



POLK  
STATE  
COLLEGE

POLK STATE VETERANS SERVICES

# Welcome Packet



Army | Marine Corps | Navy | Air Force | Coast Guard

*We are Polk.*<sup>TM</sup>



Dear Veterans,

Welcome to Polk State College! The College would like to extend its admiration and respect for the dedication you have displayed in serving our country. Now, as you begin the mission of earning your college degree, know that you won't be doing it alone. We are here to assist you in any way possible as you embark on this new chapter of your academic career. The Polk State Veterans Services office is here to help and ensure you receive the education benefits you have earned. As long as you bring the same dedication, responsibility, accountability, and commitment to your education as you brought to your military service, you can reach your academic objective and we will be here to help.

*Polk State Veterans Services is committed to serving those who have served this country.*

Regards,

**Coordinator, Veteran Services**

863.298.6886



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Polk State College is committed to equal access/equal opportunity in its programs, activities, and employment. For additional information, visit [www.polk.edu/equity](http://www.polk.edu/equity).



# Important Steps

## Step 1a: Apply for your benefits

- If this is your first time using Department of Veteran Affairs (VA) Education benefits, please go to [www.vets.gov](http://www.vets.gov) to fill out VA Form 22-1990.
  - Dependent – fill out VA Form 22-5490.
  - Transfer of Entitlement – fill out VA Form 22-1990e.
- VA Form 22-1990 allows you to select the VA educational benefit you wish to utilize.
- A confirmation page will populate once you submit your application.
- Your application will be sent to the Western Region Regional Office for review and confirmation of your eligibility.
- Any questions at this point should be directed to the VA by calling [888.GIBILL1](tel:888.GIBILL1) ([888.442.4551](tel:888.442.4551)).

## Step 1b: Change of program or place of training

- Students who have received VA education benefits before must turn in VA Form 22-1995.
  - Dependent – fill out VA Form 22-5495.
  - Transfer of Entitlement – fill out VA Form 22-1990.
- Students applying for Chapter 33 in lieu of (or in relinquishment of) other benefits should complete VA Form 22-1990.

**Step 2:** Receive your Certificate of Eligibility

- Once reviewed, the VA will send you a Certificate of Eligibility to your address on record.
- This letter certifies that you are entitled to benefits for an approved educational training program.

**Step 3:** Complete and submit an application for admission at [www.polk.edu](http://www.polk.edu)

- Once your application has been accepted, a confirmation page will populate.
- You will receive your Student ID Number and PIN.
- Log on to Passport at [www.passport.polk.edu](http://www.passport.polk.edu).
- Activate your Polk State College email.
- Review your profile information and make any necessary changes.
- You may also:
  - Complete the online orientation.
  - Apply for financial aid by completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) at [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov).
  - Take the P.E.R.T. placement exam, if required.
  - Order transcripts from colleges/high schools you previously attended.

**Step 4:** Meet with a Polk State College Veterans Services representative

- Turn in a copy of your DD214 (member 4).
- Turn in a copy of your Certificate of Eligibility.
- Ask to receive a Certification Request Form and/or Deferral Form.
  - [www.polk.edu/veterans](http://www.polk.edu/veterans)
- Familiarize yourself with hours of operation and contact information for the department.

**Step 5:** Meet with an academic advisor

- Choose your program of study.
- Print out your degree audit.
- Register for classes applicable to your degree.
- Have an advisor sign page 2 of the Certification Request Form.

**Step 6:** Turn in paperwork to Veterans Services

- Turn in Certification Request and Deferment forms to Veterans Services.
- Ask to receive copies of all paperwork submitted for future reference.
- When the Coordinator has certified your classes, you will receive a confirmation email at your Polk State student email address.

**Step 7:** Wait for the VA to pay tuition

- Polk State requires that tuition and fees are paid by a certain date; however, the VA does not always send the tuition payment by that date.
- This is why you fill out the Deferment Request Form (it tells Polk State that tuition from the VA is on its way so you will not be dropped from your classes).

**Step 8:** Attend classes

- Maintain satisfactory academic progress (SAP).
- Students are required to maintain a certain academic standing to make satisfactory progress toward their degrees or certificates.
- SAP Eligibility Standards can be found at [www.polk.edu/admission-aid/financial-aid/satisfactory-academic-progress/](http://www.polk.edu/admission-aid/financial-aid/satisfactory-academic-progress/).

**Step 9:** Verify attendance (under chapter 30; 1606)

- Go to [www.gibill.va.gov/wave/index.do](http://www.gibill.va.gov/wave/index.do).
- WAVE allows students to verify their enrollment.

**Step 10:** Keep Veterans Services informed of any changes

- Should you decide to add, drop, or withdraw, please inform Veterans Services as soon as possible for the appropriate changes to be made.
- If a student makes certain enrollment changes after enrollment certification is submitted, the VA will make a retroactive adjustment to the student's award, and the student will be charged with a debt to the U.S. government.



## Chapter 31 VR&E Veterans:

The process for Chapter 31 Veterans differs slightly from other VA Education chapters. For instance:

- You do not wait for a Certificate of Eligibility to be mailed to you by the VA. Instead, after you submit Form 22-1990 on VONAPP you will wait to be contacted by your nearest Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment counselor
- Once you meet your counselor and decide upon an approved educational plan, the counselor should provide you with VA FORM 22-1905 (Authorization and Certification of Entrance or Reentrance Into Rehabilitation and Certification of Status)
- You still need to:
  - Turn in a copy of your DD214.
  - Submit a Certification Request Form.
  - Submit a Deferment Form.
- Additionally, you need to:
  - Turn in a copy of VA Form 22-1905.
  - Contact the Polk State College bookstore to inform employees of your upcoming attendance/purchases.
- The Polk State Coordinator of Veterans Services will then communicate with your VR&E counselor regarding the certification of your classes.
- Your counselor will provide Polk State with one 1905 form for tuition, and another 1905 form for books and supplies.
- When your classes are certified, you will receive a notification in your student email.



