VA Benefits FAQ’s

1. Does DTS accept VA benefits?
   Yes, DTS is approved for the use of any VA benefits except the Hazelwood Act, which is for state supported colleges and universities. Dallas Theological Seminary is private, non-profit.

2. How do I get started?
   If you have not yet applied for benefits, you can do that through the VA website: www.gibill.va.gov. If you don't know what you are eligible for, you can call 1-888-442-4551 for that information. Once you have applied for benefits, you will receive an eligibility letter, which defines your benefits and the time for using them.

3. What does DTS need from me for this process?
   a. A copy of your eligibility letter
   b. A copy of your DD-214
   c. If you have previously used educational benefits, you will need to complete the VA form 22-1995 (Change of Program or Place of Training). This is available on the VA website.
   d. An official copy of any military transcripts, which can be received electronically.

4. Can I use my VA benefits anywhere DTS teaches classes?
   You can be certified by DTS with the VA as long as you are taking classes online or at one of the following locations:
   a. Dallas campus
   b. Houston campus
   c. Washington, DC campus
   d. Austin extension
   e. San Antonio extension

Specific Information regarding Post 9/11, Chapter 33 benefits:

1. Will the VA pay for everything I need to get my degree?
   The VA will pay for any course leading toward your degree, but not for any other courses. They don't pay for audits or any penalty fees, such as a drop fee or late fees.

2. How does the process work?
   Students are certified for their courses to the VA typically one week after the payment deadline for that session. After that, the VA pays tuition/fees directly to the school.

3. Do I pay anything?
   If you are 100% eligible, the VA will pay 100% of your tuition and fees for any course. If you are not 100% eligible, they will pay that percentage, and you will pay the rest (e.g., if you are 60% eligible, the VA pays 60% of your bill and you pay 40%). Any scholarship designated for tuition/fees only will be deducted from the total amount certified.

   Note: If you drop a course after being certified, the VA will ask you to pay them back.
4. **What about optional fees?**
   Optional fees are not covered by the VA. This now includes the Baylor Fitness Center activity fee. Because you can opt out of this fee, it is considered optional and not paid by the VA.

5. **Is there a maximum amount the VA will pay for tuition/fees?**
   The CAP for private schools’ tuition and fees for the 2015-2016 academic year is $21,084.89 annually, prorated based on your eligibility level.

6. **What other financial benefits do I get with the Post 9/11?**
   
   a. **Book Stipend**
      A maximum of $1,000 per year is calculated as follows: $41.67 per credit hour then prorated based on eligibility. For instance, if you take 9 hours, then the stipend is: $41.67 X 9 = $375.03. Then you would have $375.03 X 80% (sample eligibility) = $300.02.

   b. **Housing allowance**
      Housing requires that you are going more than half-time to be eligible. At DTS that would be 7 hours per semester. If you only take one online class of 3 hours, you won’t get any housing. Your amount is computed based on the monthly housing for the Dallas zip code (75204), times your eligibility, then times your rate of pursuit (number of hours taken / 12 [# of hours considered full-time], rounded to the nearest multiple of 10).

      Let’s say you are 60% eligible and taking 8 hours. If the housing allowance is $942, then $942 X 60% would be $565.20 X [8 (hours) / 12 (.66 rounded to .70 rate of pursuit)] = $395.64. However, if all your hours are online courses, your total housing is then cut in half. The Basic Allowance for Housing in the school year 2014-15 is $1749/month.

   1. **What about housing between semesters?**
      There is no Break Pay. Housing is paid up to the last day of the semester and picks up beginning the first day of the next semester, which is paid at the end of the month.

   2. **How does the VA handle payments?**
      The VA pays the school for your tuition and fees but sends the book stipend and housing directly to you.

7. **How can I make maximum use of my housing?**
   Work around short courses. There are some courses that do not run the entire semester. They may start late and run for 10 weeks, 6 weeks, or even one weekend. When you are certified for classes, the VA is notified of the beginning and ending dates of the course. For Post 9/11, this doesn’t affect your tuition/fees, but might affect housing.

8. **What is an example?**
   For instance, if you are taking 12 hours, but one class ends after 10 weeks, then you are no longer full-time for the remaining time in the semester. That means your rate of pursuit changes from full-time to 80%, which will affect your housing. Just be aware that not all on-campus classes meet for the full semester (for a list of these courses, see #9 below). You might consider
doing a short course online. The course would be the same number of credit hours, but it would run the full semester. You could also add an elective hour to the hours of a course you are taking that runs the full semester, as long as it is an elective hour you need for graduation. You could also take an additional course running the full semester, so that when the short course is finished, you would still have the 12+ hours needed for maximum housing.

9. Which classes are short?
BE103, BE105, CE104, CE505, NT113, PM101, PM102, RS100 plus numerous courses offered at the extension sites. All online courses run for the entire semester.

10. Are there any helpful websites?
   a. The first is the VA website: www.gibill.va.gov.
   b. The second is www.ebenefits.va.gov. Here you can keep up with your school enrollment status, months of entitlement, level of eligibility, and delimiting dates. There are two levels of enrollment. Level one requires only a name and social security number. Level two—premier, which gives you payment information and other helpful options—requires two additional forms of identification.
   c. The third is www.military.com. This is a website that gives additional helpful information related to veterans.

11. How do I get a Military Transcript?
   a. Joint Service Transcript
   b. American Council on Education
      Here you’ll find information on how to get a military transcript. On the main screen, under Related Content, there are links to the various branches for transcripts.
   c. Air Force Transcripts
      This guide provides helpful information about transcripts for both Air University for Professional Military Education and the Community College of the Air Force.

12. Are there helpful phone numbers I might need?
   a. For general VA questions, you can contact the VA Regional Office in Muskogee, OK: 888-442-4551
   b. For Chapter 30 students, to verify monthly attendance: 877-823-2378
   c. For questions about VA help at DTS: 214-887-5353, from 9:00am to 5:30pm CST.