

Reservist and Guard members have a new Education Benefits option.

Public Law 110-181, authorized an accelerated payment option for Reserve GI Bill & REAP recipients effective October 1, 2008. An accelerated payment is a lump sum payment of 60% of tuition and fees for certain high cost, high tech programs. To qualify, the participant must be enrolled in a high tech program and must certify they intend to seek employment in a high tech industry as defined by VA. Accelerated payment is paid instead of GI Bill benefits that the participant would otherwise receive.

Accelerated payments under this program may only be made to reservists pursuing a program of education lasting 2 years or less that does not lead to a degree (i.e. bachelor's, masters, etc.). Additionally, the tuition and fees must exceed 200% of the monthly amount of educational assistance that he or she would otherwise be eligible to receive during the certified period of enrollment.

If you have further questions, contact VA at 1-888-GIBILL-1 (1-888-442-4551) or visit the VA web site at <http://www.gibill.va.gov/> and click the "Education Benefits" tab.

To determine your specific benefits, please go to VA web listed above, click the "Education Benefits" tap and follow the link to "How to Apply". On that page, click on the link to complete an online application. You will need the following information from your Career Education Specialist at The Learning Center to complete the questions in Section 12:

12a. The Learning Center
Address thru 12/31/2008
2975 S. Rainbow Bl. Suite D-1
Las Vegas, NV. 89146

Address after 1/1/2009
777 N. Rainbow Bl. Suite 150
Las Vegas, NV. 89107

12b. Start date: XX/XX/XXXX

12c. Career goal: IT Certifications

Questions and Answers about Accelerated Pay:

What is an Accelerated Payment?

An accelerated payment is a lump sum payment of 60% of tuition and fees for certain high cost, high tech programs. If you do not have sufficient entitlement to cover 60% of tuition and fees, we will pay you based on your actual remaining entitlement.

VA will make accelerated payments for one term, quarter, or semester at a time. However, if the program is not offered on a term, quarter or semester basis, the accelerated payment is paid for the entire program. To qualify, you must be enrolled in a high tech program and you must certify that you intend to seek employment in a high tech industry as defined by VA. Accelerated payment is paid instead of Montgomery GI Bill benefits that you would otherwise receive.

Who qualifies for accelerated payments?

Only individuals eligible for the Montgomery GI Bill - Active Duty (Chapter 30), Montgomery GI Bill - Reserve Duty (Chapter 1606), and Reserve Educational Assistance Program (REAP) qualify for accelerated payments. Additionally, Reservists and REAP participants only qualify for accelerated payments for programs of education that began after October 1, 2008.

How high do the tuition and fees have to be?

To receive accelerated payment, the tuition and fees must be more than double the Montgomery GI Bill benefits that you would otherwise receive for that term. For example, if your full-time rate is \$732 and you are enrolled in a 4-month semester, your tuition and fees must be over \$5,856 (4 months x \$732=\$2,928; \$5,856=2 x \$2,928) before you could receive an accelerated payment.

If you receive \$900 monthly benefits, your tuition and fees must be over \$7,200 (4 months x \$900=\$3,600; \$7,200= 2 x \$3,600). If you receive \$1,050 monthly benefits, your tuition and fees must be over \$8,400 (4 months x \$1,050 = \$4,200; 2 x \$4,200 = \$8,400).

What programs qualify for accelerated payment?

For Active Duty GI Bill recipients, both degree and non-degree programs qualify. You must be enrolled in a program in one of the following categories:

- Life science or physical science (but not social science)
- Engineering (all fields)

- Mathematics
- Engineering and science technology
- Computer specialties
- Engineering, science, and computer management

For Reserve GI Bill and REAP recipients, only non-degree programs that last under 2 years qualify for accelerated payment.

What industries qualify for accelerated payments?

You must intend to seek employment in one of the following industries:

- Biotechnology
- Life Science Technologies
- Opto-electronics
- Computers and telecommunications
- Electronics
- Computer-integrated manufacturing
- Material Design
- Aerospace
- Weapons
- Nuclear technology

How do you apply for accelerated payments?

Ask your school to include your request for accelerated payment to VA when it sends your enrollment information to VA for processing. Your request must include your certification that you plan to seek employment in a high technology industry.

How is your education entitlement charged?

We will divide your accelerated payment by the amount of your full-time monthly rate (including kickers and additional contributions) and we will reduce your entitlement by the resulting number of months and days.

Example: Jill received an accelerated payment of \$3,600. Her full-time rate is \$900. VA will charge her entitlement as follows: $\$3,600/\$900 = 4$ months.

Can school related expenses (such as books, supplies, and living expenses) be counted as tuition and fees for accelerated payments?

No. Only the school's tuition and fees can be considered for accelerated payment.

Can you receive accelerated payments for short, non-degree course?

Yes, as long as they are approved for VA benefits. Short, expensive, IT courses offered by businesses typically are not approved for VA benefits.

Is it possible to receive an accelerated payment check before a school term begins?

No. VA needs to verify that you have enrolled before sending out the large payment. VA will pay you as soon after the start of the term as possible. You will receive your payment faster if you receive direct deposit.

Do you have to verify your enrollment each month if you receive an accelerated payment?

No. After you complete your enrollment, we will ask you to verify that you received the accelerated payment and we will also ask you to tell us how you used the accelerated payment (such as toward tuition, fees and books and supplies). We are asking the latter question for statistical purposes only because the law requires us to collect this information. Your answer will have no bearing on your entitlement to the accelerated payment. You must respond to these questions within 60 days from the end of your enrollment period or we will create an overpayment equal to the accelerated payment. As with any course, you must notify us of any change in your enrollment. Your school will be reporting any changes as well.

Is there any financial risk with accelerated payment?

Yes. If you receive a non-punitive grade (a grade that does not count toward graduation requirements such as a "W" for Withdrawal), you may have to repay all or part of your accelerated payment depending on the reasons you received that grade. You may have to repay a large amount of money.

Do you have to pay back the accelerated payments if you fail to find employment in a high technology industry?

No. The fact that you intended to find employment in a high technology industry is sufficient to let you keep your accelerated payments.

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