

# CAMPUS KIT

FOR COLLEGES & UNIVERSITIES



**Student Veterans of America**

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[www.studentveterans.org](http://www.studentveterans.org)

# PURPOSE

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*This Campus Kit is designed to provide information to assist institutions in serving the needs of their student veterans.*

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# STUDENT VETERAN CONCERNS

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## GI Bill

### Chapter 30

**ISSUE:**The active duty GI Bill (Chapter 30) provides only \$9,675 per year to cover tuition, & fees, books, and living expenses. This covers only 60% the average cost of college.

**CONCERN:** Student veterans may be forced to work multiple jobs on top of the GI Bill to pay for school. This is in addition to possible issues readjusting from deployment such as post traumatic stress disorder and traumatic brain injury.

**MORE INFORMATION:**<https://www.gibill.va.gov>

### Chapter 31 (Vocational Rehabilitation)

**ISSUE:**Incoming freshman student are often delayed in enrolling into classes until right before the semester begins. By this time many classes have been filled for weeks.

**CONCERN:** To be eligible for this program the student veteran must be at least 20% disabled with an employment handicap or at least 10% disabled with a serious employment handicap. Delays in registering for classes adds stress and scheduling dilemmas for individuals with a employment handicap.

**MORE INFORMATION:**<https://www.vba.va.gov/bln/vre/index.htm>

## Delayed Schedule for Payment of Benefits

**ISSUE:**Processing for Department of Veterans Affairs educational benefits can take up to eight weeks. Then these benefits are setup on an after the fact or monthly basis.

Colleges & Universities require payment for tuition, fees, books, etc.. up front or early in the semester before benefits have been received by the student veteran.

**CONCERN:** Many veterans are unable to pay the costs of education upfront. Student veterans often incur late fees while they wait to receive benefits to pay tuition.

**SUGGESTION:** Offer deferred tuition payment or no late fees for students waiting on veteran's benefits.

## Students Called to Duty

**ISSUE:** Student veterans may be called to active duty during a semester.

**CONCERN:** Preparing for deployment is difficult enough without having to deal with not completing their current classes either by withdrawing or taking an incomplete. Many student veterans report a wide disparity in options between professors, programs, and schools.

**SUGGESTION:** Find your institution's policy for students called to duty. If you do not have one, establish one. Ensure this policy minimizes negative consequences for the student.

## Full-Time Veteran Support Staff

**ISSUE:** Student veterans often have to navigate multiple departments to utilize the range of benefits and resources available to them. They often are handed from one department or staff member to another until they find what they need or simply give up.

**CONCERN:** Colleges & Universities often do not provide full-time staff members to act as the point of contact for veteran's benefits and programs. This leads to frustration on the part of student veterans. The institution also loses out by missing resources available to it in order to better serve student veterans and not understanding how well it serves students who are veterans.

**SUGGESTION:** Establish positions in your institution to be a single point of contact for veteran's benefits and programs at your institution. Use this office for staff member to process paperwork and stay on top of the needs and issues of student veterans.

## Availability of Information

**ISSUE:**Information specific to veterans is often not easy to find or is organized with bits of information spread through many sources of information.

**CONCERN:** It can be frustrating to not be able to easily find information specific to your needs as a student veteran. Delays in finding this information, or outdated information can have a negative impact for student veterans.

**SUGGESTION:**Create online resources specifically for veterans and prominently promote it. Use this website to consolidate veterans information from throughout the institution.

## PLAN OF ACTION FOR COLLEGES & UNIVERSITIES

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### Step One: Develop a Veterans Support Committee

- Include members from each department of your institution.
- Find out the number of student veterans and what types of benefits or resources they are using.
- Draft a letter to these students that shows support from the administration and ask for feedback on their needs.

### Step Two: Support a Student Veterans Organization

- Contact all student veterans about establishing a student veteran's organization.
- Host a "call out" meeting to assist students in standing up the organization.
- Ensure they have access to all resources available to other student organizations.
- Realize that this student organization will have specific needs that other organizations may not have.

### Step Three: Veterans Affairs Work Study Position(s)

- Determine if your institution is eligible for Department of Veterans Affairs work-study position for a student veteran.
- File for the work-study position.
- Employ the work-study student veteran assisting other student veterans and prospective student veterans. Train the student veteran to carry out these duties. This will increase the credibility of institution regarding student veterans.
- Provide office space and information technology resources as needed.
- **LINK:** <http://www.vba.va.gov/pubs/forms/22-8691.pdf>

## Step Four: Develop Online & Print Resources

- Build a website to consolidate information for student veterans from throughout institution.
- Create and distribute print brochures with the same information.
- Ensure they have access to all resources available to other student organizations.
- **EXAMPLE:** <http://registrar.wisc.edu/students/vets/>

## Step Five: Educate Administration, Facility & Staff

- Incorporate educational material on student veterans into routine training programs.
- Utilize the presentation “Understanding the Student Veteran.
- Ensure the on campus counseling resources are training to handle student veteran issues and are able to handle them.

