

Frequently Asked Questions for the California Military Department GI Bill Award Program (CMD GI Bill), formerly the California National Guard Education Assistance Award Program

Important Changes to the Program

- The California National Guard Education Assistance Award Program (CNG EAAP) has changed to the California Military Department GI Bill Award Program (CMD GI Bill or Program) as of the 2020-2021 academic year
- The program will remain unchanged for renewal participants who entered the program prior to the 2020-2021 academic year as long as they continue to meet eligibility requirements, including but not limited to, renewal application deadlines and requesting a leave of absence for any terms not attending the minimum of 3 units.
- Effective for the 2020-2021 academic year, the requirement for new applicants to have already served 2 years in the California Military Department (referred to as the Cal Guard from hereon) prior to participation in the program has been removed.
- New participants who enter the program during or after the 2020-2021 academic year will be required to provide 2 years of service in the Cal Guard (California National Guard, California State Guard, or the California Naval Militia) upon completion of the last academic period the CMD GI Bill is utilized.
- New participants who enter the program during or after the 2020-2021 academic year may use the CMD GI Bill for a certificate, degree, or diploma that leads to a baccalaureate, graduate, or doctoral degree.
- New participants who enter the program during or after the 2020-2021 academic year must complete their course of study within 10 years of initial acceptance into the program.
- New participants who enter the program during or after the 2020-2021 academic year can use the program for one degree (baccalaureate or higher). (Participants can use the program for an associate degree and then continue for a bachelor's degree as long as they have eligibility remaining.) Program participants who entered the program during or after the 2020-2021 academic year must not have previously participated in the program and obtained a baccalaureate, graduate, or doctoral degree.
- Only program participants who entered the program prior to the 2020-2021 academic year will be eligible for the \$500 stipend for books and supplies for graduate students.

Eligibility

Q: I've been active in the Cal Guard for over 4 years but live in Nevada. Does this affect my eligibility for the CMD GI Bill?

A: Yes, only residents of California are eligible for awards. To meet residency requirements, you must have had a physical presence in California for at least one year with the intent to make California home for other than a temporary purpose (reference California Education Code, Sections 68000 to 68134).

Q: I have not served a full 2 years yet. Can I apply now?

A: Yes, Assembly Bill 2722 removed the requirement service members serve 2 years prior to applying for the Program but added a 2-year service commitment to the end of the Program. Program participants who enter the Program during or after the 2020-2021 academic year (AY) will be required to serve 2 years in the Cal Guard (California National Guard, the California State Guard, or the California Naval Militia) upon completion of the last academic period they use educational assistance under the CMD GI Bill. If your last term ends on May 24, 2024, then you must serve until May 25, 2026, to meet the service requirement.

Q: If I entered the Program prior to the 2020-21 academic year, am I required to serve 2 years upon completion of my last participation period in the Program?

A: No, program participants who entered the Program prior to the 2020-21 AY do not need to serve an additional 2 years as they had to meet the 2-year prior service requirement before being allowed to apply.

Q: What if I leave the Cal Guard (California National Guard, the California State Guard, or the California Naval Militia)? Can I rejoin the program later?

A: If you leave the Cal Guard while participating in the CMD GI Bill without transferring to a different component of the Cal Guard within 60 days, you permanently lose your program benefits. You must remain in the Cal Guard throughout the participation period (term) to receive an award check for that term (for example, if you ETS on May 15, 2022, but your spring term does not end until May 16, you are not eligible for an award check. Neither Statute nor Regulations allow for a pro-rated check if a student leaves during the term).

Participants who entered the program during or after the 2020-2021 academic year agree to serve 2 years upon completion of participation in the Program and will be subject to recoupment of all Program funds received for failure to meet this requirement except in special circumstances (such as medical discharge). Because the CMD GI Bill was created to be a retention program, you cannot return to the CMD GI Bill, even if you rejoin the Cal Guard later. If you are transferring from one component to another (within 60 days), you will be able to continue in the program. You will need to make sure to notify the CMD GI Bill Coordinator of your plans and submit an additional Statement of Understanding with your new commander's signature. You will need to contact the CMD GI Bill Coordinator if the appropriate Statement of Understanding is no longer available on the website.

