

NUMBER: 780

SUBJECT: VETERANS EDUCATION BENEFITS – INTRODUCTION, OVERVIEW, AND AVAILABILITY OF INFORMATION

APPROVAL DATE OF LAST REVISION:

REGULATORY CITATIONS: SCHOOL APPROVALS AND SURVEYS; SCO HANDBOOK (JUNE 2019)
PRINCIPLES OF EXCELLENCE - EXECUTIVE ORDER 13607PAGE 1 OF 3

780.1 – INTRODUCTION, SCHOOL APPROVAL, AND THE SCO

The Veterans Administration (VA) offers educational support for Veterans and other eligible persons attending Bridgerland Technical College. The Utah State Approving Agency for Veterans Education (SAA) approves the institution and its education and training of veterans and other eligible persons. College programs are individually approved and submitted by the SAA for review and acceptance by the US Department of Veterans Affairs. Student required documents and evaluations, enrollment declarations, and satisfactory progress and attendance standards are defined by VA and overseen by SAA. The College is obligated to these definitions and students wishing to remain eligible for VA education benefits must abide by the standards set forth. The VA and SAA have authority over the school. Although school policies and procedures as they pertain to our veterans and other eligible persons are considered correct and complete, any error, omission, question, or concern, not addressed therein will fall under the direction of these authorities, and cannot be overlooked by college administration.

The College's applications and approvals are submitted and maintained, as required, by the College's VA Certifying Official (also known as the School Certifying Official or SCO). Primary and Secondary SCO's may be designated and must be approved by VA. It is the responsibility of the Primary SCO to manage the approval and oversee the administration and compliance of VA education benefit processes at the College. The College must notify VA of any changes in the designations shown on the approval.

780.2 – PRINCIPLES OF EXCELLENCE AND AVAILABILITY OF INFORMATION

The College is required to adhere to standards set forth by Executive Order 13607, Establishing Principles of Excellence for Educational Institutions Serving Service Members, Veterans, Spouses, and Other Family Members. This order is addressed in its entirety on the College's Consumer Information web-page and is included in Policy 700.734, Consumer Information. These principles provide access to information to help qualifying students make informed choices about their college education. All information regarding veterans' benefits may be linked from this source.

All Veteran benefit information at the college is provided in a meaningful and easy-to-understand format and posted on the VA Education Benefits page of the school's website. See the posted documents. The same information is also available from the Colleges VA Certifying Official and/or Financial Aid Office.

780.3 – SCO RESPONSIBILITIES - OVERVIEW

In addition to the management of the applications and approvals mentioned above, the College's SCO's are responsible for various aspects related to the administration of VA funding at the school under the direction of the VA. SCO's serve as liaison between the student and VA. The Primary SCO additionally serves as the competent authority at the school. Responsibilities of the SCO's include, but are not limited to the following:

780.3.1 – COMPLIANCE SURVEY

SCOs participate in Compliance Surveys conducted by the Department of Veterans Affairs. The purpose of these surveys is to advise the college administration of the laws and regulations governing the payment of education benefits to VA beneficiaries, and to examine the records of specific beneficiaries to ensure the propriety of payments. An Education Compliance Specialist from VA will contact the SCO regarding the upcoming survey and identify the required documents and information that must be gathered and made available during the survey. Under the direction of the Primary SCO, various offices of the college may be involved in compiling required documents.

780.3.2 – CERTIFYING ENROLLMENT INFORMATION

SCOs are responsible for meeting with Veterans and other eligible persons and assuring he or she meets all eligibility requirements, submits appropriate documentation, and qualifies for enrollment certification for benefit eligibility. Other staff

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on campus may be assigned to assist the SCO in these efforts. Following the successful completion of VA delivered certifying officials training, and approval by VA, SCOs are authorized to certify enrollment information and are granted access to VA's certification system. SCOs must adhere to the rules and regulations outlined by VA in order for the College to maintain its eligibility to receive funding from federal military and Veterans educational benefits programs.

780.3.3 – MONITORING AND REPORTING

SCOs must keep VA informed of the status of Veterans and other eligible persons. SCOs monitor each beneficiary throughout his or her enrollment. Any enrollment, eligibility or other changes must be reported to VA.

780.3.4 – RECORDKEEPING

Records of VA students will be maintained for at least three years following the student's last date of attendance. Records will be kept in a safe place and the privacy of VA students will be protected. The file should contain all VA paperwork including transcripts, grade reports, enrollment change documents, school application, record of any disciplinary action, program outline, graduation form, and any other pertinent information and forms. Files may be maintained both in the Financial Aid Office and Registration.

