

MATC VET'S UPDATE

Milwaukee Area Technical College

Fall 2006

IMPORTANT DATES:

- **December 18:** Begin Accepting Pre-Application for Veteran Education Grant
- **December 19:** End of Fall 2006 Semester
- **January 17** (Wednesday): Start of Spring 2007 Semester

MATC Veterans Office's Mission:

The major goal of the MATC Veterans Affairs Office 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 pertaining to GI Bill entitlement benefits, such as the pay schedule and eligibility requirements
- Assisting veteran students with problems such as missing checks, or lost or delayed checks
- Referring veteran students to community sources that can assist them in addressing various issues, such as health care and employment
- Advising veteran students on matters pertaining to the pursuit of their educational goals

Vet's Update

A newsletter for MATC
Veteran/Reservist Students
Fall 2006

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

scottj@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 each semester with the MATC Veterans Affairs Office. This is done by completing a VA registration card in person or online. (Note: Submit this card after you have registered for classes to prevent a delay in receiving your GI Bill). To complete the card in person, go to the MATC Veterans Affairs Office at the Downtown Milwaukee Campus, or visit an Admissions office at the Mequon, Oak Creek or West Allis campus. You may register online at matc.edu, go to "current student" then "veteran aid."
2. Take courses in your selected associate degree or diploma program or courses that are required by MATC for graduation. (Note: The Department of Veterans Affairs will pay only for required courses.)
3. Inform MATC Registration as well as the Department of Veterans Affairs of any change of address.
4. Complete the necessary forms for dropping a course with MATC Registration. Also inform the 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.)

Current GI Bill Rates Effective October 2006

- Chapter 30 (three-year or more regular active duty vets), \$1075/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 attending three-quarters time (9-11 credits), half-time (6-8 credits) or less than part-time (5 credits or less).

New Educational Benefit for Activated Reservists

A new educational benefit for certain activated reservist is now available. The new education benefit, Chapter 1607, makes certain reservists/guard members who were activated after September 11, 2001 either eligible for education benefits or eligible for increased benefits.

Changes in the Wisconsin GI Bill Program

Three important changes have occurred in the WI GI Bill.

One change is the elimination of the Tuition and Fee Reimbursement Grant (TFRG) and Part Time Study (PTSG) programs. Both of these programs have been combined to become the **Veterans Education Grant (VetEd)**. This grant provides reimbursement of tuition and some fees following successful course completion. These changes are:

- When a veteran earns a bachelor's degree, they are 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.)
- Must submit a **pre-application** within 30 days before 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.

Another change is the establishment of a **tuition fee remission** program for veterans and their spouses and children. Some aspects of this program:

- 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 but not limited to 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 students) of veterans.
- The remission covers 50% of program and material fees for eligible veterans.

A third change involves the WI National Guard Tuition Grant (NGTG). This grant now requires a **pre-application** (visit <http://dma.wi.gov> for the pre-application) to be submitted to the WI Department of Military Affairs (DMA) within 30 days of the start of the semester. The deadline for students to submit the NGTG application to DMA has been amended to 60 days instead of 90 days.

In addition to the benefits mentioned, WI Department of Veterans Affairs also offers the **Retraining Grant Program** for veterans who are eligible. 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).

Useful Department of Veteran Affairs Telephone Numbers and Websites

- **Federal Educational Benefits**, 1-888-GIBILL-1 (1-888-442-4551)/www.gibill.va.gov (for veterans/reservist/dependents to inquire about their Montgomery GI Bill benefits)
- **State (Wisconsin) Educational Benefits**, 608-266-1311/www.dva.state.wi.us
- **Vocational Rehabilitation & Employment** (for veterans who have service-connected disabilities), 1-800-827-1000/www.vba.va.gov
- **Home Loans**, 1-800-827-1000 (for information about how veterans may obtain a mortgage)
- **Compensation and Pension** (for information about Service Connected Disability Compensation and Survivors' Benefits), 1-800-827-1000
- **Hospital and Medical Benefits** (for information about VA medical benefits), 1-877-222-8387
- **CHAMPVA** (for information about healthcare services and supplies for dependents and spouses of veterans), 1-800-733-8387
- **VA's Debt Management Center** (for information about resolving debts resulting from participation in GI Bill Entitlement Programs), 1-800-827-0648

EDUCATIONAL BENEFITS

MONTGOMERY GI BILL (Chapter 30/1606): Provides up to 36 months of 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 an establishment, such as a 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. It 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/88thrc.

