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Student Last and First Name

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Student Social Security Number

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Rio Hondo College Student ID Number

I have received a copy of the RHC Veterans Information Handbook.

I understand the handbook includes RHC institutional policies and procedures and Federal Regulations as they relate to Veterans Educational Benefit Programs.

I understand that if I change my major or educational goal or fail to follow the steps listed on page 3 "Checklist for Receiving Benefits While Attending RHC", my enrollment certification and receipt of benefits will be delayed.

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Signature

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Date



# Veterans Information Handbook

**Veterans Services Office  
3600 Workman Mill Road Whittier, CA 90601  
(562) 692-0921 extension 3133**

**[www.riohondo.edu/students/financialaid](http://www.riohondo.edu/students/financialaid)**

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# Introduction

The Veterans Services Office at Rio Hondo College is designed as a liaison between you as a veteran or dependent and the Department of Veterans Affairs.

The Office is equipped to assist you with the appropriate forms to process your claim for educational benefits. RHC will forward all appropriate documents concerning the application for and the usage of your benefits to the VA processing center located in Muskogee, Oklahoma.

The Office is also an informational center to assist you with any questions you may have regarding your veterans educational benefits at Rio Hondo College.

Although we work to ensure that VA regulations are complied with, we have no authority to determine whether you are eligible for a particular chapter of VA educational benefits. ONLY the VA can determine eligibility. If you feel you may be eligible for educational benefits you should submit an application. The Veterans Administration will review the application and determine if you have eligibility.

As a Veteran receiving benefits, you are required to comply with all applicable regulations, policies and procedures.

# Education Programs

Detailed federal program descriptions are available at the Department of Veterans Administration Education Benefits & Services home page ([www.gibill.va.gov](http://www.gibill.va.gov)).

## FEDERAL PROGRAMS

### **Chapter 30: Montgomery G.I. Bill—Active Duty**

Chapter 30 has four eligibility categories:

Category I involves veterans who began active duty for the first time after June 30, 1985.

Category II involve military retirees who entered the service (or agreed to delayed entry) before 01/01/1977 and who were eligible to receive chapter 34 benefits (Vietnam era education program on 12/31/1989).

Category III involve veterans that were voluntarily or involuntarily separated from the service because of a reduction in personnel.

Category IV involves veterans who converted their education benefits from chapter 32 to chapter 30.

### **Chapter 32: Veterans Educational Assistance Program (VEAP)**

Individuals must have initially entered active duty from 01/01/1977 to 06/30/1985 and must have enrolled and contributed to VEAP before 04/01/1987. VEAP is a voluntary contribution and matching program. The veteran's contributions were matched on a \$2 for \$1 basis by the Government.

### **Chapter 35: Dependent Educational Assistance (DEA)**

Educational assistance paid to dependents of veterans. Persons who may be eligible are:

A child (between ages 18 and 26, with some exceptions), or surviving spouse of a veteran who died in service; or who died of a service-connected disability; or who died while evaluated as having total and permanent service-connected disability; or who is listed as a POW/MIA.

A child of a veteran who is permanently and totally disabled due to a service-related condition.

A spouse of a veteran or serviceperson who has a permanent disability resulting from a service-connected disability; or who is listed as a POW/MIA.

Surviving spouses whose benefits stopped when they remarried can receive DEA benefits again if their remarriage ends by death or divorce, or they cease to live with the person to whom they presented themselves in public as married.

### **Chapter 1606: Montgomery G.I. Bill—Selected Reserve**

Educational program for active members of the Selected Reserve. Selected Reserve components of the Ready Reserve include the Army, Naval, Air Force, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard Reserves, National and Air National Guards. Eligibility is determined by the Department of Defense or by the Department of Transportation (Coast Guard) not by the VA.

### **Chapter 1607: Reserve Educational Assistance Program (REAP)**

Department of Defense educational program for active members of the Reserve components called or ordered to active duty for at least 90 days after September 11, 2001. Eligibility is determined by the Department of Defense and the Department of Homeland Security not by the VA.

