



Using Your VA/GI Bill Benefits

The GI Bill aims to help veterans pursue a career in aviation by paying for flight training and ratings beyond a private pilot certificate. So, while veterans cannot use the GI Bill for a private pilot certificate, it can be used to pay for instrument rating, commercial pilot certificate and flight instructor ratings.

Eligibility: Veterans who qualify under the Post 9/11 GI bill can be reimbursed up to 100% of their training (subject to the annual cap, see below) depending on their eligibility percentage. That percentage is based on time in service, and the VA will provide you with that number. Veterans who use the Montgomery GI Bill will be reimbursed directly from the VA for 60% of total training costs.

Annual Reimbursement Cap: The VA has established an annual reimbursement cap for flight training. For the 2023-24 academic year, the VA reimburses a maximum of **\$15,497.15**. (The academic year is August 1st to July 31st of the following year). This cap applies to all courses and/or enrollments that begin during that academic year, regardless of the academic year in which the courses or enrollments are completed.

This means that once a veteran enrolls in a flight training course and meets the annual cap for that academic year, the VA will not reimburse for that course any further, **even if the training rolls over into a new academic year**. Any flight training exceeding this cap becomes the veteran's responsibility.

After a veteran completes a course and a new academic year starts (on August 1st), the maximum amount of money they can spend on flight training resets to the cap amount for the new academic year. Any additional flight training courses they enroll in after that date will be covered by the new academic year's cap. Veterans should keep this mind when choosing their enrollment date.

Additional expenses: The VA will not reimburse for books, materials, exam or checkride fees. These expenses are the responsibility of the veteran but can be reimbursed by the VA by filling out form VBA-22-0803. EFI can provide copies of this form, and it is also available on the VA website.



Veterans must submit the form to the VA **within 12 months** (via the AskVA or QuickSubmit portal) along with a copy of their temporary airmen certificate, receipt of examiner payment, and receipt of airplane rental. Reimbursement may be subject to any remaining benefit amount.

Instrument/Commercial dual enrollment: The VA requires that veterans enrolled in the instrument course must concurrently enroll in the commercial course. **The VA considers this combined enrollment as a single course subject to the annual cap.** Veterans should be able to complete the instrument course before reaching the annual cap. However, it's more likely that the cap will have been met before the commercial course is completed. Veterans should expect to pay out of pocket for the remaining cost of the commercial course.

Maximum course hours: The VA will reimburse up to the maximum training hours for each course listed below.

Course	Dual	Solo	Ground	Pre/Post
Instrument	35	n/a	42.9	13
Commercial Single Engine	55	65	35	30
Multi-Engine Add-On	15	n/a	15	4.5
Flight Instructor (CFI)	25	n/a	36.5	10.2

Flight Hours exceeding program limits: The VA will not reimburse for any hours that exceed the course's approved flight hours or exceed the annual cap.

Aircraft exceeding program specifications: The VA will not cover costs associated with using aircraft not approved in your course.

Benefit limitations: The VA will reimburse you for the cost of the training, but not necessarily the full cost. You might exhaust your benefits before you have enough flight hours to complete the program (this will happen with the Instrument/Commercial program due to the dual enrollment requirement). Or you might need more training and exhaust the maximum hours allowed in your course before running out of funds.



Here are some things to consider to avoid these pitfalls:

Research program costs and flight hours: Find out exactly how many hours the program requires and the associated costs for training, fees, and other expenses.

The flight simulator costs much less per hour than an aircraft. Consider utilizing the flight simulator for as many hours as possible and pay for that out of pocket, billing the more expensive aircraft hours to the VA.

Make sure you have enough time to commit to a flight training before enrolling in a course. Schedule your lessons 2-3 a week and avoid any long gaps or delays in your training. Consistency is key to completing your course in as few hours as possible.

Look for additional funding: There might be scholarships or grants available specifically for veterans pursuing flight training.

How Do I Get Started?

The enrollment process is simple but requires a few steps. Once you are enrolled in the VA system, you can begin flight training as early as the next day!

1. If you have not applied for your benefits, go to va.gov and start the process. EFI cannot enroll you without a copy of your VA Certificate of Eligibility, and it can take the VA up to 30 days to process your application.
2. Obtain a second-class medical certificate.
3. Complete the online EFI Student Enrollment packet. (forms are available [here](#))
4. If enrolling in the commercial program or have a rotor rating, make an appointment to meet with our chief flight instructor for a logbook review.
5. Make an appointment with EFI's School Certifying Officer (SCO).
6. Start your training!