

## Using the Post 9/11 GI Bill<sup>®</sup> at Harding University.

Campuses: Searcy, NLR, Rogers

School Year: 2019-2020

The Post 9/11 GI Bill<sup>®</sup> is not the only educational benefit available to soldiers, dependents and spouses for use at Harding University. Please check the GI Bill<sup>®</sup> website for more information. Any dollar amounts are reflective of 100% eligibility. If you're eligibility level is less than 100%, you will be eligible for your percentage of the full amount.

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### How do I know if I have any benefits available?

- Soldiers – Go to <https://www.vets.gov/> and apply for benefits or you can apply through your eBenefits account. It will be helpful to have your DD214 (discharge papers) with you while you fill out your application. It will probably take 20-30 minutes to complete this application and 4-6 weeks to find out the results. The VA will mail you a letter stating whether or not you are eligible. This letter will also let you know what level of benefits are available to you if you are eligible.
- Dependents and Spouses – The soldier who is a spouse or legal guardian must be eligible for benefits themselves and then they must meet the requirements to transfer their entitlement to you. Requirements for transferring a soldier's entitlement can be found online at the GI Bill<sup>®</sup> website. If the transfer of entitlement is approved, you will then need to go through <https://www.vets.gov/> and apply to use those benefits. If approved, you will be eligible under the same rate as the soldier. The soldier can choose to revoke the transfer of unused benefits at any time.

### What will this benefit cover?

- Harding is a private university, therefore, the VA will set a cap on the amount of funds they will send per student per school year. This cap changes yearly, so check with either the VA or the School Certifying Official (SCO) for exact amounts. The cap for the 2019-2020 school year is \$24,476.79 for those at the 100% eligibility level.
  - If you are an undergraduate student and the VA approves you for the 100% rate, you will also qualify for the Yellow Ribbon Program (this now includes Fry Scholarship recipients).
  - Graduate students are not eligible for the Yellow Ribbon Program at Harding.
- Harding is currently allowed to submit the following charges to the VA to go towards that fee cap (these funds are sent directly to the school):
  - Tuition
  - Class fees
  - Technology Fee
  - Graduation Fee (one-time fee)
  - First Year Experience Fee (one-time fee)
- Any other charges (meal plan, room and board, books, etc) will be the responsibility of the student to pay.
  - All students, including Veterans, are encouraged to fill out the FASFA each year. Students may qualify for scholarships, loans, or grants that can go towards the remainder of their bill each semester.

- Please note: If you qualify for a scholarship or discount that is to be used to offset the cost of tuition and fees only (i.e. the Trustee Scholarship, Minister's Discount, etc), the SCO is required to deduct the amount of that scholarship from the total tuition/fees charges.
  - For example, if your tuition/fees amount totals \$8,000, but you have a tuition based scholarship for \$5,000, Harding will only submit \$3,000 for the VA to pay.
- If a scholarship can be used for any part of the student's bill (tuition included), that amount does not have to be reported to the VA. That scholarship can then pay for your meal plan, room and board, etc.

### What is the Yellow Ribbon Program?

- For private schools, Yellow Ribbon funds are paid out when the student surpasses the yearly fee cap. The VA and school will split the cost of whatever the difference is and each pay their portion.
  - Only undergraduate students who are receiving the Post 9/11 GI Bill<sup>®</sup> and Fry Scholarship benefits at the 100% level are eligible for these funds at Harding.

\*\*\*If you are receiving a Harding funded scholarship at any point during the school year and you need Yellow Ribbon funds, Financial Aid will reduce your Harding funded scholarship to pay for Yellow Ribbon regardless of which semester you received your Harding scholarship.\*\*\*

### Will I receive any other funds from the VA while using the Post 9/11 GI Bill<sup>®</sup>?

- You could be eligible for a housing and book stipend while using this benefit. You can choose to use these funds to help pay the remainder of your bill, but you are not required to do so.
  - Book Stipend (sent to the student): The VA should send you \$41.67 per credit hour and up to \$1,000 per school year if you are 100% eligible. If you're less than 100%, that \$1,000 will be prorated.
  - Housing Stipend (sent to the student):
    - Active Duty Soldiers: The VA will not send you two housing stipends if you choose to go to school while still on active duty. You will likely continue to receive your stipend for being on active duty instead of receiving your educational housing stipend. The VA will determine which payment you receive.
    - Veterans/Spouses/Dependents: As long as you are registered as a full time student, you should receive a housing stipend. This stipend is based on the E-5 level with dependents for the 72143 zip code (around \$1,251 per month).
      - For the months of August and December, for example, you will only receive a partial payment because you are not in class for the entire month.
      - If you are less than full time, the VA will prorate your payment based on your rate of pursuit (Your rate of pursuit is determined by how many hours you are taking compared to what Harding considers full-time status). That rate of pursuit must be greater than 50% to receive any amount of a housing stipend (more than 6 hours for undergraduates and more than 4.5 hours for graduate students for a 16 week semester).
    - Due to the changes made in the Colmery Act (August 2017), as of August 1, 2018, the VA will pay your housing stipend based on where you take the majority of your courses that semester. Your percentage eligibility level will be factored into what the VA will pay.
      - If you're on the Searcy campus, you should qualify for up to \$1,251/month.
      - If your classes are online, you should qualify for half the national average. Currently \$841/month.