# VA WORK STUDY

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## Step One: Request to be an Approved Worksite

- A letter from the person who will be the work-study supervisor needs to fax a letter, on official letterhead from the institution, requesting to become a worksite. This letter needs to contain the following information:
  - Who the supervisor is, along with contact information
  - What the supervisor does (brief job description)
  - Number of enrolled veterans at the institution (this will determine how many work study hours that will be allotted to the site).
  - The mission of the veteran office or center. Include qualitative information such as number of veterans served.
  - The anticipated job duties of the student worker.
    - § Do not use catch phrases such as “and additional duties as assigned”.
    - § Include “veteran” in bullet points.
  - This letter must be very clear and concise. Keep it to one page. It must be clear the student worker will work directly and only with veterans issues.
- Submit this letter to the VA Work Study Office.

- You will NOT be notified where or not you are approved. You must contact the VA Work Study Office.
  - After submitting the initial letter, call to verify they received it. Remember the phone hours for the VA Work Study Office is 10am to 2pm.
  - They should be able to give you an anticipated approval date.

## Step Two: Hiring a Student

- Once you have selected the student(s) you wish to hire for VA work study, call the VA Work Study Office to have them verify the student(s) qualify. Ensure you know the student's social security number and which chapter they are using. The student must be actively receiving VA educational benefits. If the student has applied for benefits but not received their first check they will be denied.
- Have the student complete VA Form 22-8691 – Application for Work Study Allowance.
  - In Part III, Block #9 have them check “no”. This will enable them to start much sooner. If they check “no”, you can write in this block the date when you would like them to start (Contract Start XX-XX-XXXX). Contract will be backdated when approved.
  - In Part III, Block #12 and #14 they can be very brief.
  - In Part III, Block #13, if you are already an approved worksite, which you should be when filling out this application, put the exact location. The rest of the information (supervisor, contact info, worksite info) should be on the position description you send with it.
  - Do NOT include a resume or any academic information.
- Position Description:
  - The student and supervisor names must be clear and on top of the position description. There will be more than one supervisor only list one.
  - The position description should be brief – condense Part A and B of the description.
  - Once again, they will not notify you if you were approved or not.
  - After you fax this information, call to verify they received it. Ask when they expect it to be approved.

## Step Three: Timesheets

- Students cannot work more than 25 times the number of weeks in the semester so, if they are working a full term they can only get 25 hours per week.
- Timecards need to be submitted after a student works 50 hours. Depending on how many hours per week they work, they may not be paid every two weeks.
- Do not send a cover sheet – any communications should go in the “remarks” block of the time sheet.

\*\*VA Work Study instructions provided by Minnesota Department of Veteran Affairs; Higher Education Veterans Programs.

# SUGGESTIONS

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## For Administrators

- Survey your student veterans for their needs and concerns.
- Work with student veterans during registration periods to ensure they are able to quickly enroll in classes.
- Develop easy to use procedure to notify institution (all parts of it to include professors, departments, programs, support offices) in the event they are called to duty. Ensure point of contact is promoted and easy to find.
- Add “veterans sensitivity” training in faculty and staff development programs.
- Maintain veterans committee to host dialogue between student veterans and others.
- Host events on campus to make sure veterans feel welcome on campus.
- Consider establishing a foundation account to assist student veterans with tuition, book, and other fees.
- Keep in mind that Department of Veterans Affairs benefits and programs do not cover all the needs of student veterans. Consider developing your own scholarships, programs and other student veteran’s specific resources.
- Evaluate the admissions process to ensure veterans are not disadvantaged. Student transitioning out of active service face a host of admissions difficulties.
- Veterans have dramatically different life experiences, especially younger veterans. Do not treat them the same as you do student straight out of high school or other first time students.
- Develop veteran specific orientation. Partner with local veterans organizations and military units for presentations and assistance.

## For Faculty

- Include veterans information on syllabus
- Student veterans may not feel comfortable publicizing their veteran status. This is especially true for some topics. If your course covers war topics establish an atmosphere where they feel comfortable in. Be understanding of veterans different viewpoint on topics.
- Be flexible with attendance for student veterans who have appointments with Veterans Affairs. Rescheduling these appointments is often not possible or result in a long delay.
- Be aware of military spouses and family members with individuals deployed. This is a very difficult period for them as well.

## Sample Letter to Student Veterans

Dear Student,

We are contacting you in an effort to reach out to students that have been identified as military veterans.

