Certifying Chapter 33 Graduate Training
For
School Certifying Officials (SCOs)

Topics

➢ Standard Terms

➢ Non-Standard Terms

➢ Identifying Chapter 33 IHL Graduate Students in VA-ONCE

➢ Credit hours taken and Credit hours considered full-time

➢ VBA Standard Remarks

Background

When certifying graduate training under Chapter 33, School Certifying Officials (SCOs) must report the minimum number of credit hours their academic regulations require to be considered full-time, as published in their catalog, to ensure proper entitlement is charged and appropriate payments are released for any rate of pursuit. In some scenarios, equivalent credit hours need to be calculated and used in determining Rate of Pursuit. In other scenarios, VA will divide the number of credit hours certified by the number of credit hours required to be considered full-time to determine rate of pursuit.

The Long Term Solution (LTS) automatically performs credit hour equivalent calculations for all non-standard terms. These automatic adjustments alter the expected rate of pursuit for students enrolled less than full-time with individually defined full time modifiers, and under values training for terms longer than standard length.

Until LTS is reprogrammed, School Certifying Officials (SCO) may have to add the VBA Standard Remarks; "*Graduate non-standard term*" in the remarks depending on the scenario.

Terminology Defined

- VA uses '**FT Modifier**' to define the minimum number of credits considered as full time in a standard term
- Commonly for Grad Studies, 6, 9 or 12 hours may equal FT, per your published catalog and/or financial aid documents
- **Standard Term** for VA means 15-19 weeks for semester schools and 10-13 weeks for quarter schools.
- To calculate for standard term, count actual days in the term, divide by 7. Round up or down as applicable.
- For example Fall 19 = August 26 thru December 21.

  118 days / 7 = 17 (16.86) weeks = **Standard Term**

- **Individually Defined Modifier (IDM)** is a new term, used when your catalog has identified a FT measure for non-standard periods, such as summer or other accelerated sessions. Example; Catalog may state 9=FT in Fall & Spring, but 6=FT in a 12 week summer session. Summer is an **IDM**

Standard Terms

A standard length semester is 15 to 19 weeks and a standard length quarter is 10 to 13 weeks.

SCOs must enter the number of published credit hours that his/her school considers to be full time for a standard length semester or quarter for the program the student is pursuing in the TT/FT box.

Note: Do not enter remarks in the remarks section for standard terms.

Non-standard Terms

A non-standard length semester is shorter or longer than 15 to 19 weeks and a non-standard length quarter is shorter or longer than 10 to 13 weeks.

SCOs must enter the minimum number of hours required for full time, as published in their catalog, in the TT/FT box.

Additionally, he/she may enter the following VBA Standard Remark in VA-ONCE "Graduate non-standard term", to off ramp the enrollment for manual processing

– For any non-standard term that is longer (regardless of whether there is an individually defined FT modifier)

– For short non-standard terms, that have an individually defined FT modifier

What is an Individually Defined Modifier?

When a school is approved for VA benefits as semester/quarter and has a calendar published in their catalog that is by VA definition a Non-Standard Term and has a full time modifier associated. This is considered an individually defined modifier.

Example – A school is approved as a semester school and the catalog shows a calendar with 5 terms (all less than 15-19 weeks each) of time with 6 credits being considered full time. This facility would certify 6 in FT/TT box and add the remark.

When to use the "Graduate Non-Standard Term" remark?

