# Vocational Rehabilitation Services Manual C-400: Training Services

Revised April 1, 2021

## C-405: Customer Responsibilities

Successful completion of training requires active involvement by the customer in all aspects of the VR service and training. This includes:

* providing all required documentation;
* completing all admission and registration procedures required by the training institution;
* maintaining satisfactory training progress, as defined by the training institution; and
* maintaining satisfactory progress with VR services as defined in the customer's IPE.

VR requires that each customer who is provided with training services apply for available financial assistance such as federal, state, or local grants and private scholarships.

A service authorization is the only valid means by which VR can authorize goods and services with VR funds. For more information on purchasing services and procedures, refer to [D-204: The Purchasing Process](https://twc.texas.gov/vr-services-manual/vrsm-d-200#d204).

### C-405-1: Required Documents

A customer who is participating in training must provide the VR counselor with the following documentation, which is kept in the customer's paper case file:

* Verification of application for available financial aid
* Verification of financial aid award
* A copy of the individualized degree plan or comparable documentation as provided by the training institution
* A course schedule for each training period
* Documentation that shows progress for each training period
* Written documentation of added and dropped courses
* Written justification for a change in the major course study
* Documentation of the appropriate certificate of completion

For information on Measurable Skill Gains documentation requirements, refer to [VRSM A-500: Measurable Skill Gains](https://twc.texas.gov/vr-services-manual/vrsm-a-500). For information on Credential Attainment documentation requirements, refer to [VRSM A-600: Credential Attainment](https://twc.texas.gov/vr-services-manual/vrsm-a-600).

When a course of study is changed more than twice, approval from the VR Supervisor is required before VR continues sponsorship of costs associated with training.

### C-405-2: Participation in VR Services and Training

The following information is based on the Texas Workforce Commission Vocational Rehabilitation Services Rule §856.45. No exceptions other than those described below can be made to the following policies and procedures.

To demonstrate customer participation in VR services, the customer must:

* enroll in courses and electives that are included in the institution-approved degree or training plan;
* contact the VR counselor before adding or dropping classes this includes taking an incomplete for a course. If the course schedule is changed, then payments for reader services, books, tools, supplies, transportation, room and board, and other supports must be recalculated;
* maintain and complete a full-time course load as defined by the training institution, unless the customer is:
	+ a graduating senior (from a college or university);
	+ an incoming freshman (first two semesters or quarters);
	+ a returning adult student (first academic year only);
	+ attending summer school; or
	+ subject to other documented extenuating circumstances, such as disability-specific limitations, that prevent the customer from participating in a full-time course load;
* communicate with the VR counselor, teachers, and the training provider's disability office about problems or accommodation needs;
* use the services and supports that are available through the training provider's disability office, as needed;
* maintain consistent enrollment and attendance in regular semesters; and
* maintain satisfactory progress, as defined in C-405-3: Satisfactory Training Progress.

### C-405-3: Satisfactory Training Progress

Satisfactory training progress is defined by the training provider and included on the customer's IPE. The customer must meet satisfactory training progress requirements for each semester or grading period to receive VR funding for subsequent semesters or grading periods.

The VR counselor can make exceptions to this requirement for no more than one semester or grading period and on a case-by-case basis if justification for the exception is documented clearly in a case note. If a customer fails to meet satisfactory training progress for two or more consecutive semesters or grading periods, the VR Supervisor must review and approve continuing with, or resuming, training and related services or supports.

## C-406: Training at a College or University

Customers can attend an accredited public or private (independent) college or university and earn a certificate or an associate, bachelor's, master's, or doctoral degree when the customer can meet minimum standards to be accepted in the program.

### C-406-1: Assessment for Training at a College or University

Customers must meet the minimum standards for acceptance to a college or university that is sponsored by VR; the college or university must be identified as the provider for the service in the customer's IPE or IPE amendment.

Before completing the IPE, the VR counselor assesses the customer's potential to benefit from and successfully complete academic training. The assessment includes a review of the customer's:

* previous academic achievements (grades, degrees, and certificates);
* existing or new cognitive evaluations;
* need for, or history of, remedial classes;
* independent living skills;
* ability to manage the related time demands;
* need for assistive technology or accommodations in a training environment; and
* need for non-VR supports for participation.

For more information about completing the comprehensive assessment, refer to B-400: Completing the Comprehensive Assessment.

#### Private or Out-of-State Colleges or Universities

Training must be provided through public colleges and universities in Texas unless:

* a specific curriculum related to the customer's course of study is not available at a Texas public institution;
* academic training elsewhere is determined to be more economical, after all costs are considered; or
* academic training elsewhere provides specialized services needed by the customer that are not available at a Texas public institution.

