



Veterans Educational Benefits

Information Packet

2017 -2018

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Rio Salado's Veterans Services

The Rio Salado College (RSC) Veterans Services Office is proud to serve our veterans and their dependents. We act as the liaison between the college and the Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA). The purpose of our office is to coordinate the processing of students' GI Bill® educational benefits and, in a broader sense, to help them successfully reach their goals as students at RSC.

Office Location & Important Phone Numbers

Rio Salado College
2323 W. 14th Street
Tempe, Arizona 85281
Hours: 8 to 5pm M – Th.
9 to 5pm Fri.

Veterans Services	P: (480) 517-8153; Toll Free: (877)517-8153
Admissions & Records	P: (480) 517-8540
Academic Advisement, Military	P: (480) 517-8590; Toll Free: (800)517-8590
Cashiers Office	P: (480) 517-8330
Counseling & Career Services	P: (480) 517-8785
Disability Resources	P: (480) 517-8562
Financial Aid Office	P: (855) 622-2332
Testing	P: (480) 517-8560
Tutoring Services	P: (480) 517-8247

Important Fax Numbers & Email Addresses

Veterans Services	F: (480)517-8185
Military Advisement	F: (888) 295-8439
Enrollment verifications	F: (480)377-4736
Prerequisites verification for enrollment	F: (480)377-4899
Transcript requests	F: (480) 377-4741
Residency Documents	residency@riosalado.edu

Department of Veterans Affairs

VONAPPS (Apply for benefits, change schools)	http://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/apply.asp	
Monthly Enrollment Certification	https://www.gibill.va.gov/wave/index.do	
Monthly Enrollment Certification (Ch. 30, CH.35 (certificates only), 1606, & 1607)		1-877-823-2378
VA Regional Office, Muskogee, OK		1-888-442-4551
VA Direct Deposit/Address Change		1-877-838-2778

GI Bill® Benefit Chapters

RSC Veterans Services does not determine eligibility for benefits. Only the Department of Veterans Affairs can do that. The information below is presented only as a rough guide to the payment you can expect if the DVA finds you eligible for a program.

FOR VETERANS:

- **Chapter 33, Post-9/11 GI Bill®:** The veteran is awarded a percentage of entitlement based on length of active military service after 9/10/2001. DVA will pay this percentage of:
 - in-state tuition and fees
 - BAH (rate for an E5 with dependents in zip code 85281 for in-person enrollment; one-half the national average rate for completely online enrollments)
 - book stipend of up to \$1000 per academic year based on number of credits
- **Chapter 30, Montgomery GI Bill®:** DVA pays veteran a monthly stipend.
- **Chapter 31, Vocational Rehabilitation:** Veteran must have 20% or higher service-connected disability to be eligible. Benefits are authorized through a DVA case manager. Program will pay tuition and fees, actual cost of books, and a supplies stipend. The veteran also receives a monthly living stipend.

FOR RESERVISTS:

- **Chapter 1606, Selected Reserves:** Reservists and National Guard members who have never been activated. DVA pays a small monthly stipend.
- **Chapter 1607, Reserve Educational Assistance Program:** Reservists who have served active duty time. DVA pays a monthly stipend based on length of active duty service.

FOR SPOUSES AND DEPENDENTS:

- **Chapter 35, Survivors and Dependents Educational Assistance (DEA):** For spouses and children of veterans who are deceased or who have a 100% service-connected disability rating. Recipient is paid a monthly stipend.
- **Chapter 33, Post-9/11 GI Bill® Transfer of Education Benefit (TEB aka TOE):** Eligibility to transfer benefits to a spouse or dependents is based on length of service and retirement eligibility date.
Transferring benefits is a three-step process:
 1. The service member applies for his/her benefits through VONAPP at <http://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/apply.asp>
 2. Once approved for benefits, the service member applies with Department of Defense (DoD) for approval to transfer the benefits
 3. Once DoD approval is received, the spouse or child applies through VONAPP at <http://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/apply.asp> to complete the transfer.
- **Fry's Scholarship:** This benefit is for children of service members who die in the line of duty. They are eligible for the full benefit of Ch33 post-911.