- Enter "Graduate Non-Standard Term" in the remarks field for

    - Any non-standard term that is <u>longer</u> (regardless of whether there is an individually defined FT modifier)

    - For short non-standard terms, that have an individually defined FT modifier

- DO NOT use the "Graduate Non-Standard Term" in the remarks field for

    - standard length terms

    - For short non-standard terms, that DO NOT have an individually defined FT modifier

Certifying Chapter 33 Standard Terms

Certifying Chapter 33 Standard Terms

Step 1:

Review the student's Bio data screen to confirm:
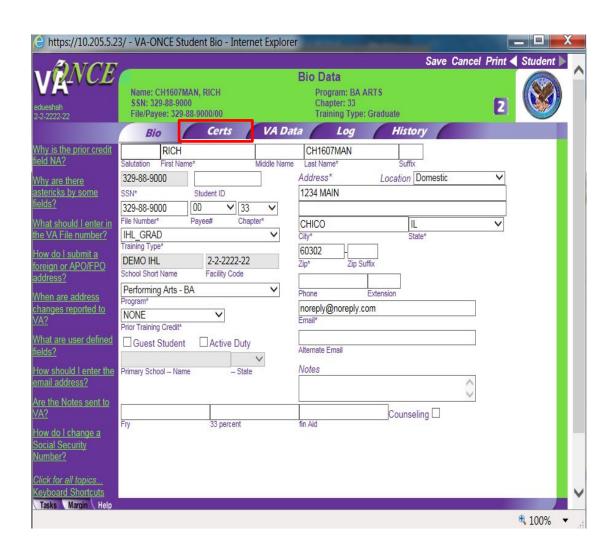
➢ The benefit type is Chapter 33
➢ The training type is an IHL GRAD

Step 2:

Open the Certs screen by clicking on the Certs t*ab*

Certifying Chapter 33 Standard Terms

Step 3:

Activate the edit enrollment field by clicking on certs at the top of the screen.

Click on "New" from the drop down menu.
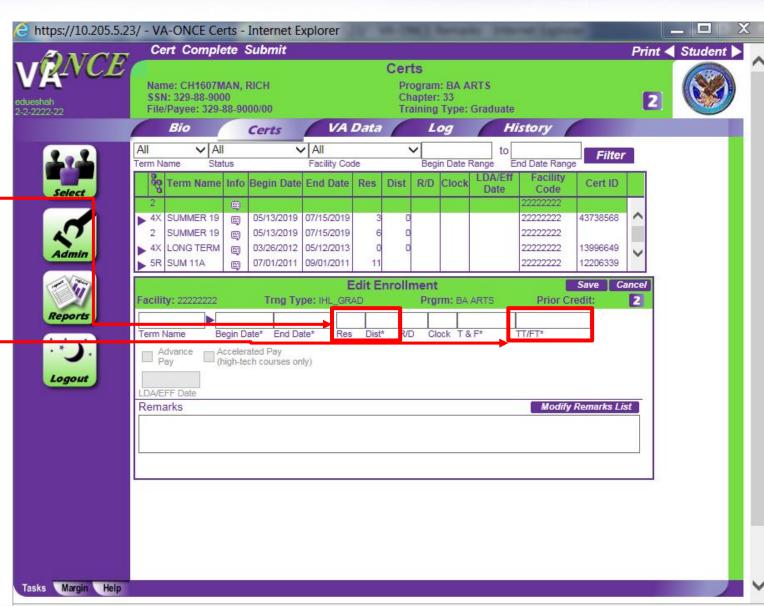
Certifying Chapter 33 Standard Terms

Step 4:

In the edit enrollment field, enter the number of credit hours the student is pursuing in the residence/distance field

Enter the number of credit hours your school considers to be full-time for a normal semester or quarter in the TT/FT field

Note: The number of credit hours can vary by programs or enrollment period as published.

