

MATC VET'S UPDATE



Milwaukee Area Technical College

Spring 2007

IMPORTANT DATES: 2007

- **March 22 (mid-term):** Spring Semester Grades Available
- **April 9:** Open Registration, Summer/Fall Classes
- **May 18:** Classes End for Spring 2007 Semester
- **June 10:** Summer Classes Begin
- **August 24:** Beginning of Fall Semester

MATC Veterans Office's Mission:

The MATC Veterans Affairs Office's major goal is to facilitate the process so you can receive your veterans' educational benefits.

Services include:

- Processing VA forms for GI Bill educational entitlement benefits
- Answering questions about GI Bill entitlement benefits, such as the pay schedule and eligibility requirements
- Assisting veteran students with problems such as missing, lost or delayed checks
- Referring veteran students to community sources that can assist them with various issues, including health care and employment
- Advising veteran students on matters pertaining to their educational goals

Vet's Update

A newsletter for MATC
Veteran/Reservist Students
Spring 2007

MATC Veterans Affairs Office
Downtown Milwaukee Campus
Room S223
414-297-6394

scottjl@matc.edu

MATC is an Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Institution and complies with all requirements of the Americans With Disabilities Act.

THINGS YOU MUST DO

Recipients of the GI Bill must do the following:

1. Register at the beginning of the fall and summer semesters. This is done by completing a **VA Benefits Request form** at the MATC Veterans Affairs Office in person.
Submit this form immediately after you have registered for classes to prevent a delay in receiving your GI Bill.
To complete the form in-person, go to MATC's Veterans Affairs Office (Downtown Milwaukee Campus) or Admissions offices at the Mequon, Oak Creek or West Allis campuses.
You must complete this form, sign and date it as well as bring, mail, or fax (414-297-7229) it to MATC's veterans Affairs Office.
2. Take courses in your selected associate degree or diploma program, or courses required for graduation from MATC. The Department of Veterans Affairs will pay **only** for required courses.
3. Inform the MATC Registration Department as well as the Department of Veterans Affairs of any change of address.
4. Complete the necessary forms for dropping a course with the MATC Registration Department. You must also inform MATC Veterans Affairs Office of changes in classes.
5. Submit a Pre-Application within 30 days of the start of the semester to apply for the WI Veteran Education Grant. This GI Bill benefit can apply to veterans, reservists and National Guard members.
6. In addition to the five steps above, we also recommend that you submit your Veteran Education Grant online for reimbursement of your courses. Go to <https://services.dva.state.wi.us>. Click on "veteran login ID and password."

New Education Benefit for Activated Reservists

Certain reservists who were activated for at least 90 days after September 11, 2001 can get an increase in their GI Bill entitlement.

The benefit is called "Reserve Educational Assistance Program" (chapter 1607). To apply for this benefit, submit your DD-214, military orders, and form 22-1995 or 22-1990 to the MATC's Veteran Certifying Official.

Increase in Tuition Remission for Veterans

Starting in summer 2007, the tuition remission (reduction of tuition) at MATC will increase from 50 to 100 percent for eligible veterans. Veterans whose eligibility was established for the remission will automatically receive this increase. Veterans whose eligibility has not been established must submit an application (WDVA-2030) with their DD-214 to the Department of Veteran Affairs in Madison at least 45 days before the start of the semester. The application is available at the MATC Veteran Affairs Office and at MATC Student Services offices at the Mequon, Oak Creek and West Allis campuses.

Changes in the Wisconsin GI Bill Program

Three important changes have occurred in the WI GI Bill.

1. The first change is the elimination of the Tuition and Fee Reimbursement Grant (TFRG) and Part Time Study (PTSG) programs. These two programs have been combined and are now called the **Veterans Education Grant (VetEd)**. This grant provides reimbursement of tuition and some fees following successful course completion. The changes are as follows:
 - When a veteran has a bachelor's degree, he or she is no longer eligible for the VetEd.
 - Veterans must achieve a semester GPA of 2.0 or better to be eligible for reimbursement.
 - Dependents are not eligible for the VetEd but are eligible for the 100% fee remission. The dependent must be a full-time (12 credits or more) student.
 - If the veteran is eligible (does not matter if they apply for it) for the National Guard Tuition Grant or the Reserve Tuition Assistance Program, they are **not** eligible for the VetEd.
 - The number of credits that can be reimbursed is based on the length of active duty. (30 credits for active duty between 90-180 days; 60 credits for active duty between 181-730 days; 120 credits for active duty for two years or longer.)
 - Veterans must submit a **pre-application** within 30 days of the start of the semester. Visit dva.state.wi.us to get the pre-application.
 - VetEd must be submitted within 60 days of the end of the semester/term.
2. The second change is the establishment of a **tuition fee remission** program for veterans and their spouses and children. Some features of this program are:
 - The remission applies only to Liberal Arts transfer courses, postsecondary and vocational adult program fees, and material fees. Eligible students are still liable for all other fees, including applicable out-of-state tuition, online course fees, and incidental fees such as parking and student ID.
 - The remission covers 100% of program and material fees for eligible spouses and children (must be full-time student) of veterans.
 - The remission covers 50% of program and material fees for eligible veterans.
3. The third change is with the WI National Guard Tuition Grant (NGTG). This grant now requires a **pre-application** (visit <http://dma.wi.gov> to get the pre-application) to be submitted to the WI Department of Military Affairs (DMA) within 30 days of the start of the semester. Also, the deadline for students to submit the NGTG application to DMA has been amended to 60 instead of 90 days.

