

RECEIVING EDUCATION BENEFITS V3.1 DRAFT 11/05/18 Working Draft, Pre-Decisional, Deliberative document – Internal VA Use Only

The process of applying for and receiving post-secondary education benefits involves the following phases: applying for benefits specific to one's military service, certifying enrollment with a school, and regularly verifying attendance. Benefits include tuition, book stipend, and/or housing allowance. Across the four different benefit chapters, we've uncovered the process for applying and enrolling in benefits is very similar, with the broadest difference coming from how school attendance is verified and the financial amount of the benefits.

To complete this journey map, human-centered designers interviewed 71 total stakeholders: 30 student veterans/dependents across 10 schools, 14 school administrators, 16 employees at the regional processing offices, and 11 employees at VA Education Service Central Office. This journey map captures the voices of student veterans and dependents and highlights which moments matter most in their experience of receiving VA benefits to further their education.

VA CHAPTER BENEFITS

Chapter 30 – Montgomery GI Bill (Active Duty)

Chapter 31 – Vocational Rehabilitation Benefits*

Chapter 33 – Post-9/11 GI Bill

Chapter 35 – Survivors' & Dependents' Educational Assistance

Chapter 1606 – Montgomery GI Bill Selected Reserve (MGIB-SR) **Chapter 1607** – Reserve Education Assistance Program (REAP)

*This chapter will be explored with a forthcoming line of business Program will be phased out by November 25, 2019

KEY JOURNEY PHASE Optional journey Bright Spot Pain Point

	APPLYING FOR EDUCATION BENEFITS								GOING TO SCHOOL						
WHAT OCCURS IN THIS MOMENT	Learn About GI Bill	Determine Eligibility and Research Schools	Apply to Education Program	Connect With Campus Services	Plan Financials	Submit Benefit Application to VA	Look for Housing	Receive COE the Mail	Register for classes Add/Drop	School Certifies Enrollment	Troubleshoot Benefits Process with VA/SCO	Verify Attendance	Attend Class	Receive Stipends	Follow-Up Process
☆ BRIGHT SPOTS	*	"I used the Comparison Tool, it was really a big help to me, especially searching by location." "Registration was easy. You just sign up once."		"My SCO has an answer to every single one of my questions ever."	"I feel great being a receipt of benefits. It makes me feel like I worked for something and that it's not a hand out."			"When I go to my eBenefits, it show each term and ho many credits onli or in class I did. It always stays up t date."	s w ne		"My SCO showed me that 'Submit a Question' was the best way to get attention from VA." "My Veterans coordinators do a lot more for the school than they're obligated to. It's just that they really care."			"My money comes on time every month."	
PAIN POINTS		"TAP is like 'if you want to be a contractor, we'll tell you everything.' But it didn't help me with education." "I wish I knew the GI Bill was about months, not credits." "I wish there was one place online to find everything." "VonApp is slow and annoying. You even have to use Internet Explorer." "I didn't know if I was doing the right thing when I was applying. It would have been different if I knew more about the GI Bill, I would have taken less credits."		"My school veteran office was poorly run – the official was way overworked." The VA feels overwhelming, so I go to the person at my school. "Frustration is with the VA. School has been awesomelly helpful, walking me through each step." "I'd rather have a personal connection than a computer screen. That's why I go to my school first. I would have floundered without them."	"It's tough that you don't get your first housing stipend until after classes start, and it's not until the end of each month." "I feel like I'm left in the dark in terms of knowing when my tuition will be paid." "I'm worried that I don't have enough to cover all of my schooling." "Fear of poverty made me learn how to save up." "I have gotten two different BAH numbers from financial aid and Comparison Tool. One would cover my rent and the other doesn't."			I had no clue that needed a Certific of Enrollment. I'm still waiting of COE, it's three months late." I'didn't know the getting COE duri active duty precludes you from BAH." I'l get paper lette wish they would email." I'my biggest pain point is the waiting and checking for COE app."	n t t g m s. I		"I hate calling the call center. They seem highly understaffed." I would never go to VA.gov to look on pages, I use Google instead." "They don't always understand what I'm trying to explain to them. They often pass me off to the next person and put me on hold. It's a constant thing." "If I had problems, I would harass the VA by phone until it's fixed."			I was not prepared when VA pro-rated my BAH – they didn't consider my clinical classes as academic credit. "Waiting on BAH at the end of the month is rough." "I feel like I'm left in the dark a lot when it comes to my tuition being paid and whether I'm going to get my allowance. The hardest part is not knowing, the lack of consistency." I don't have the money to do an internship. "I was confused by BAH at first. What's it based on?" "I'm still waiting on last month's check. My school says to wait."	
THIS MOMENT MATTERS BECAUSE	Determining eligibility and understanding breadth of benefits can be stressful. This moment is key to preparing students to understand their options for determining eligibility and understanding breadth of benefits available to them.		can deperations roptions efits This monoservices	Student's experience at their school is dependent on the helpfulness of School Certifying Official and Veteran Services staff. This moment is key for students to have a person within Campus Services that they can trust to inform them and insure they are on track to receiving their benefits.		Lack of reliable benefit estimates and the timing of disbursement creates anxiety in students. This moment is key for students to feel secure that they will have finances to sustain themselves for their time in school.		tes co fr will have the Thi	Analog processing time and lack of communication often makes students frustrated and anxious. This moment is key for students to understand clearly about the status of their benefit application and timeline of receiving their COE.		Veterans often find the process of getting help with their benefits arduous and confusing. This moment is key for students to easily find and receive helpful and accurate information on their benefit questions from the call center, VA website or SCO.		arduous Co	Lack of transparency and communication of monthly allowance can cause confusion and frustration. This moment is key for students to receive clear communication of breakdown and timeline of monthly allowance.	
WHAT SHOULD WE MEASURE	- Knowing where to go for answers - Expectation management - Ease and understanding of information from VA - Effective education planning tools			- Expectation management - Student trust in SCO - Consistent support by SCO		- Trusting benefit estimates form VA and/or school - Clarity of financial benefits - Resources provided to financially plan for school		- C	- Expectation management - Consistent and transparent communication - Ease and understanding of information from VA		- Easy to use platforms - Trusted information - Consistent and transparent communication		- 0	- Expectation management - Clarity on monthly BAH amount - Consistent and transparent communication	



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