MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

BETWEEN

THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

AND

University of West Florida

VA-ONCE (VA ONline Certification of Enrollment)

Electronic Transfer of Enrollment Information by Educational Institutions to the Department of Veterans Affairs

I. PURPOSE

This is an agreement between the Department of Veterans Affairs, hereinafter referred to as VA, and University of West Florida, hereinafter referred to as the institution. The purpose of this agreement is to establish an alternative procedure for the institution to use to make certifications to VA of enrollments and changes in enrollments of students of the institution who seek to receive benefits under educational assistance programs administered by VA.

Under current procedures, a majority of institutions use the VACERT program to electronically transmit enrollment information to VA. The other institutions prepare such certifications in written form, the institution's certifying official signs them, and presents them to VA in that form. The alternative procedure authorized under this agreement permits the institution to use an Internet program known as VA-ONCE, to submit the certifications solely by electronic means.

II. AGREEMENTS BY VA

VA agrees to accept, instead of certifications made on printed forms prescribed by VA for that purpose or certifications generated by the VACERT program, certifications created by the institution using the VA-ONCE program in the form of electronic certification documents or written computer-generated documents signed by the institution's certifying official(s). VA also agrees to maintain the history file of enrollment activity on its VA-ONCE server.

III. OBLIGATIONS AND AGREEMENTS OF INSTITUTION

The institution, by executing this agreement and in consideration of the agreement of VA to accept the alternative VA-ONCE generated written or electronic documents submitted by the institution, agrees to comply with all applicable laws, regulations, and VA requirements pertaining to certifications of enrollments and notices of change in student status, even though the provisions of those laws, regulations, or requirements do not appear on the certifications created by the VA-ONCE program.
The institution acknowledges that by using the VA-ONCE program it is subject to all the duties and liabilities pertaining to educational institutions found in 38 U.S.C. sections 3684 and 3685; 38 CFR sections 21.4203, 21.4209, 21.7156, 21.7307, 21.7656, 21.7807, and 21.5200; all certifications applicable to the institution certifying on comparably prescribed VA forms otherwise in use at the time of the certifications; and any other provisions of law or regulations that apply.

The institution certifies that it has appropriate resources, including hardware, software, and staff, to effectively use the VA-ONCE program instead of traditional certification procedures. The institution must provide an appropriate web browser which can be obtained free from several vendors.

The institution agrees to take reasonable precautions to safeguard against unauthorized access to VA-ONCE, and to prevent improper use or disclosure of passwords. The institution also agrees to notify VA immediately upon learning of any unauthorized access, unauthorized use, or disclosure of a password. The institution further agrees to notify VA immediately if any authorized certifying official leaves that position so that VA can suspend the certifying official's user ID and password.

To the maximum extent permitted by the law applicable to the institution, the institution hereby agrees to hold harmless the Department of Veterans Affairs from any claim for damages based on use of the VA-ONCE program.

IV. ACTION

Upon receipt of the signed agreement from the institution, and executed by VA, VA will furnish each designated certifying official with his or her own user ID and password that will be necessary to access the Internet-based program.

V. OVERSIGHT

If the institution electronically sends files to the regional processing office, VA will continually monitor the quality and timeliness of the information. VA will notify the institution of problems detected during the receipt and processing of these files.

The institution agrees to inform VA of any problems found with the VA-ONCE program that could jeopardize the accuracy, integrity or confidentiality of the information contained in files electronically sent to the regional processing office.

VI. WITHDRAWAL

The institution may withdraw from this Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) at any time by notifying VA in writing 60 days beforehand. After withdrawing from this MOU, the institution is required to timely submit certifications using VA Form 22-1999, Enrollment Certification.

VII. REVIEW/CHANGES

VA will conduct periodic reviews of this Memorandum of Understanding as deemed necessary. Changes of this Memorandum of Understanding shall be in writing and approved.
by the signatories or their successors.

VIII. SECURITY

Data for VA-ONCE is stored behind the Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) firewall and thus falls under its approved data protection storage procedures. When the institution sends data over the Internet it will be encrypted using Secure Sockets Layer (SSL) technology, an accepted industry standard. Access to the data will be protected and controlled by unique user names and passwords. Passwords will follow the VBA standard of strong passwords.

Executed by the University of West Florida

this 28th day of June, 2004

By: 

Wes Little, Interim Provost, Academic Affairs

Phone Number: 850-474-2035 E-mail Address: wlittle@uwf.edu

Executed by the Department of Veterans Affairs

this ______ day of ________________, ________.

By: 

Patrick Courtney, Director Atlanta Regional Processing Office

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Phone Number: 
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VA-ONCE MOU (FEBRUARY 2004)

http://www.gibill.va.gov/once/MOU.htm