- If you're taking a combination of traditional lecture and online courses, the VA will determine which rate you qualify for.
- If you're completing practical training (internships, clinical rotations, student teaching, etc) off-site from the Main Campus, the SCO will be required to submit where you are actually located for the course(s). The VA will determine how much housing stipend you're eligible for.

### Is my major approved for VA benefits?

- Most are approved.
  - Undergraduate programs, yes. All of Harding's undergraduate degree programs and majors are approved by the Arkansas State Approving Agency (SAA).
    - The VA will only pay for courses that are required for your major. For most majors, elective hours will be satisfied by your remaining bible requirements.
  - Graduate programs. All are approved, *except* for the following:
    - Master of Science in Education (MSE)
    - College of Education: Endorsements
- The following certificate programs have been approved by the Arkansas SAA:
  - Biblical Studies Certificate (College of Bible and Ministry)
  - Christian Ministry Certificate (College of Bible and Ministry)
  - Post Master's Certificate in Family Nurse Practitioner (Carr College of Nursing)
- Undergraduate students can be listed as an "Undeclared" major for your first two years, but then must declare a major for the VA to continue to pay. The VA will only pay for Liberal Arts requirements.
- Minors can only be certified if your major requires a minor.

### Practical Training

**\*\*Definition:** Off-campus job experience included in a program of study and described in such terms as internship, practicum, externship, field work, student teaching, and clinical rotations.\*\*

- Due to the changes in the Colmery Act, the VA has altered its rules regarding practical training. If the training site is not pre-approved, the SCO cannot certify the course regardless of whether or not the course is required for graduation.
  - In-state (Arkansas) sites: Location must be approved 30 days prior to the official class start date.
  - Out-of-state sites: Location must be approved 60 days prior to the official class start date

### Will my VA benefits cover International Programs?

- No. It is not mandatory that students go on one of the overseas programs in order to graduate, therefore, I cannot certify those courses. It doesn't matter that the courses you take satisfy graduation requirements and that the tuition charges are the same. You can take those courses in Searcy, therefore, there is no reason for the VA to pay for you take them at HUG, HUF, etc.

### Can I use my benefits at more than one school?

- Possibly
  - Transfer Students: If you are or have used any of your benefits at another institution, you must fill out VA Form 22-1995 to "Request For a Change of Program or Place of Training" to let the VA know your

primary school will now be Harding. Once that approval goes through, the VA should send you a new Certificate of Eligibility that the SCO will need a copy of.

- Concurrent Enrollment: 1) All concurrent enrollment must first be approved by the Registrar's Office. 2) You must request a "Parent Letter" be sent on the Concurrent Enrollment request. 3) If the Registrar's Office approves the transfer, the SCO will then check to see if the requested class meets a graduation requirement. 4) If they do, that SCO will contact the other school to let them know they can certify those transfer hours with the VA.

### Will I receive transfer credit for my time in service?

- Probably.
  - When you provide a copy of your military transcript (Joint Services Transcript, Community College of the Air Force, etc), we should be able to grant you credit for:
    - KINS 101: Wellness
    - KINS 133: Recreational Activities
    - Other transfer hours might be awarded based on what you did while in service and how it relates to your major.
  - These hours will not help or hurt your GPA, but you will receive hours towards graduation.

### Does Harding have a Veteran's group on campus?

- Yes. The Harding University Veteran's Association (HUVA) is active every semester and represents all branches of service. You can find them on Facebook or contact the Faculty Sponsor or SCO for more information.
  - Faculty Sponsor: Dr. Shawn Fisher
    - Email: [sfisher@harding.edu](mailto:sfisher@harding.edu)
    - Office: Ganus Building 212
  - Harding's SCO: Kelley Cox
    - E-mail: [veterans@harding.edu](mailto:veterans@harding.edu)
    - Phone: 501-279-4404
    - Fax: 501-279-4388
    - Office: Administration Building 106 (Registrar's Office)
    - Mailing address: 915 E. Market Ave, HU 10766, Searcy, AR 72149

For more information, please visit <http://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/> or contact the SCO.