

# Starting Your Benefits at CCU

To access your VA Educational Benefit funds, you must complete three steps:

1. You must apply to the VA for approval of your eligibility.
2. You must be admitted to CCU.
3. Provide the Office of Financial Aid/Veterans Affairs with a copy of your curriculum/advisement record and if applicable, verification of transfer credits.

**You must follow procedures for maintaining your benefits once enrolled.**

## Applying for VA Eligibility Approval

The Office of Financial Aid/Veteran Affairs at CCU does not determine initial eligibility for any VA Educational Benefit program. The educational arm of the US Department of Veterans Affairs is the sole determining body of benefit eligibility.

Time is the key factor in the application process and often determines how you may apply for approval. The VA requests 30-45 business days (5-9 calendar weeks) to process an application. In most cases, however, processing time can take up to a month longer than that. Applications can be submitted to the VA before a student is officially admitted to CCU.

You may submit the application and supporting documents in one of two ways:

1. Mail a hard copy to the VA Regional Processing Center (RPO) in Decatur, Georgia. Use this option only if you are submitting the application at least two (2) months before your first (1st) planned semester of attendance. Once the application is approved, you will need to provide the resulting Certificate of Eligibility to the Office of Financial Aid/Veterans Affairs at CCU.
2. Apply online through the VA's online application system, at [VONAPP](#).

All VA Educational Benefits are part of what's commonly called the GI BILL. The VA classifies all recipients of benefits by the different chapters of the bill. In order to send the correct application to the VA you must know what chapter you are. To find your chapter and application requirements click [here](#).

If you have specific questions about a program that aren't answered on these pages, please contact the USDVA Regional Processing Office toll-free at 1-888-442-4551 or go to their website, [www.gibill.va.gov](http://www.gibill.va.gov).

## Admission

Complete an application for degree seeking student status and submit it to the Office of Admissions & Adult Student Services.

- Complete admission requirements  
Undergraduate: [www.coastal.edu/admissions](http://www.coastal.edu/admissions)  
Graduate: [www.coastal.edu/graduate](http://www.coastal.edu/graduate)
- Select a program of study, **a requirement for VA educational benefits**. First time students will be allowed up to two (2) semesters of undecided work, all other students must declare a major.

### Exception

CROSS-REGISTERED STUDENTS: If you are only visiting CCU for one semester, or the summer, you must provide the VA Certifying Official with a copy of an approved cross registration form. This form must show that the courses taken at CCU will be received by your home school and applied to your program of study. You must also complete the [CCU Request for Enrollment Certification](#).

## Policies and Procedures to maintain benefit eligibility

### Enrollment

The VA only pays benefits if the student is enrolled. Students must notify the Certifying Official in the OFAVA of their registered enrollment for each semester they wish to receive payments by completing the [CCU Request for Enrollment Certification](#). Students must not change their enrollment without notifying the Certifying Official in the OFAVA as this may result in overpayments and collection activities.

### Financial Aid

Students who receive VA Educational benefits may also qualify for Title IV Federal financial aid, which may include grants, federal work study and loans. **\*\*\*Important Note\*\*\*** ALL VA benefits, including Dependent's benefits and monthly benefits, are included in the financial aid package when determining eligibility for other forms of aid. This means that if you are originally offered several forms of merit-based or need-based aid (i.e. the LIFE Scholarship, the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship, the SC Need-Based Grant, etc.), your award amounts may be reduced or eliminated entirely from your financial aid package once your monthly benefits and/or other VA benefits are processed. You may not be awarded over your Cost of Attendance (COA) for any form of financial aid, including veterans benefits. For more information regarding COA, click [here](#).

### Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) or Standards of Progress (SOP)

In addition to [CCU's SAP policy](#), and the [OFAVA's SOP policy](#), students receiving VA Educational Benefits must also meet the SAP or SOP requirements of the VA. Failure to meet these requirements may result in the student losing benefit eligibility until the deficiencies are corrected.