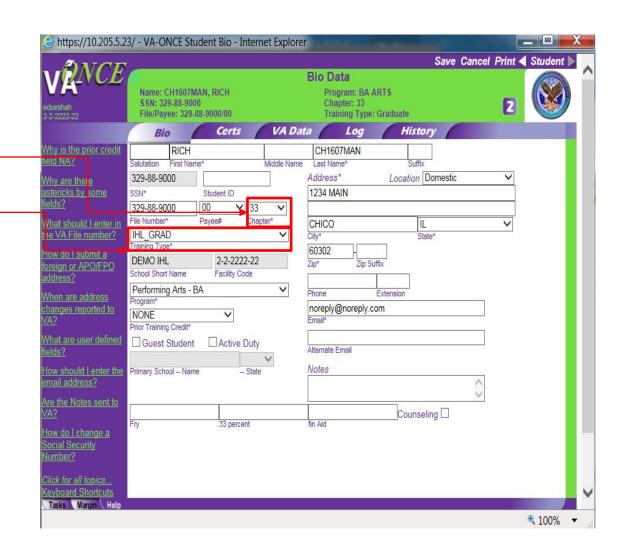Remember: Do not enter remarks for standard terms or standard quarters

Certifying Chapter 33 Non-Standard Terms

Certifying Chapter 33 Non-Standard Terms
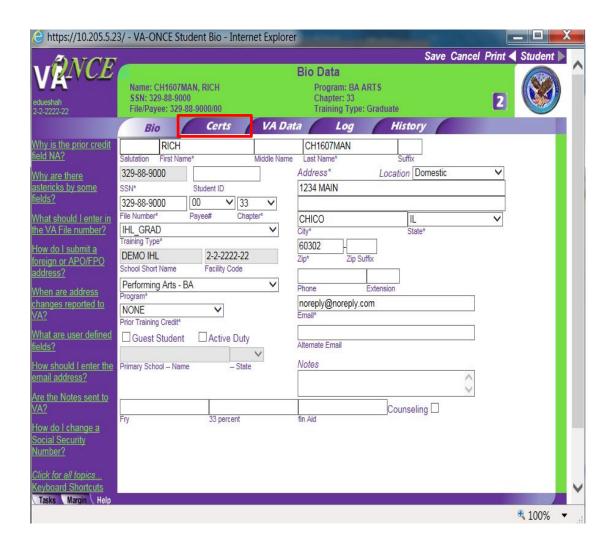
Step 1:

Review the student's Bio data screen to confirm:

➢ The benefit type is Chapter 33

➢ The training type is an IHL GRAD

Step 2:

Click on the Certs t*ab to open the Certs screen*

Step 3:

Activate the edit enrollment field by clicking on certs at the top of the screen.
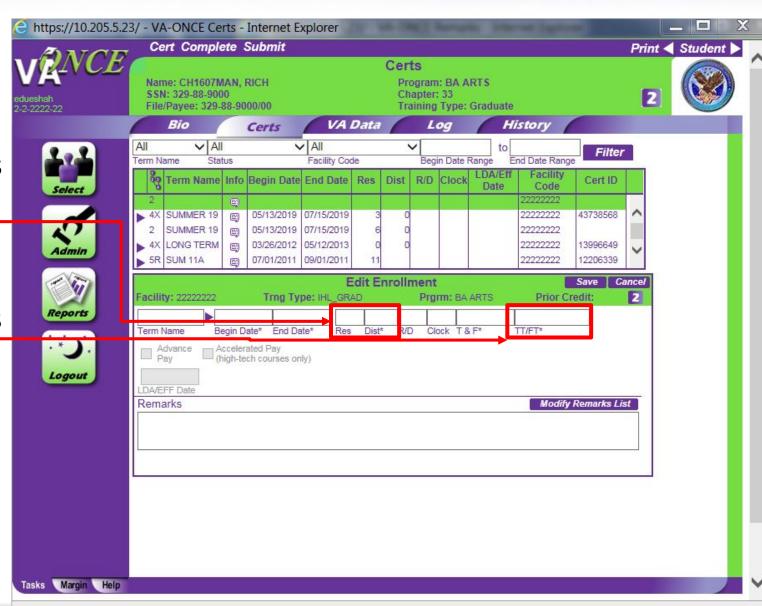
Click on "New" from the drop down menu.