Tuition and fees paid by VR cannot exceed in-state tuition and fees. Exceptions to the limitations for tuition and fees require justification and approval by the VR Supervisor. For more information refer to C-412: Maximum Payment for a Training at a College or University.

For approval requirements see D-206-3: Out-of-State Purchases and C-412-4: Private or Out-of-State for College or University Training.

#### Evaluating Previous Training Performance

If the customer's history includes a record of marginal or poor performance in previous training, before committing to a full training program in the customer's IPE, the VR counselor should consider obtaining additional diagnostic evaluations or other types of assessments, if comparable documentation is not available, to develop a remedial plan and determine whether the customer is likely to be successful (with supports).

Examples of poor training performance include:

* excessive and/or repetitive class withdrawals or drops;
* poor attendance; and
* failing grades.

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### C-406-4: Required Time Frames for Completion of Training at a College or University

VR customers are expected to complete VR-sponsored training within a reasonable time and in accordance with their college or university degree plan.

VR sponsorship of academic training that exceeds the following time frames requires VR Supervisor approval as soon as it is apparent that the following time frames will be exceeded:

* An associate degree (generally 60 credit hours) must be completed within three years.
* A bachelor's degree (generally 120 credit hours) must be completed within six years (including credit hours from a junior college or community college).
* A master's degree must be completed within three years. (This does not include time to complete bachelor's degree before beginning the master's degree program.)

Timeframes for a doctoral degree level training varies. Documentation must show that the customer is participating at a full-time status.

#### Prorated Time Frames

When a customer has spent time in a college or university before VR sponsorship, the VR counselor must consider the credit hours already earned that apply to the current degree plan. The required timeframes for completion are then based on the institution degree plan that must be based on full time enrolment. The VR counselor documents the justification for the prorated time frame in a case note in ReHabWorks (RHW) and includes the agreed-upon time frame in the customer's IPE or IPE amendment.

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## C-409: Training by Paid Instructor or Exempt Schools

Training by a paid instructor or school exempt from the TWC licensing requirement to meet a customer's individualized needs can be purchased with VR funds. For assessment considerations, content of an IPE, and required time frames refer to C-407: Training from Career and Technical or Certified Schools (Proprietary Institutions).

### C-409-1: Legal Authorization

TEC §132.002(b) states:

"Schools offering a course or courses of special study or instruction financed or subsidized by local, state, or federal funds or by any person, firm, association, or agency other than the student involved, on a contract basis and having a closed enrollment, may apply to the commission [TWC] for exemption of such course or courses from this chapter [TEC—Chapter 132] and such course or courses may be declared exempt by the commission where the commission finds the course or courses to be outside the purview of this chapter."

### C-409-2: Arranging for a Paid Instructor or Exempt School

The VR counselor arranges for paid-instructor training so that a customer has a chance to learn a specific work skill from a qualified individual. This training can be:

* customized to the customer's needs (for example, one-on-one);
* offered in a small-group setting; or
* through a school that has a TEC §132.002(b) exemption (see 407-1: Out of State Proprietary Institutions).

#### Instructor Qualifications

The trainer and the course must be:

* approved by TWC; or
* specifically exempted in writing by TWC, based on TEC §132.002(b).

Per TWC regulation, all vocational training providers that charge a fee, including individuals that provide training, are defined as "schools."

Requests for approval to use a school that has the TEC §132.002(b) exemption require:

* Consultation with State Office Program Specialist for Proprietary Schools, and
* Approval from the Regional Director or Deputy Regional Director.

This approval is granted individually for the course and is not a blanket approval for an unlicensed school.

#### Fees

When training is obtained through a paid instructor, tuition and fees rates paid by VR must not exceed payment rates that are governed by the policies and procedures outlined in C-413: Maximum Payment for Training at a Propriety Institution.

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## C-411: Purchasing Training Services from a College, University, or Proprietary Institution

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### C-411-3: Repeating Courses

VR usually does not pay for courses that must be repeated. If VR funds are used to pay for a course more than twice, the VR counselor must consult with the VR Supervisor, and the justification for VR support of the repeated course must be clearly documented by the VR counselor in an RHW case note.

Counseling and guidance should be provided to ensure that the customer is using available supports and is complying with customer responsibilities as defined on the IPE or IPE amendment.

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## C-412: Maximum Payment for Training at a College or University

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### C-412-1: Public Training Institutions: Two-Year Community College

Verify that the institution is a public community college by finding where it is classified on the [College for all Texans— Institutions of Higher Education](http://www.collegeforalltexans.com/apps/degreeprograms/) website.

Exceptions to the limitations for tuition and fees require justification and approval by the VR Supervisor. For additional information, refer to [D-200: Purchasing Goods and Services](https://twc.texas.gov/vr-services-manual/vrsm-d-200).