## STATE PROGRAM

### **CalVet:**

Educational assistance in the form a fee waiver is available to children or spouses of veterans who became 100% disabled while performing active military service. This program is available in place of the Board of Governor's Fee Waiver Program (BOGW). **A student cannot receive both federal VA educational benefits for dependents (Chapter 35) and the CalVet fee waiver.**

# Checklist for Receiving Benefits While Attending RHC

The following is designed to assist you in getting your benefits started at Rio Hondo College.

Pick up a Veterans Information Handbook and any necessary forms to start a file with the Veterans Services Office.

Request that official transcripts be sent to you from all schools you previously attended including military courses. (Sealed hand-delivered transcripts will speed up the process!).

Federal regulations requires Veterans to submit OFFICIAL SEALED transcripts from all schools, colleges, training institutions and technical schools attended to Rio Hondo College. This includes all training and education received before entering active duty as well as any received during service and after discharge, **even if VA benefits were not paid for attending the course or program.** Military transcripts are required and/or DD295 or VMET or certificates of completion must also be submitted for military schools.

You can request military transcripts at:

<b>AARTS</b>	<b><a href="http://aarts.army.mil">http://aarts.army.mil</a></b>
<b>SMART</b>	<b><a href="http://www.navycollege.navy.mil/transcript.html">http://www.navycollege.navy.mil/transcript.html</a></b>
<b>CGI</b>	<b><a href="http://uscg.mil/hg/cgi/">http://uscg.mil/hg/cgi/</a></b>
<b>CCAF</b>	<b><a href="http://www.maxwell.af.mil/au/ccaf/transcripts.asp">http://www.maxwell.af.mil/au/ccaf/transcripts.asp</a></b>

Students with out of state transcripts will need to also request a copy of the out of state school's college catalog.

Students with foreign school transcripts will need to have the foreign transcripts evaluated by an academic credentials evaluation service, and will need an official copy of the evaluation sent to the Rio Hondo College Admissions Office.

Do not open the sealed transcripts when you receive them. They must be sealed to be official (see step 3).

Contact the Assessment Office (562-463-3247) to schedule an Assessment Test. All new Rio Hondo Students must be assessed for placement in Reading, Math and English.

Contact the Veterans Services Office (562-463-3370) **AFTER** all your transcripts have been received and you have taken your Assessment Test to schedule an appointment to have a Veterans Educational Program Evaluation & Prior Credit Evaluation form(s) prepared.

**You must have received all official transcripts before your scheduled appointment.**

When you see the academic counselor, identify yourself as a veteran. Veterans and dependents are required by law to declare a two-year major or certificate as listed in the Rio Hondo College catalog, or a transfer major based on agreements with California State University, University of California or other four year college/university. *An "undeclared" or "general education" major are not acceptable for VA purposes.*

The Program Evaluation must be specific and indicate each class you must complete to fulfill your degree objective (major, pre-requisites, general education requirements and electives) as well as the coursework you have already completed toward your degree objective.

Be aware that the VA places restrictions on what **AFTER** courses you may be paid for. A counselor's recommendation may not be payable under VA regulations, especially if the class is a "recommended" elective.

***Please prepare for possible delays in evaluation if you have more than one transcript or have out of state transcripts that require more detailed analysis.***

Submit the completed Program Evaluation to the Veterans Services Office.

Submit Veterans Education Benefit forms necessary to start your file.

New Students: (never received benefits)

- Submit VA form 22-1990; Application for Education Benefits or
- VA form 22-5490, Application for Education Benefits (Chapter 35) (*dependent students only*)

Transfer Students: (received benefits at RHC or other school)

- Submit VA form 22-1995; Request for Change of Program or Place of Training or
- VA form 22-5495, Request for Change of Program or Place of Training (Chapter 35) (*dependent students only*)

*NOTE: The above information is for transfer students who have used Veteran Educational Benefits previously. If you are a transfer student (changing schools) who has never used Veteran Educational Benefits before you would be considered a new student.*

Submit a copy of your DD 214 (Member # 4). Reservist must provide a copy of their DD 2384 (Notice of Basic Eligibility (NOBE)), issued from their military unit.

