



2023-2024 Welcome Guide

Welcome to UCI!

On behalf of the Veteran Services Center (VSC) team, we would like to congratulate you on the great achievement of being accepted into [one of the most competitive public research institutions](#) in the county.

Now, we are reaching out to provide you with the information you may need to fund and maximize your experience at UCI. **Please read this guide in its entirety** for a better understanding of what you may be eligible for, important timelines to keep in mind, and helpful tips to navigate your onboarding process at UCI. The information provided here is also available on our website: <https://veteran.uci.edu>.

Sincerely,
Veteran Services Center Team
veteran@uci.edu





Mission Statement

The Veterans Services Center (VSC) provides assistance to military-connected students - veterans, reservists, National Guard, active duty, and dependents - in obtaining their U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) education benefits. The VSC is responsible for submitting certification requests for incoming and continuing military-connected students, answering questions military-connected students may have concerning their VA educational benefits, and providing resources to assist military-connected students in navigating their transition to student life at UC Irvine.

Visit the VSC

We are located on the third floor of the UCI Student Center Building.

Address:

G306 Student Center Building
Irvine, CA 92697

Email:

veteran@uci.edu

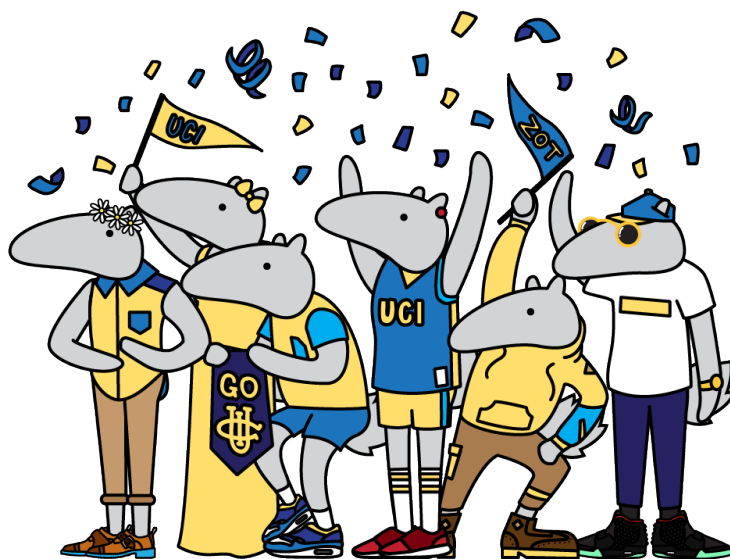
Phone Number:

(949) 824-3500



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Campus Benefits

Priority Registration

All continuing **student veterans, reservists, National Guard, and active duty are eligible for Priority Enrollment**. This benefit applies after attending your first quarter or semester at UCI.

Continuing student veterans, reservists, National Guard, and active duty using U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) education benefits are automatically enrolled in this campus benefit. If you are not using VA education benefits and would like to be enrolled into this campus benefit, please submit a **Service Benefit Verification** letter or **Statement of Service** letter by [following this link](#) and reviewing the *Submit Your Forms* section.



This benefit starts after attending your first quarter or semester at UCI. So, in most cases, it will start in the winter quarter. Initial course registration for undergraduate students occurs [during summer orientation \(SPOP/T-SPOP\)](#).

Housing Guarantee

Active duty, reservists, National Guard, and veterans are guaranteed an offer of on-campus housing for four years or the normal time to degree completion, whichever is greater. The Housing Guarantee applies to military-connected students who are single and those with families, even in the event a degree program is interrupted by a deployment.

If you are an undergraduate or transfer student, housing guarantee options include Undergraduate Housing, Graduate Housing, or Family Housing. Keep in mind that if you are a population that has access to another housing guarantee such as a freshman, transfer, or graduate program specific guarantee, then you should follow the avenues of those guarantees first. This guarantee is intended for full-time military-connected student that do not have access to another guarantee or are looking for housing outside of the typical deadline cycle.

Visit [this website to apply](#), upon registering with the UCI Veteran Services Center, prior to completing a housing application. To learn more about this campus benefit, please visit this [UCI Student Housing](#) website.



If you will not use VA education benefits, please submit a **Service Benefit Verification** letter or **Statement of Service** letter by [following this link](#) and reviewing the *Submit Your Forms* section.

Non-California Resident Tuition Exemption

The Veterans Access, Choice, and Accountability Act (VACAA) of 2014 allows military-connected students using U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) education benefits to qualify for non-resident tuition exemptions.

Effective academic year 2022-2023, students using VA educational benefits (Chapters 30, 31, 33, or 35) may qualify for non-resident tuition exemptions if they are living in the state of the institution regardless of formal state of residence.

