

University of Wisconsin System

WI G.I. BILL BENEFITS: FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

NOTE: This FAQ does NOT yet address recent legislative changes that will be effective for spring term 2010.

APPLYING FOR WI G.I. BILL BENEFITS

1. Does this FAQ apply to anyone eligible for the WI G.I. Bill?

No, these FAQs are only for students attending University of Wisconsin System institutions. If you are a student in the Wisconsin Technical College System contact the appropriate School Veterans Certifying Official. They are listed in the brochure described in the next question.

2. Where do I get information about these benefits and how do I apply?

A brochure, which explains the benefits, lists School Veterans Certifying Officials at each institution, and includes the forms necessary to apply, is available for downloading online at [http://dva.state.wi.us/webForms/WDVA_B0105_Wisconsin_Tuition_Programs_\(WI_GI_Bill\)_Color.pdf](http://dva.state.wi.us/webForms/WDVA_B0105_Wisconsin_Tuition_Programs_(WI_GI_Bill)_Color.pdf)

This information is also available from your County Veterans Service Office (CVSO) or the School Veterans Certifying Official at your educational institution. Your CVSO provides information and assistance in obtaining state and federal veterans benefits. For a listing of CVSO's go to <http://dva.state.wi.us/CVSO.asp>.

3. There are two forms in the brochure, do I need to complete both?

Yes. To be considered for the WI G.I. Bill benefits you must submit the form entitled "Request for Certification..." to the Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs (WDVA) AND submit the form "Application for WI G.I. Bill Benefits..." to the educational institution you plan to attend. When WDVA determines the eligibility of the veteran, they will notify the educational institution of their determination. To have the certification process proceed in a timely manner, you must submit your application to the educational institution at the same time you submit your certification request to the WDVA.

4. Is there an application deadline to receive the fee remission?

Yes. Please submit applications for WI G.I. Bill benefits to WDVA and to the UW institution you plan to attend **within 14 calendar days** from the official start of the fall or spring term. For summer sessions, applications must be submitted by June 1st. For interim terms, applications are due by the due date for the term fees.

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Be sure to submit the request for certification to WDVA *at the same time* as you submit the application to your educational institution in order to allow time for WDVA to process the application, request additional information if needed, and send the completed certification to the educational institution. You are responsible to respond in a timely fashion if WDVA requests additional information.

If WDVA certification is not received by the educational institution by November 1 for fall, April 1 for spring, and July 1 for summer, you may not be eligible to receive the remission for that term. Certifications received after these dates will be processed for the subsequent term.

Once the certification and eligibility process has been successfully completed, a student's account will be adjusted to reflect the remission. The student will be liable for any unpaid fees and late charges that accrue after a specified due date.

5. What does the WI G.I. Bill remission cover? What fees does it not cover?

The Wisconsin G.I. bill includes two programs:

1. Veterans who meet the qualifying criteria under Wis. Stats. §36.27 are eligible to receive 100% remission of standard academic fees (resident tuition) and 100% of segregated fees. An eligible veteran who entered active military duty as a Wisconsin resident but is nonetheless considered a non-resident for tuition purposes is eligible to also receive 100% remission of the non-resident portion of the tuition.
2. The spouse, surviving spouse, or child of certain deceased or disabled veterans who meet the eligibility criteria under Wis. Stats. §36.27(3n) are eligible to receive a full remission of standard academic and segregated fees.

Academic fees are commonly referred to as either “resident tuition” or “in-state tuition.” Segregated fees are separate non-instructional fees charged to all students for the support of student life activities such as the student center and recreational sports, among others.

The Wisconsin G.I. bill remission does not apply to the following:

- Academic fees charged by a UW institution for study abroad programs where the fees collected are subsequently paid by the UW institution to a non-Wisconsin institution. It also does not apply to any non-instructional fees charged in connection with a study abroad program such as for travel or living expenses.
- The additional academic fees that are charged for certain academic programs that are funded on a self-supporting basis without state support. Students enrolled in these higher priced cost recovery programs will be responsible for the difference between the cost of regular tuition and fees (for graduate or undergraduate tuition respectively) and the full cost of the program.
- Other fees that are assessed in addition to academic student fees and segregated fees. Examples of fees that are not included in the remission include textbook rental fees, laptop rental fees, special course fees such as laboratory fees, the excess credits

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surcharge, and the United Council fee. Housing and meals plans are likewise not included in the remission.

- Fees charged for continuing education courses (where continuing education units – CEU's – are granted). The Wisconsin G.I. Bill applies only to tuition remissions for eligible individuals enrolled in academic, university-credit courses.