Submit your class schedule each semester to certify for benefits.

Complete a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) on-line to determine eligibility for other aid programs ([www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov))

# Questions & Answers

## ATTENDANCE:

If you do not attend class....you are not entitled to benefits.

If you stop attending a class, you must drop officially through the Rio Hondo College Admission Office and report the drop to the Veterans Services Office. This is one of your responsibilities. Federal law requires that students' report any change in enrollment status, which might affect VA educational benefits to the school and the VA.

Failure to drop a class can result in overpayment of benefits.

When there is an overpayment, the VA will withhold future payments, or ask for repayment of the overpaid benefits. Depending on the situation, they can take you to court, charge interest, as well as withhold future tax refunds, attach wages, put a lien on property or deny home loans.

Although the Veterans Services Office monitors student attendance, it is imperative that you report any changes to your enrollment to the Veterans Services Office IMMEDIATELY.

## CONCURRENT ENROLLMENT:

When receiving VA Educational Benefits, you may be concurrently enrolled at more than one school during the same semester. The school where you are receiving a degree will be your Parent School. The other is the Supplemental School. The courses you enroll in at the Supplemental School must be approved by your Parent School in order for you to receive benefits.

You must complete a "Parent School" form at your school's VA Office. The form indicates that the Parent School will grant credit toward the current major for the course(s) taken at the Supplemental School. You are responsible for informing the Supplemental School's, Veterans Services Office where your Parent School is located and requesting that they certify you for the classes you are in enrolled in at their institution. The Supplemental School will inform the VA Administration about your enrollment at their institution.

## DIRECT DEPOSIT:

Students receiving Chapter 30, 31, 1606 or 1607 benefits have the option to have VA payments deposited directly into a checking/savings account of their choice. Call 1-877-838-2778 to set up an account or to update current direct deposit account information.

## F, W, INC, NC GRADES:

Since the VA will not pay benefits for the period after a student has ceased attending class, RHC is required to check on student attendance for all classes in which a student received an "F", "W", "INC", "NC" grades. If you receive such a grade, you will be sent a letter asking that you document the reason for the grade. You will be required to state if you completed the classes and received the "F", "W", "INC", "NC" grade on the basis of the work completed for the class; or if you ceased attending the classes, in which case you must indicate the date you last attended.

The reason for the "F", "W", "INC", "NC" grade will be noted in your file. If the "F", "W", "INC", "NC" grade is a result of non-attendance, the VA will be notified of the last date of attendance reported by you and the VA will reduce your units and pay rate effective the date you indicated as the last date of attendance.

## MONTHLY VERIFICATION

Veteran students who will receive benefits under the Montgomery G. I. Bill (CH. 30 & 1606) have to verify monthly enrollment. You have the option of calling in their monthly verification or using the internet to verify. The toll-free number is 1-877-823-2378. The website is [www.gibill.va.gov/wave](http://www.gibill.va.gov/wave). Allow two weeks for payment. *Federal holidays may delay receipt of the Student Verification of Enrollment and/or your check.*

### OFFICE HOURS:

The Financial Aid Veterans Assistant, Arely Rodarte, can be reached at (562) 463-3370 or by e-mail at [arodarte@riohondo.edu](mailto:arodarte@riohondo.edu).

Her office hours are:

Monday & Thursday	8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.
Tuesday & Wednesday	10:30 a.m. – 7:00 p.m.
Friday	8:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

### PAYMENT:

VA Benefit checks are sent directly to the address the student indicated on the VA application. Payment is based on the dates the required class meets. The VA will automatically pay students for all payable breaks between regular semesters unless the veteran student states in writing that they do not want break pay. Payment of benefits usually occurs between the 1<sup>st</sup> and the 15<sup>th</sup> of each month and is paid for the previous month. The VA does not consider checks as late until after the 10<sup>th</sup> of the month. Inquiries may be made through the Veterans Services Office or directly with the VA at their toll free number 1-888-442-4551.