In addition to the benefits outlined above, the Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs offers the **Retraining Grant Program** for eligible veterans. This program can provide up to \$3,000 per year for unemployed or underemployed veterans. For more information, call **1-800-947-8387** (WIS-VETS).

Payment Rates Factors

Payment rates are based on the following:

- **Length of your original enlistment.** Veterans who served three years of active duty or longer get a higher rate than those who served less than three years.
- **Type of training taken.** Payment rates for clinical/shop courses, as opposed to classroom format, are higher.
- **Participation in the GI Bill \$600 buy-up program.** This program pays an additional \$150 per month if you are a full time student.
- **Participation in a college fund.** This fund is added to the regular GI Bill payment and is prorated like the regular GI Bill payment.
- **Number of credits taken.** Payment rate is based on full-time, three-quarter time, half-time, and less-than-half-time rate.

Useful Department of Veteran Affairs Telephone Numbers and Web Sites

Federal Educational Benefits, 1-888-GIBILL-1 (1-888-442-4551), www.gibill.va.gov, for veterans/reservists/dependents to inquire about their Montgomery GI Bill benefits.

State (Wisconsin) Educational Benefits: 608-266-1311/www.dva.state.wi.us

Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment:

1-800-827-1000, www.vba.va.gov, for veterans who have a service-connected disability.

Home Loans: 1-800-827-1000, for veterans to inquire about information for obtaining a mortgage.

Compensation and Pension: 1-800-827-1000, for information on Service Connected Disability Compensation, Survivors' Benefits.

Hospital and Medical Benefits: 1-877-222-8387, for information on VA medical benefits.

CHAMPVA: 1-800-733-8387, for information on healthcare services and supplies for dependent and spouses of veterans.

VA's Debt Management Center: 1-800-827-0648, for information about resolving debts resulting from participation in GI Bill Entitlement Programs.

How the Montgomery GI Bill Is Received and Paid

The Montgomery GI Bill is received monthly, and payment is prorated based on the start or end date of the semester. Payments are always issued after one month is completed, and enrollment must be certified with the VA each month. In some cases, payments are issued in a lump sum.

Enrollment can be certified either online (www.gibill.va.gov) or over the phone (1-877-823-2378 for recipients of chapter 30, 1606, and 1607. Recipients of chapter 35 are sent an enrollment certification form through the mail.

Current GI Bill Rates - Effective October 2006

Chapter 30 (three-year or more regular active-duty vets), **\$1,075/month**
Chapter 30 (two-year or less regular active-duty vets), **\$ 873/month**
Chapter 1606 (reserve and guard), **\$309/month**
Chapter 1607 (deployed reserve and guard members), **\$645/month** (service of one year)
Chapter 35 (dependents /spouses), **\$860/month**

Part-time students will be adjusted based on whether they attend three-quarters time (9-11 credits), half-time (6-8 credits) or less than part-time (5 credits or less).

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS EDUCATIONAL BENEFITS

MONTGOMERY GI BILL — Chapter 30 (veterans), 1606 (reservists), 1607 (reservists), 35 (dependents, spouses): Provides up to 36 months (48 months for chapter 35) of full-time educational benefits. This benefit may be used for degree, diploma and certificate programs, flight training, apprentice/on-the-job training and correspondence courses. Remedial, deficiency and refresher courses may be approved under certain circumstances. Generally, this benefit is payable for 10 years following your release from active duty.

ACCELERATED PAYMENT FOR

MONTGOMERY GI BILL: This is a lump sum payment of 60% of tuition and fees for certain high-cost, high-tech programs. To qualify, you must be enrolled in a high-tech program and must certify your intention to seek employment in a high-tech industry.

LICENSING & CERTIFICATION PROGRAM:

You can receive reimbursement for licensing and certification tests approved for the GI Bill. The reimbursement is up to \$2,000 per test but not more than the actual cost of the test. Visit www.gibill.va.gov and click on the Licensing and Certification page for more information.

