

STUDENT VETERANS GUIDE

Prepared by the
Office of Veterans Affairs

Updated September 2017

*"Let every nation know, whether it
wishes us well or ill, that we shall
pay any price, bear any burden,
meet any hardship, support any friend,
oppose any foe to assure the survival and
the success of liberty."*

President John F. Kennedy

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TO OUR STUDENT VETERANS:

Welcome to WCSU, Veterans and Active Service Members!

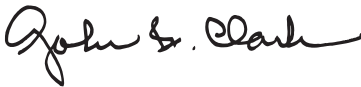
On behalf of our Western Connecticut State University community, and as a fellow veteran, I would like to first extend a heartfelt "Thank you" for your service to our country. We are proud to be your university of choice and stand ready to be of assistance to you as you progress through your program here.

Students who are veterans or active members of the military often face challenges such as a transition back to civilian life after years of service, or deployment during their course of study. Our Veterans Committee assists us in providing support with these and other areas of concern, recognizing the opportunity it offers us to give back to an exceptional group of men and women who have put so much on the line for us all.

Comprised of student Veterans, faculty, staff and community representatives, the committee has established a range of services and events specifically for you. These include the Veterans Lounge in Midtown's Student Center, and a dedicated office and website that you can access for information. As you will see in reviewing this booklet, there are many additional services and offices here focused on facilitating your success and enriching your experience at Western.

I'd like to express my personal good wishes to you for the coming year and beyond. I look forward to seeing you on campus, and congratulate you on your decision to add a bachelor's degree to the fine credentials you have already earned.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "John B. Clark". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "John" being the most prominent part.

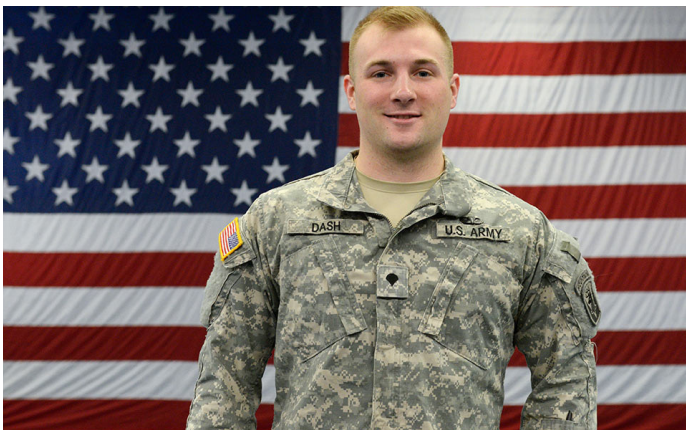
Dr. John B. Clark
President
Western Connecticut State University

OFFICE OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

The Office of Veterans Affairs was created in 2013 in order to better serve the unique needs of Student-Veterans and their families. Western Connecticut State University recognizes the complexities of education benefits and provides a full-time administrator in order effectively help navigate current/former service members through these benefits. Located on the first floor of Old Main, room 101 (within the Graduate Office) on the Middtown Campus of Western Connecticut State University, the office is open from 8am-4pm Monday through Friday. All current/former service members and family members are encouraged to contact the Office of Veterans Affairs in order to ease the transition into Western Connecticut State University.

The Connecticut State Board of Education has approved WCSU's education programs for the training of Veterans. Veterans may take advantage of their benefits under Chapter 30 (Montgomery GI Bill), Chapter 31 (Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment), Chapter 33 (Post 9/11 GI Bill), Chapter 1606 (Montgomery GI Bill – Selected Reserve) and Chapter 35 (Survivors and Dependents Educational Assistance), the Connecticut National Guard Tuition Waiver or the Connecticut Veterans Tuition Waiver.

Please visit our website at www.wcsu.edu/veterans in order to learn more about the Office of Veterans Affairs, education benefits and the many unique opportunities available to student-veterans at WCSU. In addition, many necessary forms are available online. To explore a complete listing and to apply for VA Education Benefits, please visit: www.vets.gov or gibill.va.gov.



