August 1, 2019

**Background:** On August 16, 2017, President Donald J. Trump signed into law the Harry W. Colmery Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2017, ([Public Law 115-48](https://www.congress.gov/bill/115th-congress/house-bill/3218/text)), also known as the “Forever GI Bill.”

Section 305 (*Training for School Certifying Officials*) of this law,” requires the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), in consultation with State Approving Agencies (SAAs), to develop and administer mandatory training for School Certifying Officials (SCOs) at “covered educational institutions.” This mandate is effective August 1, 2018.

A “Covered Educational Institution” is an educational institution that has enrolled 20 or more individuals during a calendar year, using VA educational assistance under Title 38, United States Code. This includes main, branch and extension campuses approved by the SAA.

SCOs and ELRs may verify a covered educational institution by clicking [here](http://10.205.5.114/gibill/resources/education_resources/school_certifying_officials/covered_institutions.asp). SCOs who have questions regarding covered educational institutions should contact their [ELR of jurisdiction](https://www.benefits.va.gov/GIBILL/resources/education_resources/school_certifying_officials/elr.asp). ELRs should direct discrepancies with covered educational institutions to the National Training Team (NTT)-Compliance via email at [Operations Management](mailto:eduopermgmt.vbavaco@va.gov) - ([eduopermgmt.vbavaco@va.gov](mailto:eduopermgmt.vbavaco@va.gov)).

**New SCOs**: Beginning on or after August 1, 2019, **all new** SCOs at educational institutions or facilities that have enrolled one or more individual(s) during a calendar year using VA educational assistance under title 38, United States Code, are required to complete new SCO online training prior to being authorized to certify enrollments to VA. New SCO online training is available to all SCOs; however, this training requirement only applies to new SCOs as described above.

**IHL and NCD Facilities** – New SCOs must complete 10 virtual training modules (5 hours of training). A copy of their certificate of completion must be submitted to the ELR of jurisdiction along with the VA Form 22-8794. The ELR will be required to verify the completion of the applicable online training prior to entering the SCO’s contact information into WEAMS and granting access to VAONCE.

**OJT & Apprenticeship and Vocational Flight Facilities** – New SCOs must complete 1 virtual training module (approximately 1.5 hours of training) specific to his or her facility type. A copy of their certificate of completion must be submitted to the ELR of jurisdiction along with the VA Form 22-8794. The ELR will be required to verify the completion of the applicable online training prior to entering the SCO’s contact information into WEAMS and granting access to VAONCE.

**Existing SCOs**: Beginning on or after August 1, 2019, existing SCOs at covered educational institutions, where the educational institutions have enrolled 20 or more individuals during a calendar year, using educational assistance under title 38, United States Code, must complete existing SCO training online and qualifying VA training at conferences as a **continuing education** requirement.

* **All Existing SCOs (except OJT and Apprenticeship)** – Existing SCOs are required to complete 5 hours of training consisting of multiple online training module and qualifying VA sessions at National and /or State school conferences. The SCOs have 1 year to complete the annual training requirement (August 1, through July 31 of following year).

* **OJT and Apprenticeship Facilities** - Existing SCOs are required to complete 1.5 hours of training consisting of 1 virtual training module specific to his or her facility type. The SCOs have 1 year to complete the annual training requirement (August 1, through July 31 of following year).

**Read-only SCOs:** A Read-only SCO is an individual at an educational institution with permission to access enrollment information, request information, and submit inquiries to VA to assist an authorized SCO with obtaining accurate information to certify student’s enrollment. The educational institution must provide the ELR with the name(s) of the read-only SCOs on the VA Form 22-8794 before their information is entered into WEAMS. Read-Only SCOs are not required to take SCO training, as they are not authorized to certify student’s enrollment to VA.

**Transferees:** New SCOs who successfully completed the online training and transfers to a new facility or educational institution of the same facility type within their first year of employment, are not required to retake the new SCO training. However, if the SCO transfers to a different facility type (i.e. IHL to Vocational Flight), the SCO must complete the online training applicable to the new facility prior to being authorized to submit certifications to VA. The new SCO must provide the ELR with a copy of the certificate of training completion and the VA Form 22-8794 before his or her information is entered into WEAMS and prior to being authorized access to VA-ONCE.

**Note:** Claims Processors and Call Center employees are aware that they cannot accept enrollment information for individuals designated with “Read-Only” SCOs.

Information regarding the Department of Veterans Affairs [Online School Certifying Official Training](https://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/resources/education_resources/school_certifying_officials/online_sco_training.asp) is available on the [GI Bill website](https://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/).