For other exemptions from non-resident tuition that may apply to you, visit the University Registrar's website at: <http://reg.uci.edu/residency/classification.html>. The Statement for Legal Residence is found here: <http://reg.uci.edu/residency/downloads/slr.pdf>.

All questions related to determining your residency and eligibility for a VACAA waiver should be directed to the Residence Officer in the University Registrar. They can be contacted at regres@uci.edu or (949) 824-6124.

Education Benefits

There are multiple educational benefits military-connected students - active duty, veterans, reservists, National Guard, and dependents - may use to further their education and career goals. [Before you apply, be sure to understand the different benefits you may be eligible for and which benefit\(s\) you would like to use.](#)

CalVet College Fee Waiver for Veteran Dependents (Not a VA Benefit)

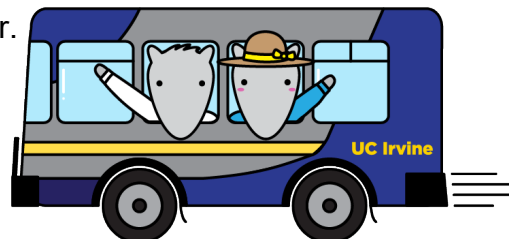
This benefit is provided by the state of California and not the U.S Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). The CalVet College Tuition Fee Waiver for Veteran Dependents benefit waives **only** mandatory system-wide tuition and fees at any State of California Community College, California State University, or University of California campus for California residents. This program does not cover campus-specific fees, the expense of books, parking or room, and board. There are four plans under which dependents of veterans may be eligible. The **CalVet College Fee Waiver Application** needs to be submitted to your [County Veterans Services Office](#) prior to the start of the academic year. Once you receive your approval letter, please upload a copy to the Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships (OFAS) secure website (instructions below) beginning July 1, 2022. Please note that you only need to submit the letter once an academic year.

Direct all questions regarding your waiver to the OFAS at fafiscal@uci.edu. More information about submitting your CalVet College Fee Waiver will be provided on the [VSC "Submit Your Forms" website](#) during the summer months.

Please note that the CalVet College Fee Waiver is a state education benefit. As a result, it waives "Tuition" and the "Student Services Fee" only. Please refer to the chart of fees for the current academic year at <https://www.reg.uci.edu/fees/> to review these covered benefits and **how much you may still owe before the payment fee deadline**. Students are still responsible to pay for all other fees and charges, including lab fees or technology fees incurred during the term.



Any eligible waivers will be processed later this summer. For questions related to using the waiver at UCI please email fafiscal@uci.edu.



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Education Benefits

There are different VA educational benefits offered to students at UCI: Chapters 30, 31, 33 (veterans/transfer of entitlement), 35, 1606, and 1607. Once you have [reviewed the benefits](#) you may be entitled for, and how they work at UCI, you should confirm that you are in an approved program by the VA. For an accurate list of our currently approved VA programs, please [click this link and visit this VA website](#). Once you find the “University of California-Irvine,” click on the “Programs” tab. Once you are there, click on “Institution of Higher Learning” and you will see the list of our approved VA programs.

When you are ready, apply through the [VA’s website](#) to receive a Certificate of Eligibility (COE) letter. We will need this letter to process your benefits at UCI. If you have any questions about your eligibility, please contact the VA Educational Benefits hotline (888-442-4551). Please note that our center cannot provide information about your VA eligibility.

Transfer students: We need an updated Certificate of Eligibility to process your educational benefits. Please visit [this VA website](#) to submit a Request for Change of Program/Training form.

Using your VA education benefits at UCI: We will need two things to start processing your VA education benefits at UCI.

First, we will need your Certificate of Eligibility (COE) which will give us essential information about your entitlement. This letter only needs to be submitted once, when you initially enroll in benefits, and whenever your entitlement changes (which is rare). Once you receive your COE, please [visit our website](#) to upload your document through our *Secure File Upload* link.

The **second** thing we will need, is your [Request for Certification \(RFC\) Annual Form](#). This document only needs to be submitted once per academic year, or whenever you need to make an adjustment to your benefits. More information about the RFC will be found in the next section of this guide.



A Certificate of Eligibility (COE) letter may take up to 30 days to arrive in the mail. We suggest you apply for this letter at your earliest convenience to prevent any delays later this summer/fall.

Fall 2023 RFC Priority Submission Dates

Submitting paperwork after these dates may result in a delay in processing.

UCI School of Law

Students should submit an RFC and additional paperwork by
07/25/2023

UCI Campus

(All students in the quarter system)
Students should submit an RFC and additional paperwork by
08/25/2023

Certification Process of VA Education Benefits **(Not CalVet)**

Once you have applied for, received, and uploaded your Certificate of Eligibility (COE) to our [website](#), you will need to submit a [Request for Certification \(RFC\) Annual Form](#) for the 2023-2024 academic year. This document only needs to be submitted once per academic year, or whenever you need to make an adjustment to your benefits.



