



## VA Benefits

CIU is proud to be consistently ranked among the most military-friendly schools in the country and we are a participant in the Yellow Ribbon Program.

Program-eligible veterans, their spouses, and children can use VA education benefits to help cover the cost of their CIU tuition.

## How to Apply for and use VA Benefits:

The basic process for all chapters is outlined below:

1. Visit <https://www.va.gov/education/how-to-apply/> for information on what benefits you might be eligible for and information on how to apply. Additionally, you may contact the Department of Veteran's Affairs directly at [1 \(888\) 442-4551](tel:18884424551) to fully determine your eligibility. More detailed information about the various chapters can be found further down in this document.
2. Once you have applied for VA benefits, it can take up to 30 days for the VA to process and respond to your request. If your request is approved, you will receive notice from the VA and some sort of Certificate of Eligibility (COE) or Statement of Benefits.
3. Ensure that the CIU School Certifying Official (SCO) – Laura McCall gets a copy of your COE or a copy of your eBenefits page for processing (you may submit this directly by email: [laura.mccall@ciu.edu](mailto:laura.mccall@ciu.edu) or Fax: (803) 223-2505. Please note, the VA will not automatically notify CIU of your benefits eligibility.
4. You will also be asked to fill out a Certification Request Form provided by the SCO which will go in your file as proof that you requested CIU to certify you for your education benefits. A new Certification Request Form must be filled out each school year for which you wish to use your VA benefits at CIU.
5. CIU's SCO will certify your courses and tuition & fees to the VA. The VA typically releases payment two to three weeks after the actual tuition and fees have been reported to the VA. This occurs after the add/drop period for each sub-term.

- In cases where some or all of the funds are sent directly to the university, once CIU receives payment from the VA, it will be posted to your student account. The Accounting department will be made aware of your status as VA student and will handle your account accordingly. They understand the process of waiting for VA payments.
- In cases where all funds are sent to the student, the student is responsible to pay the university directly for the cost of their tuition and fees.

## VA Chapters

### VA Ch. 33: Post-9/11 GI Bill

Below are the basic eligibility requirements and VA processing info for the Post-9/11 GI Bill:

- Available for current service members and veterans (with an honorable discharge) with at least 90 days of aggregate service on or after September 10, 2001 or individuals discharged with a service-connected disability after 30 days.
- If you served on active duty after September 10, 2001, you may qualify for the Post-9/11 GI Bill®. See [Eligibility Requirements](#) for more information.
- The school will receive payment for tuition and fees directly from the VA based on your percentage of eligibility.
- Students are issued a book stipend and a monthly housing stipend while attending courses (if eligible) directly by the VA, based on the percentage of eligibility and rate of pursuit. See [Post-9/11 Pay Rates](#) for more information.
- Starting in the 2021-2022 school year, Post-9/11 GI Bill® students who receive Monthly Housing Allowance (MHA) and/or kicker payments are required to verify their enrollment to continue receiving their payments. Please visit the [Enrollment Verification page](#) on the VA website to learn more about the enrollment verification requirement and verification methods.

VA Application forms for Ch. 33:

- [22-1990](#)\* – Use if you are applying for the Post-9/11 GI Bill for the **first** time.
- [22-1995](#) – Use if you have used your benefits at another institution and would like to **transfer** to CIU as your primary institution. You will also need to use this form if you are **changing the degree level** you are pursuing.

- [22-1990e](#)\* –Use if you are a **dependent** (child, or spouse as defined in 1 U.S.C. § 7) applying to use a service member’s benefits. Please see [Transfer of Entitlement](#) for more information.