On behalf of the INSTITUTION community, thank you for your service to our country. You have undoubtedly made sacrifices and faced hardships unknown to most other students. You have experiences few of us will ever understand.

INSTITUTION would like to assist you in your transition to academic life. We have many departments and individuals who are available to helping veterans adjust to civilian and campus life. In particular are the programs below.

- Counseling Service provides XYZ services. It is located at \_\_\_ and can be contacted at 555-555-5555.
- Disability Services provides XYZ services. It is located at \_\_\_ and can be contacted at 555-555-5555.
- Veterans Support office provides XYZ services. It is located at \_\_\_ and can be contacted at 555-555-5555.

In addition to on campus resources, please be aware of the many resources available to you. MilitaryOneSource ([www.militaryonesource.com](http://www.militaryonesource.com)) is a very comprehensive source of information. Student Veterans of America ([www.studentveterans.org](http://www.studentveterans.org)) is an umbrella group of student organizations and can provide assistance as well.

We would appreciate if you would complete the questions enclosed and return it to \_\_\_\_\_. Doing so will allow us to better understand your needs and assist you in succeeding in your academic life.

Sincerely,

Name

INSTITUTION

Service Branch: \_\_\_\_\_

Interested in meeting other veterans: [yes] [no]

How can we assist you in your transition to academic life?

Would you like to schedule a meeting with supportive faculty & staff? [yes] [no]

Do you have family members or close friends that would like information or support

[yes] [no]

Would you prefer to NOT be contacted regarding your veteran status? [yes] [no]

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

## QUICK LINKS & RESOURCES

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### VA & DOD Hotlines

VA Education Office	1-888-442-4551
VA Healthcare Office	1-877-222-8387
VA Benefits	1-800-827-1000
WAVE (Verify Your Attendance)	1-877-823-2378
VA Gulf War Help Line	1-800-273-8387
DOD Direct Veterans Hotline	1-800-497-6261
Suicide Hotline	1-800-273-8255

### VA Websites

GI Bill	<a href="http://www.gibill.va.gov">http://www.gibill.va.gov</a>
Apply for GI Bill Benefits	<a href="http://vba.va.gov/pubs/forms/VBA-22_1990.pdf">http://vba.va.gov/pubs/forms/VBA-22_1990.pdf</a>
GI Bill WAVE	<a href="https://www.gibill.va.gov/wave/">https://www.gibill.va.gov/wave/</a>
Veterans Online Application (VONAPP)	<a href="http://vabenefits.vba.va.gov/vonapp/main.asp">http://vabenefits.vba.va.gov/vonapp/main.asp</a>

VA Hiring – Student Programs [http://www.va.gov/JOBS/hiring\\_programs.asp#5](http://www.va.gov/JOBS/hiring_programs.asp#5)  
VA Medical Centers <http://www1.va.gov/directory/guide/home.asp>  
VA Compensation & Pension <http://www.vba.va.gov/bln/21/>

## Other Useful Government Websites

Defense Activity for Non-Traditional Education Support (DANTES) [http://www.dantes.doded.mil/Dantes\\_web/DANTESHOME.asp](http://www.dantes.doded.mil/Dantes_web/DANTESHOME.asp)  
Army/American Council on Education Registry Transcript System (AARTS) <https://aartstranscript.army.mil>  
Community College of the Air Force Request Forms <http://www.maxwell.af.mil/au/ccaf/transcripts.asp>  
Coast Guard Military Transcripts [http://www.uscg.mil/hq/cgi/offical\\_transcript.asp](http://www.uscg.mil/hq/cgi/offical_transcript.asp)  
Sailor/Marine American Council on Education Registry Transcript (SMART) <http://www.navycollege.navy.mil/transcript.html>  
National Center for PTSD <http://ncptsd.va.gov>

## Veteran Service Organizations

Student Veterans of America <http://www.studentveterans.org>  
The American Legion <http://legion.org> 1-800-433-3318  
Veterans of Foreign Wars <http://www.vfw.org> 1-800-VFW-1899  
Disabled American <http://www.dav.org> 1-877-426-2838

## Veterans

Paralyzed Veterans of America	<a href="http://www.pav.org">http://www.pav.org</a>	1-800-424-8200
AMVETS	<a href="http://www.amvets.org">http://www.amvets.org</a>	1-877-726-8387
Vietnam Veterans of America	<a href="http://www.vva.org">http://www.vva.org</a>	1-800-882-1316

## Service member Opportunity Colleges (SOC)

SOC Consortium member institutions provide flexibility to service members, their families, and veterans seeking college degrees. In turn SOC colleges and universities benefit from the enrollment of mature, highly-motivated adult students who make use of tuition assistance or the GI Bill. <http://www.soc.aascu.org>