Q: Can my dependents use this program?

A: No. This program is only for active service members.

Institutions

Q: Where can I find a list of eligible institutions?

A: The list is available in a drop-down box on the application. You can also check the California Student Aid Commission's web page by going to [California Student Aid Commission](#) and selecting the Cal Grant Eligible Schools link at the bottom of the page.

Q: My institution is on the eligible list. Does that mean my program will be eligible?

A: Not necessarily.

- Some programs offered through the California State University system or University of California system are not eligible because the institutions do not consider enrollment in most of their Extended Education/Continuing Education/University Extension Programs to be the equivalent as enrollment in their main campuses due to different admission requirements and different financial aid options. Therefore, enrollment in the Extended Education/Continuing Education/University Extension Programs may not qualify for the CMD GI Bill.
- Some institutions have an Institutional Participation Agreement with the California Student Aid Commission for only some of their campuses and programs. An example is Pepperdine University, which has 5 schools but only the programs offered through their Seaver College (which shows as Pepperdine University – Malibu on the application) and their Graziadio Business School (which shows as Pepperdine University – GSBM on the application) are eligible. Their Caruso School of Law, Graduate School of Education and Psychology, and School of Public Policy are not included on the Institutional Participation Agreement and not eligible. Another example is the University of La Verne, where the College of Law is a separate campus and not included on the Institutional Participation Agreement, so the College of Law is not eligible.
- Additionally, one of the recent changes to the CMD GI Bill is that the CMD GI Bill may be used for a certificate, degree, or diploma that leads to a baccalaureate, graduate, or doctoral degree.

Q: My institution is not listed on the application or list of eligible institutions. How can it get added?

A: Service members may not request that institutions be added to the list of eligible schools nor contact the Commission on behalf of a non-eligible institution. Institutions interested in becoming eligible for the CMD GI Bill must contact the California Student Aid Commission and are required to complete a Cal Grant Institutional Participation Agreement. The institution can find more information regarding applying for the Cal Grant by going to [California Student Aid Commission Participation Agreement](#).

Q: My institution is on the eligible list. Does this mean it will stay eligible for as long as I am in the CMD GI Bill and attending there?

A: Unfortunately, no. Because the California State Statute regarding the CMD GI Bill states that a "qualifying institution" equals the definition of a "qualifying institution" for the Cal Grant program, any changes made to Cal Grant program's definition also impacts the CMD GI Bill.

In the 2012 State Budget Act, the definition of a "qualifying institution" was changed to require that institutions maintain a graduation rate above 30% and a federal student loan Cohort Default Rate (CDR) below 15.5%. An institution that was eligible for the 2022-2023 academic year may not be eligible for the 2023-2014 academic year if either the graduation rate drops or the CDR increases. Additionally, an institution can decide mid-year to withdraw from participating in the Cal Grant program.

Q: I am pursuing my Master's (or Doctorate) degree. Can I use this program?

A: Yes. You can use the CMD GI Bill to obtain a master's or doctorate at an eligible institution as long as the institution determines it is an eligible program. Examples of ineligible programs at eligible institutions are certificate programs at the Extended Education/Continuing Education/University Extension Programs through the California State University and the

University of California. You can contact the CMD GI Bill Coordinators to determine if the program is eligible. Program participants who entered the program during or after the 2020-2021 academic year must not have previously participated in the program and obtained a baccalaureate, graduate, or doctoral degree.

Q: I have decided to change institutions starting mid-year. How does this impact my CMD GI Bill?

A: First, you will need to fill out a Record Change Request form, found by contacting the CMD GI Bill Coordinator. Secondly, it is important to note that when you are accepted into the CMD GI Bill the maximum award amount you will receive is calculated based on the institution you initially put on the application. When you change your institution, this must be re-determined based on the maximum award amount based on the new institution. Eligibility for additional funds will be contingent upon funds being available. If funds are not available (as may happen when switching from a lower costing institution to a higher costing institution), you will receive funds based on the original institution.

CMD GI Bill or Cal Grant

Q: The form asks me to choose the Cal Grant or the CMD GI Bill. How are they different?