780.3.4.1 – REPORTING FEES

Schools are provided reporting fees based on the number of students who were certified to VA at least once during the year and who received VA educational benefits. The VA will provide to the school a list of students receiving assistance. SCOs should compare the list and report any errors as directed.

780.3.5 – OTHER

The College agrees to keep up-to-date on current rules and benefits by allowing SCOs to participate in VA training opportunities and providing them with the resources needed to receive information and comply with regulation. The College should provide resources so that staff may assist students in applying for education benefits and resolving payment issues, disseminate and post benefit information, and ensure full awareness of student responsibilities to the school. Any internal problems that may affect service to VA students, beyond the authority of the Primary SCO, should be brought to the attention of supervisors.

780.4 – STUDENT ELIGIBILITY – OVERVIEW

The Post 9/11 GI Bill, also known as the Post 9/11 Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2008, makes it possible for all members of military to receive educational benefits. Eligible service members, veterans and certain dependents and survivors may receive financial support for technical training and apprenticeships like those available at the College. Tuition and fee payments or monthly stipends may be available to assist with the costs of getting an education. Payments may be made directly to the College or the beneficiary. Eligibility and qualifying payments are determined by VA. Veterans and other eligible persons must adhere to certain student conduct and other school policies; beneficiaries not meeting required standards may have their benefits discontinued. Students may need to meet additional requirements as identified by VA.

780.4.1 – APPLICATION FOR BENEFITS

Veterans and other eligible persons may contact VA directly with any questions about his or her eligibility or payments, and to apply for benefits. Once eligibility is determined VA will provide the student with a certificate of eligibility. The certificate of eligibility must be submitted to the school along with any other required documents as directed.

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780.4.2 – ELIGIBLE PROGRAMS

Beneficiaries may only enroll in programs approved by VA in order to qualify for benefits. Many certificate programs at the College are approved; apprenticeship programs may also be approved. Approved programs are published on the VA Education Benefits page on the school website. Request for and documentation of program approval are maintained by the school's Primary SCO. The college Administration works effectively with the Primary SCO to maintain awareness about any program changes, including changes to the programs name, length, level of offering, and effective dates. The Primary SCO works directly with SAA (and indirectly with VA through SAA) to keep the school's VA program approvals current with the offerings of the College.

780.4.3 – PRIOR CREDIT

A criterion for school approval is that it reviews prior credit and grants credit appropriate to a VA student's current program. The school has and enforces policy with regard to transfer courses, credits and previous experience. Education at previously attended universities, colleges, or trade schools, and military education and training will be evaluated. Students work with the SCO and program instructor or department head to evaluate and determine credit to be granted. More information is available on the VA Education Benefits page on the school website.

780.4.4 – SATISFACTORY PROGRESS, ATTENDANCE AND CONDUCT

The law requires that education benefits to Veterans and other eligible persons be discontinued when the student ceases to make satisfactory progress toward his or her training objective. Standards may include competency completion, attendance, and other conduct standards. Students must abide by standards set forth and schools are required to enforce these standards. An academic record for each student will be maintained. Standards are published on the VA Education Benefits page on the school website.

780.5 – DEFINITIONS

- (a) **US Department of Veterans Affairs.** In addition to education assistance, this government agency provides benefits to eligible veterans and their families, including healthcare services, disability compensation, vocational rehabilitation, home loans, life insurance, and burial and memorial benefits.
- (b) **Veterans Administration (VA).** VA is a department of the US Department of Veterans Affairs. VA provides assistance to people who have served in the armed forces, including financial help with costs associated with obtaining an education.
- (c) **State Approving Agency (SAA).** Congress authorized the creation of SAA's to help VA review, evaluate, and approve programs at schools seeking to enroll students participating in VA education benefits programs. VA contracts with SAA's who monitor programs in their states to ensure programs are effectively and efficiently administered.
- (d) **School Certifying Official (SCO).** Approved by SAA, the SCO for the college is a liaison for students and the US Department of Veterans Affairs. If more than one SCO is authorized at the school, SCO herein refers to either the Primary or Secondary SCO unless otherwise noted.
- (e) **Supervisors.** As referred to in section 780.3.5, "supervisors" is the college administrations' Vice President assigned to be the Veteran contact for the school. The Veteran contact designation exists to assist service member and veteran students and their families with academic and financial advising (including access to disability counseling), and to assist with the successful completion of their studies, and job searches.