CHAPTER 30

The Montgomery GI Bill (MGIB)

The MGIB program provides up to 36 months of education benefits. This benefit may be used for degree and certificate programs, flight training, apprenticeship/on-the-job training and correspondence courses. Remedial, deficiency and refresher courses may be approved under certain circumstances. Generally, benefits are payable for 10 years following your release from active duty.

You may be an eligible veteran if you have an Honorable Discharge, AND you have a High School Diploma or GED or in some cases 12 hours of college credit, AND you meet the requirements of one of the categories below:

CATEGORY I

- Entered active duty for the first time after June 30, 1985
- Had military pay reduced by \$100 a month for first 12 months
- Continuously served for three years, OR two years if that is what you first enlisted for, OR two years if you entered the Selected Reserve within a year of leaving active duty and served four years ("2 by 4" Program)

CATEGORY II

- Entered active duty before January 1, 1977
- Served at least one day between 10/19/84 and 6/30/85, and stayed on active duty through 6/30/88 (or 6/30/87 if you entered the Selected Reserve within one year of leaving active duty and served four years)
- On 12/31/89, you had entitlement left from Vietnam-era GI Bill



CATEGORY III

- Not eligible for MGIB under Category I or II
- On active duty on 9/30/90 AND separated involuntarily after 2/2/91,
- OR involuntarily separated on or after 11/30/93,
- OR voluntarily separated under either the Voluntary Separation Incentive (VSI) or Special Separation Benefit (SSB) program
- Before separation, you had military pay reduced by \$1,200

CATEGORY IV

- On active duty on 10/9/96 AND you had money remaining in a VEAP account on that date AND you elected MGIB by 10/9/97
- OR entered full-time National Guard duty under title 32, USC, between 7/1/85 and 11/28/89 AND you elected MGIB during the period 10/9/96 through 7/8/97
- Had military pay reduced by \$100 a month for 12 months or made a \$1,200 lump-sum contribution

The following rates are effective October 1, 2017 and apply to those completing an enlistment of three years or more:

Institutional Training	
Training Time	Monthly rate
Full time	\$1,928
$\frac{3}{4}$ time	\$1,446
$\frac{1}{2}$ time	\$964
less than $\frac{1}{2}$ time more than $\frac{1}{4}$ time	\$964*
$\frac{1}{4}$ time or less	\$482*

The following rates are effective October 1, 2017 and apply to those completing an enlistment of less than three years:

Institutional Training	
Training Time	Monthly rate
Full time	\$1,566
$\frac{3}{4}$ time	\$1,174.50
$\frac{1}{2}$ time	\$783
less than $\frac{1}{2}$ time more than $\frac{1}{4}$ time	\$783*
$\frac{1}{4}$ time or less	\$39150*

CHAPTER 31

Vocational Rehabilitation & Employment

Veterans are eligible if they:

- Have received, or will receive, a discharge that is other than dishonorable
- Have a service-connected disability rating of at least 10%, or a memorandum rating of 20% or more from the Department of Veteran Affairs (VA)

Active Duty Service Members are eligible if they:

- Expect to receive an honorable discharge upon separation from active duty
- Obtain a memorandum rating of 20% or more from the VA

Basic Period of Eligibility

The basic period of eligibility for services is 12 years from the latter of the following:

- Date of separation from active military service, or
- Date the veteran was first notified by VA of a service-connected disability rating.

What Happens after Eligibility is Established?

The veteran is scheduled to meet with a Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor (VRC) for a comprehensive evaluation to determine if he/she is entitled for services. A comprehensive evaluation includes:

- An assessment of the veteran's interests, aptitudes and abilities
- An assessment of whether service-connected disabilities impair the veteran's ability to find and/or hold a job using the occupational skills he or she has already developed
- Vocational exploration and goal development leading to employment and/or maximum independence at home and in the veteran's community

How to Apply?

Please visit www.ebenefits.va.gov, select "Apply," select "Education and Training," and then "Vocational Rehabilitations and Employment Benefits."



CHAPTER 32

Post-Vietnam Era Veterans Educational Assistance Program (VEAP)

VEAP is available if you elected to make contributions from your military pay to participate in this education benefit program. Your dollar contributions are matched on a 2-to-1 basis by the government. You may use these benefits for degree, certificate, correspondence, apprenticeship/on-the-job training programs and vocational flight training programs. In certain circumstances, remedial, deficiency and refresher training may also be available.

