Welcome to Western Kentucky University's Office of Veterans Affairs Online Orientation

Please read the following information carefully. At the end of this orientation, you will be required to answer some questions and then submit a confirmation page to the VA Office (VAO) showing you have read this information and that you understand all of the information contained herein.

This confirmation will be placed in your file in the VAO.

If you have questions regarding any of the information contained in this presentation, you may contact the VAO at 270-745-3732.

Who We Are
Throughout this presentation you will encounter the following acronyms.

- **VAO** – VA Office at WKU
- **DVA** – Department of Veterans Affairs
- **VA Certifying Official** – The VA representative in the VA Office at WKU. The VA Certifying Officials for the Department of Veterans Affairs are your liaisons. Contact them if you encounter difficulties you can not resolve.

Admissions
The application for VA education benefits does not constitute admission to WKU. Application for admission to the university must be made through the Office of Admissions. You may contact the Office of Admissions at 270-745-2551 or online at: [http://www.wku.edu/admissions](http://www.wku.edu/admissions). You cannot be certified to the DVA unless you have been admitted to the university and registered in classes.

Tuition
You are responsible for paying your tuition and fees to the university. You should be prepared to pay your tuition and fees up front and begin to receive your monthly VA educational benefits after you attend class and have been certified to the Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA).

Payment
DVA pays a monthly stipend for each month that you actually attend classes. VA educational benefits are not based on the University's tuition and fees.

Training time dictates the monthly rate of pay. Active duty service members receive tuition and fees reimbursement only. Change in training time will affect payment. Training time varies in Summer due to accelerated terms. Check the list for the hours required for summer training on the Veterans Affairs website. If you do not receive your monthly stipend, you should contact the DVA at 1-888-442-4551.
Deferment of University Bill

While waiting to be paid your monthly stipends from the DVA, you may need to request a deferment of tuition from the Office of Veterans Affairs at WKU. If you do not request the deferment, your bill will be due up front to the university by you. DVA works with a lag time and the deferment is required in order to prevent your classes from being dropped or a late fee added. However, your Certification Request Form must be submitted (and your VA file complete by the first day of the semester) before you can request a deferment.

If you choose to request a deferment, you will have a "hold" placed on your student account until your bill is paid in full by yourself and/or DVA. This "hold" will prevent you from dropping/adding classes, receiving grades, transcripts, etc.

The Deferment Request can be submitted online on the VA Forms page.

Housing

Students that are interested in on campus housing should contact the Office of Housing and Residence Life by visiting their website or calling 270-745-4359 or visit their website at http://www.wku.edu/housing.

Applying for Federal Financial Assistance

Veterans may be eligible for financial assistance (grants, loans, etc.) even if receiving VA Educational Benefits. The process of applying for financial aid begins with the completion of the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). You may file via the Internet at www.fafsa.ed.gov. Federal financial aid cannot affect your VA Educational Benefits. However, your VA may reduce the amount of financial assistance you are eligible to receive.

Credit for Military Service

Credit for military training is evaluated/determined by the WKU Transfer Center. In order to learn what credit may be granted, you must provide a copy of your DD295, DD214, Certificate of Training or other applicable documents. If you have served on active duty in a branch of the military for 181 days or more and earned an honorable discharge you may receive three (3) semester hours of credit applicable to category F of the general education requirements. Therefore, any course under category F of the general education requirements will not be certified to DVA.

Note: WKU does not award credit for MOS training.

Certification Request Form

Every semester, upon completion of registration, you must submit a Veteran Certification Request Form to the VAO (via your TOPNET account under the Financial Aid tab). Certification Request Forms are processed in the order in which they are received.

You will not be certified until you have submitted this form and any other documentation required to certify your courses in accordance with DVA regulations.
Processing Times
The VAO requires at least 2 weeks to certify your classes to the DVA after you submit your Certification Request Form. During peak times it may take longer. However, the DVA requires approximately 12-14 weeks to process your initial application for benefits. Certifications will vary depending upon the work load at DVA.

If you have questions about the status of your certification, you should call DVA at 1-888-442-4551.

Certification
You will receive benefits only for those courses that apply to your degree and are certified by your VA Certifying Official. The Certifying Official will not intentionally certify courses that are not part of your declared program of study.
You may take any course you want, but DVA will not pay for it unless it is listed on your degree program as a required course for graduation.
Repeat courses are not certifiable unless required by the university to make a grade of "C" or better. If you repeat the course a second time, the VA Certifying Official must go back and reduce your benefits from the 1st semester in which you registered for the course. This will create an overpayment to DVA. DVA will not pay for you to take an audited course.
You must be degree seeking in order to be certified to DVA.