Please note that we will begin to process RFCs later this summer for the upcoming fall, so please stay tuned to your UCI email for any important updates or document requests.

Helpful Hints When Filling Out the RFC

- Take your time filling out the form. Any errors may cause processing delays of benefits.

For example, a student may miss selecting all the academic terms they want to be certified for. In this case, the students may experience delays or even be dropped from courses for a term not selected on the RFC.

Another example is when a Chapter 31 or 33 student indicates they are waiving USHIP/GSHIP (UCI's health insurance), but then forgets to process any requests with the UCI Student Health Center. These students may experience delays related to their fees and tuition coverage. Sometimes it can cause a student being dropped from courses.

- Thoroughly read the policy reminder and student responsibility sections of the RFC before signing the document acknowledging that you understand the information on the form.

Out-of-State Students

Please review the [Non-California Resident Tuition Exemption](#) information of this guide. We will not be able to process your VA benefits until you have received a VACAA waiver from the UCI Residency Officer.

Graduate Students

Please make sure to provide your academic advisor's contact information on the RFC. The academic advisor information will be used to confirm course dates and enrollment requirements on a personalized Graduate Advisor Form each term. UCI Law students please contact registrar@law.uci.edu, UCI School of Medicine please contact mededreg@uci.edu, and UCI Paul Merage School of Business students please [contact your program's coordinator](#) to inquire about your advisor.

Chapter 31 Beneficiaries

Please review the [Chapter 31 section](#) of our website for important information related to your book/supplies benefits and your UCI health insurance coverage, which is not covered by chapter 31.

Certification Cycle

1. Once we have the required paperwork, we will process an initial certification for units to the VA. For Chapter 31 or 33 students, we partner with the Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships (OFAS) to place a placeholder award in student accounts while we wait to invoice the VA later in the term.
2. After the drop period, we review enrollment and process any unit changes to the VA. So, if you drop a course, it is better that you reach out to let us know ahead of time instead of waiting for us to find the change later in the term. This delay may cause benefit lags on your end.
3. For Chapter 31 or 33 students, once all financial aid has been posted and once lab and e-tech fees have been assessed, which usually happens during week four of an academic quarter, we will start billing the VA for all eligible tuition and fees.
4. After the academic term ends, we will conduct a final grade and GPA check to assess current eligibility status. Non-punitive grades, meaning failed grades that do not affect your GPA, such as "No Passes" or "Withdrawals," must be reported to the VA. Failed punitive grades, like an "F," are not reported to the VA. More about our GPA policy can be found on the bottom of the first page of the RFC.

Chapter 31 or 33 student Zot Accounts (student billing portal) will not be updated right away. If applicable, your account should be updated with any VA awards around the first fee deadline. The first fee deadline usually occurs in mid-September. Find your fee deadlines for the [2023-2024 academic year](#) on the UCI Registrar's website.

Once your enrollment is certified for a term, you will receive an automatic email from the VA stating your certified term dates with additional courseload information.



Important Summer Dates

June to early July- Around this time, the Registrar's office will update their [fee website](#) for the upcoming academic year.

Middle of August- Around this time, fees for fall will be available in student accounts. Once this happens, our office will be able to start the certification process for fall 2023 students. Once your enrollment is certified for a term, you will receive an email from the VA confirming that your enrollment has been processed for that term. For confirmation of your benefits processing, please contact the VA at (888-442-4551)

Middle of August to early September- Around this time, the Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships (OFAS) will be placing financial aid awards and VA education awards in student accounts.

Please note that the UC system is currently implementing a cohort-based [Tuition Stability Plan](#) for undergraduate students. This may cause some changes to the above-mentioned dates, so stay tuned to your UCI email for any updates.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Over the summer months our office experiences an increased volume in questions and processing requests. To avoid any response delays, we have created a robust [Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQs\) page](#) that can answer many of your questions. We invite you to visit this page as a useful resource! Here are some of the most frequently asked questions:

Does my scholarship, fellowship, teaching assistance, or other financial aid impact my VA education benefits?

For military-connected students using Chapter 31 and 33 benefits, tuition and fees are paid directly to the institution on behalf of the student when the enrollment certification is processed. Tuition and fees are prorated by the student's benefit level for Chapter 33 beneficiaries. The actual net cost for in-state tuition and fees after the application of any waiver, scholarship, aid, or assistance [other than loans and funds provided under section 401(b) of the Higher Education Act of 1965], provided directly to the institution and specifically designated for the sole purpose of defraying tuition and fees. This means that any tuition-specific awards you receive will be used to cover your tuition **before** the VA covers the remaining tuition and fees, which may reduce the amount covered by the VA but will not reduce any MHA payments or book stipends.