### **VA Ch. 30 & 1606: Montgomery GI Bill (MGIB) and Selected Reserves (MGIB-SR)**

Below are the basic eligibility requirements and VA processing info for the Montgomery and Selected Reserves GI Bill:

- The Montgomery GI Bill is available for veterans who began active-duty service after June 30, 1985 and paid into the benefit at the beginning of their service.
- The Selected Reserves GI Bill is available to members of the Selected Reserves with a 6-year service commitment.
- Students are paid directly by the VA on a monthly basis while attending courses. See [Chapter 30 Pay Rates](#) or [Chapter 1606 Pay Rates](#) for more information.
- Students must verify their enrollment on [WAVE](#) at the end of each month in order to receive their benefit payment
- **NOTE:** No tuition/fees payments will be made to the university by the VA under these chapters. Students are responsible to make sure they pay their student account balance. Students can apply for federal aid and/or set up a payment plan with the accounting department.

VA Application forms for Ch. 30 & 1606:

- [22-1990](#)\* – Use if you are applying for Montgomery or Selected Reserves GI Bill for the **first** time.
- [22-1995](#) – Use if you have used your benefits at another institution and would like to **transfer** to CIU as your primary institution. You will also need to use this form if you are **changing the degree level** you are pursuing.

### **VA Ch. 35: Dependents’ Education Assistance (DEA)**

Below are the basic eligibility requirements and VA processing info for the Dependents’ Education Assistance program:

- The Survivors’ and Dependents’ Education Assistance benefit provides assistance to dependents of military service members with a service-connected, permanent, and total disability or who were MIA, POW, or died in connection with a service-related disability.

- Students are paid directly by the VA on a monthly basis while attending courses. See [Pay Rates & Training Times](#) for more information.
- **NOTE:** No tuition/fees payments will be made to the university by the VA under these chapters. Students are responsible to make sure they pay their student account balance. Students can apply for federal aid and/or set up a payment plan with the accounting department.

VA Application forms for Ch. 35:

- [22-5490](#) – Use if you are applying for Veteran's education benefits for the **first** time.
- [22-5495](#) – Use if you have used your benefits at another institution and would like to **transfer** to CIU as your primary institution. You will also need to use this form if you are **changing the degree level** you are pursuing.

### **VA Ch. 31: Veteran Readiness and Employment (VR&E)**

Below are the basic eligibility requirements and VA processing info for the Veteran Readiness and Employment program:

- Veterans with service-connected disabilities may be eligible. A service-connected disability rating of at least 10% or a memorandum rating of 20% or more from the U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs is required.
- Must be used within 12 years of either the date of separation from active military service or the date in which the veteran was first notified by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs of a service-connected disability rating.
- Can cover up to 100% of tuition and fees as well as books, paid directly to the school.
- A monthly [subsistence allowance](#) may be available as well.

VA Application forms/process for Ch. 31:

- Contact the Department of Veterans Affairs by phone at (800) 827-1000 to determine your eligibility.
- [28-1900](#) – Complete and submit directly to the VA.
- For more info visit the [VR&E page](#) on va.gov.

## **Veterans Benefits' Policies:**

Below are the Veterans Benefit Policies that will apply as you use your benefits at Columbia International University. These policies have been given to us by the Department of Veterans Affairs. Please review this information, as well as the more specific information available under the individual chapters above.

### **Changing Courses/Enrollment**

You are responsible to make CIU's SCO (Laura McCall) aware of any changes to your courses and/or enrollment. This includes adding or dropping courses, as well as withdrawing from any or all courses. If you drop or withdraw from a course after the approved add/drop period (see the [CIU Academic Calendar](#) for add/drop dates) you will be responsible for any debt accrued with the university.

### **Satisfactory Academic Progress and GPA**

Veterans Affairs Education Benefits will not be affected due to Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) until the student is placed on Academic Dismissal. Students who are on Academic Dismissal are unable to register for courses and therefore unable to utilize their Veterans Benefits. Otherwise, a student's GPA has no effect on their Veterans Benefits. For more information on SAP, please review the [Financial Aid SAP Policies](#).

### **Applicable Courses**

All courses certified to the VA must count toward the student's current degree which they are pursuing. If a course, shows up on a degree audit as not counting toward your degree it cannot be certified to the VA for payment. However, if your advisor will allow you to substitute the course in question for another required course toward your degree, you can work with your advisor to file an [academic petition](#) with the Registrar's office to make an exception for your course. Once the petition is accepted and in place, the course can be certified to the VA for payment.