Drop/Add/Withdrawal
A Change in Status form should be submitted to the VAO when you add a class or classes (after your initial submission of your Certification Request Form). If you drop or withdraw, the VA Office at WKU will automatically be notified of those changes; however, any additional classes that you add must be submitted through this form.

Degree Program
The VAO will monitor your Program of Study through your online interactive degree audit (iCAP audit). If you are pursuing a second degree, you are required to submit to the VAO a copy of your official degree program your first semester at WKU. If you are pursuing a master's degree, you are required to submit to the VAO a copy of your Form C. The VAO needs to monitor all classes according to your degree program.

Major/Degree Changes
A change in your major must be reported to the VA Office at WKU so that applicable forms can be submitted to the DVA. You will be required to file a new degree program if your major and/or degree changes. If you change your major in the middle of the semester, all classes for the current semester, must apply to the new degree requirements.

You will also be required to fill out a 22-1995 for DVA. This form can be obtained in the VAO.

Address Change
You must keep your address current. You must notify VA if your address changes. Your address change can be made by telephone by calling 1-888-442-4551 or in writing to VARO, P.O. Box 66830, St. Louis, MO 63155-6830. You also need to notify the VA Office at WKU and the Registrar's Office.
Failure to notify these entities could result in loss of important information to the veteran.

**Academic Progress**
You must make satisfactory progress toward your degree objective. Specifically, your GPA must meet the guidelines detailed in the current WKU catalog.

**Satisfactory Academic Progress**
You must make satisfactory academic progress with the university. You must also attend the course(s) in which you enroll. If you are placed on academic suspension, your VA educational benefits will be terminated for the duration of the suspension. If you are placed on probation, the DVA will be notified.

**VA Overpayment**
An overpayment can result if you drop below the training time that was originally reported to the DVA and you fail to notify the VA Office at WKU in a timely manner.

Example: You are certified full-time and then drop a class, which puts you below full-time. If VA continues to pay you at the full-time rate (even though you are below full-time), when the reduction is reported, you will receive an overpayment letter and those funds will need to be repaid to DVA.

**Verification**
Chapter 30 and 1606 must verify their enrollment to DVA on the last day of every month. You will verify that you are still in school at the training time that was reported by the VA Office at WKU. If that training time has changed, you need to specify during this verification process.

Failure to verify your enrollment the last day of every month will cause your benefits to be terminated. If the VA Coordinator has certified your courses to DVA, and DVA has processed that certification, and you fail to verify, your benefits will be terminated.

**Email Address**
Upon initial registration to the university you will be issued a WKU email address. Students will be notified periodically about important information through this form of communication.

This will be the email address that the VAO will use to correspond with all veterans and dependents. If you do not know how to access your WKU email account, please read the instructions found at toppermail.wku.edu.

**Advance Pay**
WKU does not participate in Advance Payment.

**TopNet**
You can view the date that you are certified to DVA by checking your WKU TOPNET account. The date you are certified to your DVA along with how many courses are certifiable will be posted under your account. You can view this information by logging into your account, click on Student Services, Financial Aid, Awards and Veteran Information.

**Reporting Changes**

You must notify the VA Office at WKU of ANY and ALL changes within five (5) working days. The VA Certifying Official will then notify the DVA.

**VA Regional Office**

Questions concerning the status of your application, remaining benefits, the status of your benefit check, etc., may be obtained by contacting the DVA.

Mailing Address: Department of Veterans Affairs

*9700 Page Avenue*

*Suite 101-Education*

*St. Louis, MO 63132-1502*

*Telephone: 1-888-442-4551.*

*DVA website: [http://www.gibill.va.gov](http://www.gibill.va.gov)*

**VA Office at WKU**

Telephone: 270-745-3732
Fax: 270-745-6586
Email: va.questions@wku.edu

Feel free to contact the VAO with any questions that you may have. We will respond in a timely manner to assist you with your questions.

**VA Forms**

The [Certification Request Form](http://www.wku.edu/veteran) and the [Change of Status Form](http://www.wku.edu/veteran) is listed on the VAO website at www.wku.edu/veteran. The Change in Status form can also be located at the above website. The Change in Status Form is used after you submit your Certification Request Form, when you drop and/or add classes or if you withdraw from the university.