## Things to Keep in Mind ...

- During the fall and spring terms, Polk State College considers 12 credit hours as full time.
- During the summer term, 9 credit hours is considered full time.
- BAH rate is based on the ZIP code of the Polk State Winter Haven Campus (33881).
- Federal regulations (34 CFR 668.16(e), 34 CFR 668.32(f), and 34 CFR 668.34) mandate that students progress toward the completion of a degree or certificate within an eligible program when receiving financial aid/VA educational benefits.
- It is your responsibility to make sure both your academic and personal information is up-to-date in order for the VA and Polk State to effectively contact you.
- A copy of your DD214 automatically rates you credit for the class HLP 1081.
- Should you need to take any remedial courses, you must do so in a face-to-face class rather than online to be certified by the VA.
- Report any changes in your student status, class schedule, etc., to Veterans Services.
- If a student makes certain enrollment changes after the enrollment certification is submitted, the VA makes a retroactive adjustment to the student's award, and the student will be charged with a debt to the U.S. government.



# Online Resources

- **VA Home:** [www.va.gov](http://www.va.gov)  
Official benefit website.
- **GI Bill Training:** [www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/school\\_training\\_resources.asp](http://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/school_training_resources.asp)  
A valuable resource to help you increase your knowledge, skills, and abilities.
- **Web Automated Verification of Enrollment (WAVE):** [www.gibill.va.gov/wave](http://www.gibill.va.gov/wave)  
Use this site to submit your monthly verification of enrollment.
- **VA Forms:** [www.va.gov/vaforms](http://www.va.gov/vaforms)  
VA Forms are available here.
- **VA Debt Management Center (DMC):** [www.va.gov/debtman](http://www.va.gov/debtman)  
DMC has collection jurisdiction for all educational benefit debts. The DMC e-mail address is [dmc@va.gov](mailto:dmc@va.gov).
- **E-Benefits:** [www.ebenefits.va.gov](http://www.ebenefits.va.gov) or [www.vets.gov](http://www.vets.gov)  
eBenefits is a one-stop shop for online benefits-related information.
- **Joint Services Transcript (JST):** [jst.doded.mil/smart/signIn.do](http://jst.doded.mil/smart/signIn.do)  
Get a transcript that translates military formal education and job experiences into civilian language; also the transcript includes college-equivalent credit recommendations.
- **College Navigator:** [nces.ed.gov/collegenavigator](http://nces.ed.gov/collegenavigator)  
This is a tool to help students in selecting schools and training programs.
- **Search Accredited Schools:** [ope.ed.gov/accreditation/Search.aspx](http://ope.ed.gov/accreditation/Search.aspx)  
Search for accredited schools at this site published by the Department of Education.

# Important Phone Numbers

- **VA Educational Benefits:** [888.442.4551](tel:888.442.4551)
- **Other VA Benefits (local regional office):** [800.827.1000](tel:800.827.1000)
- **Monthly Verification of Enrollment & IVR (Interactive Voice Response System):** [877.823.2378](tel:877.823.2378)
- **Direct Deposit Enrollment (students):** [877.838.2778](tel:877.838.2778)
- **VA Debt Management Center:** [800.827.0648](tel:800.827.0648)

# Educational Program Comparison

	Minimum Length of Service	Months of Benefits (Max.)	How Payments Are Made	Duration of Benefits
<b>Post-9/11 GI Bill</b>	90 days of active aggregate service (after 9/10/01), or 30 days of continuous service if discharged for disability	36	Tuition: Paid to school  Housing stipend: Paid monthly to student  Books & Supplies: Paid to student at the beginning of the term	Generally 15 years from last day of active duty
<b>MGIB-AD</b>	2-year continuous enlistment (minimum duty varies by service date, branch, etc.)	36	Paid to student	Generally 10 years from last day of active duty
<b>MGIB-SR</b>	6-year commitment (after 6/30/85)	36	Paid to student	Ends the day you leave Selected Reserve
<b>REAP</b>	90 days of active continuous service (after 9/10/01)	36	Paid to student	Generally 10 years from the day you leave the Selected Reserve or the day you leave the IRR 4
<b>VEAP</b>	181 continuous days of active service (between 12/31/76 and 7/1/85)	36	Paid to student	10 years from last day of active duty
<b>DEA</b>	N/A	45	Paid to student	Please see the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs website <a href="http://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/handouts_forms.asp">www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/handouts_forms.asp</a>



# Contact Information

**Polk State Veterans Services:** 863.298.6886 | [veterans@polk.edu](mailto:veterans@polk.edu) | [www.polk.edu/veterans](http://www.polk.edu/veterans)



**Winter Haven Campus**  
Modular #4  
999 Avenue H, N.E.  
Winter Haven, FL 33881  
863.297.1010 x5390



**Lakeland Campus**  
LTB 1155  
3425 Winter Lake Rd.  
Lakeland, FL 33803  
863.297.1010 x6383



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have served this country.**

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**[www.polk.edu/veterans](http://www.polk.edu/veterans)**