The direct link to the School Certifying Official Training is: <https://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/resources/education_resources/school_certifying_officials/online_sco_training.asp>

**Initial Registration Procedures:**

1. ELRs are no longer required to pre-register new SCOs for the online training. New and existing SCOs must self-register by accessing the GI Bill website for School Administrators and clicking the link to the Department of Veterans Affairs School Official Training. Instructions on how to self-register and access the SCO online training modules will also be posted on the GI Bill Website to assist them in navigating through the online training registration process.
2. ELRs must use the VA Form 22-8794, “Designation of Certifying Official(s),” submitted by an educational institution to identify new SCOs, existing, and read only SCOs. A new SCO must submit a copy of his or her certificate of completion along with the VA Form 22-8794 to their ELR of Jurisdiction. The ELR is responsible for ensuring new SCOs submits a certificate of completion prior to entering their information into WEAMS and granting access to VAONCE.
3. The SCO online training portal is available on or after August 1, 2019, for new and existing SCO training. The attached instructions will assist you in navigating through the online training registration process. To self-register click the link below:

[School Certifying Official (SCO) Training](https://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/resources/education_resources/school_certifying_officials/online_sco_training.asp)

The direct link to the School Certifying Official Training is: <https://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/resources/education_resources/school_certifying_officials/online_sco_training.asp>

**Questions:** If you have any questions about the Section 305 training requirement or need technical assistance, please contact the National Training Team - Compliance via e-mail at [Operations Management](mailto:eduopermgmt.vbavaco@va.gov) - ([eduopermgmt.vbavaco@va.gov](mailto:eduopermgmt.vbavaco@va.gov))

V/R,

National Training Team - Compliance

Education Service

Attachments:

A: Initial GovDelivery Message to IHL, NCD and Vocational Flight SCOs

B: Initial GovDelivery Message to OJT and Apprenticeship SCOs

C: Attachment C – SCO Reminder Notifications

A and B have been sent to SCOs notifying them of their training requirement via GovDelivery.

You may use the information in attachment C below to remind the SCOs of his or her training requirement.

**Attachment A – Initial GovDelivery Message to IHL, NCD and Vocational Flight SCOs**

Greetings,

Section 305 of the [Harry W. Colmery Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2017](https://www.congress.gov/bill/115th-congress/house-bill/3218/text), also known as the “Colmery Act,” requires the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), in consultation with the State Approving Agencies (SAAs), to develop and administer training for designated School Certifying Officials (SCOs) effective August 1, 2018.

**Who is Required to take the School Certifying Officials (SCOs)Training?**

Beginning on or after August 1, 2019, **all new** SCOs at educational institutions that have enrolled one or more individual(s) during a calendar year, using educational assistance under title 38, United States Code will be required to complete new SCO Training.

Beginning on or after August 1, 2019, existing SCOs at covered educational institutions, where the educational institutions have enrolled 20 or more individuals during a calendar year, using educational assistance under title 38, United States Code, must complete existing SCO training online and qualifying VA training at conferences as a **continuing education** requirement.

**What are the Training Requirements?**

The chart below outlines the training requirement for new and existing SCOs. This includes 2- and 4-year Institutions of Higher Learning, Non-College Degree Institutions, and Vocational Flight Institutions.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **TYPE OF SCO** | **DEFINITION** | **TRAINING REQUIREMENT** |
| “New” SCO  (IHL and NCD Only) | Individuals who begin work as a SCO on or after August 1, 2019 | Effective August 1, 2019, **all new** SCOs are required to complete 10 virtual training modules (5 hours of training). New SCOs must complete the training **prior** to being authorized to certify enrollments to VA. To meet this prerequisite, the designated individual(s) must submit a copy of their certificate of completion along with the VA Form 22-8794 to the ELR of jurisdiction |
| “New” SCO  (Vocational Flight Only) | Individuals who begin work as a SCO on or after August 1, 2019 | Effective August 1, 2019, new SCOs are required to complete 1 virtual training module (approximately 1.5 hours of training) specific to his or her facility type. New SCOs must complete the training **prior** to being authorized to certify enrollments to VA. To meet this prerequisite, the designated individual(s) must submit a copy of their certificate of completion along with the VA Form 22-8794 to the ELR of jurisdiction. |
| “All Existing” SCOs  (Includes Vocational Flight) | All designated SCOs who began work prior to August 1, 2019 | Effective August 1, 2019, existing SCOs have 1 year to complete the annual continuing education requirement. (August 1, through July 31 of following year). Existing SCOs are required to complete 5 hours of training consisting of online training modules and qualifying VA sessions presented at National and/or State school conferences. |
| “Read-only” SCO | An individual at an institution with permission to access read-only or inquiry only information | Read-only SCOs have no training requirements because they are **not approved** to submit enrollment information to VA. |

**How will SCOs Access Online Training?**

The SCOs will receive an email via GovDelivery directing them to the [GI Bill Website](https://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/). There, they will find the link to the Department of Veterans Affairs [School Certifying Official Training](The%20direct%20link%20to%20the%20School%20Certifying%20Official%20Training%20is:%20https:/www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/resources/education_resources/school_certifying_officials/online_sco_training.asp) along with instructions to help them navigate through the registration process.