For pamphlets & fact sheets regarding these and other benefits please visit the following website:
http://gibill.va.gov/resources/student_handouts/index.html

How to Apply for and use Veterans Educational Benefits at RSC

1. **Apply for your VA benefits online:** Complete your application for GI Bill® education benefits online by clicking on the Apply for Benefits button at <http://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/apply.asp>. The DVA will process your application and send you a Certificate of Eligibility letter 4-6 weeks later.
2. Apply for RSC admission www.my.maricopa.edu and take the placement test.
3. Meet with a RSC Military Advisor to determine your program of study and select your classes within this program of study.
4. Submit academic transcripts from **ALL** colleges previously attended to the military advisement office. Please note that military transcripts, transcripts from any institution that has previously certified you for benefits, and non-regionally accredited institutions are also required.
5. Once all transcripts have been submitted, contact military advisement to request **evaluation** of those transcripts. **Rio Salado College requires that all transcript be submitted prior to enrollment in your first term. The RSC Veterans Services will not certify you until all transcripts have been evaluated.** Upon completion of your transcript evaluations, a military advisor will create a RioCompass check sheet and academic plan.
6. After you are enrolled in classes, complete and submit to RSC Veterans Services your MCCCDD Request for Benefits Form.

Please note: CH35 beneficiaries should make sure they indicate the proper VA file number (usually the veteran's SSN). Certifications can not be processed without this information.

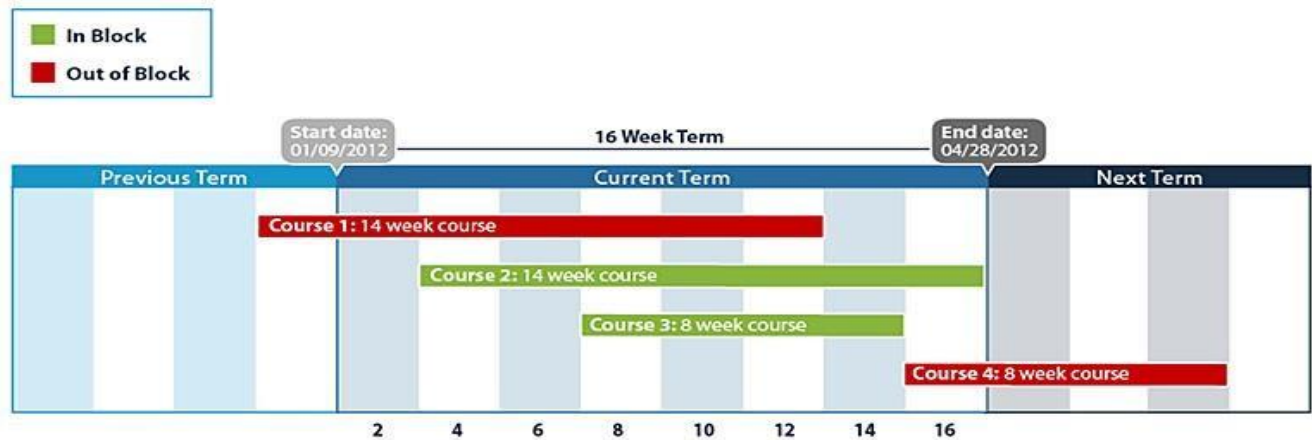
RSC Semester Block System

Like traditional institutions that operate on semesters, Rio Salado College structures its academic programs in 16-week semester blocks. Unlike traditional institutions, Rio Salado College has 40 semester blocks start dates!

Rio's academic calendar is divided into three terms (fall, spring, and summer), fall and spring with 16 semester blocks and summer with 8 semester blocks. Each semester block is 16 weeks long, with fixed start and end dates. Students that are planning to earn a degree or certificate at Rio will be placed in a semester block. When students selects a start date for their classes, the start date will determine their semester block for that term, and all coursework for that term must be completed within that semester block's start and end dates.

For example, in Fall term 2010, Block 1 began Aug. 23 and ended on Dec. 13. If a student was enrolled in that block, he/she must have completed all fall classes within that timeframe.

