VICTORIA COLLEGE

VETERAN SERVICES STUDENT HANDBOOK 2014-2015



Victoria College Mission

Victoria College is a public, open-admission college. Our mission is to provide educational opportunities and services for our students and the communities we serve. Victoria College provides:

Associate Degrees and Certificates – Programs leading to the Associate of Arts, Associate of Science, Associate of Applied Science, and Certificates that meet the needs of the students and communities within our service area.

University Transfer – Academic courses that apply to baccalaureate degrees and meet the educational needs of students planning to transfer to a university.

Career & Technical Education – Credit courses and programs designed to satisfy local and regional employer demands and meet individuals' workforce training needs.

Academic Foundations – Compensatory education courses consistent with open admission policies designed to prepare students effectively for success in college-level studies.

Continuing Education – Non-credit courses and programs that meet the immediate technical and occupational skills needs of employers and the individual, and fulfill the personal enrichment and cultural needs of the individual and the community.

Adult Education – Adult education, basic skills, and English as a second language instructional programs that meet the specific educational needs of our adult constituency.

Student Support – Services and activities that support student success, including academic guidance and counseling services.

Cultural and Intellectual Outreach – Educational activities and events that enhance our community's quality of life.

STATEMENT OF NON DISCRIMINATION

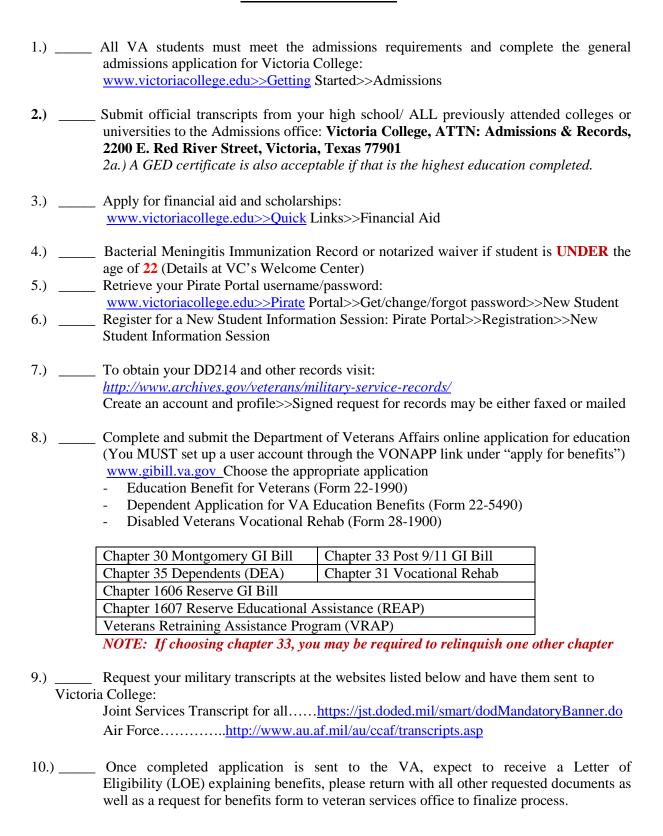
The Victoria College does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, gender, pregnancy, age, disability, genetic information, marital status, amnesty, Veteran's status or limited English proficiency. It is our policy to comply, fully, with the nondiscrimination provision of all state and federal rules and regulations.

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The Director of Human Resources is the equal employment opportunity coordinator and coordinator for compliance with the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended, including The Pregnancy Discrimination Act of 1978, the Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967 as amended, the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Sections 503, 504), Title IX of the Education Amendment of 1972, American with Disabilities Act of 1990 as amended in 2011, Immigration Reform and Control Act (1986), Texas Commission on Human Rights Act (1983), the Vietnam Era Veterans Assistance Act of 1974, Texas Statues 6252-14-V.A.T.S. and 6252-16-V.A.T.S., Executive Order 11246 and 11758, the Family and Medical Leave Act, and the Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act (GINA) of 2008.

VA New Student Process



Academic Advising

Academic Advising

- The Department of Veterans Affairs awards education benefits only for certain programs of studies (majors) approved by the State Approving Agency (SAA).
- The VA will only award benefits for courses that count towards the degree plan designated and kept record.