The School Veterans Certifying Official at the campus you plan to attend can assist you in obtaining specific information on any costs that may not be covered for your planned course of study and the other particulars of your situation.

You will be assessed and responsible to pay for any fees not covered by the WI G.I. Bill remission. Once the certification and eligibility process is completed you will be provided a bill indicating what fees are due and a due date to pay them. You will be liable for those fees and any late charges that accrue if they are not paid by the due date.

6. Does the Minnesota-Wisconsin reciprocity agreement allow me to apply the WI G.I. Bill to attend a school in Minnesota?

No, the WI G.I. Bill legislation is for students attending at University of Wisconsin System institutions only.

7. What exactly is an academic term?

An academic term, and its beginning and ending date, is defined by the educational institution. A term may be fall, spring, winter, or summer. In this document, "semester" and "term" are used synonymously.

8. Will I need to reapply each academic term?

Once you have applied, have been granted certification by WDVA, and been determined eligible by the educational institution, you do not need to reapply if you are continuously enrolled at that same institution. However, if there are changes to your residency, marital status, or to other items requested as part of the WI G.I. Bill benefits application, you must inform the school. If there is a break in your enrollment, excluding summer, or if you transfer to another UW System institution, you will need to reapply to the educational institution you plan to attend.

Once a specific UW institution has deemed that you are eligible for the WI G.I. Bill fee remission, you will continue to receive this remission unless you inform the School Veterans Certifying Official that you do not wish to receive it, in writing, **within 14 calendar days** from the official start of the fall or spring term or by June 1st for summer sessions.

It is the responsibility of the student to notify WDVA of any changes in the disability award of the eligible veteran.

9. How will I find out if I have been awarded a remission? Will WDVA or the campus inform me?

If you have been awarded a remission, the educational institution to which you have applied will notify you that your application has been successful and that the remission has been put into place. You will also receive a bill, assessing you for any fees not covered by the remission (see question #5). To avoid late charges, you will be responsible for paying those fees by the date determined by your campus for individuals receiving WI G.I. Bill remissions.

10. Might my financial aid be affected if I receive a WI G.I. Bill tuition remission?

Yes. The amounts and types of financial aid for which you are eligible may be affected by the WI G.I. Bill tuition remission. If your WI G.I. Bill tuition remission is approved after your financial aid package has already been issued, the financial aid package will need to be reassessed to reflect the new tuition resources you have received. Financial aid reassessments may occur throughout a term and are required by federal law whenever a student's financial need changes. Please consult the Financial Aid Office at the school you are attending if you have questions.

ELIGIBILITY

11. Is it possible to be currently in the military (Active Duty, Guard, or Reserves) and be considered a Wisconsin state veteran at the same time? Will the WI G.I. Bill apply to me if I take classes while on active duty?

Wisconsin veteran status does not require that one is in inactive duty status. If you meet all of the eligibility requirements, the WI G.I. Bill can apply for those still on active duty.

12. Am I eligible for other veterans benefits if I use the WI G.I. Bill benefits?

The best way to know what benefits you are eligible for is to contact your County Veterans Service Office <http://dva.state.wi.us/CVSO.asp> or the Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs <http://dva.state.wi.us/> directly.

13. How is “child” defined under the WI G.I. Bill provisions?

For the purposes of the WI G.I. Bill, the UW System has chosen to use the definitions outlined in Wis. Stats. §45.01(4), which define a child as “any biological child, any adopted child, any stepchild, or any other child who is a member of the veteran’s household, or any nonmarital child if the veteran acknowledges paternity or paternity has been otherwise established.”

14. What documentation is necessary to prove that I am the “child” of an eligible veteran?

The following documentation **in addition to** providing your own government issued photo I.D. (driver license, state I.D., passport, etc) would suffice to demonstrate that a student applicant is a “child” of an eligible veteran.

- ▶ Biological Child: A copy of the student’s Birth Certificate or similar official documents that identify parentage.
- ▶ Adopted Child: A copy of the student’s Adoption Certificate.
- ▶ Stepchild: A copy of the student’s Birth Certificate and a Marriage License that demonstrates the eligible veteran has married a biological parent of the student, or a copy of the Certificate of Eligibility for Federal VA benefits that indicates recognition as a stepchild.
- ▶ Other Child Who is a Member of the Veteran’s Household: A copy of the veteran’s most recent state and federal income taxes where the student is listed as a dependent and the student’s permanent address is the same as the veteran’s household address.
- ▶ Nonmarital Child: A copy of a certificate of paternity.

15. What documentation is necessary to demonstrate that I am the spouse of a certified veteran?

The following documentation is required to demonstrate that a student applicant is eligible for WI GI Bill tuition remission as the spouse of an eligible veteran.