A: The Cal Grant program is more exclusive than the CMD GI Bill. You can find more information on the Cal Grant program by going to the [California Student Aid Commission](#) website. Click on the For Students link, select the Financial Aid Programs link, and then click on the Cal Grants link.

It is best to ask your institution's financial aid representative as they can advise you what dollar amount you might receive through the Cal Grant. The CMD GI Bill Coordinator cannot tell you this and will not tell you which program to pick. You must have applied for the Cal Grant by the March 2 deadline (for most institutions) or September 2 for California community colleges.

Application Process

Q: What is the application process I need to complete to be considered a priority applicant?

A: The Priority period for initial applications is January 15 to April 30. The priority application steps can be found by going to the CMD GI Bill website at [Calguard Education Site](#) and clicking the "New or Returning Students" tab for the academic year that you want to apply for. Priority applicants who meet the eligibility requirements and complete the 5 steps of the priority application process by April 30 will be reviewed by a board with criteria* pre-determined by each service branch. Acceptance of priority applicants is based on the Priority Board ranking and availability of funding. Priority applicants will be notified if they are accepted after the Priority Board has met, the Interagency Agreement has been completed, budget is approved, and the systems have been updated in order to accept the applicant. Notification will not likely occur until October, at the earliest. Applicants typically wait 12 months from the time they complete the application process to when they find out whether or not they are accepted.

*The criteria can change each year based on the Components retention goals and are different for each branch.

The CMD GI Bill Coordinator will not tell you what the criteria is.

Q: What is the application process for non-priority applicants?

A: After the April 30 priority deadline, applications will continue to be accepted on a first-come, first-serve basis until funds are depleted or until we no longer have authority to award, whichever comes first.

Acceptance for first-come, first-serve applicants is based on the eligibility date and availability of funding. In past years, it has typically taken 12 months from the time the application process is completed to when we are able to begin accepting first-come, first-serve applicants (for those whom funds become available).

Q: Should I list my Cal Guard e-mail on my application?

A: You should list the e-mail address that you access most often. You should be able to access the e-mail even if you have an unexpected leave of absence from work. We communicate predominately through e-mail and failure to reply to an e-mail within the time limit given by the e-mail could result in withdrawal from the program.

Q: I am a graduate student and not eligible for the PELL Grant. Do I still need to file a FAFSA?

A: Yes. The requirement to file a FAFSA was written into the California Statute. It cannot be waived.

Q: I had to report my annual income on the FAFSA. How is this used?

A: The CMD GI Bill Coordinators do not see the information that you enter on your FAFSA. We just see the date your FAFSA was completed. At no time is your annual income used or referenced for this program.

Q: The FAFSA website is saying I need to submit my Billing Information. I thought the FAFSA was free to file.

A: The FAFSA is free to complete and can be found on [the FAFSA Website](#). In the top left of the page, it will show the United States of America flag and say, "An official website of the United States government." If you reach a website that asks for payment (such as fafsa.com), you are not at the correct website. If you need help with applying for the FAFSA,

most institutions have an enrollment officer or counselor to help walk you through it. You can also find many answers on the FAFSA Website site under Browse Help or you can find help under Contact Us.

Q: As a renewal student, do I need to complete the FAFSA for my application to be complete?

A: While you are not required by the CMD GI Bill to complete the FAFSA when you renew, your institution may require you complete it every academic year. Some institutions use the FAFSA to determine the student's Cost of Attendance, which is needed to determine your award eligibility for the CMD GI Bill.

Q: How do I complete the Statement of Understanding (SOU)?

A: Once you've initialed after each statement, filled in the information boxes, and signed the last page, you need to coordinate with your unit of assignment to have your Commander sign it (either handwritten or CAC-signed, digital images will not be accepted) prior to turning it in. Make a copy of the form for your records. After obtaining your Commander's signature, the SOU needs to be sent back to the CMD GI Bill Coordinator within 30 days by scanning and e-mailing it (preferred) to the e-mail address listed on the form. If you submit the wrong SOU (use a different year's or submit a renewal SOU when you are a new applicant or vice versa), it will not be accepted and the correct one will need to be submitted. If you do not receive a confirmation that your SOU was received after 3 or 4 weeks, contact the CMD GI Bill Coordinator to make sure it has been received. During certain periods of the year, we receive a very high number of e-mails, so it can take that long to go through them all.