### **Applicable Tuition and Fees**

All tuition and applicable university fees associated with approved courses can be certified to the VA. However, the Department of Veterans Affairs requires that any tuition-based scholarships and/or grants be deducted from the amount certified prior to submitting it to the VA. Tuition-based scholarships/grants include but are not limited to, SC Tuition Grant and Graduate Assistantships (GA).

Loans and other non-tuition-based aid, such as Federal Pell Grants, do not have to be deducted from the amount certified to the VA.

Room & board and other costs of attendance not related to tuition and applicable fees cannot be certified to the VA for payment.

### **Yellow Ribbon Program**

Columbia International University has partnered with the Veterans Affairs (VA) Administration to offer the Yellow Ribbon Program to students with 100% eligibility under the Post-9/11 GI Bill®.

This program allows degree-granting institutions of higher learning in the United States to voluntarily enter into an agreement with U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs to fund tuition expenses that exceed the highest public in-state undergraduate tuition rate. The institution can contribute up to 50% of those expenses and U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs will match the same amount as the institution.

- The Yellow Ribbon Program at CIU covers up to 100% of tuition and fees over the [Post-9/11 GI Bill yearly tuition cap](#) (50% funded by CIU and 50% funded by the Department of Veterans Affairs).
- The cap on Yellow Ribbon funds is currently unlimited for all programs at CIU.
- All students with 100% eligibility are eligible for the Yellow Ribbon Program, except for Active Duty students and their spouses, per the Department of Veterans Affairs.
- The Yellow Ribbon Program only applies to tuition and associated fees. Housing expenses and other voluntary fees are not covered.
- Most online students who are eligible for Yellow Ribbon are not likely to need this additional coverage due to lower tuition costs.
- Eligible students will automatically receive Yellow Ribbon funding on their account when their tuition and associated fees exceed the [Post-9/11 GI Bill yearly Tuition Cap](#).

### **Benefit Exhaustion and Delimiting Dates**

It is the student's responsibility to keep track of their remaining benefits and/or any delimiting date associated with their benefits. Students using Chapter 33 benefits can obtain this information at the [eBenefits](#) web site. In some cases the SCO may be able to look up this information for you; Please email [laura.mccall@ciu.edu](mailto:laura.mccall@ciu.edu) if you need help ascertaining the remaining entitlement you have. If you and/or the SCO are unable to find the status of your remaining benefits, then you must call the VA Education Benefit hotline, at [1 \(888\) 442-4551](tel:18884424551), to receive an updated status of their remaining eligibility. CIU and/or the SCO are not responsible to monitor this information. The student is also responsible for any remaining balance on their student account not covered by their VA benefits or other financial aid.

### **Tuition Assistance and VA Benefits**

Per the 2014 Department of Defense Memorandum of Understanding, federal Tuition Assistance and Veterans Affairs benefits cannot be used to pay for the same course(s). Students using Post-9/11 GI Bill® are the only exception to this policy. These students

may use their Veterans Education Benefits to cover the remaining balance for courses not completely covered by Federal Tuition Assistance. In this case, GI Bill® funding can only be used to pay the remaining balance between the amount of funding from Tuition Assistance and 100% of the tuition charged by the university.

### **CIU Policy regarding VA Benefits and Military Discount**

Veterans and their dependents receiving VA education benefits are not eligible for the CIU military discount. If the student's VA benefits expire, become exhausted, or the student declines the use of their benefits, then they will once again be eligible for CIU's military discount provided they supply financial aid with a copy of their DD-214 showing honorable discharge.

The spouse of a student who is receiving full VA benefits is eligible to receive CIU's military discount if they themselves are not using any VA benefits. A copy of the soldier's DD-214 showing honorable discharge and a copy of the marriage license would need to be supplied to financial aid.

### **SCO Contact Information:**

Laura McCall

VA Benefits Coordinator/Online Financial Aid Counselor/SCO

803-807-5049 (office)

803-223-2505 (fax)

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