### PAY STATUS:

VA monthly benefits are paid to the student based on enrolled units or the number of units that apply to the degree objective/goal currently on file. Enrollment categories are as follows:

Full-Time	12 or more units	Half-Time	6 – 8 units
Three-fourth Time	9 – 11 units	Less Than Half-Time*	1 – 5 units

*\*Students enrolled less than half-time will receive benefits for Tuition and Fees only.*

### PROCESSING TIME:

The Veterans Services Office usually processes and submits certification to the VA Administration, on-line, within one week; **during peak periods** the process may be at least two weeks. Multiple schedule changes or out of date Program Evaluation forms on file WILL cause a delay in processing.

Processing of the VA application takes appropriately 8 to 12 weeks at the Veterans Administration; subsequent paperwork (enrollment certifications, etc.) usually takes 6 to 8 weeks.

### PROGRAM EVALUATION:

A **Program Evaluation** and **Prior Credit Evaluation form** must be completed by a RHC counselor and submitted to the Veterans Services Office before enrollment can be certified to the VA Administration. New **Program Evaluation** and **Prior Credit Evaluation forms** must be completed each time you change your major or degree objective.

Revised Program Evaluation and Prior Credit Evaluation can only be completed by a counselor.

You can only be paid for classes that apply toward completion of your degree objective. For example, if you enroll in 12 unit but only 9 units satisfy your degree objective, you will be paid for 9 units only.

You will receive a copy of the Program Evaluation form completed on your behalf. It is imperative that you follow the evaluation and enroll only in courses required for your stated degree objective.

### REPEATED COURSES:

The VA WILL NOT pay for repeat courses that were successfully completed. Letter grades of "A", "B", "C" or "D" are considered to be successfully completed for VA purposes. Students WILL NOT be paid to repeat a course successfully completed due to academic renewal purposes. *Exception:* Some courses require a specific minimum grade for successful completion or transfer.

### **RETROACTIVE BENEFITS**

VA Benefits can be paid for enrollment up to one year prior to the date VA receives a student's application. The RHC Veterans Services Office does not recommend late applications however and strongly encourage you to submit your application the semester you first enroll at RHC.

### **TUTORIAL ASSISTANCE**

You may receive assistance from the VA for individual tutoring. To qualify, you must have a deficiency in a subject you are currently enrolled in.

If you receive benefits under the Montgomery G. I. Bill (CH. 30, 1606 or 1607), VEAP (CH.32), or the Dependents Educational Assistance Program (CH. 35) you may receive up to \$1200 with the first \$600 paid by the VA and the last \$600 being deducted from your remaining educational benefits. You may only receive a maximum of \$100 per month until you run out of educational benefits.

To apply for tutorial assistance, pick up the appropriate form from the Veterans Services Office.

### **VA WORK STUDY PROGRAM**

This is a tax free employment program through the VA. The rate of pay is \$6.75 an hour. You must be enrolled in and receiving educational benefits in at least a  $\frac{3}{4}$  time (9 or more credit hours) rate.

For Off-campus jobs, contact:

VA Regional Office 1-800-827-1000

For on-campus jobs, contact:

RHC Veterans Services Office (562) 463-3370

#### **Chapter 1606's:**

National Guard and Reservists, contact your unit office or education officers for work-study employment.

## Student Responsibilities at RHC

All students receiving Veterans Educational Benefits are required to comply with all applicable Federal Regulations and all Institutional Policies and Procedures.

### **CERTIFICATION:**

It is the student's responsibility to request certification every semester. Certification is not automatic. All enrollment changes such as Add/Drop or Withdrawals, Switching Courses, etc. **MUST** be reported to the Veterans Services Office immediately. The Veterans Services Office will review enrollment every three weeks to insure it meets the requirements set forth by the VA Administration.