Changing Programs (Majors)

- All students who wish to change the program they are pursuing must notify the VA advisors and the Department of Veterans Affairs.
- Chapter 30, 33, 1606 & 1607 students must complete form 22-1995 in order to keep the VA department information correct and accurate. Each time the student's major changes, a new degree audit should be completed.
- Chapter 35 and 33 dependent students must complete form 22-5495 in order to keep the VA department information correct and accurate. Each time the student's major changes, a new degree audit should be completed.

Schedule Changes

- It is the VA student's responsibility to report any schedule changes to the VA advising office as soon as possible.
- If notification is not given about any schedule change, this may result in an overpayment and the VA student will be held responsible for repayment.

NOTE Making multiple schedule changes will cause a delay in processing of VA benefits, possibly making the student responsible for initial payment of courses.

Drops & Withdrawals from Courses

- Dropping a course might result in an overpayment of benefits, holding the VA student financially responsible for the repayment.
- Before dropping a course, speak with a VA advisor about the possible consequences and necessary paperwork required.

Overpayment

- As stated earlier, an overpayment is a situation where the VA student received payment for a course that credit was not received either due to withdrawal or drop.
- To avoid overpayment:
 - o Report changes in enrollment promptly
 - o Fully understand the consequence of dropping a course or withdrawing
 - o Attend courses regularly

Concurrent Enrollment

- A VA student may be concurrently enrolled at more than one school and still receive benefits with Victoria College.
- Speak with a VA advisor about the necessary paperwork required when enrolling at two institutions.

Tutorial Assistance

- With adequate proof, the VA will reimburse all VA chapter students except 1607 for tutorial assistance up to \$1,200.
- Speak with a VA advisor for details or call 1-888-442-4551 for how to apply through the VA

Satisfactory Progress

- All Victoria College students must maintain a cumulative Grade Point Average (GPA) of 2.0 to be considered in good academic standing.
- Two consecutive semesters with a GPA of less than a 2.0 will result in Academic Suspension, making them ineligible to register for the following semester and to receive any Veteran Affairs benefits.
- Refer to the current Victoria College Catalog for readmissions policies and further information regarding the standards of progress.

Prior Credit Evaluation

- All transcripts from previous accredited colleges as well as military transcripts will be evaluated and any credit afforded will be counted towards the students' program of study on record.
- For every 6 months of service, the VA student will receive 1 hour of Physical Education credit up to 4 hours maximum.

Types of Courses

Foundational Courses

- Foundational courses are developmental courses required for students who have not met college ready (TSI) standards based on assessment placement.
- Victoria College veteran students are given TSI exemption status based on an honorable discharge from the military provided within a Member 4 DD-214.
- The VA will only pay for foundational courses when proof of their necessity has been met.

NOTE Foundational courses cannot be conducted in online format.

Online Courses

• Online format courses are payable by VA benefits if they are required for degree completion.

NOTE Chapter 33 students who enroll in a <u>completely</u> online schedule <u>will be awarded</u>

1/2 of the national average for their housing allowance. Please contact the VA for specific details pertaining to your schedule: 1-888-442-4451

Repeat Courses

- The VA will not pay for courses in which credit was already received; VC considers a grade of "D" or better a passing grade.
- One exception to this is in selective based programs where a certain grade is required to be considered completed or accepted.

For example, the Associate's Degree of Nursing requires that prospective students complete pre-requisite courses with a grade of "C" or better. A VA student who does not meet the required grade can retake the course with VA approval a second time.

NOTE the student will be held responsible for any overpayment due to a repeated courses which benefits were awarded.

Certification Process

Certification for all Chapters

- It is the duty of the Veterans Affairs advisor for Victoria College to certify the courses enrolled in for all VA students to the Department of Veterans Affairs.
- The certification process is initiated by the VA student submitting an "Enrollment Certification Request" to the VA advisor within the Advising Office prior to every semester enrolled.
- The earlier the Request for Certification is submitted, the faster the awards can be processed and benefits be dispersed. Typically within 30 days, except for first-time beneficiaries.

Monthly Verification

- Chapter 30, 1606 & 1607 students must verify their enrollment in courses monthly either online through the Web Automated Verification of Enrollment (WAVE) at www.gibill.va.gov/wave/index.do or by Interactive Voice Response (IRV) systems.
- Benefits <u>will not</u> be released without enrollment being verified with the Department of Veterans Affairs.
- Since the VA needs 30 days for processing after receiving certification requests, VA students might not be able to verify on the last day of the first month of enrollment. Keep trying each day until the award has been processed.

