

## CENTER FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

### Satisfactory Academic Progress and Standard of Attendance

In order for veterans or eligible persons to receive educational benefits there are two requirements: 1) satisfactory academic progress (measured by participation) and 2) attendance. Failure to comply with the stated progress and attendance policies will result in the discontinuation of benefits by the Department of Veteran Affairs (DVA). If the student does not meet the minimum progress set by the DVA and Excelsior College, the student's education benefit claim will be terminated.

#### Satisfactory Academic Progress

Satisfactory Academic Progress is measured by the consistent participation in and completion of program requirements (including readings, learning activities, assignments, and assessments) each week of the defined enrollment period. "Participation" is defined as:

- reading online program material
- taking an assessment
- preparing and submitting an assignment
- completion of learning activities

All students are expected to actively participate in their program until its completion.

#### Standard of Attendance

The Center for Professional Development maintains a record of attendance for all veterans and eligible persons enrolled in non-degree, non-credit professional development coursework. This record demonstrates that a student consistently meets the minimum number of clock hour participation required per week.

Enrollment periods are determined by taking the training time (total program clock hours) and dividing it by the hours expected from a student's chosen rate of pursuit. For example, if a half-time student enrolls in a program that is 180 clock hours, the DVA will use the following formula:  $180 \text{ clock hours} / 9 \text{ clock hours of activity per week} = 20 \text{ week enrollment period}$ . If that same student completes their program in 10 weeks, their benefit claim will be amended to reflect a full-time status:  $180 \text{ clock hours} / 10 \text{ week enrollment period} = 18 \text{ clock hours of activity per week}$ . Similarly, if a student dedicates fewer than the minimum hours required for half-time status, their benefit claim will be amended to reflect a less than half-time rate of pursuit. Unless otherwise noted in the program description, the Center for Professional Development programs have a maximum completion time of 12 months; therefore, enrollment periods cannot extend beyond 52 weeks.

All benefit claims are processed at a half-time rate of pursuit (minimum of 9 clock hours of participation per week). Students who successfully complete a program at a full-time or three-quarter-time rate of pursuit will have the change in status reported to the DVA accordingly. All students using veterans' benefits receive a written expectation of attendance and participation within the first five days of enrollment, with subsequent reminder notifications sent every fourteen days until program completion. Students who are active within a program but fail to complete the required 9 clock hours per week of participation (half-time status) will be reported by the VA Certifying Official. This change in clock hour commitment may result in an amendment to a lower rate of pursuit causing a potential reduction or loss of VA education benefits and, in some cases, creating a debt with the DVA if payment has already been received.

#### Excessive Absenteeism

Per Excelsior College's Excessive Absenteeism Policy, any student who fails to actively participate in a program for three consecutive weeks will, at any point in a program, be considered excessively absent. Absenteeism of one week results in a written notice informing the student of his or her nonparticipation and the consequences of unsatisfactory attendance, including claim amendment and the potential for termination of his or her program. The student will be administratively withdrawn after three consecutive weeks of nonparticipation. The student

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will not be eligible for a refund of the program fee and will owe any balance due for the program. The student will be assigned a U (“unsatisfactory”) grade reflecting his or her administrative withdrawal and will not be eligible to receive a certificate of completion. *Any student who does not participate in a program for a week or longer must contact the Center for Professional Development to have his or her absence approved.* Approval for absences must be made in advance on a week-by-week basis. Approved absences are at the discretion of the Center for Professional Development and the VA Certifying Official.

Students who fail to maintain satisfactory academic progress or attendance will be reported to the VA for discontinuance of their educational assistance allowance.

### Program Hold Policy

The Center for Professional Development understands that at times there are unavoidable obstacles that will prevent students from completing program coursework. In these cases, students may request to place their program on hold. Examples of these situations would be: military deployment orders, or emergency medical situations. To request a Program Hold, students must submit appropriate documentation supporting their request to the Center for Professional Development. Acceptable documentation can include military move orders, or a letter from a doctor detailing the student’s inability to complete coursework during a given time frame. Requests will be assessed on a case-by-case basis and must be submitted in writing. Approved Program Holds are at the discretion of the Center for Professional Development and Excelsior’s VA Office. Please note that if you have Post 9/11 benefits and choose to place your program on hold, you will most likely not be eligible for the Basic Housing Allowance stipend.

### Procedure

The Center for Professional Development will take the following steps to monitor progress and take attendance in an effort to retain students enrolled in its courses:

- The student, faculty facilitator, and Center for Professional Development staff will have access to the attendance record within the program. This record reflects the time spent within the program each day, and progress made towards the completion of each lesson.
- Any student not actively participating for one week will be sent an email notifying the student of his or her nonparticipation and encouraging the student to contact the Center for Professional Development staff and/or begin participating in the course immediately. The student will be warned that he or she will be administratively withdrawn after three consecutive weeks of nonparticipation. The student's attendance will be documented in their record.
- Any student not participating by the end of the third consecutive week will be assigned a U grade for the program and the student's access terminated. The claim termination date will be the last date of attendance. Faculty facilitators and other designated staff, including the VA Office, are sent a report listing students who have been awarded U grades. When the U grade is assigned, the Center for Professional Development will send an email to the student.
- When a student is administratively withdrawn, the student will not be eligible for refund of course tuition.

**By signing below, I acknowledge that I have read, understand, and agree to the expectations as stated above in the Satisfactory Academic Progress and Standard of Attendance Policy.**

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(Signature)

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(Date)