Q: Must I report what I receive in GI Bill Benefits and/or other Federal Educational Benefits for Veterans (VEB)?

A: Yes. When you fill out and submit your application, you are declaring under the penalty of perjury that all statements in the application are true and correct. Any false or dishonest answer to any question may be grounds for denial to participate in the program and subject to prosecution under the Uniform Code of Military Justice. If you are accepted and your benefits have changed from the time you reported them on the application, you will send an update to the CMD GI Bill Coordinator.

GI Bill benefits include, but are not limited to:

- Ch. 30 – Montgomery GI Bill – Active Duty (MG-AD)
- Ch. 1606 – Montgomery GI Bill – Selected Reserve (MG-SR)
- Ch. 33 – Post 9/11 GI Bill (including what is covered by the Yellow Ribbon program, the Fry Scholarship, or the STEM Scholarship)
- Monthly funding received from the College Fund or Buy Up Program

Other Federal Educational Benefits for Veterans (VEB) include, but are not limited to:

- Federal Tuition Assistance (FTA)
- Ch. 31 – Vocational Rehabilitation & Employment (VR&E) Program
- Ch. 32 – Veterans Educational Assistance Program (VEAP)
- Ch. 35 – Dependents' Educational Assistance (DEA)
- Air Force Tuition Assistance
- ROTC Scholarship
- Dedicated Army National Guard (DEDNG) scholarship
- Guaranteed Reserve Forces Duty (GRFD) contract scholarship
- National Call to Service Program

Q: What if I know somebody who is not accurately reporting their benefits?

A: The CMD Values are Loyalty, Duty, Respect, Selfless Service, Honor, Integrity, and Personal Courage. You are expected to uphold these values and to follow the CMD's Norms, particularly "We are truthful and live by the rules" and "Self-check and peer-check for corrections demonstrates a commitment to setting and upholding the standards." There is limited funding for each academic year. Someone who is "double-dipping" is taking money away from other eligible service members who need this award. If you do not want to report fraud directly to the CMD GI Bill Coordinator, you can confidentially report any suspicions by calling 1-888-645-0411.

Q: How are participants chosen for each year?

A: Each academic year, we allocate our funds first to our renewal participants, second to our priority participants, and lastly to our first-come, first-serve participants. There is not enough funding available to accept all eligible applicants at one time, so awards are given out to the maximum ability. As participants go on Leave of Absences, graduate, or are withdrawn for not attending and not submitting a Leave of Absence request, the funds originally allocated to them will be allocated to the next eligible participant.

Eligible renewal participants are awarded based on their priority number. After all eligible renewal participants are offered an award, awards are assigned to priority applicants based on the order of ranking. Priority applicants (met

priority deadline of April 30) are ranked by a priority board based on each component's criteria (that may change annually). If funds are available after all priority-ranked applicants have been awarded, additional awards will be given out to applicants based on a first-come, first-serve basis to those who have completed the application process after the priority deadline of April 30.

Award Amount

Q: Does my GI Bill and/or my Federal Tuition Assistance Benefits affect my award?

A: California Statute requires that any benefits you receive from the Montgomery G.I. Bill or from any other federal educational benefits for veterans (VEB), including the monthly housing allowance (BAH), be subtracted from your Cost of Attendance (COA) as determined by your institution. COA means tuition, fees, housing, food, books, transportation, and personal expenses. It can also include an allowance for the rental or purchase of a computer, childcare or other dependent care costs, and additional expenses for students with disabilities not already covered, if the school chooses to include it.

The CMD GI Bill can cover the remaining cost of attendance up to the maximum award amount.

Q: Why is my BAH included in the VEB calculation when it is meant for living expenses?

A: Because BAH is specifically provided as part of the Post 9/11 (or the VA Vocational Rehabilitation & Employment Program) and because the CMD GI Bill pays toward COA, not just tuition/fees, BAH must be included in the calculation. COA includes tuition/fees, books/supplies, housing, food, transportation, and personal expenses. It can also include an allowance for the rental or purchase of a computer, childcare or other dependent care costs, and additional expenses for students with disabilities not already covered.

