A Sigh of Relief…

Dear Student Veterans,

Congress recently passed Senate Bill 3503 to ensure you continue to receive educational benefits without interruption even if schools have moved to remote instruction. Thanks to this legislation, GI Bill® students will continue receiving the same Monthly Housing Allowance (MHA) until Dec. 21, 2020 or until the school is re-opened for in-person classes.

We know there are many questions regarding this legislation, COVID-19 and the impact to students receiving VA Educational Benefits. The following slides have been created to help answer some of the questions that our office has been receiving. If you have additional inquiries after reviewing these slides, you can contact our office and/or set an appointment to speak with one of our staff.

Office Hours: 8am - 5pm
Office Ph: 561-297-4725
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Sincerely,

Mr. Michael W. Allison, U.S.M.C.
Director/SCO, Military and Veteran Affairs
Q1: What impact does Senate Bill 3503 have on Institutions of Higher Learning (IHL) like FAU?

A1: When an IHL, such as FAU, converts an approved “face-to-face” course to online instruction (remote learning), the course will continue to be recognized as a “face-to-face” course. The law is in effect from March 1, 2020 until December 21, 2020 or until the school is re-opened for in-person classes.

A1b: The bill affects all VA education payments, including the Post-9/11 GI Bill®, Montgomery GI Bill®, Dependents Education Assistance and the Vocational Rehabilitation & Education (VR&E) programs.

Q2: Does the senate bill allow veteran students to enroll in Non-College Degree (NCD) education or training programs or courses that were not previously approved by the State Approving Agency (SAA)?

A2: No, only programs and courses previously approved by the SAA will be approved for veteran education benefits.
Identifying Remote Courses

Courses change from in person to remote (online) have an updated attribute of “Originally In Person-Campus CODE”. These courses are certified as in person to the VA.

Self Service → Registration → Register for Classes → Class details (Double click on the course) → Course Attributes

i.e: The image shows the campus for the course as Distance Learning, however the course has the “Originally In Person –Boca SOBO” attribute, to show the change from in person to remote(online).
**Your Housing Allowance & VA Work Study**

**Q3:** How does remote instruction affect my Monthly Housing Allowance (MHA)?

**A3:** Students will continue to receive the same MHA they were receiving for “face-to-face” courses although course instruction is now remote/online.

**Note:** Non-COVID-19 related changes must still be reported to the VA. If you withdraw from a class or change your enrollment status, your monthly housing allowance may be affected. Students who are required to withdraw due to verifiable exposure to or diagnoses of COVID-19 or military activation should follow the university’s Exceptional Circumstances Withdrawal (ECW) process. See Q8-Q9.

**Q4:** Will I be able to continue my VA Work Study position while the university is under “remote instruction” only?

**A4:** Yes, you are able to continue in your VA Work Study position. If changes are implemented by the VA, you will be contacted by your supervisor.
Enrollment Status, Grades & Tuition/ Fees

Q5: Will my enrollment status be changed from “face-to-face” to “online”?

A5: SCOs have been directed by the VA not to submit enrollment adjustments for the current term unless you withdraw from your course(s). The new law applies equally to current FAU students and new students who enroll in VA approved “face to face” courses that are now being offered remotely until December 21, 2020 or the school resumes in-person classes.

Q6: I heard I can elect “Pass/Fail” instead of a grade. Does the VA require me to have a certain GPA?

A6: No. There has never been a GPA requirement for GI Bill® programs. SCOs are required to report whether you add/drop courses, withdraw from the term, are placed on academic probation/suspension/expulsion, or suspended for conduct. We do recommend you speak to your academic adviser before electing the pass/fail option since some college programs do not permit pass/fail grades.

Q7: How does remote instruction affect tuition and fee payments?

A7: Tuition and Fee payments will not change due to COVID-19.
Help! I have to Withdraw from my Courses!

Q8: What if I become ill due to COVID-19 and cannot continue with my classes?

A8a: The onset, severity, and length of the illness will determine your options. We encourage you to first contact your instructors to determine whether an “Incomplete Grade” is an option. An incomplete grade will not affect your monthly housing allowance.

A8b: If you are unable to continue in your classes and an incomplete grade is not an option, you may be eligible for an Exceptional Circumstance Withdrawal. Please click HERE for the ECW process. Your last day of attendance must be reported to the VA. The law does not permit the VA to continue MHA beyond the last day of attendance.

Q9: What if I am activated by the U.S. National Guard, Reserves or other military branch as a result of COVID-19 and must withdraw from all of my courses?

A9: Students activated for military service should follow the ECW process and supply a copy of their official orders.
Fall Terms & Covid-19

**Q10:** Will FAU be offering Fall Courses?

**A10:** YES! Fall Terms are open for registration. You may register as long as you do not have a registration hold. Some courses are offered in-person and online, while others are changed to remote (from in person to online).

**Q11:** It takes time for my veteran education benefits to pay-out. How do I receive a deferment for tuition and fees?

**A11:** Once you register for classes, Complete the *Fall 2020 VA Certification Request Form* [www.fau.edu/vets](http://www.fau.edu/vets) with a copy of your Certificate of Eligibility (COE). A deferment is applied once the form is received.

If the VA Certification Request is not received before the fees due deadline the university is subject to charge late fees after the deadline. VA benefits does not cover any late fee charges.
I’m NEW to FAU and want to use my benefits

**Q12:** How do I use my veteran education benefits during COVID-19?

**A12:** Obtain your Certificate of Eligibility (COE) from the VA and complete FAU’s admission’s process by clicking HERE. Once admitted, you will be able to register for courses and begin the certification process. The certification request form will be made available at [https://www.fau.edu/vets/](https://www.fau.edu/vets/).

**Note:** Please make a PDF copy of your COE. You will need to submit a certification request form and your COE for every semester you plan to use your educational benefits.

**Q13:** What do I do if I am out of state or do not meet Florida residency requirements for tuition purposes?

**A13:** Federal and state regulations allow us to provide in-state tuition rates. Please complete an “Out Of State Tuition Waiver” also available on [https://www.fau.edu/vets/](https://www.fau.edu/vets/).
What if **NO** Classes can be Offered?

**Q14:** What if the university temporarily shuts down and no classes are offered remote, online or in-person?

**A14:** If FAU is forced to temporarily cease all operations after a semester has already begun and classes cannot continue to be offered remotely or online due to COVID-19, veteran students will continue to receive their MHA until the end of the term or 4 (28 days) weeks from the date that the school ceases **ALL** operations.
Q15: Who can I talk to?

A15a: Students’ primary point of contact should be their School Certifying Official (SCO), particularly with questions and concerns about enrollment changes, certification, course changes, and payment of allowances.

A15b: For questions about emergency financial aid, students should contact their school’s financial aid office, student affairs office, or their academic advisor.

You can also contact VA’s Education Call Center to speak with a VA representative at 1-888-442-4551 or contact Student Veterans of America’s National Headquarters at policy@studentveterans.org.
Links and Resources

Fall 2020: Learning at #FAU during COVID-19 (Video): click HERE

COVID-19 Information Affecting Education Benefits click HERE
I Miss My Fellow Comrades!

Q15: How can I stay connected to other student veterans or how can I meet new ones?

A15: The Registered Student Organization “Veteran Owls” and the "Military and Veterans Student Success Center” is here for you. Look for us on social media and keep an eye out for e-mails with the subject line “Engage” for virtual concerts, comedy shows, giveaways, and more! We’re in this together!
Thank You & Stay Safe

Contact Us

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