The following graphic provides another example:



Taking classes block by block provides students with a roadmap to follow as they work toward attaining their educational goals. They'll stay on course by knowing their class options.

For more information about Rio's block calendar, visit the [Semester Block Calendar](#) pages.

The Certification Process at RSC

Our Veterans Services office is in a continuous state of activity. Providing 40 opportunities to start or continue an academic program requires a great deal of coordination and organization. In order to ensure that all students are as prepared as possible to achieve their academic goals, and to effectively serve all students in a timely and compliant manner, Rio Salado College has established processing deadlines.

Processing Deadlines

New Rio students: To enroll in your preferred start date, the MCCCDC Request for Benefits Form must be submitted 7 business days prior to that start date.

Rio Class Length Options

Rio Salado College offers many courses in varying degrees of length. For example, many classes that are 14 or 16 weeks in length also provide an accelerated 8 week option.

Students are responsible for selecting the appropriate length of their course. The option to accelerate to an 8 week option is available in the online learning system, RioLearn. Please visit our website <http://www.riosalado.edu/8week/Pages/HowTo.aspx> for step to step guidance.

DVA Enrollment Certification

VA payment is based on the length of the courses and the total credits in which a student is enrolled. (i.e. 6 credits of 8 week classes AND 12 credits of 14 week classes are two different ways of maintaining full time VA status.)

Rio Salado College submits all enrollment certifications electronically to the DVA 7 business days **after** the start date of the student's semester block. By waiting this one week period of time, the RSC VA office can verify the course length that was selected, submit accurate information to the VA and ensure accurate VA payment for the veteran. **Please note that this delay will cause a delay in obtaining your VA benefit, it is the student's responsibility to budget accordingly. RSC will assist with providing MCCCD book loans and tuition deferments when needed (see below for more information)**

To review enrollment certification dates for each semester block, go to <http://www.riosalado.edu/veteran/Pages/Processing-Deadlines.aspx> You will receive an email to your official Maricopa email by VA-Once (the system used to certify enrollment) with the subject "Confirmation-Enrollment Information Sent to VA" once your certification has been processed.

Please note that after you receive your confirmation email, your certification is sent to the DVA and is viewable to them with 48 hours. The DVA's processing time varies depending on the time of year. For information on current processing time please contact the DVA. Once the DVA has processed your certification, you will receive a letter from them outlining your VA benefit.

You will only be certified for classes required for your program of study. Certification to the DVA is not automatic: **You must submit a new Benefits Pay Request Form to the RSC Veterans Services Office each semester you are enrolled in classes.**

CONCURRENT ENROLLMENT

When receiving DVA Educational Benefits, students may be concurrently enrolled at more than one school during the same semester as long as all classes apply to the degree program at **one** of the schools. The college which offers the degree of interest is considered the "parent school." If

RSC is the parent school and a student plans on taking classes at another institution which certifies students for veteran's benefits, the student must notify the RSC Veterans Services Office. He/she will need to complete the appropriate paperwork in order to be certified for all classes. If the other school is the parent school, the student must work with that Veterans Services office to insure that a parent school letter is sent to RSC.

TUITION DEFERMENT

Under Arizona State law, [ARS:41-611](#), students using educational benefits are eligible for deferred payment of tuition and fees. This eliminates the need for the student to pay RSC charges

up-front while waiting for DVA payment. Payment will be deferred for up to 120 days after the start date of your courses.

To receive the deferment, the student must submit the Benefits Pay Request Form (electronically through dynamic forms or in person) or a Parent's School Letter (fax or email) to RSC Veterans Services office by 4pm Arizona time daily. We **can not** guarantee that you will not be dropped from courses if the needed documentation is submitted after that time. It is therefore imperative that students act quickly to submit forms to Veterans Services after they have enrolled in classes.

IMPORTANT: All outstanding student balances are expected to be paid by the end of each term of study. Students who owe a balance at the end of any term of study will only be held through the first day of class for their next semester block.

