

# APPLYING FOR VETERANS BENEFITS

College of the Mainland is proud to offer an Office for Veteran Success to assist our servicemembers, veterans, and their families as they work towards their goals. Benefits are available from both the VA and the Texas Veterans Commission to help cover the cost of furthering their education and skills through benefits for tuition, housing, training, and other education related expenses.

All students are strongly encouraged to submit a free application for federal student aid (FAFSA) at <https://studentaid.gov/h/apply-for-aid/fafsa> (<https://studentaid.gov/h/apply-for-aid/fafsa/>). If eligible, Federal Financial Aid can be used in addition to VA Education Benefits and/or the Texas Hazlewood Exemption. The application also helps to qualify students for many scholarship opportunities, even if not qualified for the Pell Grant.

## Applying for VA Educational Benefits

To determine eligibility for VA Educational Benefits please visit <https://www.va.gov/education> (<https://www.va.gov/education/>). A Certificate of Eligibility will be required to use the benefits at COM.

## Applying for the Hazlewood Exemption

To determine eligibility for the Texas Hazlewood Exemption please visit <https://www.tvc.texas.gov/education/hazlewood/>. Students will complete the application for Hazlewood in the Office for Veteran Success at COM.

## Applying for Tuition Assistance

Active-duty service members and reservists may be eligible for military Tuition Assistance. This is a benefit paid to eligible members of all branches of the U.S. military, however each service has its own criteria for eligibility, obligated service, application process and restrictions. Please speak directly to the Educational Officer for your assigned unit before enrolling and beginning classes at College of the Mainland. You can access any branch of service by visiting [www.military.com/education](http://www.military.com/education) (<http://www.military.com/education/>).

## Applying for Tutoring Assistance

Free tutoring for many courses is available through COM; however, tutorial assistance to engage a private tutor is available through the VA to help veterans using the Post 9/11 G. I Bill ® to pay for tutoring necessary to advance their education. For more information, see <https://www.va.gov/education/about-gi-bill-benefits/how-to-use-benefits/tutor-assistance/>.

## Submitting a Request for Certification

COM may only invoice for benefits on behalf of a student with the student's express permission. Therefore, students must submit a Request for Certification each semester they wish to use VA or TVC educational benefits. Students submit all required documentation electronically by clicking on the Certification Request button located on the Veterans Services section of the COM website. Timely submission is a minimum of 10 business days prior to payment deadline.

## GI Bill® Resident Rate Requirements

COM will charge in-state tuition and fee amounts to the following "covered individuals," as defined by the Veterans Choice Act, 38 U.S.C. Sec. 3679(c):

- A Veteran who lives in the state in which the IHL is located (regardless of his/her formal state of residence) and enrolls in the school after being discharged or released from a period of active-duty service of 90 days or more, or any active duty servicemember officially stationed in the state.
- A spouse or child using transferred benefits who lives in the state in which the IHL is located (regardless of his/her formal state of residence) and
  - enrolls after the transferor's discharge from a period of active-duty service of 90 days or more OR
  - is currently living in the state because the servicemember is stationed in the state OR
  - graduated from high school or received a high school equivalency certificate in Texas and maintained a domicile in Texas for at least one year before the member was assigned duty outside of the state.
- A spouse or child using benefits under the Marine Gunnery Sergeant John David Fry Scholarship who lives in the state in which the IHL is located (regardless of his/her formal state of residence) and enrolls in the school after Servicemember's death in the line of duty following a period of active-duty service of 90 days or more.

## TSI Exemptions

While it is possible for many servicemembers and veterans to claim an exemption from taking the TSI placement exam, this could result in placement in classes for which they are not academically prepared. Please consult with an Academic Advisor before claiming the exemption.

By law, the following students "shall be exempt and shall not be required to provide any additional demonstration of college readiness and shall be allowed to enroll in any entry-level freshman course... (19 TAC Rule 4.54(a) (8-9):

- A student who is serving on active duty as a member of the armed forces of the United States, the Texas National Guard, or as a member of a reserve component of the armed forces of the United States and has been serving for at least three years preceding enrollment.
- A student who on or after August 1, 1990, was honorably discharged, retired, or released from active duty as a member of the armed forces of the United States or the Texas National Guard or service as a member of a reserve component of the armed forces of the United States."

To claim this exemption, the student must submit a copy of the DD214 (Member 4 or Service 2 or 7) to either the Admissions Office or the Office for Veteran Success.

## Tuition Deferment Request

A deferred payment of tuition and fees can be offered if the receipt of military-related financial assistance awarded to the student is delayed by less than 60 days. A Request for Certification Packet with required documents used to determine eligibility requirements, along with the Request for Deferment, must be received by the Office for Veteran

Success (OVS) prior to the payment deadline date for the semester the student is applying.

## **Awarding College Credit for Military Experience**

COM will provide counseling and advising to Veterans and service members and award college credit for their military experience and training through Prior Learning Experiences (PLAs), comprehensive exams, and course substitutions.

For additional information, please contact the Office for Veteran Success at 409-933-8455 or email us at [comvets@com.edu](mailto:comvets@com.edu).

\*GI Bill® is a registered trademark of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). More information about education benefits offered by VA is available at the official U.S. government website at <https://www.va.gov/education/about-gi-bill-benefits/>.