

## **Information Regarding Basic Allowance for Housing Monthly Payments**

(for students receiving Post 9-11 benefits)

GI Bill payments, particularly monthly housing payments, can sometimes be a mystery. Occasionally you hear about someone receiving a smaller than expected monthly housing payment or not getting one at all when they think they should. Please allow me to explain how they work.

Even though Boston University will certify your enrollment in June for the Fall semester, the GI Bill housing allowance is paid in after the fact. Your semester starts at the beginning of September the earliest you could be paid under the absolute best of circumstances is October 1<sup>st</sup>. Since the semester does not begin in early September and you are not in school for the entire month the payment you receive will be a partial payment.

### **What is the monthly housing?**

The housing allowance is a monthly benefit paid via direct deposit to students while attending school under the Post 9-11 GI Bill, and is equal to the Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH) of an E-5 with dependents. It is based on the zip code of the school (a chart of BAH rates by ZIP code at <http://www.defensetravel.dod.mil/perdiem/bah.html>). It is important to know that active duty members and spouses of active duty members using transferred entitlement cannot receive the BAH but Veterans, their spouses and dependents can receive the benefit.

### **When does the VA send payments?**

Payments are issued at the beginning of each month for training that occurred during the previous month (e.g. Payments for training taken in January will be issued by the VA in February).

### **Why is my payment less than expected?**

The most common reason for a smaller than expected BAH payment is due to the payment being pro-rated based on the number of days in the month that a student is enrolled. Payments are made in arrears and only for the days actually attended, so if the semester starts in the middle of January, the payment received in the beginning of February will be pro-rated accordingly. The first full month will be issued in March for the month of February.

As an example: suppose you are attending school full time and your housing rate is \$800 per month. The semester starts on January 19<sup>th</sup> and goes until May 14<sup>th</sup>. All months are based on 30 day periods, so months that have more or less days do not impact the benefit amount. Therefore, the payment in this case for the month of January will be for 12 out of 30 days (19<sup>th</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup>), in the amount of \$320, and it will be received in February. The payments for February, March and April will be \$800 each month, and the payment for May will be \$373.33 (pro-rated from the 1<sup>st</sup> through the 14<sup>th</sup>).

To receive your monthly housing allowance, a student must attend more than half-time. Benefits for attendance at less than full-time are prorated to the nearest multiple of ten. For example, if 12 credits are required for full-time attendance and the student is taking 8 credits, the student will receive 70 percent of the housing allowance (8 divided by 12 equals .66, which is rounded up to 70 percent).

Lastly, lower than expected payments may also be caused by over-payments. Over-payments are usually caused by students reducing the number of credit hours for which they are enrolled during the middle of a semester, which can cause payments to be made based on the incorrect number of credit hours. When this occurs, the amount of the over-payment is deducted out of future benefit payments until the account is corrected.

### **Other Housing Payment Issues?**

The monthly housing allowance payment rate for those enrolled solely in distance learning is half the national average of the Basic Allowance for Housing rates payable for an E-5 with dependents in the continental U.S.