Step 4:

In the edit enrollment field, enter the number of credit hours the student is pursuing in the residence/distance field

Enter the number of credit hours your school considers to be full-time for a normal semester or quarter in the TT/FT field

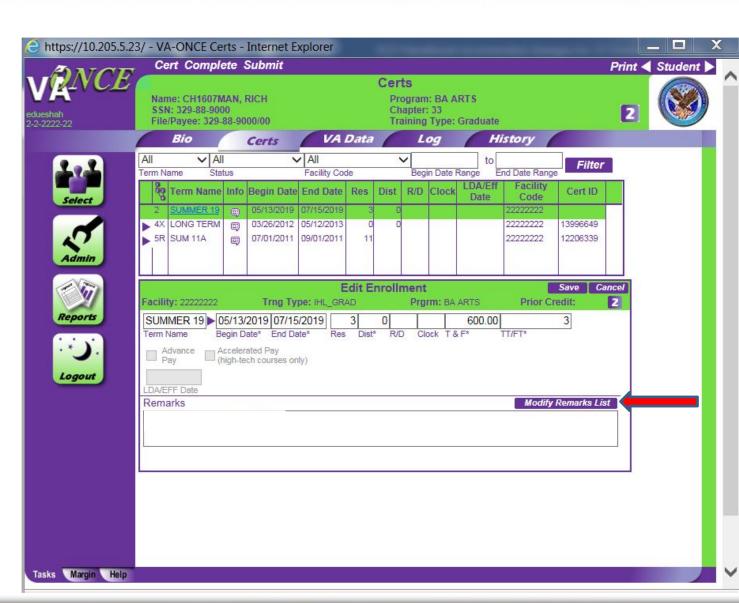Note: The number of credit hours can vary by programs or enrollment period as published.

Step 5:

Enter "Graduate Non-Standard Term" in the remarks field for
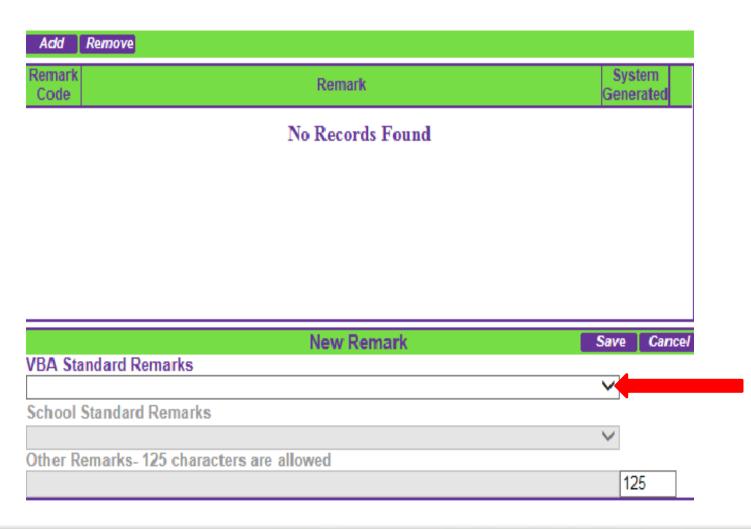
      - Any non-standard term that is longer (regardless of whether there is an individually defined FT modifier)

      - For short non-standard terms, that have an individually defined FT modifier, by:
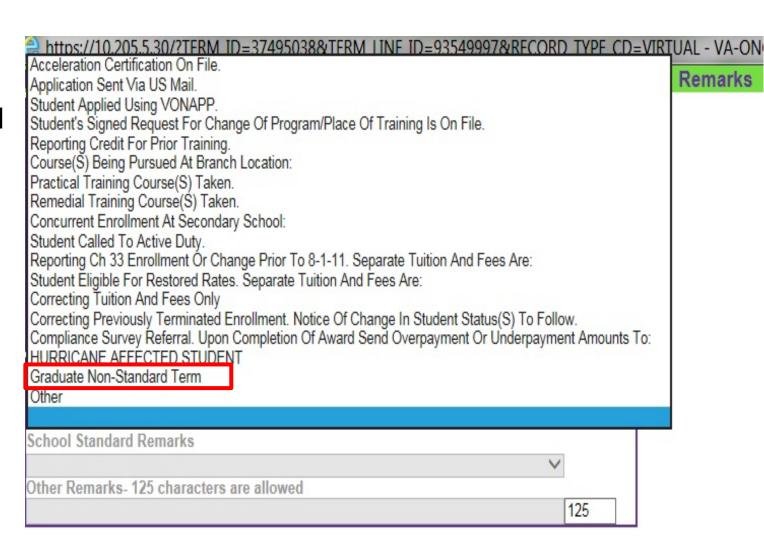
➢ Clicking on the Modify Remarks List tab.