Benefit entitlement is one to 36 months depending on the number of monthly contributions. You have 10 years from your release from active duty to use VEAP benefits. If there is entitlement not used after the 10-year period, your portion remaining in the fund will be automatically refunded.

Eligibility

To qualify, you must meet the following requirements:

- Entered service for the first time between January 1, 1977, and June 30, 1985;
- Opened a contribution account before April 1, 1987;
- Voluntarily contributed from \$25 to \$2700;
- Completed your first period of service; and
- Were discharged or released from service under conditions other than dishonorable.
- If you are currently on active duty and wish to receive VEAP benefits, you must have at least three months of contributions available.



How to Apply

You should make sure that your selected program is approved for VA training. If you are not clear on this point, VA will inform you and the school or company about the requirements.

Obtain and complete VA Form 22-1990, Application for Education Benefits. Send it to the VA regional office with jurisdiction over the State where you will train. If you are not on active duty, send copy 4 (Member Copy) of your DD Form 214, Certificate of Release or Discharge From Active Duty. If you are on active duty, you must have your enrollment approved by your base Education Services Officer, and you must have your service verified by your Commanding Officer.

If you have started training, take your application and Member 4 Copy of DD Form 214 to the Office of Veterans Affairs. Ask them to complete VA Form 22-1999, Enrollment Certification, and send all the forms to VA.

If you wish to withdraw your contributions from VEAP, obtain and complete VA Form 22-5281, Application for Refund of Educational Contributions, and send it to your nearest VA regional office.



CHAPTER 33

Post 9/11 GI Bill

You may be eligible for this program if you meet the following conditions: Veterans who have served at least 90 days of active duty service after September 10, 2001, and received an honorable discharge will qualify for the Post-9/11 GI Bill.

To qualify for the full benefit a veteran must have served at least three years of active duty after September 10, 2001. Those who qualify for the Active Duty GI Bill, the Reserve GI Bill or REAP will have the option to choose which benefit best suits their need.

For those who served on active duty after September 10, 2001, the following chart applies:

Member Serves	Percentage of Maximum Benefits Payable
At least 36 months	100%
At least 30 continuous days on active duty and must be discharged due to service-connected disability	100%
At least 30 months, but less than 36 months	90%
At least 24 months, but less than 30 months	80%
At least 18 months, but less than 24 months	70%
At least 12 months, but less than 18 months	60%
At least 06 months, but less than 12 months	50%
At least 90 days, but less than 06 months	40%

The Post 9/11 Bill includes a yearly books and supplies stipend of up to \$1,000 paid proportionately based on enrollment and your payable benefit.

A monthly housing allowance will also be paid out at your benefit percentage. As of August 1, 2017, the BAH for Fairfield County is \$2,996.00 per month for those with 100% eligibility.

Tuition and fees will be reimbursed at the percentage of eligibility. Out-of-state students with 100% eligibility may take advantage of the Yellow Ribbon program to cover the difference between in-state and out-of-state charges.

This benefit provides up to 36 school months of education benefits; generally benefits are payable for 15 years following your release from active duty. If released from active duty on/after January 1, 2013, there is no time limitation.

Transferring Benefits to a Dependent

Eligibility

Any member of the Armed Forces (active duty or Selected Reserve, officer or enlisted) on or after August 1, 2009, who is eligible for the Post-9/11 GI Bill, and:

1. Has at least six years of service in the Armed Forces (active duty and/or Selected Reserve) on the date of approval and agrees to serve four additional years in the Armed Forces from the date of election.
2. Has at least 10 years of service in the Armed Forces (active duty and/or Selected Reserve) on the date of approval, is precluded by either standard policy (Service or DOD) or statute from committing to four additional years and agrees to serve for the maximum amount of time allowed by such policy or statute.
3. Is or becomes retirement eligible during the period from August 1, 2009, through July 31, 2012, and agrees to serve an additional period of service in subparagraphs (a) through (d). A Service member is considered to be retirement eligible if he or she has completed 20 years of active Federal service or 20 qualifying years as computed pursuant to section 12732 of title 10 U.S.C. This will no longer be in effect on August 1, 2013, and on or after that date all members must comply with paragraphs 1 and 2.
 - a. For individuals eligible for retirement on August 1, 2009, no additional service is required.
 - b. For individuals eligible for retirement after August 1, 2009, and before August 1, 2010, one year of additional service is required.
 - c. For individuals eligible for retirement on or after August 1, 2010, and before August 1, 2011, two years of additional service is required.
 - d. For individuals eligible for retirement on or after August 1, 2011, and before August 1, 2012, three years of additional service is required.
 - e. Such transfer must be requested and approved while the member is in the Armed Forces.