NOTE the earliest that a student can verify their enrollment is the last calendar day of each month under Montgomery GI Bill.

Advance Payment

- Advance payment provides VA students money at the beginning of a school term to help the student meet expenses accrued at the beginning of the semester.
- To inquire about Advance Payment please visit with a VA advisor at least 30 days prior to the beginning of the semester.

Non-VA Financial Aid

Financial Aid

- VA students are eligible to supplement their VA education benefits with financial aid offered through the federal government and state agencies.
- Interested students must submit a FAFSA application in to be considered for federal aid.
- Students must complete a Student Information Sheet and SAP acknowledgment form.
- Although there are not set deadlines, priority dates are established.
 - The earlier an application is completed the quicker it can be processed and your financial aid package can be awarded.
 - o In some cases, financial aid will not be awarded until after the semester has begun, placing financial responsibility on the student for initial cost of tuition and fees.
- Acceptable academic progress must be maintained to be awarded Financial Aid assistance.
- Any student interested in applying for Financial Aid can meet with a Financial Aid advisor to discuss their eligibility and status.

NOTE every student must apply annually to continually receive Financial Aid**

<u>Appendix A – Helpful Resources</u>

Form DD-214

- VA students can request a copy of their DD-214 at the following website:
 - o http://www.archives.gov/veterans/military-service-records/standard-form-180.html

Military Transcripts

- VA students can request copies of their military transcripts at the following websites:
 - o Air Force......http://www.au.af.mil/au/ccaf/transcripts.asp
 - o Other Branches......https://jst.doded.mil/smart/dodMandatoryBanner.do

Chapter 33 Dependents: (Transfer of Entitlement)

- To apply for transfer of entitlement benefits, the veteran must first apply at the following website to receive approval for the benefit:
 - o https://www.dmdc.osd.mil/TEB/consent?continueToUrl=%2FTEB%2F

Regional Processing Office

 Department of Veterans Affairs VA Regional Office PO Box 8888 Muskogee, OK 74402-8888 1-888-GI-BILL-1

Victoria College Veterans Affairs Advisor

Staci Kelly VA Advisor 361-572-6462

staci.kelly@victoriacollege.edu

Appendix B – Chapter Details

Chapter 30: Montgomery GI Bill – Active Duty

ELIGIBILITY:

Chapter 30 benefits are afforded to Veterans who:

- Entered active duty for the first time after June 30, 1985.
- Served for three years active duty OR
- Served two years if they entered the Selected Reserves and served four years within two years of leaving active duty.
- Received an Honorable Discharge from the military upon separation

BENEFITS:

Chapter 30 students can receive benefits up to 36 months. At the beginning of each month certified in courses, the student will receive a lump sum of money either through check or direct deposit. The amount of money is dependent upon the veteran's length of service and course load enrolled in. *Active Duty personnel receive Tuition Reimbursement only*.

KICKERS AND ADDITIONAL CONTRIBUTIONS:

A kicker is part of the veteran's enlistment contract. Veterans who are eligible for "kickers" or made additional chapter 30 contribution payments will receive higher monthly benefits. If a kicker of \$12,000 is offered, then the monthly kicker is \$333.33 ($$12,000 \div 36$ months) which increases the \$1,426.00 full time to \$1,759.33.

Veterans who participate in Chapter 30 contribute \$1,200 towards their education benefit, which is non-refundable. Veterans can contribute up to \$600.00 more. This will increase their benefit by \$150.00.

Chapter 33: Post 9/11 GI Bill

ELIGIBILITY:

Chapter 33 benefits are afforded to veterans and in some instances can be transferred to their dependants (Transfer of Benefits).

Benefits are offered to service members who:

- Served on active duty on or after September 11, 2001 with;
- A minimum of 90 aggregate days (excluding entry level and skill training)
- At least 30 continuous days if discharged for a service-connected disability
- Received an Honorable Discharge upon separation from the military

BENEFITS:

The Department of Veteran Affairs pays for a percentage of the Chapter 33 student's tuition and fees accrued for courses directly to the school (Institution of Higher Learning (IHL)). The percentage paid is calculated by the VA and is dependent upon the veteran's length of service.

