

Veterans Affairs

The veterans educational assistance programs and services at Athens State University are based on the rules, regulations, policies and procedures of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and as such are subject to change without notice.

Athens State University is a participating member in the Principles of Excellence Program. Educational institutions participating in the Principles of Excellence program agree to the following guidelines:

- Provide students with a personalized form covering the total cost of an education program.
- Provide educational plans for all military and Veteran education beneficiaries.
- End fraudulent and aggressive recruiting techniques and misrepresentations.
- Accommodate Service members and Reservists absent due to service requirements.
- Designate a point of contact to provide academic and financial advice.
- Ensure accreditation of all new programs prior to enrolling students.
- Align institutional refund policies with those under Title IV, which governs the administration of federal student financial aid programs.

For questions regarding veterans programs, contact the Office of Veterans Affairs: (mail) Athens State University, Office of Veterans Affairs, 300 North Beaty Street, Athens, AL 35611; (phone) 256-233-8271; (email) carolyn.carthen@athens.edu. Students may also visit the Veterans Affairs webpage at <http://www.athens.edu/veterans-affairs/>. The Veterans Affairs Office is located on the lower-level of the Sandridge Student Center.

Veterans Educational Assistance Programs

- Montgomery G.I. Bill - Active Duty Educational Assistance Program (Chapter 30 of Title 38, U. S. Code)
- Montgomery G.I. Bill - Selective Reserve Educational Assistant Program (Chapter 1606, formerly Chapter 106, of Title 10, U.S. Code)
- Post 9/11 GI Bill - Chapter 33
- Vocational Rehabilitation - Chapter 31: This program provides educational assistance to disabled veterans who are in need of vocational rehabilitation. To be eligible a veteran must have a service-connected disability entitling him/her to these benefits. An award authorization must be received by the Office of Veterans Affairs before benefits can be used.
- Survivors and Dependents Educational Assistance Program (Chapter 35 of Title 38, U. S. Code): Paperwork for state benefits (tuition, fees, books) should be processed through the Athens State Business Office. Federal benefits (monthly checks) should be processed through the Office of Veterans Affairs.
- Reserve Educational Assistance Program (REAP) - (Chapter 1607)
- Fry Scholarship - a provision of the Post 9/11 GI Bill

Selection of Major or Program

In consultation with a Transfer Student Success Center counselor or an academic advisor, each veteran or eligible dependent student must select and plan a program in accordance with the Athens State University catalog. Assistance in determining a course of study or a change of program will be furnished by the Office of Veterans Affairs in consultation with the appropriate academic advisor.

Prior Credit Evaluation Requirements

Athens State University is required by the Department of Veteran Affairs to obtain a written record of the previous education and training completed by veterans and other eligible persons receiving VA benefits. Students are required to submit official transcripts of courses and training prior to the end of their second term of enrollment at Athens State University. The Athens State University Office of Veterans Affairs will not submit certification for VA educational funding after the second term if all transcripts have not been received, evaluated and applied appropriately.

Certification of enrollment by the Office of Veterans Affairs prior to evaluating all prior credit could result in VA overpayment to the school and student. Any overpayment created through non-compliance with veteran policies is subject to repayment, and such overpayment can cause a delay in the payment of further benefits.

Veteran students are not allowed to receive VA Educational benefits for courses in which they have earned credit or that are not required for their degree or program. Veteran students are not allowed to repeat courses in which they have a passing grade unless a higher grade is required to pursue their course of study.

Repeated Courses for Veterans Receiving Educational Benefits

If a veteran student fails a required course, the student may receive payment for repeating that course. However, according to VA regulations, the student cannot repeat a course just to improve a passing grade and still receive payment for that course. (See also Repeated Courses in the Academic Policies section of the catalog.)

Standards of Academic Performance

Veterans or other eligible students receiving VA benefits are subject to the same standards of academic performance and conduct as are other University students. For additional information, see the Academic Policies section of the catalog.