CHAPTER 33: CONTINUED

Eligible Dependents

An individual approved to transfer an entitlement to educational assistance under this section may transfer the individual's entitlement to:

- The individual's spouse.
- One or more of the individual's children.
- Any combination of spouse and child.
- A family member must be enrolled in the Defense Eligibility Enrollment Reporting System (DEERS) and be eligible for benefits at the time of transfer to receive transferred educational benefits.

Nature of Transfer

- An eligible Service member may transfer up to the total months of unused Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits, or the entire 36 months if the member has used none (unless DOD/DHS limits the number of months an individual may transfer).
- Family member use of transferred educational benefits is subject to the following:

Spouse:

- May start to use the benefit immediately.
- May use the benefit while the member remains in the Armed Forces or after separation from active duty.
- Is not eligible for the monthly housing allowance while the member is serving on active duty.
- Can use the benefit for up to 15 years after the Service member's last separation from active duty.

Child:

- May start to use the benefit only after the individual making the transfer has completed at least 10 years of service in the Armed Forces.
- May use the benefit while the eligible individual remains in the Armed Forces or after separation from active duty.
- May not use the benefit until he/she has attained a secondary school diploma (or equivalency certificate), or reached 18 years of age.
- Is entitled to the monthly housing allowance stipend even though the eligible individual is on active duty.
- Is not subject to the 15-year delimiting date, but may not use the benefit after reaching 26 years of age.



CHAPTER 35

Survivors and Dependents Educational Assistance Program

Dependents' Educational Assistance provides education and training opportunities to eligible dependents of certain veterans. The program offers up to 45 months of education benefits. These benefits may be used for degree and certificate programs, apprenticeship and on-the-job training. If you are a spouse, you may take a correspondence course. Remedial, deficiency and refresher courses may be approved under certain circumstances.

Eligibility Requirements: Basic eligibility for Chapter 35 education benefits may be established for the following categories of students:

1. Sons, daughters, spouses and surviving spouses of veterans who die or are permanently and totally disabled as the result of a service-connected disability arising out of active service in the Armed Forces, or who died from any cause while disabled; and
2. The child or spouse of a person who is on active duty as a member of the Armed Forces and who now is, and for a period of 90 days has been, listed by the service department concerned as a POW, MIA or otherwise forcibly detained by a foreign government or power.

Periods of Eligibility

CHILD: Generally, to attend school or job training under Chapter 35 Program, a son or daughter must be between 18 and 26 years of age. In certain circumstances, it is possible to begin before age 18 and to continue after age 26.

SPOUSE or SURVIVING SPOUSE: Educational benefit must be used within 10 years from the date when eligibility is determined or from the date of death of spouse from whom eligibility is derived. In certain circumstances, this period may be extended if the spouse or surviving spouse was prevented from using some portion of his or her educational benefits because of a physical or mental disability. See Chapter 35, Title 38, Code of Federal Regulations.

Educational Assistance Allowance for trainees under the Survivors' and Dependents' Educational Assistance Program (Chapter 35 of title 38, U.S.C.). The following basic monthly rates are effective October 1, 2017:

Institutional Training	
Training Time	Monthly rate
Full time	\$1,041
¾ time	\$780
½ time	\$519
less than ½ time more than ¼ time	\$519*
¼ time or less	\$260.25*

** Tuition and fees only. Payment cannot exceed the listed amount.*



CHAPTER 1606

Selected Reserve Educational Assistance Program

To apply, National Guard or Reservists must obtain DD form 2384 (Selected Reserve Educational Assistance Program: Notice of Basic Eligibility) from your National Guard or Reserve Unit. You will need to submit it with your application.