### **CHANGE OF MAJOR/GOAL:**

To change a major/goal, the student must meet with a RHC counselor to develop a new program evaluation. Changes to a student's major/goal will delay certification and payment. **Coursework for the new major will not be certified until the new program evaluation is completed and on file at the Veterans Services Office.** It is the student's responsibility to meet with a counselor as early as possible to avoid delay in payment. The Federal VA will make the final approval on all educational goal changes.

### **DUAL MAJOR/GOAL:**

Dual majors or a major and minor are not allowed by the VA in any degree AA/AS, BA/BS transfer, or certificate programs. The VA will only certify for one major and for one degree at a time.

### **COMPLIANCE:**

In the event that a final grade of "F", "W", "INC", "NC" is issued for any semester, a notice will be sent to the student from the Veterans Services Office. It is mandatory that a response to the notice be received by the Office within two weeks from the date on the notice. Any failure to respond will result in a reduction of units that must be reported to the Veterans Administration.

### **MATRICULATION:**

All students must complete the matriculation process, which includes placement testing for assessment in Reading, Math and English.

### **OFFICIAL TRANSCRIPTS:**

All official transcripts must be requested and sent from all schools previously attended before a program evaluation can be completed. **Educational Benefits will not be authorized until all official transcripts have been submitted and a program evaluation has been completed by a counselor.**

### **PROGRAM EVALUATION:**

***Coursework will not be certified for educational benefits until such time that a program evaluation is completed and on file at the Veterans Services Office.***

All veteran students must have on file a program evaluation completed by a RHC counselor. A program evaluation will list all courses required to complete the stated educational goal at RHC. Courses will be certified only if they appear as required on the program evaluation. **NOTE:** Many program requirements do not leave room for elective units. In these cases, elective units cannot be certified for payment.

### **PROBATION:**

Veterans educational benefits are subject to termination if the student has been on academic probation for more than two consecutive semesters.

## Important Telephone Numbers & Websites

Automated Monthly Verification	1-877-823-2378	<a href="http://www.gibill.va.gov">www.gibill.va.gov</a>
Burial Benefits	1-800-827-1000	
CalVet California Department of Veterans Affairs	1-213-744-4825	
California VA Home Loans	1-800-952-5626	<a href="http://www.cdva.ca.gov">www.cdva.ca.gov</a>
Champ/VA Spina Bifida	1-800-733-8387	
Compensation and Pension	1-800-827-1000	
Direct Deposit and Address Changes	1-877-838-2778	
Debt Management Center	1-800-827-0648	
Education Benefits Inquires	1-888-442-4551	<a href="http://www.va.gov.education">www.va.gov.education</a>
Federal VA Home Loans	1-800-827-1000	<a href="http://www.homeloans.va.gov">www.homeloans.va.gov</a>
Gulf War Veteran Help Line	1-800-749-8387	
Headstones and Markers	1-800-697-6947	
Health Care	1-877-222-8387	
Hospital and Medical Benefits	1-877-222-8387	
Life Insurance	1-800-669-8477	
Mammography Help Line	1-888-492-7844	
Vocational Rehab and Employment	1-800-827-1000	(Press 1 then 0)

Veterans Service Office	(562) 463-3370	Financial Aid Office	(562) 908-3411
Admissions & Records	(562) 463-3415	Counseling Office	(562) 908-3410
Assessment Office	(562) 463-3247		

VA Regional Office		1-800-827-1000
Muskogee Regional Processing Center		1-888-442-4551
P.O. Box 8888	125 S. Main Street	
Muskogee, OK 74402	Muskogee, OK 74401	
Muskogee RPO, monthly verification for CH. 30's & 1606's (1 <sup>st</sup> of each month)		1-877-823-2378

# Forms

	<b>Chapter 30, 32, 1606</b>	<b>Chapter 35</b>
Application for Education Benefits	VA Form 22-1990	VA Form 22-5490
Request for Change of Program or Place of Training	VA Form 22-1995	VA Form 22-5495
Veterans Educational Program Evaluation		
Compilation of Veterans Educational Program Evaluation revisions		