The direct link to the School Certifying Official Training is: <https://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/resources/education_resources/school_certifying_officials/online_sco_training.asp>

**How will SCOs receive credit for National and State Conference Training**

Further guidance will be provided at a later time; for updates check the [School Certifying Official (SCO) Training](https://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/resources/education_resources/school_certifying_officials/online_sco_training.asp) website.

The direct link to the School Certifying Official Training is: <https://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/resources/education_resources/school_certifying_officials/online_sco_training.asp>

**What are the Consequences for Non-Compliance?**

VA will post reminders and notifications on the GI Bill website for School Administrators, announce reminders during SCO webinars, and request that ELRs keep SCOs informed throughout the training window to make them aware of the deadline. If a SCO is non-compliant after the deadline has passed, he or she will be contacted by the ELR of jurisdiction informing him or her of the impending loss of their ability to certify enrollments to VA. Furthermore, the State Approving Agency (SAA) may move to disapprove any course of education offered by the educational institution if it fails to ensure that its SCO(s) satisfies the training requirements.

SCOs are required to take continuing education training on an annual basis to remain compliant with this law.

**What if I Have Additional Questions?**

Additional information is located on the GI Bill website at [https://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill](https://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/resources/education_resources/school_certifying_officials/online_sco_training.asp). After August 1, 2019, you should direct any questions to your [ELR of jurisdiction](https://www.benefits.va.gov/GIBILL/resources/education_resources/school_certifying_officials/elr.asp).

Thank you for your support in implementing the changes required by this law.  We appreciate your continued partnership in serving our nation’s Veterans.

Respectfully,

Charmain Bogue

Director, Education Service

Veterans Benefits Administration

**Attachment B – Initial GovDelivery Message to OJT and Apprenticeship SCOs**

Greetings,

Section 305 of the [Harry W. Colmery Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2017](https://www.congress.gov/bill/115th-congress/house-bill/3218/text), also known as the “Colmery Act,” requires the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), in consultation with the State Approving Agencies (SAAs), to develop and administer training for designated School Certifying Officials (SCOs) effective August 1, 2018.

**Who is Required to take the School Certifying Officials (SCOs)Training?**

Beginning on or after August 1, 2019, **all new** SCOs at educational institutions that have enrolled one or more individual(s) using educational assistance under title 38, United States Code will be required to complete new SCO Training.

Beginning on or after August 1, 2019, existing SCOs at covered educational institutions, where the educational institutions have enrolled 20 or more individuals during a calendar year, using educational assistance under title 38, United States Code, must complete existing SCO training online and qualifying VA training at conferences as a **continuing education** requirement.

**What are the Training Requirements?**

The chart below outlines the training requirement for new and existing SCOs. These requirements are **exclusively** for OJT and Apprenticeship facilities.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **TYPE OF SCO** | **DEFINITION** | **TRAINING REQUIREMENT** |
| “New” SCO | Individuals who begin work as a SCO on or after August 1, 2019 | Effective August 1, 2019, new SCOs will be required to complete 1 virtual training module (approximately 1.5 hours of training) specific to his or her facility type. New SCOs must complete the training **prior** to being authorized to certify enrollments to VA. To meet this prerequisite, the designated individual(s) must submit a copy of their certificate of completion along with the VA Form 22-8794 to the ELR of jurisdiction. |
| “Existing” SCO | All designated SCOs who begin work prior to August 1, 2019 | Effective August 1, 2019, existing SCOs have 1 year to complete the annual training requirement. Existing SCOs will be required to complete 1.5 hours of training consisting of 1 virtual training module specific to his or her facility type. |
| “Read-only” SCO | An individual at an institution with permission to access read-only or inquiry only information | Read-only SCOs have no training requirements, because they are **not approved** to submit enrollment information to VA |

**How will SCOs Access Online Training?**

The SCOs will receive an email via GovDelivery directing them to the [GI Bill Website](https://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/). There, they will find the link to the Department of Veterans Affairs [School Certifying Official Training](https://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/resources/education_resources/school_certifying_officials/online_sco_training.asp) along with instructions to help them navigate through the registration process.

The direct link to the School Certifying Official Training is: <https://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/resources/education_resources/school_certifying_officials/online_sco_training.asp>

**How will SCOs receive credit for National and State Conference Training**

Further guidance will be provided at a later time; for updates check the [School Certifying Official (SCO) Training](https://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/resources/education_resources/school_certifying_officials/online_sco_training.asp) website.