WORK-STUDY PROGRAM: This program is available to any student receiving VA educational benefits who is attending school three-quarter time or more. The work-study job must be in an establishment (such as the veterans' hospital) that serves military veterans. The hourly rate is either the state or federal minimum wage, whichever is greater. Call the toll-free number 1-888-442-4551 for more information.

ENTREPRENEURSHIP TRAINING: The VA offers an entrepreneurial training course for veterans. The course focuses on the development of a comprehensive business plan that addresses present and future needs of businesses. The course is funded through the Veterans Corporation at no cost to the veteran. For more information, call 608-267-7329 or 1-800-947-8387.

TUTORIAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM: This program pays 100% tuition and fee reimbursement at MATC. Along with the Montgomery GI Bill, reservists and active duty military personnel may be eligible to receive this benefit. You must be enrolled at least half-time (6 credits or more) to be eligible. Contact your unit administrator for more information, or visit www.usarc.army.mil/88thrsc.

Veteran Educational Benefits — Glossary of Terms

1. **Accelerated Payment (Chapter 30 Only):** For students enrolled in certain high-cost programs that lead to high-technology employment in high-technology industries. For more information, see the VA website at www.gibill.va.gov and click on Accelerated Payment Information for High Technology.
2. **American Council on Education (ACE) Guide:** ACE is a guide to assist military veterans to determine which college courses may be eligible for advance standing for learning acquired in military life. The guide enables students to apply their experience, training, and expertise to their degree work at colleges and universities.
3. **Advance Payment:** Payment received from the VA at the beginning of the semester for courses taken during the current enrollment. To be eligible, the student must be at least one-half time (6 or more credits) and submit the request at least 30 days before the beginning of the enrollment period.
4. **Concurrent Enrollment:** A veteran student attends two schools at the same time toward the approved occupational objective. One school would be recognized as the parent institution (degree-granting institution) and the other is the receiving institution. The student can receive payment from both schools simultaneously.
5. **Extension of Entitlement to End of Term:** An extension of educational benefits to the end of the term, provided there is enough entitlement of the months remaining to begin the term. The VA student must be within his or her delimiting date for the full extension.
6. **Interval/Break Pay:** The period between two terms, such as fall and spring semesters, spring and summer session, and summer session to fall semester.
7. **Kicker-College Fund:** An additional amount added to the Chapters 30 and 1606 monthly rate for veteran students who were given the "college fund" upon enlistment in the military. This fund is commonly referred to as a kicker, as it increases the monthly rates.
8. **Program Changes for VA Students:** There are no limitations to the number of educational, professional, or vocational objectives a VA student may pursue when they complete each program certified.
9. **Remedial, Deficiency, Refresher Training:** Veteran students may receive benefits for remedial or deficiency courses if they need courses to assist them in overcoming a weakness in a particular area of study.
10. **Six Credit Exclusion:** VA will grant a one-time allowance for the first time a veteran student drops six or fewer credits. That is, up to six credits would be exempted from an overpayment assessment.
11. **Transfer of Entitlement:** This provides for the transfer of the Chapter 30 benefit to one or more dependents. When an active military soldier contributes \$1,200, has completed six years of military service, and re-enlists for four more years, he or she can transfer up to 18 months of Chapter 30 eligibility to a spouse or child.
12. **Mitigating Circumstances:** Unanticipated and unavoidable events beyond a student's control which are responsible for the student's inability to complete a course or courses, or which result in the student's receipt of a nonpunitive grade.

Interesting Facts About GI Bill Benefits

1. VA education GI Bill benefits are not taxable.
2. Payments are prorated for the actual period (to the day) that you are enrolled. Example: if you start classes August 25, your August check will be for six days, not the full monthly rate.
3. Education benefits normally will not be terminated during any semester because your entitlement runs out. If you have one day of entitlement remaining at the beginning of a semester, the VA will pay you through the end of that semester provided you are within the ten-year period.
4. It normally takes three to six weeks for any changes in course work, dependent status, or address change to be reflected in your benefit checks.
5. Associate degree students in their last semester before graduation can add elective credits to their credit load to become eligible for a higher benefit rate. (Example: A student who needs only six credits to graduate in May 2007 may add six additional credits to become eligible for full-time GI Bill benefits.)
6. Just attending classes will not qualify you for veteran benefits. A veteran student must be doing satisfactory work in all classes in order to receive GI Bill benefits.
7. Courses offered online and via TV are approved for the GI Bill.
8. With the exception of an advance pay, the payment received on the first of the month is payment for the previous month. (Example: The October 1 check is for September 1-30.)
9. You may receive a special allowance for individual tutoring if you are enrolled at one-half time or more.
10. You may receive GI Bill benefits for remedial or deficiency courses if you need them to overcome an academic weakness in a particular area of study. The courses must be necessary for your program of education.