ADDITIONAL BENEFITS:

Transfer of Entitlement: Chapter 33 veterans can elect to transfer their benefits to their dependents (spouse or children) if they have served for a period of six years and reenlist for four more years or has at least 10 years of service previously. To transfer benefits the veteran must be approved by the Department of Defense by applying at the website listed in Appendix A and entitlement can then be transferred and initiated. Once approved by the DoD the dependant then will need to apply for benefits submitting the VONAPP online application to the DVA.

Book Stipend: Chapter 33 students are annually awarded a book stipend of \$1,000 paid proportionally based on enrollment. This benefit is paid directly to the student at the beginning of each semester certified in courses. *Not until October 1, 2011 will students on active duty be eligible to receive the book stipend benefit.*

Housing Allowance: A monthly housing allowance is paid directly to the student at the beginning of each month certified in courses. The housing allowance is prorated by the student's length of service percentage and is equal to the Department of Defense's Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH) for an "E-5 with dependents" and the zip code of the school. *Active duty personnel are not eligible for the housing allowance*. The student must meet a "rate of pursuit" of more than 50%.

Example: Full time is 12 credits, then the rate of pursuit for:

- 6 Credits is 50% (6÷12=50%) (**Not Eligible**)
- 7 Credits is 58% (7÷12=58%) (**Eligible**)

Effective October 1, 2011 the following changes to the housing allowance will take effect: students who enroll in a complete "online" schedule will be eligible to receive the housing allowance. In addition, the housing allowance will be paid proportional to the student's rate of pursuit rounded up to the nearest tenth.

Example: Full time is 12 credits = 100% of the Housing allowance afforded ³/₄ time is 9-11 credits = 80% of the Housing allowance afforded ¹/₂ time is 6-8 credits = 50% of the Housing allowance afforded

Licensing, Admission & Certification Tests: Chapter 33 students can be reimbursed for one licensing or certification test not to exceed \$2,000 and must be approved by the VA. Effective August 1, 2011 the VA will reimburse VA students for more than one "license and certification" test. As well, the VA will reimburse fees paid by VA students taking national exams for admission to an institution of higher learning (SAT, ACT, GMAT, LSAT).

Chapter 35: Dependents Educational Assistance (DEA)

ELIGIBILITY:

Chapter 35 student are:

- Dependents (spouses and children between the ages of 18 and 26 years of age) of deceased or 100% permanently disabled veterans may be eligible for educational assistance when the death or disability was the result of service in the military.
- Dependents of service members missing in action, captured in the line of duty, or forcibly detained or interred in the line of duty by a foreign power for more than 90 days may also be eligible.
- Period for eligibility for educational benefits ends on the child's 26th birthday, or 8 years from the date the VA rated the service connection total disability or death, whichever is later. In no case will benefits be awarded after age 31.
- Generally, spouses have 10 years from the veteran's date of determination or a service connected total permanent disability or date of death, which is later.
- Children's marital status does not affect ability to benefit.
- Spouses' remarriage terminates entitlement, unless death or divorce terminates remarriage.

BENEFITS:

Chapter 35 students receive monthly benefits up to 45 months. At the beginning of each month enrolled in courses, the student will receive their veteran benefit. The amount of money is dependent upon the course load enrolled in.

Chapter 1606: Montgomery GI Bill - Selected Reserve

ELIGIBILITY:

Chapter 1606 students must have:

- Have a six-year obligation to serve in the Selected Reserve signed after June 30, 1985. If you are an officer, you must have agreed to serve six years in addition to your original obligation. For some types of training, it is necessary to have a six-year commitment that begins after September 30, 1990;
- Complete your initial active duty for training (IADT);
- Meet the requirement to receive a high school diploma or equivalency certificate before completing IADT. You may not use 12 hours toward a college degree to meet this requirement;
- Remain in good standing while serving in an active Selected Reserve unit. You will also retain MGIB SR eligibility if you were discharged from Selected Reserve service due to a disability that was not caused by misconduct. Your eligibility period may be extended if you are ordered to active duty.
- The Department of Defense and the Department of homeland Security (Coast Guard) determine who's eligible for chapter 1606.

