

Outcome Measures Frequently Asked Questions

Academic Progress

Question 1: What is the purpose of reporting on a student's academic progress?

The purpose of reporting on student's academic progress is to provide more accurate information to help inform their in making decisions about their educational pursuits. For the last several years, VA has worked with the Department of Defense and the Department of Education to establish outcome measures. The Executive Order 13607, then, required VA to develop and report Veteran student outcome measures for educational institutions serving Veterans, Servicemembers and their family members. Finally, the Jeff Miller and Richard Blumenthal Veterans Health Care and Benefits Improvement Act of 2016, Public Law 114-315, Section 404, made it a requirement that schools report academic progress, as a condition of their approval for the GI Bill. Because outcome measures and academic progress are similar, VA's Education Service use the terms interchangeably.

Question 2: What is academic progress?

Currently, academic progress and outcome measures are defined equally and the Department of Education's current regulatory authority (34 CFR 668.34) sets the criteria for and definition of academic progress.

VA's Education Service is adopting the criteria for academic progress based on the Department of Education's definition in accordance with 34 CFR 668.34, Servicemembers, Veterans, and/or eligible dependents meeting the eligibility criteria and receiving Department of Veteran Affairs Education Benefits are required to maintain satisfactory academic progress. Academic progress is based on the quantitative and qualitative requirements of degree, certificate, and learning programs of the educational institutions of which Servicemembers, Veterans, and/or eligible dependents are enrolled within at that educational institution in an Academic Calendar year.

Question 3: Is there a difference between Outcome Measures and Academic Progress?

No; at this time there is not a difference between the two. VA uses these terms interchangeably.

Question 4: What are the new requirements for schools under academic progress?

As a condition of approval, schools are now required to report on outcome measures (graduation and completion dates), effective January 1, 2018

Question 5: What is the responsibility of State Approving Agencies (SAA)?

The SAA is responsible for the suspension and withdrawal of schools that do not comply with VA's rules and policies. Annually, VA will submit, to the appropriate SAA, a list of schools that are non-compliant with the reporting requirement in Section 404. The SAA will be charged with outreach to the institution to facilitate the reporting of that data or follow the administrative process for non-compliant institutions.

VA will work with State approving agencies (SAA) in their oversight and compliance with this section of the law. A school's referral to their SAA will include supporting data/evidence of the programs non-compliance.

For consistency in the application of this requirement, we request the following from State Approving Agencies:

1. Notify schools that they are non-compliant with the requirements of Section 404, and allow a reasonable amount of time for the school to come into compliance.
2. Follow up on step one. Suspend schools for a period not to exceed 60 days if the school has not reported academic progress.
3. Should the school not comply with the reporting of academic progress within the 60 day suspension period; withdraw approval.

School must meet the criteria outlined for academic progress before reinstatement of a suspension or a re-approval following a withdrawal.

Question 6: What institutions are impacted by Section 404?

All facilities/institutions that have beneficiaries using and/or receiving the Post 9/11 GI Bill benefits (Chapter 33), this includes:

- 4-Year Institutions of Higher Learning
- 2-Year Institutions of Higher Learning
- Non-College Degree Institutions

Question 7: What is the definition for Persistence Rate?

Persistence rate measures full-time and part-time Post-9/11 GI Bill Student Veterans' attendance at any school from the first to the second year.

Question 8: What is the definition for Retention Rate?

Retention rate measures full-time and part-time Post-9/11 GI Bill Student Veterans' attendance at the same institution from the first to second year.

Question 9: What is the definition for Transfer-out Rate?

Transfer-out rate applies to 2-year IHL schools only, measures full-time and part-time Post-9/11 GI Bill Student Veterans' who transfer within 150% (3 years) and 200% (4 years) of normal program length.

Question 10: What is the definition for Certificate Completion?

Certificate Completion measures full-time and part-time Post-9/11 GI Bill Student Veterans' certificate of completion at an approved school (which is not an institution of higher learning) that is reported within the VA system while the student is using benefits

Question 11: What is the definition for Graduation Rate?

Graduation rate measures full-time and part-time Post-9/11 GI Bill Student Veterans' graduation or certificate completing at an Institution of Higher Learning that is reported within the VA system while the student is using benefits.

Question 12: What institutions are impacted by Section 404?

All facilities/institutions that have beneficiaries using and/or receiving the Post 9/11 GI Bill benefits (Chapter 33), this includes:

- 4-Year Institutions of Higher Learning
- 2-Year Institutions of Higher Learning
- Non-College Degree Institutions

Question 13: When was the graduation rate updated and what does it reflect now?

The graduation rate was updated January 12, 2017. That data was originally based on first-time Post-9/11 GI Bill Servicemembers/Veterans who have not used prior Education benefits. Enrollments at flight/correspondence facilities were not included, also. Since then, the graduation rate definition and business rules have been updated to reflect all Veterans/Servicemembers who have used the Post-9/11 GI Bill benefit. This includes all Veterans/Servicemembers who may have used prior Education benefits i.e. Chapter 30, 1606, and 1607. Enrollments at flight/correspondence facilities were not included in the update.

Question 14: Will there be future academic progress measures that schools will have to report on?

Yes. Currently, we are developing and testing additional measures that we would like to collect. Those measures are in a developmental phase and, in addition to stakeholder partnership, technological enhancements will be needed to VA-ONCE and VA systems before their announcement and implementation.