Just like you cannot receive more in awards for tuition/fees than your actual tuition/fees, you cannot receive more in awards for your COA than your actual COA. COA is reported by your institution. If you think the COA reported by your institution does not accurately include your cost for tuition/fees, books/supplies, housing, etc., you can ask your institution to revise your COA.

You will be required to submit documentation from the VA detailing the benefit you receive and/or that outlines what the VA paid toward your COA.

Q: How is my award amount calculated?

A: The award for the term is calculated by taking your Cost of Attendance for the term (as provided by your institution) and subtracting any federal educational benefits received for the term to determine your unmet Cost of Attendance for the term. We can then award the lesser of the unmet Cost of Attendance for the term or the maximum award amount allowed for the term.

Q: How much money can I get each year for school?

A: The amounts are tied to maximum amounts of the Cal Grant awards for each academic year (which goes from July 1 to June 30) and are based on a traditional 9-month academic year. The amounts are only known once the State budget has passed.

The amounts for the 2022-23 AY are:

- *Up to \$1,648 at Community College (per Cal Grant B)*
- *Up to \$5,742 at the California State University (per Cal Grant A)*
- *Up to \$13,104 for a nonpublic institution (per Cal Grant A)*
- *As of 2021-22 AY, the University of California (per Cal Grant A) has established a Tuition Stability Plan for undergraduate students, which keeps the tuition the same for up to six years.*
 - *For those who are under the 2021-22 AY cohort, the maximum award amount is \$12,570.*
 - *For those who are under the 2022-23 AY cohort, the maximum award amount is \$13,104.*
 - *Graduate students are not eligible for the Tuition Stability Plan. Their maximum award is \$13,104.*

Graduate studies: for participants who entered the program prior to the 2020-2021 academic year, up to the maximum amount of Cal Grant A + \$500 for books and supplies. A portion of the funds will be included in with the check for the term and is not a separate check (see below how funds for the year are divided by terms).

Q: Will I get all the funds at once?

A: No, the maximum award amounts listed above are divided by the number of terms your institution has. If you are attending an institution with a semester schedule, the maximum you can receive each semester is half of the yearly amount (2 award checks for the year). If you are attending an institution with a quarter schedule, the maximum you can receive each quarter is one-third of the yearly amount (3 award checks for the year). The actual amount of the check will be based on the calculation listed above.

If you are attending an institution that has a mandatory summer session as reported by your institution in the WebGrants System, then you will receive an additional check, increasing your maximum award amount for the academic year. This uses up an additional portion of your award percentage (more than 100% for the 9-month academic year) and you may not have enough to fully cover your fourth year. Your acceptance e-mail will reflect the additional payment when it states what the maximum eligible award amount is.

Q: If I apply after the fall term has passed, can I receive funds for that term?

A: No, you can only receive funds for terms that are ongoing or following when you have completed the application process for that academic year.

Q: How long can I receive the CMD GI Bill Award?

A: Participants can receive the CMD GI Bill award for a maximum of 4 full-time academic years of eligibility (400%) based on a traditional (9-month) school year. As the award is utilized, remaining eligibility is decreased based on enrollment status (i.e., quarter-time, half-time, three-quarter time, or full-time) based on the schedule below.

Semester or Trimester terms

- Full-time: 50%
- Three-quarter: 37.5%
- Half-time: 25%
- Quarter-time: 12.5%

Quarter terms

- Full-time: 33.33%
- Three-quarter: 25%
- Half-time: 16.67%
- Quarter-time: 8.33%

If you are attending an institution that has a mandatory summer session or is a year-round institution, then you will receive an additional check, increasing your maximum award amount for the academic year. This uses up an additional portion of your award percentage (more than 100% for the 9-month academic year) and you may not have enough to fully cover your fourth year.

There are allowances for eligible undergraduate educational programs that require a 5th year of instruction, contingent upon funds being authorized and available. To find the list of eligible 5-year programs, go to [California Student Aid Commission](#), click on the For Students tab at the top, and then select Student Forms. This form is specific to the Cal Grant program, so do not complete and submit this form. To request 5th year benefits for the CMD GI Bill, you must contact the CMD GI Bill Coordinator for the CMD GI Bill form for 5th year benefits. New participants who enter the program during or after the 2020-2021 academic year must complete their course of study within 10 years of initial acceptance into the program.

