§ 21.5041  Periods of entitlement.

(a) Ten-year delimiting period. Except as provided in §21.5042 no educational assistance shall be afforded an eligible individual under chapter 32 beyond the date of 10 years after the later of the following:

(1) His or her last discharge or release from a period of active duty of 90 days or more of continuous service; or

(2) His or her last discharge or release from a period of active duty of any length when the eligible individual is discharged or released—

(i) For a service-connected disability;

(ii) For a medical condition which preexisted such service and which VA determines is not service-connected;

(iii) For hardship; or

(iv) Involuntarily for convenience of the government after October 1, 1987, as a result of a reduction in force, as determined by the Secretary of the military department concerned in accordance with regulations prescribed by the Secretary of Defense or by the Secretary of Transportation with respect to the Coast Guard when it is not operating as a service in the Navy.

(b) Use of entitlement. The individual—

(1) May use his or her entitlement at anytime during the 10-year period after the last discharge or release from active duty or other period as provided pursuant to §21.5042 of this part;
§ 21.5042 Extended period of eligibility.

(a) General. A veteran shall be granted an extension of the applicable delimiting period, as otherwise determined by § 21.5041 of this part provided—

(1) The veteran applies for an extension.

(2) The veteran was prevented from initiating or completing the chosen program of education within the otherwise applicable delimiting period because of a physical or mental disability that did not result from the willful misconduct of the veteran. VA will not consider the disabling effects of chronic alcoholism to be the result of willful misconduct. See §21.5021(v).

(b) Application. The veteran must apply for the extended period of eligibility in time for VA to receive the application by the later of the following dates:

(1) One year from the last date of the delimiting period otherwise applicable to the veteran under §21.5041 of this part, or

(2) One year from the termination date of the period of the veteran’s mental or physical disability.

(c) Qualifying period of disability. (1) A veteran’s extended period of eligibility shall be based on the period of time that the veteran himself or herself was prevented by reason of physical or mental disability, not the result of the veteran’s willful misconduct, from initiating or completing his or her chosen program of education.

(2) VA will not consider the disabling effects of chronic alcoholism to be the result of willful misconduct provided the last date of the time limit for filing a claim for the extension determined under §21.5030(c)(3) of this part occurs after November 17, 1988.

(d) Commencing date. The veteran shall elect the commencing date of an extended period of eligibility. The date chosen—

(1) Must be on or after the original date of expiration of eligibility as determined by §21.5041 of this part, and

(2) Must be on or before the 90th day following the date on which the veteran’s application for an extension was approved by VA, if the veteran is training during the extended period of eligibility in a course not organized on a term, quarter or semester basis, or

(3) Must be on or before the first day of the first ordinary term, quarter or semester following the 90th day after the veteran’s application for an extension was approved by VA if the veteran is training during the extended period of eligibility in a course organized on a term, quarter or semester basis.

(e) Determining the length of extended periods of eligibility. A veteran’s extended period of eligibility shall be