Eligibility:

1. If you are an enlisted person, you may be eligible if you enlisted, re-enlisted or extended an enlistment in the Selected Reserve for a period of at least six years during the period beginning July 1, 1985.
2. If you are an officer, you may be eligible if you were appointed as or are serving as a reserve officer and agree to serve in the Selected Reserve for at least six years during the period beginning July 1, 1985. This six-year commitment is in addition to any other obligated period of service in the Selected Reserve that you may have.
3. You must have completed your initial period of active duty for training if you had no prior active duty service.
4. You must be satisfactorily participating in the Selected Reserve.
5. You must have a high school diploma or equivalency certificate.

Educational Assistance Allowance for trainees under the Montgomery GI Bill - Selected Reserve (Ch. 1606 of Title 10, U.S.C.). The following basic monthly rates are effective October 1, 2017:

Institutional Training	
Training Time	Monthly rate
Full time	\$375
$\frac{3}{4}$ time	\$281
$\frac{1}{2}$ time	\$187
Less than $\frac{1}{2}$ time	\$93.75

CHAPTER 1607

Reserve Educational Assistance Program (REAP)

The National Defense Authorization Act of 2016 ended REAP on November 25, 2015. Some individuals will remain eligible for REAP benefits until November 25, 2019, while others are no longer eligible for REAP benefits.

REAP (Chapter 1607 of title 10, U.S. Code) is an education program that provides up to 36 months of education benefits to members of the Selected Reserves, Individual Ready Reserve (IRR) and National Guard, who are called or ordered to active service in response to a war or national emergency, as declared by the President or Congress.

Who Is Eligible?

Eligibility will be determined by the Department of Defense (DOD) or Department of Homeland Security (DHS), as appropriate. Generally, a member of a Reserve component who serves on active duty on or after September 11, 2001, under title 10, U.S. Code, for at least 90 consecutive days under a contingency operation, is eligible for REAP. There are no specific timeframes to use REAP; however, your eligibility generally ends when you leave the Selected Reserves.

Educational Assistance Allowance for trainees under the Reserve Educational Assistance Program (Ch. 1607 of Title 10, U.S.C.). The following basic monthly rates are effective October 1, 2017:

Institutional Training			
Training Time	Consecutive service of 90 days but less than one year	Consecutive service of 1 year +	Consecutive service of 2 years +
Full time	\$771.20	\$1156.80	\$1542.40
¾ time	\$578.40	\$867.60	\$1156.80
½ time	\$385.60	\$578.40	\$771.20
less than ½ time more than ¼ time	\$385.60*	\$578.40*	\$771.20*
¼ time or less	\$192.80*	\$289.20*	\$385.60*

** Tuition and fees only. Payment cannot exceed the listed amount.*

TUITION WAIVERS

A Tuition Waiver relieves the benefactor from the responsibility for payment of tuition. The Tuition Waiver does not apply to other costs and fees, such as: deposits, student activity fees, insurance fees, laboratory fees. There are two main categories of tuition waivers:

A. National Guard Tuition Waiver

National Guard members, who have received a Certificate of Eligibility from the Adjutant General, have been admitted to the university as full-time students and have registered for classes, can submit the certificate to the Veterans Affairs Office. This waiver applies only to the fall and spring semesters. Please contact your Unit's RNCO to apply for this waiver before every semester.

B. Connecticut State Veterans Tuition Waiver

Veterans who have served over 90 days of Active Duty in support of an operation may receive a tuition waiver. This does not include Initial Entry Training nor Active Duty for Training.

Public Act 78-175 and Public Act 74-266 authorized the ConnSCU Board of Regents to waive the payment of tuition for veterans or a dependent child* of a person classified as a prisoner of war or missing in action. Qualified summer and part-time students (less than 12 credits) also are entitled to a waiver of 50 percent of tuition cost.

*Dependent children: Must be a dependent child of a person whom the Armed Forces declared to be missing in action or to have been a prisoner of war while serving in the Armed Forces after January 1, 1960.



The following eligibility qualifications must be met for the tuition waiver:

1. Must have served in the Armed Forces on active duty continuously for 90 days between January 1, 1964, and July 1, 1975, during a time of war.