Withdrawal Requirements

In addition to following the University's policy [Withdrawal from Courses](#), students who receive veterans benefits must notify the Office of Veterans Affairs when withdrawing from a course or when dropping or adding courses during registration periods. Each withdrawal or drop resulting in a reduction in the course load must show the effective date of the change and the reason for the change.

Choice Act

In accordance with Section 702 of the Choice Act, the following individuals shall be charged the in-state/in-district rate, or otherwise considered a resident, for tuition purposes:

- A Veteran using educational assistance under either chapter 30 (Montgomery G.I. Bill – Active Duty Program) or chapter 33 (Post 9/11 G.I. Bill), of title 38, United States Code, who lives in the State of Alabama while attending a school located in the State of Alabama (regardless of his/her formal State of residence) and enrolls in the school within three years of discharge from a period of active duty service of 90 days or more.
- Anyone using transferred Post – 9/11 G.I. Bill benefits (38 U.S.C. § 3319) who lives in the State of Alabama while attending a school located in the State of Alabama (regardless of his/her formal State of residence) and enrolls in the school within three years of the transferor's discharge from a period of active duty service of 90 days or more.
- A spouse or child using benefits under the Marine Gunnery Sergeant John David Fry Scholarship (38 U.S.C. § 3311 (b) (9)) who lives in the State of Alabama while attending a school located in the State of Alabama (regardless of his/her formal State of residence) and enrolls in the school within three years of the Service member's death in the line of duty following a period of active duty service of 90 days or more.
- Anyone described above while he or she remains continuously enrolled (other than during regularly scheduled breaks between courses, semesters, or terms) at the same school. The person so described must have enrolled in the school prior to the expiration of the three-year period following discharge or death described above and must be using educational benefits under either chapter 30 or chapter 33, of title 38, United States Code.

Complaint Policy for Students Receiving VA Education Benefits

For students receiving VA education benefits, any complaint against the school should be routed through the VA GI Bill Feedback System by going to the following link: <http://www.benefits.va.gov/GIBILL/Feedback.asp>. The VA will then follow up through the appropriate channels to investigate the complaint and resolve it satisfactorily.

Payments to Students Receiving Veteran Benefits

Receipt of Checks

A student who completes an Application for Education Benefits or Change of Place of Training Form at the beginning of the semester should expect a VA processing period of about 6 weeks. If the estimated time has elapsed, the student should contact the Office of Veterans Affairs immediately and, if the case warrants, an inquiry will be made to the Regional Office.

Payment

Athens State University does not participate in the advance payment plan for veterans or eligible dependents; therefore, tuition and fees must be paid in full by the published payment date. Veteran students receiving Vocational Rehabilitation are eligible to register without payment of tuition and fees providing that an award authorization from the VA Vocational Rehabilitation office has been received prior to the payment due date for the semester. Post 9/11 veteran students must provide a letter from the Department of Veterans Affairs showing the percentage for which he or she is eligible; this percentage will determine if the student will need to pay any tuition and/or fees.

Overpayments

Each veteran or dependent receiving benefits should be aware that it is his or her responsibility to comply strictly with the policies and procedures which govern the receipt of educational benefits. Any overpayment created through non-compliance with veteran policies is subject to repayment, and such overpayment can cause a delay in the payment of further benefits.

Responsibilities of Students Receiving Veterans Benefits

It is the responsibility of veterans and dependents receiving VA benefits to notify the Office of Veterans Affairs via email of the following:

- Catalog changes
- Change of address
- Changes in enrollment or class schedule (including drops and/or adds, withdrawals)
- Change of major or program
- Course substitution (approval must be obtained prior to enrolling in the course)
- Enrollment/class schedule for each semester or term, including any enrollment at other institutions as a Visiting or Transient student while attending Athens State University
- Projected graduation date
- Veterans educational benefits eligibility changes