

Getting Started at HCC Military Personnel/Veterans

veterans@hagerstowncc.edu



1. **Apply for admission** – Submit an Application for Admission (no fee) and send it to the Office of Admissions. You may apply online at www.hagerstowncc.edu/admissions.
2. **Submit Transcripts** – Credit may be granted for a variety of formal military, technical, and educational programs based on the student's program at HCC. Official transcripts for Community College of the Air Force can be found through Credential Solutions at www.credentials-inc.com (handling fee may apply). All other branches go to the Joint Services Transcript page at <https://jst.doded.mil>. Official transcripts along with a copy of the DD214 should be sent to the Veterans & Military Specialist (VMS), STC-138. Please also submit high school transcripts (if you have graduated within the past five years or plan on applying for financial aid), college/university transcripts, and GED scores.

3. **Understand Educational Benefits.**

Chapter 30 (Montgomery GI Bill Active Duty)

- For 36 non-consecutive months of educational benefit; all VA payments (usually a BAH payment only) go directly to student.
- Student must set up an HCC payment plan or use federal financial aid to pay tuition and fees by the established HCC payment due deadline.

Chapter 31 (Veterans Readiness & Employment (VR&E). Also referred to as Voc. Rehab)

- Student must meet with and get approval from the VR&E Counselor.
- VA payment for tuition will go directly to HCC.
- Student must pick up voucher from the Finance Office to use for obtaining class materials from the HCC Campus Store.
- BAH paid directly to the student via pre-determined direct deposit.

Chapter 33 (Post 9/11 GI Bill)

- For 36 non-consecutive months of educational benefits.
- VA payment for tuition will go directly to HCC.
- Book allotment and BAH paid directly to student via pre-determined direct deposit.

Chapter 35 (Dependent Education Assistance)

- Eligibility limited to dependents of veterans who are 100% disabled, MIA, KIA, or POW.
- For 36 non-consecutive months (45 months if used prior to 8/1/2018); all VA payments (usually a BAH payment only) go directly to student.
- Student must set up an HCC payment plan or use federal financial aid to pay tuition and fees by the established HCC payment due deadline.
- Students may also be eligible for the Fry Scholarship, but may not use Fry and Chapter 35.

Chapter 1606 (Montgomery GI Bill Selective Reserve)

- For 36 non-consecutive months of educational benefit; all VA payments (usually a BAH payment only) go directly to student.
- Student must set up an HCC payment plan or use federal financial aid to pay tuition and fees by the established HCC payment due deadline.
- Tuition Assistance available for Reservists on Active Duty Status (Title 10 Orders).
- Student must load a program evaluation, completed by an Academic Advisor, into the military educational portal.

*Students with VA benefits currently assigned to another college must complete Form 22-1995 to request a change in place of training. This form is available through the VA at va.gov.

4. **Complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)** – to determine eligibility for Federal Aid (in addition to VA benefits). For more information, go to www.hagerstowncc.edu/financial-aid or call 240- 500-2473. Financial Aid Chatbot is available 24 hours a day on the website. Students using VA benefits are also eligible for Federal Financial Aid.
5. **Complete Placement Assessment Tests** – visit www.hagerstowncc.edu/testing. For questions about alternative options for earning credit, students should see a Retention Specialist.
6. **Meet with a Retention Specialist** – After placement testing, all new students must meet with a Retention Specialist before scheduling classes. Retention Specialists are available: Monday-Thursday from 9:00a.m.-6:00p.m. by appointment only, and Friday from 10:00a.m.-4:00p.m. for walk-in appointments. Retention and Registration offices are located in the Student Center. Photo I.D. required.
7. **VA Certification of Classes Form** – Once all the above steps are complete, the student will need to complete the VA Certification of Classes form. The student can get the form either by going online to www.hagerstowncc.edu/veterans or stopping by the Veterans office (STC-138). Required to be completed every semester.

Veterans Administration Benefits Process

*Students should start this process 60 days prior to the start of classes in order to receive payment within a month after starting classes. Not following these steps in a timely fashion will delay VA processing times and eventual payment to the student and the College.

- 1. Prospective students – apply for or update (if transferring from another college) benefits through the VA.** It can take up to 45 days to receive a Certificate of Eligibility (COE). While waiting to receive the COE, you may print proof of your application (with confirmation number) to use as a place holder so you can proceed through the next steps while waiting for your COE.
Apply at: va.gov/education/how-to-apply.
- 2. After enrolling in classes, complete a VA Certification of Classes Form** and (for out of state Veterans) the **Application for Nonresident Tuition Exemption for Eligible Military & Veterans**. Turn both forms into Ben Ebertowski (Veterans & Military Specialist/School Certifying Official) in the Veterans office (STC-138). These forms give HCC authorization to file the benefits on behalf of the veteran and to charge out-of-state Veterans the in-state rate; these forms need to be completed prior to the start of each semester. Completion of this step enables Veterans receiving Chapter 31 or 33 benefits to remain in classes (despite payment due deadlines) while your VA benefits are being processed.
- 3. Upon receipt of the VA Certification of Classes Form, HCC's School Certifying Official (SCO) will certify your HCC enrollment with the VA.** Please note that this electronic process can take up to one week when the Certification of Classes Form is turned in to the SCO during peak enrollment times (i.e. August, mid to late December, early January). This is an internal HCC process that must be completed before the VA begins processing educational benefits. Those qualifying for Chapters 31 and 33 benefits will have a hold placed on their HCC student accounts which will allow them to continue in classes, without penalty for not meeting payment due dates, while their VA benefits are being processed.
- 4. The VA will send an email to the student's HCC email account to notify him/her when Step 3 has been completed.** Feel free to communicate with the SCO if you do not receive this email confirmation within two weeks of turning in your VA Certification of Classes Form.
- 5. Once your enrollment is certified by HCC's SCO, the VA will process your benefits accordingly.** The earliest a veteran can expect to receive Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH) will be on the first of the month AFTER a complete month of active class participation has been established. If you haven't received the Book Stipend within the first week of starting classes, please contact the Veteran's Office and/or Dean of Students or complete a Student Assistance form at www.hagerstowncc.edu/bit for possible assistance with books. It is important that students have class materials by the first week of classes.
- 6. Payment receipt.** If entitled, the VA will send Book Stipend and BAH directly to the student. Whether or not the VA and HCC communicate directly about payment of tuition and fees is dependent on the type of benefit received (see reverse side for details). Depending on the type of benefit, it may be the student's responsibility to pay tuition and fees (by the College payment due deadlines) directly to the College.
- 7. Steps 2-6 need to be repeated for every semester of enrollment.** It is the student's responsibility to initiate this repeating process. Ideally, students should repeat this process from Step 3 two months prior to the start of each semester of enrollment.

Veteran students whose VA benefits do not cover 100% of tuition and fee costs are responsible for paying the remaining balance owed prior to the end of the semester of enrollment.

Students should contact the VA directly with any questions regarding the processing of their VA benefits.

For further Veteran-related assistance, please contact the Veterans & Military Specialist (VMS) by emailing veterans@hagerstowncc.edu, calling 240-500-2377, or by visiting the VMS office in STC-138.