I've made changes to my schedule but have already submitted my Request for Certification (RFC) form, do I need to notify you?

Yes! You won't need to complete a new form, but you will need to send us an email at veteran@uci.edu letting us know which classes were added/dropped and the number of units so that we can update the VA with these changes.

The VA says my tuition hasn't been paid yet, why is that?

When certifying benefits, our office performs a process called "double certification". Initially, we will certify you for \$0 tuition and fees so that the VA can distribute your MHA and book stipends. Once lab or technology fees have been included in your tuition, we will perform a second certification to include this amount along with the tuition and fees.

The quarter/semester just started, why hasn't my Monthly Housing Allowance (MHA) come yet?

The MHA works like a paycheck. It is awarded after each month is completed. For example, if the student is in school for the month of September, the payment is expected to arrive within the first few days of October

Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships (OFAS)

The role of the Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships is to coordinate your federal, state, and institutional aid with the Veteran Services Center to ensure that you receive the maximum allowable aid.

As you explore your financial aid options, please review the [information on this OFAS website](#). Here are some frequently asked questions related to financial aid:

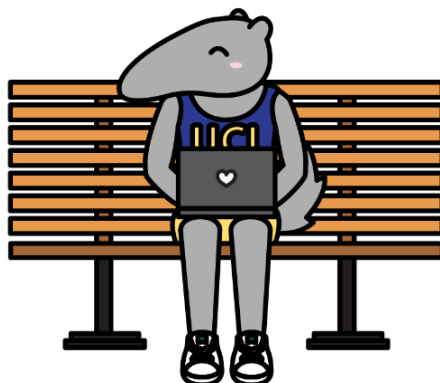
What is the [Cost of Attendance](#) (COA) and how could it affect my financial aid if I use VA education benefits?

Your [Cost of Attendance](#) (COA), also referred to as your budget, is the estimated cost to attend UCI for one year, and is used to determine the total amount of financial aid you are eligible to receive. It includes direct costs that will be charged to your student account that you are responsible to pay, such as tuition, fees, and room and board (if you live on campus). It also includes average estimates for indirect costs associated with going to college, for items like books, transportation costs and personal expenses.

The total amount of financial aid that you receive from any source (federal, state, institutional or outside agency) cannot exceed your [cost of attendance](#).

Where can I find more information about my specific [Cost of Attendance](#)?

You can review your [Cost of Attendance](#) by logging in to your [MyAid](#) portal.



If my Cost of Attendance (COA) is exceeded, how will this affect my financial aid award? Will I have to reimburse UCI if I am over-awarded?

The coordination of Veteran Benefits with other financial aid awards, including UCI [Grant](#), follows a UC systemwide policy. The UC Education Financial Model formula is below:

Cost of Attendance (budget)

- (minus) parent contribution from [FAFSA](#) (or student contribution if Independent)
- (minus) Federal Grant (Pell [Grant](#), SEOG, Veteran Benefits)
- (minus) State [Grant](#) (Cal [Grant](#), CHAFEE, Cal Vet Fee Waiver, MCS)
- (minus) Blue & Gold Opportunity Plan
- (minus) Federal Direct loans and federal work study
- = UC [Grant](#) award amount (also called your 'demonstrated need')

If a student is initially awarded UCI [Grant](#) and later becomes eligible for Veteran Benefits or other financial aid, their financial aid award will be revised if necessary in accordance with the UC awarding formula above. It may be necessary for you to repay financial aid already received once your aid offer is revised.

It is possible for a student to receive both UCI [Grant](#) and Veteran Benefits if they have sufficient demonstrated need.

Federal Veterans Benefit

This is [gift aid](#) provided by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs for education and training purposes to students who are active or were active in military service. There are several different types of awards called chapters. All but Chapter 33 and Chapter 31 are paid directly to the student veteran. Chapter 33 and 31 pay for UC Tuition and other fees directly to the campus. Dollars paid directly to the campus may affect other forms of financial aid, beginning with loans and work-study, and may affect UC [Grant](#) in accordance with the formula above.

Federal Vet Dependent Aid

This is [gift aid](#) provided by the Department of Veterans Affairs for education and training purposes to students who dependents of active or formerly active-duty military members. There are several different types called chapters. All but Chapter 33 and Chapter 31 are paid directly to the student. Chapter 33 and 31 pay for UC Tuition and other fees directly to the campus. Dollars paid directly to the campus affect other financial aid programs, starting with UC [Grant](#), in accordance with the formula above.



Have questions about your financial aid? Please reach out to OFAS at fafiscal@uci.edu.