Step 5:

➢ Click the VBA Standard Remarks drop down arrow

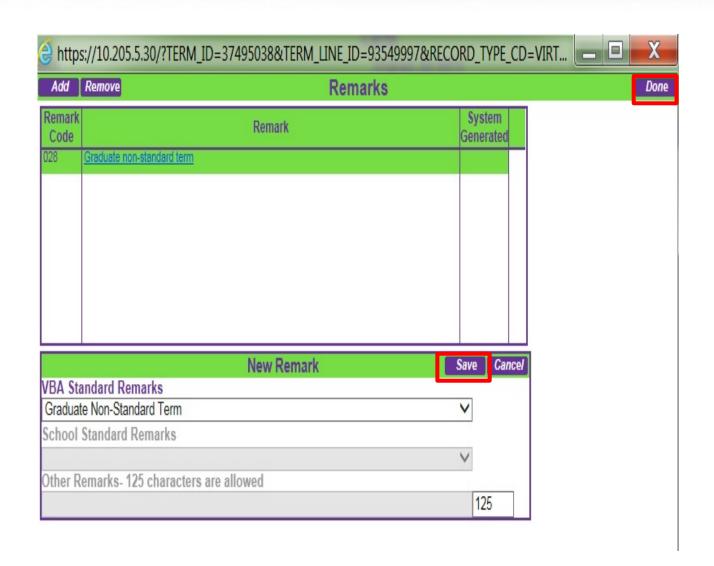# Certifying Chapter 33 Non-Standard Terms

Step 6:

➢ Select Graduate Non-Standard Term from the list of VBA Standard Remarks

Certifying Chapter 33 Non-Standard Terms

Step 7

After selecting the VBA Standard remark, Click save and done

Certifying Chapter 33 Non-Standard Terms

Graduate Non-Standard Term will populate in the remarks section

VA will determine the rate of pursuit by dividing the number of credits taken by the number of credits your school considers full-time for the program.

Examples of Certifying Chapter 33 Standard and Non-standard Terms

Identifying an IDM (Individually Defined Modifier)

This catalog has two separate published credits listed as full time. They have an IDM and a standard term listed.

- The catalog lists full time for a "per term" as 6 credits.- This "per term" is a non standard session(less than 15-19 weeks) per published catalog calendar. This is an Individually Defined Modifier.

- 9 credits for a standard 16 week term.

Course Load Guidelines

Most graduate courses are 3 credit hours. The maximum course load in the graduate degree program for a fully admitted student is 6 credit hours per term or 9 credit hours in a 16 week course, which is considered full-time. Students taking 1-5 credit hours per term or 1-8 credit hours per semester are considered part-time. A student must receive written authorization to enroll in more than 6 credit hours per term or more than 12 credit hours per semester. Authorization is waived if the following courses are taken with two 3-credit-hour courses in one term:

Fall 2019

- **August 19**: First day of Fall 1 classes
- **October 18**: Last day of Fall 1 classes
- **October 19**: Fall 1 graduation date
- **October 21**: First day of Fall 2 classes
- **December 20**: Last day of Fall 2 classes
- **December 21**: Fall 2 graduation date

Identifying an IDM (Individually Defined Modifier)

How to certify- Based on the catalog the school has 2 defined two separate full time standards. Depending how the structure of the program the facility has 2 ways to certify.