As of July 2020, VR pays the maximum rate of $113 per semester hour. This amount is all inclusive of tuition and fees combined at a public community college.

VR pays a maximum of $3,390 per year for certificate training at a two-year community college that is not on a semester hour schedule. (The maximum amount for certificate programs through a college or university is based on established tuition and fee rates for enrollment in 15 credit hours for both the fall and spring semesters.)

These rates are based on one standard deviation above the averages from [College for All Texans](http://www.collegeforalltexans.com/index.cfm?objectid=63188B97-0C47-0020-6DBBBAD96A7DFB83) (college cost 2019-2020) average of tuition and fees. VR reviews these rates annually in July.

### C-412-2: Public Training Institutions: Technical and State College

Verify that the institution is a public technical or state college by finding where it is classified on the [College for all Texans— Institutions of Higher Education](http://www.collegeforalltexans.com/apps/degreeprograms/) website.

Exceptions to the limitations for tuition and fees require justification and approval by the VR Supervisor. For additional information, refer to [D-200: Purchasing Goods and Services](https://twc.texas.gov/vr-services-manual/vrsm-d-200).

As of July 2020, VR pays the maximum amount of $204 per semester hour. This amount is all inclusive of tuition and fees combined at a public technical or state college.

VR pays a maximum of $6,120 per year for certificate training at a technical or state college that is not on a semester hour schedule. (The maximum amount for certificate programs through a college or university is based on established tuition and fee rates for enrollment in 15 credit hours for both the fall and spring semesters.)

These rates are based on one standard deviation above the averages from [College for All Texans](http://www.collegeforalltexans.com/index.cfm?objectid=63188B97-0C47-0020-6DBBBAD96A7DFB83) (college cost 2019-2020) average of tuition and fees. VR reviews these rates annually in July.

### C-412-3: Public Training Institutions: Four-Year College or University

VR staff verifies that the institution is a public university by finding how it is classified on the [College for all Texans— Institutions of Higher Education](http://www.collegeforalltexans.com/apps/degreeprograms/) website.

As of July 2020, VR pays the maximum amount of $368 per semester hour. This amount is all inclusive of tuition and fees combined at a public university.

Exceptions to the limitations for tuition and fees require justification and approval by the VR Supervisor. For additional information refer to [D-200: Purchasing Goods and Services](https://twc.texas.gov/vr-services-manual/vrsm-d-200).

VR pays a maximum of $11,040 per year for certificate training at a four-year college or university that is not on a semester hour schedule. (The maximum amount for certificate programs through a college or university is based on established tuition and fee rates for enrollment in 15 credit hours for both the fall and spring semesters.)

These rates are based on one standard deviation above the averages from [College for All Texans](http://www.collegeforalltexans.com/index.cfm?objectid=63188B97-0C47-0020-6DBBBAD96A7DFB83) (college cost 2019-2020) average of tuition and fees. VR reviews these rates annually in July.

### C-412-4: Public Health Related Institutions

VR staff verifies that the institution is a public health–related institution by finding how it is classified on the [College for all Texans— Institutions of Higher Education](http://www.collegeforalltexans.com/apps/degreeprograms/) website.

Exceptions to the limitations for tuition and fees require justification and approval by the VR Supervisor. For additional information, refer to [D-200: Purchasing Goods and Services](https://twc.texas.gov/vr-services-manual/vrsm-d-200).

As of July 2020, VR pays the maximum amount of $358 per semester hour. This amount is all inclusive of tuition and fees combined at a public health-related institution.

VR pays a maximum of $10,740 per year for certificate training at a public health related institution that is not on a semester hour schedule. (The maximum amount for certificate programs through a college or university is based on established tuition and fee rates for enrollment in 15 credit hours for both the fall and spring semesters.)

These rates are based on one standard deviation above the averages from [College for All Texans](http://www.collegeforalltexans.com/index.cfm?objectid=63188B97-0C47-0020-6DBBBAD96A7DFB83) (college cost 2019-2020) average of tuition and fees. VR reviews these rates annually in July.

### C-412-5: Private or Out-of-State Training at a College or University

When a customer chooses to attend a private (independent) or an out-of-state college, technical or state college, university, or health-related institution, even though a comparable public training institution is available in Texas, the VR counselor:

* documents the reason for selecting the public training institution that is being compared to the private or out-of-state training institution in a case note; and
* follows the procedures above for determining the amount that can be paid to the public institution. This is the amount that VR can pay toward the cost of a private institution.

Tuition and fees paid by VR cannot exceed in-state tuition and fees. Exceptions to the limitations for tuition and fees require justification and approval by the VR Supervisor.

For approval requirements see [C-406-3: Content of an IPE for Training at a College or University](https://twc.texas.gov/vr-services-manual/vrsm-c-400#c406-3) and [D-206-3: Out-of-State Purchases](https://twc.texas.gov/vr-services-manual/vrsm-d-200#d206-3).