The direct link to the School Certifying Official Training is: <https://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/resources/education_resources/school_certifying_officials/online_sco_training.asp>

**What are the Consequences for Non-Compliance?**

VA will post reminders and notifications on the GI Bill website for School Administrators, announce reminders during SCO webinars, and request that ELRs keep SCOs informed throughout the training window to make them aware of the deadline. If a SCO is non-compliant after the deadline has passed, he or she will be contacted by the ELR of jurisdiction informing him or her of the impending loss of their ability to certify enrollments to VA. Furthermore, the State Approving Agency (SAA) may move to disapprove any course of education offered by the educational institution if it fails to ensure that its SCO(s) satisfies the training requirements.

SCOs are required to take continuing education training on an annual basis to remain compliant with this law.

**What if I Have Additional Questions?**

Additional information is located on the GI Bill website at [https://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill](https://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/resources/education_resources/school_certifying_officials/online_sco_training.asp). After August 1, 2019, you should direct any questions to your [ELR of jurisdiction](https://www.benefits.va.gov/GIBILL/resources/education_resources/school_certifying_officials/elr.asp).

Thank you for your support in implementing the changes required by this law.  We appreciate your continued partnership in serving our nation’s Veterans.

Respectfully,

Charmain Bogue

Director, Education Service

Veterans Benefits Administration

**Attachment C – Reminder Notification**

**Initial Reminder – 60 days (Beginning May 31)**

School Certifying Official (SCO)Training Requirement Expiration Notification

Reminder: You have 60 calendar days to complete your 5-hour training requirement. Virtual training modules for new SCOs due on [**July 31, 2020**].

Click the following link to take training: [School Certifying Official (SCO) Training](https://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/resources/education_resources/school_certifying_officials/online_sco_training.asp)

The direct link to the School Certifying Official Training is: <https://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/resources/education_resources/school_certifying_officials/online_sco_training.asp>

SCOs who have not completed their training to date must do so within 60 days to remain compliant with Section 305 of the [Harry W. Colmery Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2017](https://www.congress.gov/bill/115th-congress/house-bill/3218/text)*,* also known as the “Colmery Act.”

If a SCO is non-compliant after the deadline has passed, he or she will be contacted by the ELR of jurisdiction informing him or her of the impending loss of their ability to certify enrollments to VA. Furthermore, the State Approving Agency (SAA) may move to disapprove any course of education offered by the educational institution, if it fails to ensure its SCO(s) satisfies the training requirements.

**Second Reminder – 30 Days (Beginning June 30)**

School Certifying Official (SCO)Training Requirement Expiration Notification

Reminder: You have 30 calendar days to complete your 5-hour training requirement. Virtual training modules for new SCOs due on [**July 31, 2020**].

Click the following link to take training: [School Certifying Official (SCO) Training](https://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/resources/education_resources/school_certifying_officials/online_sco_training.asp)

The direct link to the School Certifying Official Training is: <https://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/resources/education_resources/school_certifying_officials/online_sco_training.asp>

SCOs who have not completed their training to date must do so within 30 days to remain compliant with Section 305 of the [Harry W. Colmery Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2017](https://www.congress.gov/bill/115th-congress/house-bill/3218/text)*,* also known as the “Colmery Act.”

If a SCO is non-compliant after the deadline has passed, he or she will be contacted by the ELR of jurisdiction informing him or her of the impending loss of their ability to certify enrollments to VA. Furthermore, the State Approving Agency (SAA) may move to disapprove any course of education offered by the educational institution, if it fails to ensure its SCO(s) satisfies the training requirements.

**Final Reminder – 15 days (Beginning July 17)**

School Certifying Official (SCO)Training Requirement Expiration Notification

Reminder: You have 15 calendar days to complete your 5-hour training requirement. Virtual training modules for new SCOs due on [**July 31, 2020**].

Click the following link to take training: [School Certifying Official (SCO) Training](https://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/resources/education_resources/school_certifying_officials/online_sco_training.asp)

The direct link to the School Certifying Official Training is: <https://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/resources/education_resources/school_certifying_officials/online_sco_training.asp>

SCOs who have not completed their training to date must do so within 15 days to remain compliant with Section 305 of the [Harry W. Colmery Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2017](https://www.congress.gov/bill/115th-congress/house-bill/3218/text)*,* also known as the “Colmery Act.”

If a SCO is non-compliant after the deadline has passed, he or she will be contacted by the ELR of jurisdiction informing him or her of the impending loss of their ability to certify enrollments to VA. Furthermore, the State Approving Agency (SAA) may move to disapprove any course of education offered by the educational institution, if it fails to ensure its SCO(s) satisfies the training requirements.