

# Steps for Using VA Education Benefits at Howard College

## STEP 1 – Apply for VA Education Benefits by going to [www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/](http://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/)

Applying on line is recommended (click “Apply for Benefits” and then click “Apply Online (VONAPP)”) to expedite your claim. A paper application (22-1990) may be printed and submitted, but it then has to be mailed to the VA Regional Office in Muskogee, Oklahoma and will take longer for the VA to process.

The VA web site has several methods in place to help you determine which benefit is best for you. Please study these carefully. By virtue of guidance from the VA, and effective October 1, 2013, Howard College cannot provide any recommendations regarding education benefits since you are the only person who can choose which program best meets your needs.

NOTE – Your VA Education Benefits paid directly to you will be paid by check or direct deposit. Payments are made one month behind (i.e., September is paid in October, October is paid in November, etc.).

Use the website ([www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/](http://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/)) to complete a *Change of Program or Place of Training* if you have used VA Education Benefits at another college.

## STEP 2 – Wait

It will take the VA 2-3 weeks to process electronic applications. Paper applications will take 6-8 weeks or longer.

After your application is processed, VA will send you two (2) copies of your Certificate of Eligibility. Bring one copy your Certificate of Eligibility and your DD-214 (Member 4 or Copy 4) to the School Certifying Official for Howard College.

## STEP 3 – Complete Admissions Requirements to Howard College and Register for Classes

The admissions requirement for Howard College includes:

1. Complete and submit the application for admissions (printed copy is available at [www.howardcollege.edu](http://www.howardcollege.edu), see Appendix A, or you can apply at [www.ApplyTexas.org](http://www.ApplyTexas.org))
2. Submit an official copy of your high school transcripts and placement scores
3. Submit an official copy of college transcripts from previous colleges attended
4. Visit <https://jst.doded.mil> and request your official military transcripts be sent to Howard College
5. Provide proof of vaccination for bacterial meningitis (or proof of exemption)
  - a. As of January 1, 2014, this requirement applies only to individuals 22 years of age or younger

Once your admissions packet is complete, you will need to meet with an academic advisor to discuss your intended degree plan and then register for classes.

After you have registered for classes, visit <Site> to complete and submit the “Request for Certification of VA Benefits.” This form is confirmation that you are enrolled and that you wish to use VA Education Benefits. The “Request for Certification of VA Benefits” is only valid for one term, so you must submit a new one every time you register for a new term. If you do not complete and submit the “Request for Certification of VA Benefits” each term, you will not receive payments from the VA. You will receive an email notification from the VA as soon as Howard College has submitted your enrollment information so ensure that your email address is correct when you submit your “Request for Certification of VA Benefits.”

#### **STEP 4 – Verify Your Enrollment on WAVE (Web Automated Verification Enrollment) (For Chapter 30, Chapter 1606, and Chapter 1607 only)**

If you are receiving VA Education Benefits under Chapter 30, Chapter 1606, or Chapter 1607, you will need to visit [www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/](http://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/) (click “Verify Attendance”) or call 877-823-2378 to verify your attendance on or after the last day of each month while attending school. If you do not verify your attendance/enrollment, the VA will not pay you. If you are receiving VA Education Benefits under Chapter 33 Post 9/11, you do not need to verify attendance.

#### **STEP 5 – Maintain Communication with the School Certifying Official at Howard College**

If you have submitted a “Request for Certification of VA Benefits” and you make changes to your schedule (i.e., adding or dropping a course), you must advise the School Certifying Official at Howard College so that such changes can be reported to the VA.

If you have missed three or more consecutive days of class or classes, change your contact information (address/phone/email), change your banking information, or completely withdraw from school, you must advise the School Certifying Official at Howard College so that changes/updates can be reported to the VA.

Failure to maintain communication with the School Certifying Official at Howard College may result in an over payment, which must be returned to the VA.

NOTE – If you drop a course after the census day of the semester, you will owe money back to the VA.

#### **STEP 6 – Stay Informed**

Your WAVE account will give you information about your VA Education Benefits. You can also use your WAVE account to update your mailing address, your direct deposit account number, see if a payment has been mailed or deposited, and see if you have pending documents to be processed by the VA.

The GI Bill website is a great resource of information. The site offers links to frequently asked questions, live chat, submitting a question, announcements, benefits calculation, applying for benefits, VA contact information, and much more. It is in your best interest to study all aspects of the benefits offered by the VA to make the best choice.