Q: My school wants payment in advance. When do I get my award check?

A: Payments are not issued until after your term has started. Schools must wait until the census date before requesting the award check. The census date is usually 3 to 4 weeks (which puts you past the final “drop with a refund” day) into the term. Non-traditional schools must wait 30 days after the term has started. When an institution has multiple sessions in a term, they must wait until the last session of the term has started before requesting the award check. Your award check typically will arrive at your school 4 to 6 weeks after the funds are requested in WebGrants. Speak to your institution to see if they will defer your payment. Provide them a copy of your acceptance e-mail. For detailed information, see the detailed explanation of the award payment process.

Q: What if I receive another award/grant/scholarship?

A: There are a few ways this can impact you. Sometimes the rules of the other award/grant/scholarship do not allow you to receive other awards. The State University Grant (SUG) offered by CSU requires students to not be receiving a Cal Grant or other award designated to cover fees. The institution determines what awards/grants/scholarships requires you to choose between receive that award/grant/scholarship and the CMD GI Bill and what you can receive simultaneously. Any awards/grants/scholarships you receive simultaneously must be subtracted from the original Cost of Attendance. For example, if you receive the California College Promise Grant (formerly known as the BOG waiver), then the amount the California College Promise Grant paid towards the tuition/fees portion must be subtracted out of the original Cost of Attendance. You cannot receive award money from the CMD GI Bill for tuition/fees you are not being charged for. If you receive other awards that are need-based (such as the Pell Grant, UC Scholarships, the CSU State University Grant, or other institutional grants), then those awards may be reduced because a condition of those awards usually is that all your combined awards cannot exceed your Cost of Attendance. You should speak to your institution’s financial aid office about this to avoid any problems.

Q: Do student loans affect the CMD GI Bill?

A: Student loans are not used in CMD GI Bill award calculations. Ideally, if your tuition/fees and books/supplies have already been paid by a student loan, you will use the CMD GI Bill to pay back the student loans.

Q: Does being accepted mean I will receive a check as long as I attend the minimum of 3 units?

A: Not necessarily. If you are receiving a Cal Grant payment, you could still be accepted for the CMD GI Bill, but you would not receive an award check from the CMD GI Bill as one of the requirements is that participants can only receive payments for either the Cal Grant or the CMD GI Bill in an academic year. Or, if the amount you receive in federal educational benefits for veterans meets or exceeds your cost of attendance as determined by the institution, you would still be an awardee but would not receive an award check. Or, as listed above, you may not receive an award check if you opt to receive other grants or scholarships over the CMD GI Bill when the rules of those grants or scholarships prohibits you from receiving both.

Q: What if I think the payment is incorrect?

A: If you think the payment is not for the correct amount, do not cash the check. You can have your financial aid officer contact the CMD GI Bill Coordinator to verify the information. You can also contact the CMD GI Bill Coordinator directly. The system can only issue one check per term. If your check is for less than it should be, the system cannot issue another check for the same term.

Q: How will I receive payment?

A: You will receive an automated e-mail when the check is sent to your institution. The check will be made out to you. Upon receipt of the check, funds may be immediately subject to satisfying any financial holds attached to your account at the school. For detailed information, see the Detailed Award Payment Process section.

Q: It's been more than 2 weeks since I received the e-mail that my check has been mailed and my school still hasn't contacted me? What should I do?

A: It is not uncommon for it to take 3-4 weeks before the institution will contact you. After 3 weeks, I recommend you contact your institution's financial aid office (which is where the envelope is addressed to). If after 4 weeks they state they do not have the check, e-mail the CMD GI Bill Coordinator. The CMD GI Bill Coordinator will contact the institution to determine if a Stop Pay/Reissue request needs to be ordered to replace the check. The Stop Pay/Reissue request takes approximately 30 to 60 days.

Q: Can I take courses for credit/no credit and receive a CMD GI Bill payment?

A: No. One of the requirements of the program is that you maintain a cumulative GPA of 2.0 or greater. Therefore, each class you take must be graded.