MCCCD BOOK LOANS FOR VETERAN STUDENTS

The same state law that allows us to issue deferred payment of tuition also allows for deferred payment on books and materials. It allows our institution to provide you with a **loan** to pay your book costs up front. The amount awarded is based on the total credits enrolled at the time of request. In order to comply with this law, the Maricopa Community College District (MCCCD) has instituted book advances for you to receive these loan funds. Book advances are sent to students through the Maricopa Student Refund Program, a partnership between the Maricopa Community Colleges and a third party, Citi Prepaid Services.

To be eligible for this program you must complete the following steps:

1. Contact the RSC Veterans Services Office to request a book loan and to complete a promissory note. The RSC Veterans Services Office will send you an email with a promissory note (through dynamic forms) that will need to be completed.
2. You must enroll with Money Network at <https://my.maricopa.edu/msrp> to ensure you receive your payment. There are three options for payment:
 - a. You can choose to receive a prepaid visa card. Processing time to receive this card is 10 days minimum. Any future requests for funds will be loaded on this card. This option will prove to be the quickest route to receiving funds for future terms. Upon release of funds, money will populate on the card within 2 to 3 days.
 - b. You can choose to receive your advance through direct deposit. You will receive your book advance in 3 to 4 days.
 - c. Failure to select preferred method will cause your book advance to be delivered via mail as a check. This can take 2 to 3 weeks minimum.

[Click here for more information about the Maricopa Student Refund Program \(MSRP\).](#)

Please note that to receive this advance prior to your start date you must request your book advance at least 10 business days prior to the start of your course (if direct deposit is your selected option). This does not include the additional processing time listed above for check or prepaid card method.

IMPORTANT: All outstanding student balances are expected to be paid by the end of each term of study. Students who owe a balance at the end of any term of study are not eligible to receive a book loan for their next term.

DVA Payment

DVA only pays for the time periods that students are actually in classes: break pay was abolished in 2011.

The DVA only pays for the in-state rate of tuition.

If you are a veteran and have lived in the state of Arizona for less than a year, you can apply to receive automatic in-state residency. Please see below under residency for more information.

If you are a distance learning student, please be aware that for CH33 DVA will only pay the in-state fees. This is currently \$84 of the \$215 rate.

Educational benefits are paid in arrears, meaning you are paid the month AFTER you earn the benefit. For example, you will not receive payment for the month of August until the beginning of September. Payment for partial months of training is prorated by DVA.

Chapters 30, 35 (certificate seeking only), 1606, & 1607 - Veterans certified for these chapters must verify their enrollment monthly to receive payment. This verification can be done via the automated phone number 1-877-823-2378 or on the WAVE website <https://www.gibill.va.gov/wave/index.do> You are not allowed to do this prior to the last day of the month. Benefits are paid directly to the recipient.

Chapter 33 (Post 9/11 GI Bill®) - Veterans certified for this chapter will be directly paid their monthly Housing Allowance (BAH) and Book Stipend. Tuition and Fees are paid directly to the school. ***NOTE: Housing allowance is not payable to individuals on active duty. Housing allowance is not payable for those pursuing training at half-time or less. Housing allowance will be prorated for those pursuing training at a rate over half-time but less than full-time.***

To figure the prorated amount, divide your actual number of credits by the number considered to be full-time and round to the nearest tenth.

For example: student is enrolled in 10 credit hours in a full semester where 12 is full-time.

$10 \div 12 = .8333333$, which rounds to 80%. DVA will pay 80% of usual BAH rate.

Direct Deposit is available for all chapters. Call 1-877-838-2778 to set up or change direct deposit with the DVA.

Monthly Pay Rates

Rates Tables for Chapter 30, 33, 35, 1606, & 1607 are available at http://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/resources/benefits_resources/rate_tables.asp

Pay in all benefit chapters is based on level of enrollment at any given moment in time, not over the entire semester. For chapter 33, the student must be OVER half-time to earn BAH.