- Option 1: A full standard 16 week term from August 19, 2018-December 20, 2019 using 9 credits in the TT/FT box WITH NO REMARK.

- Option 2: Fall 1 from August 19, 2019- October 18, 2019 using 6 credits in the TT/FT box and ADDING THE REMARK. Then Fall 2 from October 21, 2019- December 20,2019 using 6 credits in the TT/FT box and ADDING THE REMARK.

Fall 2019

- **August 19**: First day of Fall 1 classes
- **October 18**: Last day of Fall 1 classes
- **October 19**: Fall 1 graduation date
- **October 21**: First day of Fall 2 classes
- **December 20**: Last day of Fall 2 classes
- **December 21**: Fall 2 graduation date

Note: ELR's, SAA's, and ECSS's will be checking this on compliance surveys to ensure the modifier matches the catalog.

Certifying Chapter 33 Graduate Credits
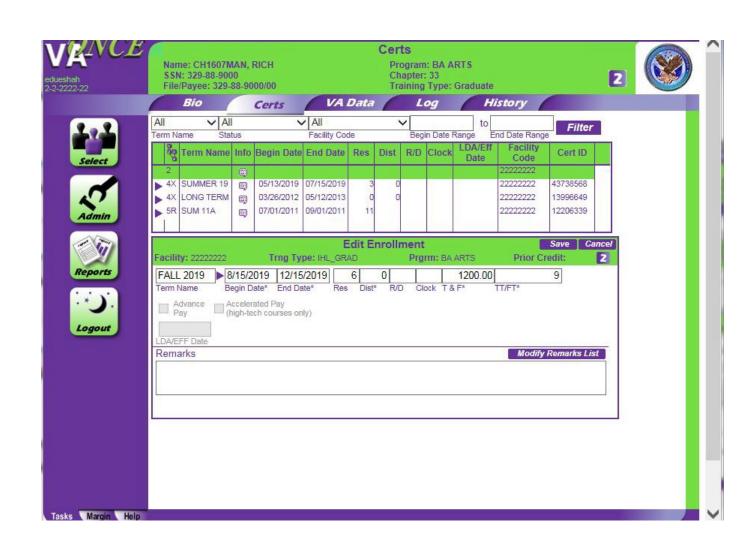
Example 1 – Standard Term

Student takes 6 credit hours in the 16 week fall semester. Your academic regulations state 9 credits or more is full-time.

Certify 6 credit hours and enter 9 in the TT/FT box.

VA will divide credits taken by credits considered full-time to determine the rate of pursuit (6 ÷ 9 = .66).

The student's rate of pursuit is 70%

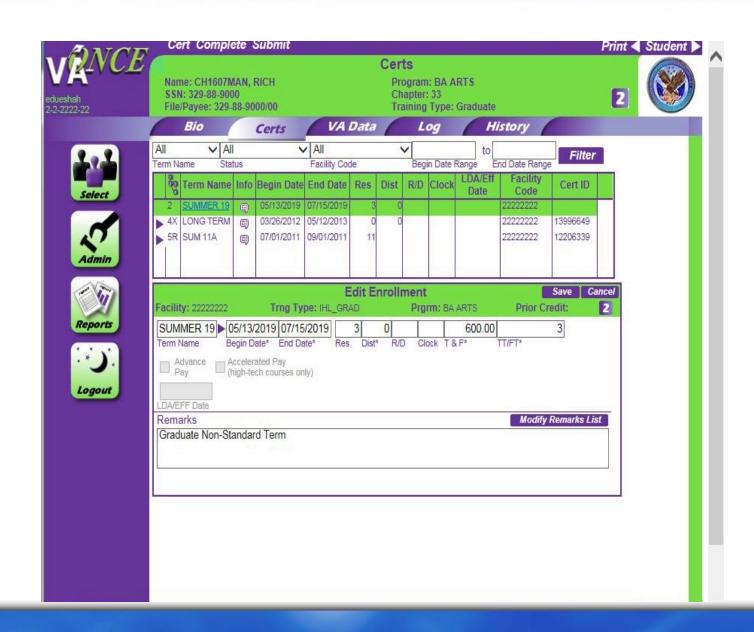Remember: Do not add remarks for standard terms