General

Question 1: Why is VA focusing on Chapter 33 only and not on other chapters?

The passage of the Miller/Blumenthal Education Improvement Act requires that schools receiving GI Bill funding report on Chapter 33 beneficiaries, but does not require reporting for all of the other GI Bill programs.

Question 2: Will Department of Education's graduation numbers be reflected on the Comparison Tool website in addition to VA data?

Yes; the Comparison Tool website will include Department of Education's graduation numbers and VA data.

Question 3: What types of certificates will be published / tracked?

All certificate completions reported will be tracked and published by facility code.

Question 4: When will VA make school's graduation rate public?

VA will make a school's graduation rate public at least annually. VA's current data reflects a fraction of the overall number of schools that can or have reported on outcome measures. Since Section 404 requires that schools report on the progress of Chapter 33 individuals that receive Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits, we anticipate receiving more complete data to report graduation rate at a later time.

Question 5: How can a school register to participate in the POE?

Schools wishing to commit to the Principles of Excellence may contact VACO's GI Bill Integrity and Protection Team at the following e-mail: Principles.Excellence@va.gov. The GI Bill Integrity and Protection team will provide the requesting institution a commitment form to complete and email back to VACO. Once your request is accepted and processed, we will list your school as a participant on the GI Bill Comparison Tool website.

Reporting Academic Progress

Question 1: How long do schools have to update VA-ONCE or to report graduation/completion data?

Institutions have until January 1, 2019 to enter graduation data into VA-ONCE or through the appropriate paper form. At the end of February 2019, VA will perform an initial compliance assessment and notify the appropriate SAA(s) of any compliance issues with the requirements of Public Law 114-315 Section 404. We are requesting graduation and completion records going back three years and, if available, back to August 1, 2009. However, to meet the requirements of the law, a school must report academic process data from January 1, 2018 forward. Additional time will be allowed to report historical graduation and completion data for those schools willing and able to provide it.

Question 2: Will schools need to report grades?

Not at this time. Existing reporting procedures for issues such as incomplete grades or academic probation will not change. Schools will be required to report the data elements (graduation and completion) that will be used to calculate Academic Progress; the schools do not directly report Academic Progress. The schools reports the data and Academic Progress business rules are used to calculate Academic Progress:

Academic progress	Based on provided data VA Calculates the following Outcome Measures
	Certificate of Completion
	Graduation Rate
	Persistence Rate
	Transfer-out Rate
	Retention Rate

Question 3: If a school recently started using VA-ONCE and used paper certifications prior to that point, how should we update the graduations of students who were not certified in VA-ONCE?

Institutions should update graduation/program completion data using the same method that was originally used to certify the enrollment. If originally certified using a VA-ONCE

Enrollment Certification, then a VA-ONCE termination should be submitted to reflect the graduation/completion.

If originally certified using a paper Enrollment Certification, then a paper VA Form 22-1999b “Notice of Change in Student Status” should be sent to reflect the graduation/completion.

Question 4: What information should schools report back to VA?

Institutions must report individual graduation/program completion information for Chapter 33 beneficiaries. We would prefer all graduation information back to August 1, 2009 (inception of the program) through present. VA recognizes that paper records must be kept intact and in good condition for at least three years, and any records beyond that will not be required to be reported through VA-ONCE or a paper enrollment.

The following data elements received from schools/institutions will be used to calculate academic progress. Some data fields’ maybe set by the institution when first receiving the MOU for VA-ONCE access, and unique character designations will not be reflected on this list. However, each data field has been defined and VA’s source document is located [here](#).

Data field required	Data field required	Data field required
Term dates -beginning and end	School Facility Code	Certification of Enrollment
Term name	School Name	Clock Hours
Term Type	School Status	Tuition and Fees
Drop Date	Training Type	Yellow Ribbon
Break Days	Primary School Name & State	Out of State Charges
Reason for Enrollment Termination	Address of Student	Fees
Program Name	State (for both facility & student)	Training Time
VA Objective/Course Code	City (for both facility & student)	Res
Student First Name	Zip Code (for both facility & student)	Dist.

Student Last Name	Phone (student)	R/D
Student SSN	Email (student)	Termination of Enrollment Fields

The list of data elements above does not preclude a school from reporting on other required data elements, per the SCO handbook. Please consult the SCO handbook for a list of all requirements. Definitions for each data field may be found in the SCO handbook – Academic Progress Reporting Requirements.

Question 5: How far back should schools go to report graduation/completion data for Post-9/11 GI Bill?

An educational institution is required to report data beginning from January 1, 2018 forward. Institutions are requested to report graduation/completion data from August 1, 2009 - present for all Chapter 33 education benefit recipients who graduated while using VA benefits. Having graduation data back to 2009 allows VA to tell a complete story of Post-9/11 GI Bill beneficiary success at the educational institution.

Question 6: Should individuals who are not currently receiving benefits be reported?

No. Schools should only report information on students who are receiving education benefits. Reporting a person’s graduation or completion data, back to 2009, is necessary if the person was receiving benefits at the time of their enrollment. If a student exhausts their benefits, the school should only report information through the next semester of the student’s enrollment.

[OJT and Apprenticeship](#)

Question 1: Does the requirement apply to OJT and Apprenticeship programs?

No; the law requires only schools receiving Chapter 33 benefit payment to report on the academic progress of that individual. OJT and Apprenticeship facilities do not receive payment from VA and are exempt from this reporting requirement.