- ▶ The spouse’s government issued photo I.D. (driver license, state I.D., passport, etc).
- ▶ A copy of the marriage certificate showing the student’s marriage to the certified veteran.

16. What documentation is necessary to demonstrate that I am the unremarried surviving spouse of an eligible veteran?

The following documentation is required to determine that a student applicant is eligible as an unremarried surviving spouse. These documents will be used to determine the eligibility ending date of WI GI Bill benefits for the unremarried surviving spouse.

- ▶ A copy of the marriage certificate showing the student’s marriage to the certified veteran.
- ▶ A copy of the latest federal or state tax return for the unremarried surviving spouse.
- ▶ A copy of the birth certificate or adoption papers for the youngest child born to or adopted by the unremarried surviving spouse and the certified veteran.

17. Can I provide copies of the documents to verify my relationship to the eligible veteran?

Yes. Photocopies are fine.

18. I am confused about the eligibility delimiting dates and ages. When do they start and end, and what happens if they begin or end within an academic term? Can I still receive the remission for that academic term?

The child of an eligible veteran must be at least 17 years old but not yet 26 years old on the first day of instruction as established by the institution, in order to take advantage of the WI G.I. Bill in a particular academic term. If the child's 26th birthday falls on or after the second day of the term, the child would be eligible for the benefit for that term.

Qualified spouses and unremarried surviving spouses have a specific window of time to take advantage of the benefits of the WI G.I. Bill.

1. If the eligible veteran and qualified spouse/unremarried surviving spouse had no children together, the spouse has a ten year period beginning from the date of the eligible veteran's death or initial Veterans Affairs disability determination of at least 30%. The educational institution will be informed of this start date by WDVA and will project ten calendar years into the future to establish a definitive eligibility end date.
2. If the eligible veteran and unremarried surviving spouse had children together, the unremarried surviving spouse has until ten years after their youngest child reaches, or would have reached, 18 years of age to take advantage of the WI GI Bill benefits, or during the first ten years after the veteran died, whichever is longer.

The qualified spouse or unremarried surviving spouse will be eligible to receive the benefits for an academic term as long as the eligibility end date is after the first day of instruction, as established by the institution, for the term, as long as all other eligibility requirements are met.

19. Do I need to be a full-time student to benefit from the WI G.I. Bill?

No, as of academic year 2007-08, the provisions of the WI GI Bill have changed to no longer require the children of eligible veterans to be enrolled full time. Spouses, unremarried surviving spouses, and the veterans themselves are also not required to be enrolled full-time. However, children and spouses must be Wisconsin residents for tuition purposes and meet other eligibility requirements as described in question #18.

20. For how many semesters and/or credits can I use the WI G.I. Bill?

You can receive the WI GI Bill tuition remission for up to 128 credits or eight semesters (whichever is longer) beginning the first time you are granted the WI G.I. Bill remission, provided that you maintain the other eligibility status requirements. The WI G.I. Bill was first implemented for the fall 2005 academic term. Students cannot receive remissions for semesters or credits used prior to that time.

21. What does "whichever is longer" mean when referring to my semester and credit limitations?

You have eight full semesters to receive this remission, even if your credits total more than 128. Conversely, you may receive this remission for more than eight semesters, as long as your total credits remain under 128.

For example:

- a. If you have received the remission for fewer than eight semesters but have completed 128 credits, you will still be eligible for eight semesters of remission even if it will put your total credits over 128.
- b. You can continue to get the remission for more than eight semesters if the number of credits you've taken is less than 128. After you have received the remission for eight or more semesters, and your credits total 128, you will not receive the remission.

22. How are the 128 credits counted? If I drop a course will those credits count towards the 128 credit limit?

If a grade is assigned in a course, then those credits will count towards the 128 credit limit. All courses graded on an A-F scale, pass/fail, or audit basis will count toward the limit. If you drop a course prior to the institutional add/drop deadline, the course will not appear on the transcript and will not count toward the 128 credit limit. Courses dropped after that deadline will appear on the transcript with a grade (e.g. W or DR) and will count toward the 128 credit limit.

23. What happens if I withdraw during the semester? Will the semester count against the eight semesters and 128 credit limitation?

If you withdraw from the institution prior to the 100% refund deadline, the semester and credits will not be counted toward the eight semesters and 128 credits allowed for the WI G.I. Bill benefits. If you withdraw from the institution after the 100% refund deadline, the semester and credits will count toward the eight semesters and 128 credits you are allowed under the WI G.I. Bill.

In some cases, if the withdrawal is due to medical circumstances, you may not be required to count the semester or credits against your WI GI Bill eligibility. Contact the veterans' services coordinator at your campus for more information.

