

ETSU Veterans Affairs Office

Certificate of Understanding (COU)

Guidelines

- A. I understand that I must comply with ETSU and the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA) policies.
- B. I understand it takes approximately nine (9) to twelve (12) weeks for the DVA to process initial applications. If I have questions about the status, I should call the VA Regional Office in St. Louis at 1-888-GIBILL-1 (1-888-442-4551)
- C. Questions regarding the amount of entitlement should be directed to the DVA.

Admission

- A. I understand that application for VA benefits does not constitute admission to the University.
- B. I understand that ETSU does not guarantee a tuition deferment plan for veterans and that I am responsible for paying all tuition and fees to the University, even if I have not received any payments from DVA.

Registration

I understand that upon completion of registration, I must submit an Enrollment Certification Request Form (ECRF) to the ETSU Veterans Affairs Office. I will not be certified until I have submitted the ECRF and any other documentation required to certify my courses in accordance with DVA regulations. The ETSU Veterans Affairs Office may terminate or adjust previous certifications, even if I have successfully completed the course.

Unsatisfactory Progress

- A. I understand that courses repeated as part of the 'Fresh Start' program may not qualify for DVA benefits.
- B. I understand that if placed on academic suspension, GI Bill benefits will be terminated for the duration of the suspension.

Attendance Policy

- A. I understand that I must attend the courses for which I enroll.
- B. I understand that receipt of a 'FN' grade requires repayment of funds.

Degree Pursuit

- A. I understand I will receive benefits only for those courses that apply to my degree and are certified by the ETSU Veterans Affairs Office. The ETSU Veterans Affairs Office will not intentionally certify courses that are not part of my declared program of study.
- B. I understand that DVA benefits cannot be paid for repeat courses for which I have already received a passing grade. Payment for such a course results in overpayment.

Developmental Courses

- A. I know that I can be certified only for developmental/remedial courses that are required by the University.
- B. Per DVA regulations, remedial/ developmental courses taught on-line may not be certified for DVA payment. Remedial/developmental courses must be taught as conventional resident courses (in the classroom) in order to be certified to DVA.
- C. I understand that a Developmental Studies (DSP) suspension results in suspension of my DVA educational benefits.

Self-Certification

- A. I understand that Chapter 30, 1607 & 1606 recipients must verify enrollment with the DVA each month.
- B. I understand that any delay on my part in contacting DVA will delay payment.

Prior Credit

- A. It is my responsibility to request and have submitted to the ETSU Admissions Office official transcripts for institutions previously attended. This includes credit for college courses; tests scores from CLEP, DANTES, and similar examinations; my DD-214 or DD-295/AARTS/SMART or CCAF transcript, if I am active duty. Failure to submit will result in the termination of my benefits.

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- B. I understand that if I have completed basic training I will not be certified for Health & PE/Recreation courses, until a transfer credit evaluation is completed.
- C. I realize that once I have received a written evaluation of transfer credit from the Office of Admissions, I must meet with my advisor and complete a Prior Credit (PC) Evaluation.

Breaks/Intervals

- A. I realize that, if not on active duty, I will be paid for breaks between academic terms, unless I request otherwise, if the break does not involve the passage of a calendar month and:
 - 1. Prior to the start of the break, I was enrolled in the previous term for at least one half time.
 - 2. I am enrolled at least half time for the following term.
 - 3. I do not change place of training.
- B. I understand that if I accept break payment and do not enroll for the following term, it will create an overpayment.

Changing Curriculum

- A. If I decide to change any part of my program of study (POS) and/or major/minor/concentration, I understand that it is my responsibility to notify the ETSU Veterans Affairs Office.
- B. I must submit a new Declaration of Academic Program (DAP) within two (2) terms of a change in major.

Non-Punitive Grades

- A. A non-punitive grade, i.e., AU(Audit), FN(Failure for Non-attendance), W(Withdrawal), is defined as any grade, which does not count toward the GPA.
- B. I understand that receipt of a non-punitive grade results in overpayment.
- C. Overpayments may be waived, if I submit evidence of mitigating circumstances that explain why I could not complete a course in which I receive a grade of 'W'. The DVA Summary of Educational Benefits cites examples of acceptable mitigating circumstances.

Overpayment/Alternatives

- A. I understand that if overpaid, DVA will notify me of the overpayment and acceptable appeal procedures.
- B. I understand that I may be assessed interest and administrative collection cost on outstanding debts.
- C. Examples of actions which may result in overpayments are:
 - 1. Withdrawing from a course
 - 2. Receiving a grade that does not count towards graduation
 - 3. Repeating and accepting DVA payment for a course in which you have already received a passing grade
 - 4. Receiving a FN grade in violation of the attendance policy
- D. I understand that I am responsible for resolution of overpayments with DVA.
- E. I understand that the DVA may collect an overpayment out of future educational benefit checks.

Keeping the ETSU Veterans Affairs Office Informed

I understand that I must notify the ETSU Veterans Affairs Office **via goldmail only** of changes in my enrollment within five (5) working days. The ETSU Veterans Affairs Office will notify the DVA, and my benefits may be adjusted or terminated.

In addition to the information above, I have been informed that, in accordance with guidelines set forth by the DVA, it is my express responsibility to keep the ETSU Veterans Affairs Office informed of change(s) in my dependent/family status, address, phone number, and/or enrollment and DOP status. I understand that any failure, on my part, to observe ETSU and DVA policies could result in overpayment for which I agree to hold ETSU harmless should I be required to repay entitlements as the result of my own intentional and/or negligent actions.

NOTE: The ETSU Office of Veterans Affairs is not part of the US Department of Veterans Affairs. It is a department of East Tennessee State University (ETSU) under the direction of the Office of the Registrar.

NOTE: Utilizing Tuition Assistance (TA) and Post 9/11 GI Bill (Chapter 33) benefits simultaneously may affect your overall benefit payments. Please ask Veterans Affairs personnel for additional information.

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| _____ Signature | _____ Student Number (E-Number) |
| _____ Print name | |
| _____ Date | _____ VA File Number (CH 35 only) |

NOTE: The above signature indicates that you have received a copy of the ETSU Certificate of Understanding, and that one will remain in your VA file at ETSU's Office of Veterans Affairs.

ETSU VA Initials

Date