MATC Veterans Office Staff

Maureen Crump-Phillips
Manager
414-297-8811

James Scott
Veterans Certifying Official
414-297-6394

Maria Galindo
Veterans Education Support Staff
414-297-7016

Laura Woelfel
Financial Aid Specialist
414-297-6230

QUESTIONS ABOUT GI BILL PAYMENT

When will I get paid?

If you are continuing your GI Bill benefits, your entitlement should be deposited into your account approximately 30 days from the date certified by MATC. If, for example, you were certified for payment on January 17, 2007, your check will be deposited/mailed during the first week of February.

How much will I get paid?

The amount of entitlement depends on the number of credits taken during the semester and your enlistment contact. If, for example, you served more than three years on active duty, and you were taking 12 or more credits, your payment would be \$1,075 per month. If, for example, you entered as a Selected Reservist and took 12 or more credits, your payment would be \$309 per month.

How long can I receive my entitlement?

If you were in active duty, your GI Bill ends 10 years from the date of your last discharge. The 14 years period is generally effective for Selected Reservists (Your GI Bill can end earlier than 14/10 years if you received the maximum monetary amount of your entitlement before.)

Can I receive additional entitlement?

You may be eligible for additional entitlement if you re-enlist, change military occupational specialty (MOS), or participated in the "kicker" program. You also may receive additional

allowances for tutorial assistance or as a work-study student. Please contact the MATC Veteran Affairs office for more information about these allowances.

Can I receive advance pay?

You may receive advance pay (two months of entitlement) if you: Train at one-half time or more Request an advance payment in writing Submit your VA registration to the MATC VA office at least 35 days before classes start

Can I spend my VA money if the amount is incorrect?

You may spend the money, but if the amount is incorrect, the VA will make the appropriate adjustment on subsequent entitlement payments.

Can I receive the Montgomery GI Bill (Federal) and WI GI Bill at the same time?

Yes. The Montgomery GI Bill does not conflict with the WI GI Bill. The former is funded by the federal government, while the latter is funded by Wisconsin state government.

What is Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment?

Vocational Rehabilitation is a program to assist eligible veterans in achieving maximum independence in their daily life through providing services such as personal counseling, education and training, medical and dental treatment and subsistence allowance. For more information, call 1-800-827-1000 or contact Gretchen Schutney at (414) 902-5121.

If you have a question about MATC programs, classes or services, call any campus:

Monday-Thursday
7:45 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Friday
7:45 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Where to Turn for Answers

Downtown Milwaukee Campus

Enrollment Information Center,
Room S101
700 West State Street
414-297-MATC

Mequon Campus

5555 West Highland Road
262-238-2300

Oak Creek Campus

6665 South Howell Avenue
414-571-4074

West Allis Campus

1200 South 71st Street
414-456-5310

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

- MATC Veterans Affairs will be adding **estimated** Montgomery and WI GI Bill benefits to the 2007/2008 financial aid award letters. These estimates will be based on VA benefits received during the 2006/2007 fall, spring and summer semesters. The purpose of these estimates is to prevent over-awarding from occurring in the amount of financial aid received
- The MATC Student Employment Services has 2007 spring job listings. Available jobs include employment in business and industry, health care, food service and more. For more information, contact Student Employment Services at the Downtown Milwaukee Campus by calling 414-297-6244, see the JOBshop area at matc.edu, or visit Room S203A.
- If you are a Wisconsin resident and served in the military, you can get a copy of your DD-214 by calling the Madison VA office at 608-266-1311.
- Another way to supplement your income is to apply for a VA work-study job. Any eligible veteran, reservist or dependent claiming VA educational benefits and enrolled at least three-quarter time may apply for this benefit. Call 414-297-6394 for more information.
- MATC may award military veterans three credits for completing basic training. Just take a certified copy of your DD 214 (discharge paper) to your assigned program counselor and request advanced standing for required elective courses in your occupational major.
- Veteran Educational entitlements, such as the Montgomery and WI GI Bill, must be considered as an educational resource for federal financial purposes. These benefits will be included in your student financial aid award package and could result in an over-award of funds. This over-award would result in a reduction of your financial aid award.
- The VA Regional Office has a new program for global war on terrorism (GWOT) veterans and their families. The program assists these individuals with a smooth transition from GWOT to civilian life. For more information, contact Andrew Hendrickson or Anthony Peterson from the Milwaukee Veteran Affairs Outreach Team at the VA Medical Center, 5000 W. National Avenue, Milwaukee, WI 53295, 414-384-2000 or 1-888-469-6614.