Residency classification

Arizona state law grants eligibility to be reclassified as a resident for tuition purposes to veterans and eligible dependents. **This is not automatic.** To be reclassified, the student must submit copies of the following documents to RSC's Admissions and Records office **before the start of classes**:

Veterans (with honorable discharge)

- Domicile Affidavit form (available from Admissions & Records)
- DD-214 Member 4 copy showing an honorable discharge
- Proof of intent to reside in Arizona. The following items will suffice:
 - Proof of Arizona voter registration (available at www.azsos.gov)
 - Arizona driver's license
 - Arizona motor vehicle registration
 - Employment history in Arizona
 - Transfer of major banking services to Arizona
 - Change of permanent address on all pertinent records

Dependent (spouse or child) of Veteran/Active Duty Service member; OR Veteran (with less than honorable discharge)

- Domicile Affidavit form (available from Admissions & Records)
- Certificate of Eligibility (COE) from Department of Veteran Affairs awarding CH30 or CH33 benefits, awarding the Fry scholarship; OR the Department of Defense document approving transfer of the CH33 benefit to the student.
- DD-214 providing a minimum of 90 days total service and a discharge date no more than 3 years prior to enrollment; OR a minimum of 90 days total service and a service-connected date of death no more than 3 years prior to enrollment. (Dependents may submit a Military ID card if service member is still active).
- Proof of intent to reside in Arizona. The following items will suffice:
 - Proof of Arizona voter registration (available at www.azsos.gov)
 - Arizona drivers license
 - Arizona motor vehicle registration
 - Employment history in Arizona
 - Transfer of major banking services to Arizona
 - Change of permanent address on all pertinent records

Considerations for dependents:

- Students using CH35 (Dependents and Survivors Educational Assistance) are **NOT** eligible for the residency change under this law.

Grades & Withdrawals

If you are unsure of the financial consequences of dropping a class, please contact RSC Veterans Services Office. We will gladly help you examine the consequences for your chapter of benefits and discuss possible alternatives to dropping the class! Remember, if you do not participate in your course, you may be dropped for non-attendance and face the same consequences as voluntarily withdrawing.

Listed below are the guidelines used by the DVA for determining what classes you will receive payment for:

VA will pay for:

A, B, C, D, F, and P grades

VA will not pay for:

Dropped classes (withdrawals during drop period)
Z - (no credit)
W - (withdrawal after drop period)
Y- [withdrawal failing grade)
F- dropped for non-attendance

If you drop a class after the tuition refund deadline (viewable under Account Inquiry on your My.Maricopa page), the DVA will not pay for the portion beyond the drop date, but you will still be charged the entire amount for the class. The DVA may refuse to pay for any portion of a dropped course if it feels the drop was not justified by "mitigating circumstances."

Academic Progress

Veterans must follow RSC academic progress policy listed below in order to remain eligible for benefits.

Credit hours for which grade Points are computed at resident Maricopa Community College <u>(A,B,C,D, and F)</u> 12+	Minimum Grade Point <u>Average Required</u> 2.00
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DVA regulations require that all persons using any type of veteran educational assistance program make satisfactory academic progress toward achievement of their educational objective (program of study). A student who does not meet the minimum standards (see above) will be placed on academic probation for a maximum of two consecutive semesters. The DVA requires schools to notify them of all students on probation. After two semesters on probation, if satisfactory academic progress has not been demonstrated, veteran educational benefits will be terminated. Benefits may be resumed when the student raises the cumulative grade point average to the required minimum standards or has demonstrated the ability to meet these standards through the approval of a written appeal. Contact the RSC Veterans Services Office for information on the appeal process.

Online Coursework

Distance learning courses, also referred to as e-learning courses, are taught via the internet and may be entirely or partly online. Courses taught partly online are identified as hybrid in the class schedule. E-learning courses cover the same material as courses taught in person. To be successful in e-learning courses students should possess a reasonable level of comfort with technology and have consistent access to a computer with a reliable internet service provider. Communication among students, and between students and instructors, is mediated by RioLearn, the Learning Management System (LMS) used for online and hybrid courses. Communication between instructors and students occurs on an on-going basis, generally weekly as due dates are established for assignments to keep students on track for completion of their course work.