Certifying Chapter 33 Graduate Credits

Example 2 – Non-Standard Term IDM identified

Student takes 3 quarter hours in a non-standard term. Your school has an individually defined modifier of 3 for the 6 week non standard term, as published in the school catalog.

Certify 3 quarter hours and enter 3 in the TT/FT box.

Click the Modify Remarks List and select VBA Standards Remarks; then select "Graduate Non-Standard Term" from the VBA Standard Remarks.

VA will divide credits taken by credits considered full-time to determine the rate of pursuit (3 ÷ 3 = 1).
The student's rate of pursuit is 100%

Certifying Chapter 33 Graduate Credits

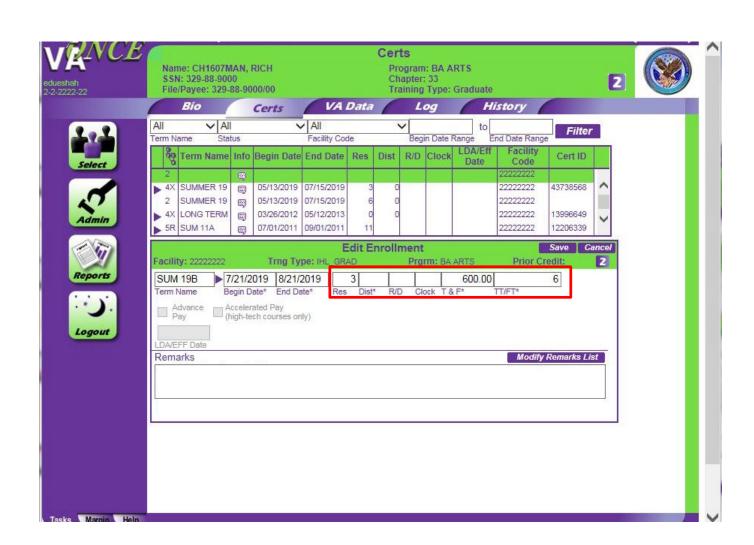**Example 3 – Non-Standard Term
NO IDM Identified**

Student takes 3 quarter hours in a non-standard term. Your school considers 6 quarter hours to be full-time for a standard quarter term. The term is 9 weeks. There is not an individually defined modifier published in the catalog for non standard terms.

Certify 3 quarter hours and enter 6 in the TT/FT box.

VA will calculate equivalent credit hours for the non-standard term. The equivalent credit hours will be divided by credits considered full-time to determine the rate of pursuit
(4÷ 6 = .66).

The student's rate of pursuit is 70%

Remember: Do not add remarks for short non standard terms that DO NOT have an individually defined FT modifier
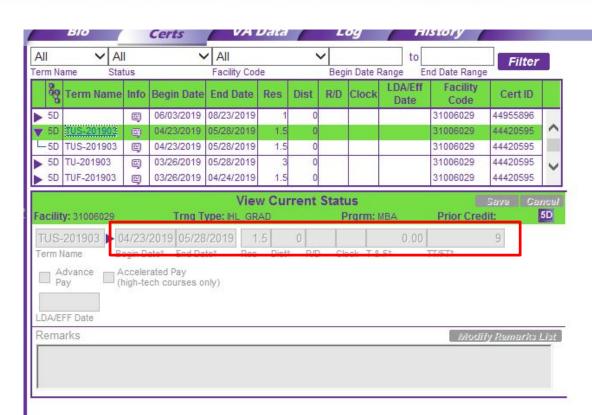
Certifying Chapter 33 Graduate Credits

**Example 3(continued) – Non-Standard Term
NO IDM Identified**

Student takes 9 hours over a standard term, in 3 separate modules all vary in week length. Your school considers 9 credit hours to be full-time for a standard 16 week semester term. There is not an individually defined modifier published in the catalog for non standard terms.