Taxes

Q: Will I receive anything for taxes?

A: Your institution is responsible for sending you the IRS Form 1098-T (Tuition Statement). The CMD GI Bill amount you receive should be listed in box 5 – Scholarships or grants. Scholarships and grants reduce the amount of qualified educational expenses the student can use when calculating a deduction or credit. If the amount of scholarships and grants you receive in a calendar year is greater than the amount of qualified expenses you are charged in that year, your institution may not create a 1098-T for you.

Q: What do I do with the 1098-T?

A: You can use the information provided to determine if you are eligible for education tax credits. You are not required to attach IRS Form 1098T to your tax return. Please note that there is no IRS requirement that you claim a tuition-and- fees deduction or an education-related tax credit.

Q: How do I use the 1098-T information when filing my taxes?

A: We cannot offer tax advice. If you have such questions, you should consult with a qualified tax professional or contact the IRS Taxpayer Assistance line at 1-800-829-1040.

Absences/Deployments

Q: I am not attending for a term. What do I need to do to stay in the program?

A: If you are going to miss one or more terms, you need to complete the Record Change Request form for a Leave of Absence (LOA) in order to not be withdrawn. The Record Change Request form can be found by contacting the CMD GI Bill Coordinator. If your LOA is not approved or you do not submit a LOA request, you will be withdrawn from the program for the academic year. If you then wanted to participate in the CMD GI Bill for future academic years, you would then have to go through the application process again and will be competing for an open spot with the new

applicants. There is no guarantee a new spot will be available. If you entered the Program prior to 2020-2021 and are withdrawn and have to reapply, you will fall under the new rules of the CMD GI Bill, including the 2-year service commitment to the Cal Guard (California National Guard, California State Guard, or the California Naval Militia) upon completion of the last academic period the CMD GI Bill is utilized.

Q: How long can I stay on a leave of absence?

A: You can request a Leave of Absence (LOA) for up to one (1) year. An LOA for more than 1 year may be approved for special circumstances, such as deployment.

Summer Term

Q: Is my summer session considered mandatory or discretionary?

A: It depends on how your school has established the terms in the California Student Aid Commission's WebGrants database.

If you are attending an institution that requires mandatory summer sessions for all of its students, you will receive money for the summer sessions. Or,

If you are attending an institution where summer sessions are not required for all students attending the institution, the summer term is considered discretionary (optional), even if it is mandatory for your specific program. Students attending discretionary summer terms may receive money if there are remaining funds available after all mandatory terms have been paid. When making a decision regarding your summer attendance, remember a participant receives 400% of program eligibility based on full-time enrollment for fall and spring. Eligibility is used for each term the participant attends and the amount of usage is determined by the institution's type of term (quarter or semester) and your attendance status. This means you may not have enough to fully cover your fourth year.

Only a few schools have a mandatory summer term established in WebGrants. Contact the CMD GI Bill Coordinator to find out if it is discretionary or mandatory. We do not usually have enough funds in the future to issue discretionary summer term award checks.

Q: What are the requirements to receive an award check for summer?

A: As of January 1, 2015, students who want to receive an award check for summer must submit a signed letter from their unit commander stating that attending the summer term will not adversely impact attendance at mandatory military training. If you are attending a discretionary summer term, an award check will only be issued if there are enough funds remaining after all mandatory terms have been paid. All participants who would like to receive a summer term payment, even if the term is considered mandatory, must complete the Summer Term Certification. The Summer Term Certification form is available under the Summer Term tab at the [Calguard Education Site](#). If you are completing the Summer Term Certification form after you have completed the summer term, you must complete your sections of the form but you are not required to have your commander complete the form.

Remaining in the Program

Q: Under what circumstances could I be removed from the program?

A: Awardees could be removed at any time if they do not continue to meet the requirements. Removal could occur if you:

- Left or lost status as an active member of the Cal Guard (California National Guard, California State Guard, or California Naval Militia) (Permanent withdrawal)
- Lost status of California residency
- Switched to an ineligible institution
- Did not attend a required term and failed to submit a Leave of Absence request
- Did not maintain 3 units for the term and failed to submit a Leave of Absence request
- Did not maintain a GPA of 2.0 or higher (Permanent withdrawal)
- Used up all of the 400% eligibility (Permanent withdrawal)
- Falsifying or misrepresenting data (Permanent withdrawal)

After being withdrawn from the Program for an academic year, students cannot reapply for the same academic year and will have to wait to apply for the next academic year.

