



**Vocational
Rehabilitation
Program**

**POST SECONDARY ACADEMIC
AND VOCATIONAL TRAINING
HANDBOOK**

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INTRODUCTION

When an agreed upon employment goal requires a academic training to meet employment requirements, Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) may assist with tuition and related expenses. For you to receive agreed upon assistance, you must follow the requirements expected of every VR student. This handbook explains your responsibilities, so please read it carefully. Your counselor can answer questions you may have.

REQUIREMENTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF COLLEGE STUDENTS

EXPECTATIONS OF COLLEGE STUDENTS

COMPLETE FREE APPLICATION FOR FEDERAL STUDENT AID (FAFSA)

You must apply for financial aid on an annual basis and submit a copy of the Student Aid Report (SAR) to your VR counselor. The FAFSA application is available online at www.studentaid.gov. Being early and accurate in your application is one of the most important steps in securing aid. If you cannot get financial aid because you owe money to a school or defaulted on student loans, then VR cannot assist with school costs until you are in good standing with the financial aid office by either repaying the loan, arranging a repayment plan, or obtaining a deferral. VR cannot pay your debt.

ENROLL FULL-TIME

You must be enrolled full-time according to your school's definition of full-time status. This usually means 12 credit hours for an undergraduate program and 9 credit hours for a graduate program. Any exception to this must be agreed upon by you and your counselor. Exceptions may include, a full course load is not needed to complete the course work, or the required courses in the program of study are not available due to scheduling.

A college student cannot take less than a full course load for more than two terms during the training program.

MAINTAIN CUMULATIVE GRADE POINT AVERAGE (GPA)

An undergraduate must maintain at least a 2.0 cumulative GPA to receive funding from VR. A graduate student must maintain the minimum cumulative GPA required for their program. If your school's minimum cumulative GPA requirement is higher than VR policy requirement, you must meet the school's standard. You will be allowed one probationary semester to raise your cumulative GPA. If you do not maintain the required cumulative GPA, VR will not support your training until the cumulative GPA returns to the required level.

WITHDRAWING OR FAILING CLASSES

If you must retake a class due to a poor grade or withdrawal after the add/drop date, it will be your responsibility to pay for retaking the class. If you think you may need to withdraw from a class, contact your counselor immediately to discuss your situation before withdrawing.

TIMEFRAME FOR COMPLETING CLASSES

VR sponsorship for a freshman pursuing an undergraduate degree (bachelor's degree) shall be limited to five years, and for each year thereafter shall be decreased by one year based on enrollment status (sophomore, junior, senior). Only credit hours that contribute to the degree-required credit hours, including general electives and major-specific, will be supported. For example, if you want to take a karate class but it doesn't count towards a general elective or your major, you will be responsible for the cost of that class. A degree program of study outlining the necessary courses for completing your major must be provided to your VR Counselor so your course work completion can be tracked.

MAINTAIN CONTACT WITH VR COUNSELOR

You must maintain regular contact with your VR counselor. If problems arise that impact your success in school, contact your counselor immediately to discuss. This includes consideration to change your major,

switching schools, dropping or adding a class, withdrawing from a class, or anything else that impacts your progress and funding. Any changes must be agreed upon by your counselor and you and reflected on a signed Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) Amendment before they are implemented and supported by VR.

SUBMIT INFORMATION REQUIRED BY VR

You must give your counselor a copy of the following information within the given timelines:

At least thirty (30) days prior to the institutions due date for payment of tuition and fees or at least five (5) days after the information is made available by the school:

- Student Aid Report (SAR) summary. This report will be given to you after you submit your application for FAFSA.
- Financial Aid Award Letter from the school's financial aid office.
- Student Account Detail from the school. (itemized student bill)

Within five (5) days of the school posting to your school account:

- Class schedule.
- Grades from the previous term.
- List of required textbooks and supplies (if applicable).

Your VR Counselor may require these documents submitted by a specific date so there is time to amend your IPE before classes begin.

It is best to submit these documents to your VR counselor as early as possible. If you do not provide all the above information in the appropriate timelines before the start of the term, VR may not pay for that term, and you will be financially responsible. If the above information is not available within the timelines prior to the start of the term, notify your counselor immediately. VR will not pay late fees if you fail to submit necessary documents on time.

