipend at the online rate, set as roughly one-half the national average.
2. The 'Rate of Pursuit'
 - a. "Full-time" is set by STI as 12 credit hours earned per year. Because students take courses one a time, the "rate of pursuit" is a ratio of credits earned over months during an individual enrollment period. For example, a 3-credit course taken over the 3-month period is considered full-time (3/3), because that pace would amount to 12 credits over 12 months, while a 1-credit course taken over that same 3-month period is less than half-time (1/3).
 - b. 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.
 - c. 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, as it relates to enrollment periods changing.

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

- 1) After the initial advising meeting, a student advisor will email registration instructions which will prompt the students to indicate “using GI Bill” in the special comments line of the registration form. This provides STI with consent to be “certified” with the VA for the course.
- 2) Students should select “check” as payment method to submit registration without making a payment.
- 3) STI will leave the invoice as “unpaid” until payment has been received from the VA. Students may see another invoice in their 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. Failure to have tuition paid by the end of the course term may result in academic dismissal.

Please note:

- 1) 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.
- 2) Many schools offer a Priority Enrollment status for students using GI Bill®. Because all students have equal registration access, STI does not have a Priority Enrollment policy in place for students using GI Bill®.

VA Requirements of GI Bill® Users

- 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.
- 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.
- 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 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.
- 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. You are advised to stay



informed as to your remaining benefits, as you are responsible for any tuition the VA does not pay.

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:

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

STI Courses and Rate of Pursuit

Most of our graduate courses are considered 100% full time rate of pursuit. Any courses with a ratio of less than 1 credit per 1 month may be processed at less than full time, but the VA is the final authority in determining that rate. 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 encouraged to contact the VA directly regarding payment questions.

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.