



**TO:** Chief Student Services Officers  
Veterans Program Coordinators

**FROM:** Gina Browne, Dean, Educational Services and Support

**RE:** Isakson and Roe Veterans Health Care and Benefits Improvement Act of 2020

---

This guidance memo provides updated information regarding important changes to Veterans' education benefits.

### **Isakson and Roe Veterans Health Care and Benefits Improvement Act of 2020**

The new Johnny Isakson and David P. Roe, M.D. [Veterans Health Care and Benefits Improvement Act of 2020](#) brings significant changes to Veterans' education benefits. Many of the changes enhance or expand education benefits for Veterans, Servicemembers, families and survivors and provide for the improvement and or expansion of various GI Bill® programs. Veterans Resource Center administrators and staff may need to collaborate with other campus departments to ensure that all provisions are in place by the August 1, 2021 effective date. Listed below are the relevant sections that will affect colleges.

#### 1. Requirements for in-state tuition

Students eligible for GI Bill educational benefits including the Montgomery GI Bill–Active Duty program (Chapter 30), the Veterans Readiness and Employment program (formerly called Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment) (Chapter 31), or the Post-9/11 GI Bill program (Chapter 33) are exempt from paying nonresident tuition regardless of when the veteran separated from the military.

[Senate Bill \(SB\) 701](#) if passed, will amend current California Education Code (CEC) 68075.7 to conform with the federal law that eliminated the requirement of the expiration of a 3-year eligibility period. Regardless of the passage date of SB 701, colleges must still implement the change by the August 1, 2021 effective date.

#### 2. Verification of enrollment to receive Post-9/11 Educational Assistance benefits

School Certifying Officials (SCOs) are required to use a dual certification process. The SCO will certify enrollment through the VA-ONCE system when the student enrolls in courses, and then recertify the student after the last day to drop without a W deadline.

July 14, 2021

SCOs should notify students using the Post 9/11 GI Bill that the student is required to submit enrollment/attendance verification to the VA every month they are enrolled. This communication will be via an electronic means not yet announced by the VA. Students who fail to verify continued enrollment two months in a row may not receive their monthly housing allowance from the VA. We are currently awaiting additional guidance and policy updates from the VA.

3. Personalized Form Required Prior to Enrollment

Colleges are required to provide, prior to enrollment “a form that contains information personalized to the individual” with information to facilitate comparison by the individual of aid packages offered by different educational institutions. If tuition and fees change, the institution must provide the student with an updated form with the new information within 15 days of the date the changes are determined. See the attachment for complete details about what must be included on the personalized form.

SCOs (or other Veterans Program staff) should work with campus departments (financial aid office, admissions and records, and outreach) to ensure that the required information is presented to the student.

4. Prohibition of Automatic Enrollment Certification

Campuses must have a policy that prohibits SCOs from automatically certifying courses to the VA and requiring students to approve enrollment certification.

5. Provide Program Completion Requirements

Campuses must provide students with the graduation requirements for their program. Information must include the information about when required classes will be offered and a timeline to graduate.

6. Absence Due to Military Service

Campuses must have a policy that ensures that students who are members of the Armed Forces (including the reserve components and the National Guard) who enroll in a course of education are readmitted if they are temporarily unavailable or have to suspend their enrollment due to military service. Campuses must have a policy to accommodate students who are absent for short periods due to military services. Campus policies should comply with provisions of the Higher Education Opportunity Act ([20 U.S. Code § 1091c](#)) ([34 CFR § 668.18](#)) that require prompt readmission of those who are absent due to military services of 30 days or longer. Additionally, California Education code [[CA EDC § 66023](#)] requires each campus to

July 14, 2021

establish and maintain a military leave policy. For additional information you may review the [Department of Education Frequently Asked Questions: Institutional Readmission Requirements for Servicemembers](#).

7. Designated Campus Employee for Military Affiliated Students

Campuses must designate an employee to serve as a point of contact for military affiliated students (servicemembers, veterans, dependents, family members) who need assistance in any of the following areas: academic counseling, financial counseling, disability counseling, and other information regarding completing their course of study. These points of contact may include referring military affiliated students to the appropriate person or office to receive assistance.

The VA may issue additional guidance for implementation of changes to veteran education benefits. As the guidance is released, we will update this memo. If you have any questions regarding any of the provisions explained above, please send an email to Heather McClenahen at [veterans@cccoco.edu](mailto:veterans@cccoco.edu).

Attachment: Personalized Form Prior to Enrollment Requirements

cc: Rebecca Ruan-O'Shaughnessy, Vice Chancellor Educational Services and Support

## **Attachment**

### **Isakson and Roe Veterans Health Care and Benefits Improvement Act of 2020 Personalized Form Prior to Enrollment Requirements**

Please provide every veteran student with a personalized form (document) explaining each area and website link below upon enrollment:

- 1) In State Tuition/Residency requirements including total cost of course, tuition, fees, books (approximate cost), supplies and other additional costs per the college catalog.
- 2) Provide written guidance of the dual certification process where as the SCO will certify enrollment via VA-ONCE system and then recertifies the student after last day to drop with-out a W deadline.
- 3) Specify specifically that the student is then required to submit enrollment/attendance verification to the VA every month they are enrolled (VA has NOT informed colleges how to complete this yet).
- 4) Provide personalized form with comparison of individual financial aid packages offered to student. Detail Financial Aid links, A&R requirements and outreach information so veteran is informed.
- 5) Provide your campus policy on SCOs automatically certifying courses to the VA.
- 6) Provide veterans with requirements for their program of study: include required classes and timeline to graduate (can be completed with Academic Plan preparation).
- 7) Provide statement of absence due to Military Service policy of campus and website link.
- 8) Provide names/locations/emails of designated campus employees who serve as a point of contact for military affiliated students who need assistance.
- 9) Provide all contact information of your VRC personnel.