WORK WITH THE DISABILITY SERVICES OFFICE

The disability services office at your school arranges accommodations for students who provide appropriate documentation of a disability. You are responsible for the coordination of these services.

To receive services through the disability services office, you generally must:

- Make an appointment with the disability services office.
- Provide disability services with documentation that your disability exists and that requested services are appropriate.
- Be prepared to discuss the accommodations that are necessary and appropriate. The staff will not know that you need support unless you ask. Services are individualized for each student.
- Follow all university/college policies and procedures when requesting services and accommodations.
- Contact instructors for the provision of specific accommodations.
- Keep in contact with the disability services office each semester.

WORK WITH UNIVERSITY CAREER SERVICES

The career services office at your school can assist you with cover letters, resumes, networking opportunities with alumni, job fairs, and informational interviews. When you are nearing graduation, this office will provide additional assistance in helping you find a job in your field.

POLICIES FOR POST-SECONDARY COSTS AND FEE SCHEDULES

TUITION AND FEES

All applicable comparable benefits for which you have been approved must be applied to your tuition and fees on your itemized student bill.

Comparable benefits for training may include but are not limited to grants and non-merit scholarships.

You must inform your VR counselor within ten (10) days of any approval for comparable benefits for school support or if you directly receive such funds related to school.

You may attend any accredited public or proprietary school that provides academic training towards your vocational goal and is approved by the VR Business Unit. Verification that the school is approved must be made prior to VR commitment for payment, verbally or on an IPE. VR's support for approved tuition and fees is determined by the Business Unit based on a flat rate fee per semester. Any remaining costs after VR's contribution is your responsibility. If your balance is less than the flat rate fee for tuition and fees, VR will only pay the remainder of your balance. You are not required to accept student loans, although you may choose to in order to cover any remaining costs.

Remember, all purchases/payments to support your academic training must be included on a current IPE or IPE Amendment and authorized before the start of classes, otherwise you will not receive VR financial support for that term.

SUMMER SCHOOL

Summer school may be financially supported by VR if you attend full time and after applicable financial aid is applied. If that does not cover all the tuition and fees, the additional expense is your responsibility.

HOUSING

Students may receive housing assistance if housing is not a normal living expense for the student. Housing assistance may be provided while you are enrolled in classes, not on academic probation, and participating in your post-secondary program.

VR will not pay relocation costs for students.

On-Campus Colleges and Universities

VR may pay for on-campus housing if housing is determined necessary. The amount VR will pay for both housing and meals must not exceed the maximum allowable monthly SSI rate. Any additional expense is your responsibility.

VR may assist with summer on-campus housing if housing is determined necessary and you are enrolled in summer classes related to your program of study or participating in a required internship.

Off-Campus Colleges and Universities

VR may pay for off-campus housing if housing is determined necessary. The amount VR will pay for both housing and meals must not exceed the maximum allowable monthly SSI rate. Any additional expense is your responsibility.

VR may assist with summer off-campus housing/rent if housing is determined necessary and you are enrolled in summer classes related to your program of study or participating in a required internship.

TEXTBOOKS AND SUPPLIES

If agreed to on the IPE, VR may only pay for textbooks and supplies that are required for your classes up to a limited amount. It may be necessary for VR to reimburse you for the purchases. If so, you must submit to your counselor all receipts, and each receipt must include your signature. Signed receipts must be submitted to your counselor as soon as you have made the purchases or by the date the counselor assigns, otherwise, you may not receive reimbursement.

OVERPAYMENTS AND REFUNDS

If a student receives an overpayment during a term, it must immediately be refunded to VR or agree to have future payments adjusted to deduct the overpayment. Circumstances that may require a refund to VR include:

- The student receives financial assistance from a comparable benefit for tuition, fees, books/supplies and maintenance (housing and meals) that has already been paid for by VR.

- The student receives a refund because of dropping a class.
- The student did not utilize VR funds for the purpose they were intended.

If you refuse to refund VR, post-secondary financial support will be suspended, and/or your VR case may be closed for fraud/misuse of program funds.

ANNUAL REVIEW

Your VR counselor will conduct an annual in-depth review of your academic participation and grade reports to determine if you are making adequate progress towards your established employment goal. If it is determined you are not progressing satisfactorily in your approved course of study, support for your training will be suspended, and your VR counselor will work with you to identify a more appropriate employment goal.