BENEFITS:

Similar to Chapter 30 students, Chapter 1606 students receive a monthly sum each month they are certified.

KICKERS:

Chapter 1606 students may be eligible for kickers depending upon enlistment benefits. Possible kickers are \$100, \$200, and \$350.

Chapter 1607: Reserve Education Assistance Program (REAP)

ELIGIBILITY:

- Active members of the Selected Reserve called to active duty and members of the Individual Ready Reserve (Army IRR, Air Force IRR, Navy IRR and Marine Corp IRR.) called to active duty on or after September 11, 2001, in response to a contingency operation declared by the President or Congress.
- The Department of Defense and the Department of homeland Security (Coast Guard) determine who's eligible for chapter 1607.
- Members of the Selective Reserve may be eligible for chapter 1607 after serving 90 consecutive days on active duty for a contingency operation.

BENEFITS:

Chapter 1607 students receive up to 48 months of benefits under any combination of VA educational benefit program they may qualify for. Chapter 1607 members do not have a delimiting date. Members are eligible for benefits as long as they remain active.

Veteran Qualifications

A Veteran must:

- At the time of entry into the U.S. Armed Forces, designated Texas as Home of Record; or entered the service in Texas; or was a Texas resident;
- Have received an honorable discharge or separation or a general discharge under honorable conditions;
- Served at least 181 days of active duty service (excluding training);
- Have no federal Veteran's education benefits, or have no federal Veterans education benefits dedicated to the payment of tuition and fees only (such as Chapter 33 or 31; for term or semester enrolled that do not exceed the value of Hazlewood benefits;
- Not be in default on a student loan made or guaranteed by the State of Texas;
- Enroll in classes for which the college receives tax support (i.e., a course that does not depend solely on student tuition and fees to cover its cost), unless the college's governing board has ruled to let Veterans receive the benefit while taking non-funded courses; and
- Make satisfactory academic progress toward a degree or certificate in accordance with the institution's policy regarding eligibility for financial aid. (Effective fall 2014)

Veterans who are granted their first Hazlewood Act exemption beginning fall, 2011 must reside in Texas during the semester or term for which the exemption is claimed. This requirement does not apply to the Veterans who either received the exemption prior to the 2011-2012 academic year, have reenlisted into active duty, or reside with a spouse who is on active duty.

Hazlewood Act application process

A Veteran must:

- Apply and be accepted to a **Texas public** college or university of his/her choice. Go to www.applytexas.org to apply or use your institution's application for admission;
- Provide proof (DD214) from the Department of Defense regarding military service and the nature of discharge;
- Provide proof of eligibility or ineligibility for GI Bill benefits (Chapter 31, 33/Post-9/11) by requesting a certificate of eligibility for federal education benefits from www.gibill.va.gov (if Veteran has active duty service after 9/11/2001);
- Fill out the Hazlewood Exemption application form; and
- Turn in the Hazlewood Exemption application form, a copy of your letter of eligibility/ineligibility, and a copy of your DD214 into the financial aid office of the institution you will be attending.

Applications and all supporting documentation must be received by the institution no later than the last day of class in order to be evaluated for the semester or term.

Determine institution eligibility for the Hazlewood Act

Eligible Institutions:

The Hazlewood Act is available only for use at a Texas public college or university. To access listings of Texas public colleges and universities, follow this link: <u>Texas Institutions of Higher Education</u> and select any of the schools listed under the Texas Public Institutions. The schools listed under **Independent (Private) Institutions** do **NOT** qualify for this exemption.

Legacy Act (Child)

Eligible Veterans may assign unused hours of exemption eligibility to a child under certain conditions.

Oualifications

A child (legacy recipient) must:

- Qualify for resident tuition;
- Be the biological child, stepchild, adopted child, or claimed as a dependent in the current or previous tax year;
- Be 25 years old or younger on the first day of the semester or term for which the exemption is claimed (unless granted an extension due to a qualifying illness or debilitating condition); and

• Make satisfactory academic progress in a degree, certificate, or continuing education program as determined by the institution.