Although Rio Salado College provides courses in modules of varying length, coursework is not self-paced. **Please note that should an instructor grade your course early as a result of self-acceleration you will only be paid for the time you were in course.**

To prevent your instructor from grading you out early, students should log into their courses weekly, access lessons and submit lessons as they are due. Please note that if students do not participate they may be graded out with a W or Y grade. If students have not completed their course work in the allotted course time, they may be able to request specific course extensions (course extensions are granted by the discretion of the instructor or by department policy). Please note that the DVA **will not** pay for the time you are completing your course extension (any time past the official end date of the course).

Other Programs and Additional Information

TUTORIAL ASSISTANCE

Students are strongly encouraged to take advantage of RSC Tutoring Center. If a student requires additional tutoring, DVA may pay tutorial assistance to a student receiving education benefits. To qualify, you must have a deficiency in a subject you are currently enrolled in which makes tutoring necessary. The instructor must sign a request for tutorial assistance and recommend a tutor.

The monthly rate may not exceed the cost of tutoring or \$100. The maximum amount payable is \$1200. There is no entitlement charge for the first \$600 under chapters 30 and 1606. There is no entitlement charge under chapter 33 or 35. For Chapter 33, individuals must have a rate of pursuit of at least 50% to receive tutorial assistance. Tutorial Assistance is not available for Chapter 1607.

LICENSING AND CERTIFICATION BENEFIT

This benefit allows DVA to pay for a license or certification test, if you are eligible. Please contact the DVA or RSC VS Office for more information. Using the test benefit will cost you entitlement.

VA WORK STUDY PROGRAM

This is a tax free employment program through the DVA. You must be enrolled at least $\frac{3}{4}$ time and receiving educational benefits. This program is available for all chapters except the VRAP program. The following offices employ DVA work study; please inquire directly with that office to see if they have a current need for student workers:

RSC Veterans Affairs	(480)-517-8153
DVA Office, Phoenix	(800)-827-1000
VA Hospital	(602) 227-5551
D.E.S. Phoenix	(602) 861-0496
D.E.S. Mesa	(480) 834-7777

VETERANS UPWARD BOUND PROGRAM

Veterans Upward Bound (VUB) is a free college preparatory program for veterans. The program provides individualized self-paced basic skill instruction, career testing, and employment counseling. This program is highly recommended for veterans new to college and those who may want to improve their academic and/or computer skills. For more information visit:

<https://students.asu.edu/trio/vub>

EAST VALLEY VETERANS EDUCATION CENTER (EVVEC)

The Maricopa Community Colleges East Valley Veterans Education Center (EVVEC) provides educational outreach and college advisement services to veterans and their family members at no cost. We offer a “one-stop-shop” where veterans can get practical information about the

educational resources available to successfully pursue a college education. Services offered include:

- Computer use for active, reserve and veteran college students and their spouses.
- Skype service to facilitate communication/connection with family during mobilization.
- Assistance in applying for VA educational benefits.
- Educational, employment and workforce development workshops.
- Employment service as an access point for Maricopa and Phoenix Workforce Development
- Referrals to community resources (medical, housing, vocational, etc.)
- VUB courses in remedial subjects such as math and english.
- View more information including a live monthly calendar of events at <http://www.evvec.org/Pages/default.aspx>
- Contact information for EVVEC is 480-384-9850.

Tuition Assistance

Reservists, National Guard members and active duty service members are frequently eligible for Federal Tuition Assistance (TA) funding from their military units. TA is a Department of Defense program and the amount of funding available and the application process varies by branch of service and by unit. See your unit's Education Service Officer (ESO) for further information and to initiate the process of requesting and being approved for TA. Completed Tuition Assistance paperwork should be turned in directly to RSC Fiscal Office (Cashiering), not RSC VA Office.

Military Transcripts

Obtain a transcript translating your formal military education and job experience into civilian language. Not all of your classes will be accepted and may not transfer to other colleges.

Army, Navy, Marines, and United States Coast Guard—Joint Services Transcript

<https://jst.doded.mil>

Air Force (CCAF)

<http://www.au.af.mil/au/ccaf/>

CLEP

<http://clep.collegeboard.org/>