### C-412-6: Purchasing Dual Credit Courses

Customers taking dual credit courses from a college or university must meet the same requirements established for classroom courses at that institution. For policies and procedures on purchasing dual credit courses, refer to [C-1305-9: Dual Credit Courses](https://twc.texas.gov/vr-services-manual/vrsm-c-1300%22%20%5Cl%20%22c1305-14).

## C-413: Maximum Payment for Training at a Proprietary Institution

VR staff verifies that the institution is licensed or certified by TWC on the [Licensed Career Schools and Colleges Directory](https://apps.twc.state.tx.us/CSC/directory/search.do) website; the [Eligible Training Provider System](https://apps.twc.state.tx.us/PROVIDERCERT/dispatcher?link=HREF&pageid=APP_HOME) website; or another regulatory agency website, such as the [Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation](https://www.tdlr.texas.gov/LicenseSearch/), before including the training on the IPE.

The maximum amount VR can pay for tuition and fees combined for full-time enrollment at a proprietary institution, after comparable benefits and BLR is applied, is the lesser of:

* $113 per semester hour; or
* $3,390 per year.

As of July 2020, these rates are based on one standard deviation above the averages from College for All Texans public training institutions two-year community college (college cost 2019-2020) average of tuition and fees.

Exceptions to the limitations for tuition and fees require justification, consultation with the State Office Program Specialist, and approval by the VR Supervisor. For additional information, refer to [D:200: Purchasing Goods and Services](https://twc.texas.gov/vr-services-manual/vrsm-d-200).

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## C-415: Textbooks and Supplies

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### C-415-2: Maximum Amounts

Exceptions to the limitations for books and supplies require justification and approval by the VR Supervisor. For additional information, refer to [VRSM D-200: Purchasing Goods and Services](https://twc.texas.gov/vr-services-manual/vrsm-d-200).

The maximum amounts that VR can pay per semester or grading period for required textbooks and course-related supplies that are not included in tuition and fees are as follows:

* Community college: $1,005
* Technical and state college: $592
* Four-year college or university: $733
* Health-related institutions: $733
* Proprietary institutions (career colleges): $1,005

These rates are based on one standard deviation above the averages from [College for All Texans](http://www.collegeforalltexans.com/index.cfm?objectid=63188B97-0C47-0020-6DBBBAD96A7DFB83) (college cost 2019-2020) averages for books and supplies. VR reviews these rates annually in July.

Tools and equipment that are required for training but will be kept and used by the customer for employment after completing training are purchased according to processes and procedures in [VRSM C-1407: Tools and Equipment](https://twc.texas.gov/vr-services-manual/vrsm-c-1400#c1407). The amount for these items is not included in or subject to the maximum amounts for required textbooks and course-related supplies.

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## C-421: Work Experience Services

Work Experience services include Work Experience Placement and Work Experience Training. These services allow a customer to be placed within a business or organization in the community to complete a short-term (12 weeks or fewer), part-time work experience to learn skills that are transferable to future long-term competitive integrated employment. Work Experience Services can be used with students and youth with disabilities, adults, and in trial work. A customer's work experience can be in a volunteer position, internship, or temporary short-term employment in which wages are paid by the employer or purchased by Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) via Wage Services.

Work Experience Services can be purchased for customers:

* with limited or no work history;
* who need to gain experience related to the vocational training or degree they have completed; and/or
* with acquired vocational barriers that limit their capacity to continue to work in a field in which they were previously employed.

A customer must have unexpired employment authorization documents to participate in a short-term paid-work setting. For more information, see [VRSM B-204-2: Customer Identification and Authorization for Employment](https://twc.texas.gov/vr-services-manual/vrsm-b-200#b204-2).

For details on how Work Experience Services can benefit a customer, refer to [VR-SFP Chapter 14: Work Experience Services](https://twc.texas.gov/standards-manual/vr-sfp-chapter-14).

When a single work experience must exceed 12 weeks to meet the customer's individualized needs, the VR counselor must document the reason for the extension in a case note and obtain approval from the VR Supervisor. The case note must include the goals to be achieved and the number of additional weeks that are needed to meet the customer's needs. The VR Supervisor must document the required approval in a case note in ReHabWorks (RHW).

The following premiums are available for Work Experience Services. Refer to the links below for additional information:

* [VR-SFP 20.11 Brain Injury Premium](https://twc.texas.gov/standards-manual/vr-sfp-chapter-20#s20-11)
* [VR-SFP 20.6 Mileage Premium](https://twc.texas.gov/standards-manual/vr-sfp-chapter-20#s206)

Service authorizations for premiums must be issued at the time the service authorization for the base service is issued.

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