Veteran Educational Benefits Glossary of Terms

Accelerated Payment (Chapter 30 Only): For students enrolled in certain high-cost programs that lead to high-tech employment in a high-tech industry. Go to www.gibill.va.gov and click on Accelerated Payment Information for High Technology for more information.

American Council on Education (ACE) Guide: ACE guide assists military veterans in determining which college courses may be eligible for advanced 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.

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.

Concurrent Enrollment: A veteran student is attending 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 the receiving institution. The student can receive payment from both schools simultaneously.

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. (Note: The VA student must be within his or her delimiting date for the full extension.)

Interval/Break Pay: The period between two terms such as fall and spring semesters, spring and

summer session, and summer session to fall semester.

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.

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.

Remedial, Deficiency, Refresher Training: Veteran students may receive benefits for remedial or deficiency courses if they need these courses to assist them in overcoming a weakness in a particular area of study.

Six Credit Exclusion: VA will grant a one-time allowance for the first time a veteran student drops six or less credits. That is, up to six credits would be exempted from an overpayment assessment.

Transfer of Entitlement: This provides for the transfer of Chapter 30 benefit to one or more dependents. When an active military soldier contributes \$1,200, completes six years of military service, and re-enlists for four years or more, he or she can transfer up to 18 months of Chapter 30 eligibility to a spouse or child.

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 non-punitive grade.

HEALTH CARE BENEFITS

As a veteran or reservist, you may be eligible for the following health care benefits:

- Clinic and hospital care in VA facilities if treatment is for a service-connected disability or your income is below \$25,162 (single) or \$30,197 (married).
- Health Care Aid grants for emergency medical care and some pre-authorized non-emergency medical care.
- Subsistence Aid grants to cover basic cost of living expense where illness, injury, or death may cause a loss or reduction of income.
- Low interest loans for health and subsistence needs. Call 1-800-827-1000 for more information regarding these health care benefits.

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 6 days, **not** the full monthly rate.)
3. Education benefits normally will not be terminated during any semester if 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. Attendance only 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 via TV/cable and Internet 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 assist in overcoming an academic weakness in a particular area of study. The courses must be necessary for your program of education.

QUESTIONS ABOUT THE G.I BILL

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 September 1, 2006, your check will be deposited/mailed during the first week of October.

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 were taking 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-year period is generally effective for Selected Reservists. (Note: 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 regarding these allowances.

Can I receive advance pay?

You may receive advance pay (two months of entitlement) if you:

- Train at 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; however, 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 that assists 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 Schuthey at 414-902-5121.

Where Seek Answers

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.

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

MATC Veterans Office Staff

James Scott

Veterans Certifying Official
414-297-6394

Maria Galindo

Veterans Education Support Staff
414-297-7016

Laura Woelfel

Financial Aid Coordinator/Veterans Education Benefits
414-297-6230

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

- MATC Student Employment Services has current job listings. Available jobs include employment in business and industry, health care and food service. For more information, visit Student Employment Services at the Downtown Milwaukee Campus, Room S203A, or call 414-297-6244.
- 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.
- Military veterans may be awarded three MATC credits for completing basic training. Just take a certified copy of your DD 214 (discharge paper) to your assigned MATC program advisor and request advanced standing for required elective courses in your occupational major.
- MATC Student Senator Leng Xiong is organizing a veteran student support group at MATC. The purpose of this group is to address veteran

students' concerns and issues. For more information, call 414-349-6571.

- 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.