Legacy recipients will receive an exemption for the number of degree certified hours reported by the institution for that term or semester. Maximum degree certified program in which the student is enrolled for the term or semester and shall be consistent with the program length as defined within the school catalog as approved by the regional accreditation commission. *If a child to whom hours have been delegated fails to use all of the assigned hours, a Veteran may re-assign the unused hours that are available to another child. Only one child will use Hazlewood Legacy benefits at a time. (Effective fall 2014)

Legacy Act Application Process:

Qualifications

A child (legacy recipient) of a Veteran must:

- Apply and be accepted to a Texas public college or university. Go to www.applytexas.org to apply or use our institution's application for admission;
- Fill put the Hazlewood Exemption Application;
- Provide proof of eligibility or ineligibility for GI Bill benefits (Chapter 31, 33/Post-9/11) by requesting a certificate of eligibility for federal education benefits from www.gibill.va.gov; and
- Take both applications, letter of eligibility/ineligibility (if needed), along with a copy of the Veteran's DD214, to the financial aid office of the institution you will be attending.

Applications and all supporting documentation must be received by the institution no later than the last day of class of a term in order to be evaluated for that semester or term.

Hazlewood Act for Spouse/Child

Spouses and dependent children of eligible Active Duty, Reserve, and Texas National Guard who died in the line of duty or as a result of injury or illness directly related to military service, are missing in action, or who became totally disabled for purposes of employability as a result of a service-related injury or illness are entitled to each receive a 150 credit hours exemption.

Qualifications

A spouse must:

- Be a spouse of a Veteran who, at the time of entry into the U.S. Armed Forces, was a Texas resident, designated Texas as Home of Record, or entered the service in Texas;
- Be a spouse of a Veteran of the U.S. Armed Forces or the Texas National Guard who
 died as a result of service-related injuries or illness, is missing in action, or became
 totally disabled (100%) as a result of service-related injury or illness or is entitled to
 receive compensation at the 100% rate due to individual employability (IU) due to a
 service connected injury or illness;
- Have no federal Veterans education benefits, or have no federal Veterans education benefits dedicated to the payment of tuition and fees only (such as Chapter 33 or 31) for term or semester enrolled that do not exceed the value of Hazlewood benefits;
- Qualify for resident tuition; and
- Make satisfactory academic progress in a degree, certificate, or continuing education program as determined by the institution. This requirement does not apply to the spouse of a service connected deceased or MIA Veteran. (Effective fall 2014)

A child must:

- Be a child of a Veteran who, at the time of entry into the U.S. Armed Forces, was a Texas resident, designated Texas as Home of Record, or entered the service in Texas;
- Be a child of a Veteran of the U.S. Armed Forces, Texas National Guard, or Texas Air National Guard who died as a result of service-related injuries or illness, is missing in action, or became totally disabled (100%) as a result of a service-related injury or illness or is entitled to receive compensation at the 100% rate due to individual employability (IU) due to a service connected injury or illness;
- Have no federal Veterans education benefits, or have no federal Veterans education benefits dedicated to the payment of tuition and fees only (such as Chapter 33 or 31; for term or semester enrolled that do not exceed the value of Hazlewood benefits;
- Qualify for resident tuition; and
- Make satisfactory academic progress in a degree, certificate, or continuing education program as determined by the institution. This requirement does not apply to the child of a service connected deceased or MIA Veteran. (Effective fall 2014)

Application process for Spouse/Child

A spouse or child of a Veteran whose death was service connected or Killed in Action, is Missing in Action MIA, or is/was 100% permanently disabled must:

- Apply and be accepted to a Texas public college or university. Go to www.applytexas.org or use your institution's application for admission;
- Provide a DD214 and a disability rating letter or a DD1300 Report of Casualty regarding the Veteran's death;
- Provide proof of eligibility or ineligibility for GI Bill benefits (Chapter 31, 33/Post/9-11) by requesting an education benefits letter from the VA at www.gibill.va.gov; and
- Fill out the Hazlewood Exemption application form.

Applications and all supporting documentation must be received by the institution no later than the last day of class of a term in order to be evaluated for that semester or term.

SAP POLICY for Hazelwood Exemption at Victoria College

Beginning the Fall 2014 semester, students who use Hazlewood benefits must maintain a cumulative GPA of 2.0 or higher to continue to receive Hazlewood assistance.

If a student has been denied a state exemption or waiver for not meeting the requirements of Victoria College's Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) Guidelines, a waiver will need to be filed with the Financial Aid office.