One term is 16 weeks, one terms is 9 weeks, one is 5 weeks. Certify 3 separate enrollments with each modules individual begin and end dates, hours taken in each module and enter 9 in the TT/FT box.- No remarks

VA will calculate equivalent credit hours for the 2 non-standard terms. The equivalent credit hours will be divided by credits considered full-time to determine the rate of pursuit. The rate of pursuit will be higher when the terms are overlapping.

Remember: Do not add remarks for short non standard terms that DO NOT have an individually defined FT modifier or standard terms.

Certifying Chapter 33 Graduate Credits

Example 4 – Non-Standard Term
IDM Identified

Student takes 3 quarter hours in a non-standard term. As published in your catalog, your school considers 6 quarter hours to be full-time for this non standard quarter.
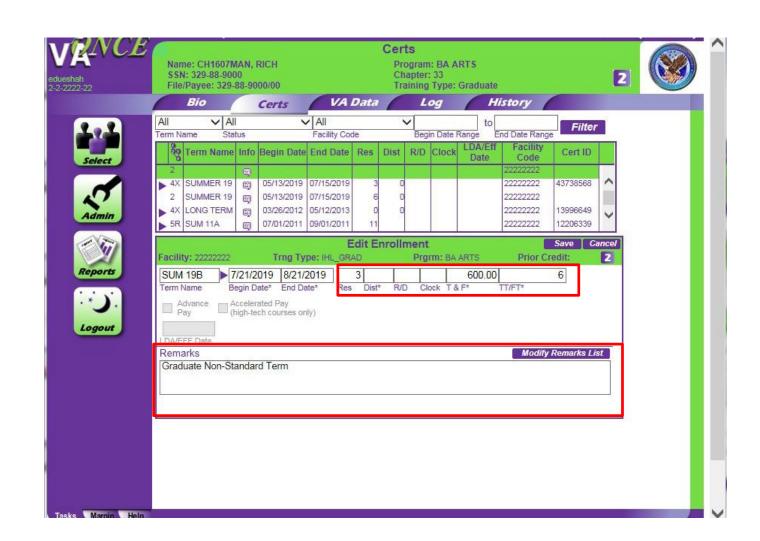
Certify 3 quarter hours and enter 6 in the TT/FT box.

Click the Modify Remarks List and select VBA Standards Remarks; then select "Graduate Non-Standard Term" from the VBA Standard Remarks.

VA will divide the number of credits taken by credits considered full-time to determine the rate of pursuit (3 ÷ 6 = .50).

The student's rate of pursuit is 50% or exactly halftime.

Remember: A student's rate of pursuit must be greater than 50% to be entitled the Monthly Housing Allowance.

Summary

Today you:

- Learned the difference between standard terms and non-standard terms
- Identified Chapter 33 IHL Graduates on the VA-ONCE Bio Data Screen
- Learned how to enter the number of credit hours taken and the number of credit hours considered full-time in the appropriate VA-ONCE fields.
- Learned when you need to enter the VBA Standard Remarks "Graduate non-standard term" in VA-ONCE to Off ramp non-standard enrollments for manual processing

Questions

Questions!

- How does VA know whether or not to calculate the credit hour equivalency?
- I was told not to try to calculate payments for students but, to direct students to the VA students area. Is this still true?
- What is the difference between certifying a non-standard term that had an individually defines modifier versus a non-standard term without an individually defined modifier?
- Does the individually defined modifier apply to Associates degree as well?
- How do you do adjustments and amendments for modular terms?
- Will the equivalent credit hour still be utilized in determining the rate of pursuit for graduate non-standard terms?
- What if the school has not defined what is full time for non-standard terms?