Q: What do I need to do to continue in the program the next academic year?

A: Participants need to annually submit the renewal application and renewal Statement of Understanding and, for those who entered the Program in 2020-21 or later, the Service Commitment Acknowledgement form for each academic year. Renewal applications will be accepted from January 15 to June 1. Awardees who do not complete the renewal

application process by the June 1 deadline will be withdrawn from the program for the upcoming academic year and will lose their current “spot.” In order to participate in the CMD GI Bill for future academic years, you will then have to complete the first-come, first-serve 4-step application process “For New or Returning Students” and will be competing for an open spot with the new applicants. There is no guarantee a new spot will be available. You would be subject to the new rules for the CMD GI Bill and, if you had already used the Program for a degree (baccalaureate or higher), you will not be allowed to return to the Program.

Q: I missed the renewal deadline. Is there anything I can do now?

A: If you are a participant who did not renew by the June 1 deadline, you can reapply as a “new or returning” applicant for the next academic year if you have not already used the Program for a degree (baccalaureate or higher) and meet all other program requirements. Because the April 30 priority deadline will have passed, you will be applying as a first-come, first-serve applicant. You must complete the application process and will be competing for a new spot with the other hundreds of applicants who have applied for the year. Acceptance will be based on when you completed the process and on the availability of funds. The average wait time from when a student applies as a new/returning student to when the student finds out if they were accepted is 10 to 12 months.

The CMD GI Bill Coordinator

The CMD GI Bill Coordinators’ contact information can be found at the CMG GI Bill home page [Calguard Education Site](#). You can e-mail them at ng.ca.caarng.list.cn6-eaap-mailbox-access@army.mil. Because of all of the factors involved, the CMD GI Bill Coordinators cannot predict when you will be accepted or, if you are accepted, when your institution will input your enrollment information.

Detailed Award Payment Process Information

- The Priority period for initial applications is January 15 to April 30. Applicants who meet the eligibility requirements and complete the 5 steps of the application process (found at [Calguard Education Site](#)) during that timeframe will have their file ranked by a board with criteria* determined by each service branch. Applicants will be notified if they are accepted after the Priority Board has met and the list has been approved by OTAG. Because of the various factors (the annual Budget Act must be approved by the Governor and the renewal applicants must first be renewed), notification will not likely occur until October, at the earliest.
After the April 30 priority deadline, applications will continue to be accepted on a first-come, first-serve basis until funds are depleted or until we no longer have authority to award, whichever comes first. On average, applicants have to wait 12 months from the time they complete the application process to when they find out if they are accepted.
- After you have been accepted for the CMD GI Bill, your file is activated and processed in the California Student Aid Commission’s WebGrants System database.
- Your institution will receive an e-mail notice when they can go into the Commission’s WebGrants System to enter your enrollment information (which must be done each term). Traditional institutions are asked to wait until the census date (last date to drop and receive a refund) has passed. Non-traditional institutions must wait 30 days after the term has started. When an institution has multiple sessions in a term, they must wait until the last session of the term has started before requesting the award check.
- After the payment has been requested, it typically takes 4 to 6 weeks for the award check to be mailed to the institution (or in busy periods, it can take 6 weeks). It cannot be expedited. The check is made out directly to you and is mailed to your school’s financial aid office.
- When the check is mailed to the institution, you will receive an automatically generated e-mail message to let you know it has been sent and that your institution should be contacting you in the next few weeks to come pick it up. (Do not reply to this e-mail as it is not checked.) It is up to the institution on how they disburse the funds. Some deposit any funds received into the student’s account and then the student can receive a refund of whatever is remaining. Others require the student to come into the office to sign the check over to the institution. And some disburse the check directly to the student.
- Your next award check cannot be issued until your institution has marked the current check as “Payment Disbursed.” At that time, the next term will become open for the institution to request the next check.