24. What happens if I transfer to another UW System institution?

Your credits/semesters enrolled at any UW System institution are cumulative under the WI G.I. Bill. Your eligibility limitations (10 years, age, number of credits/semesters, etc.) are tracked based on enrollment at any and all UW System institutions. Remember that if you transfer or have a break of more than a semester (other than summer) in enrollment, you will need to submit a new application for the WI G.I. Bill tuition remission to the applicable UW institution.

25. What happens if I am concurrently enrolled in more than one UW institution or at a UW institution and a Wisconsin Technical College?

In order to receive a WI G.I. Bill remission, you need to apply for it at each UW institution or Wisconsin Technical College you attend.

If you are concurrently enrolled in more than one UW System institution and have been granted a WI G.I. Bill tuition remission, your credits earned/semesters attended at each UW System institution are cumulative under the WI G.I. Bill, the same as they are in the case of transfer

between UW System institutions (see question #24). The credits earned/semesters enrolled at any Wisconsin Technical College would not count in this total.

RESIDENCY

26. There are multiple references to “resident” in the WI G.I. Bill and in the statute exempting certain veterans from non-resident tuition. What does it mean to be a “resident” under these provisions?

There are two different uses of the term “resident” in these sections. One use refers to the WDVA definition of resident under Chapter 45 of the Wisconsin Statutes, and the other is to the UW System definition of resident under Wis. Stats. §36.27(2).

To be considered an “eligible veteran” under Wis. Stats. §36.27(2)(b)(4) and Wis. Stats. §36.27(3p), the applicant must meet WDVA’s definition of “resident” under Chapter 45 of the Wisconsin Statutes.

In contrast, the term “resident” as it is used in Wis. Stats. §36.27(3n) relating to fee remissions for certain family members of eligible veterans has a different meaning. In that section, “resident” refers to residency for tuition purposes under Wis. Stats. §36.27(2). In other words, the family member must be determined to be a “resident for tuition purposes” to satisfy one of the criteria for eligibility for G.I. Bill benefits.

27. What happens if I am denied eligibility by WDVA or denied a fee remission under the WI G.I. Bill? May I appeal the decision?

If you are denied eligibility by WDVA, you will receive notice of the denial directly from WDVA. You may appeal this denial to WDVA according to WDVA’s own appeal protocol as described in the notice of denial.

If you are denied a fee remission after having been determined eligible by WDVA, you will be informed by the educational institution. Typically, the School Veterans Certifying Official will contact you in writing to inform you of the denial and the basis for the denial. If you wish to appeal the institutional decision, contact the School Veterans Certifying Official at your institution to request information about the institution’s appeal protocols.

28. If I am a spouse or child of a qualified veteran and I meet all other criteria for WI G.I. Bill benefits but I do not meet the residency requirements, am I still eligible for WI G.I. Bill benefits?

Wis. Stats. §36.27(3n) provides 100% remissions to certain spouses, surviving unremarried spouses and children of deceased or disabled veterans, if the student (spouse or child) is a resident student, which is interpreted to mean a resident for tuition purposes. Thus, if you were not a Wisconsin resident or if you relinquished Wisconsin residency, you would no longer be eligible for the benefit, even if you meet all other qualifications.

OTHER VETERANS BENEFITS

29. What is Wis. Stats. §36.27(2)(b)4 and how does it relate to this new veteran benefit?

Wis. Stats. §36.27(2)(b)4 predates the WI G.I. Bill and provides that certain veterans who might otherwise be classified as nonresidents be classified as Wisconsin residents for tuition purposes. As amended in 2005, this section applies to any veteran who “was a resident of the state at the time of entry into active duty, who is a resident of and living in the state at the time of registering at an institution and who is a veteran as defined in Wis. Stats. §45.01(12)...” To qualify for this tuition residency benefit, a veteran must apply to the WDVA for certification of eligibility.

The WI G.I. Bill was enacted in 2005. Wis. Stats. §36.27(3p) provides for a partial tuition remission for certain qualifying veterans, including both veterans who are Wisconsin residents and those veterans who are classified as residents for tuition purposes under the provisions of Wis. Stats. §36.27(2)(b)4. WDVA will certify a veteran’s eligibility for this remission program, jointly identifying those veterans who qualify for the remission program and as residents under Wis. Stats. §36.27(2)(b)4.

The WI G.I. Bill also provides tuition remission benefits for the eligible spouse, unremarried surviving spouse, and children of certain deceased and disabled veterans. Spouses and children of eligible veterans must themselves be residents for tuition purposes, according to UW System definitions, in order to receive WI G.I. Bill tuition remission benefits. Non-resident children and spouses are not eligible for WI G.I. Bill benefits.