WARS:

- World War II: Dec. 7, 1941, to Dec. 31, 1946
- Korean hostilities: June 27, 1950, to Jan. 31, 1955
- Vietnam: Dec. 22, 1961, to July 1, 1975

QUALIFYING CONFLICTS:

- Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm: Aug. 2, 1990, to June 30, 1994, and those engaged in combat or in a combat support role in:
 - Peace-Keeping Mission in Lebanon: Sept. 29, 1982, to March 30, 1984
 - Grenada Invasion: Oct. 25, 1983, to Dec. 15, 1983
 - Operation Earnest Will (Escort of Kuwaiti Oil Tankers): Feb. 1, 1987, to July 23, 1987
 - Panama Invasion: Dec. 20, 1989, to Jan. 31, 1990

and who have received an Expeditionary medal or letter stating their involvement in such action. Also included are those individuals who have served 90 consecutive days of active service since August 2, 1990.

2. Must have been released from active duty under honorable conditions.
3. Must be a resident of Connecticut at the time s/he is accepted by the University.
4. Must be matriculated.

Note: Eligibility to receive Veterans Affairs Education Benefits is not a determining factor in granting a tuition waiver.

HOW TO RECIEVE VA EDUCATIONAL BENEFITS

Step 1:

Western Connecticut State University Veteran's Registration Form and a blank Degree Program Sheet (wcsu.edu/veterans)

AND the following:

- A. Chapter 30: DD-214 & Certificate of Eligibility from VA
- B. Chapter 31: DD-214 & VA Form 28-1905 from Voc Rehab
- C. Chapter 32: DD-214 & Contribution Statement
- D. Chapter 33: DD-214 & Certificate of Eligibilty from VA
- E. Chapter 35: Relative's DD-214 & Certificate of Eligibility from VA
- F. Chapter 1606: Latest DD-214, Certificate of Eligibility from VA,
DD-Form 2384: Notice of Basic Eligibility
- G. Chapter 1607: Last DD-214 & Certificate of Eligibility from VA

Step 2: Certification

After you have registered for courses, drop off all required paperwork with the Office of Veterans Affairs in Old Main, room 101. The VA certifying official will then certify your enrollment to the VA. It is the student's responsibility to request certification **before** every semester. Certification is not automatic. Students are only certified for classes required for current degree program. All enrollment changes(Add/Drop, withdrawals) **must** be reported to the certifying official.

Step 3: Matriculation Status

Report class attendance to VA as required (monthly if necessary). Any change in matriculation status (full time to part time; leave of absence; withdrawal from the University) must be reported to the certifying official.

Step 4: Change of Program of Study/Major

In the case of a change in program study/major, the student must meet with his or her academic advisor to develop a program evaluation. Changes to a student's program of study/major will delay certification and payment. Coursework for the new major will not be certified until the new program evaluation is completed and on file with the certifying official's office. It is the student's responsibility to meet with an academic advisor as early as possible to avoid delay in payment. Form 22-1995 must be completed online, and approval sent to the certifying official; it is available at www.va.gov. The VA will make the final approval on all educational changes.

How To Contact Us: Veterans Affairs Office

Old Main 101
181 White Street
Danbury, CT 06810
(203) 837-8003
vetinfo@wcsu.edu



POLICIES AND GUIDELINES

Certification

Veterans are certified only for those classes that are required for their degree program. It is the student's responsibility to take at least 12 hours of degree-required courses to qualify for full-time benefits (nine hours is considered full-time for graduate study). If a student takes fewer than 12 hours, he/she should make sure that all courses are required in the program. Veteran Education Benefits are certified on a semester basis.

Concurrent Enrollment

Please visit the Office of Veteran Affairs if you are enrolled concurrently at another college/university.

Dual Major and Minor

Dual majors pursued under an academic policy that defines the dual major's requirements can be certified if both majors are approved. Only courses required to complete the dual major can be certified.

A minor pursued as part of an approved major can be certified, even if the minor will require additional credit to graduate.

Repeated Courses

The VA WILL NOT pay for repeat courses, unless to complete a major requirement when an F was earned. No classes in which A, B, C or D grades were earned may be repeated for VA purposes. (Letter grades of A, B, C or D are considered to be successfully completed for VA purposes). Students WILL NOT be paid to repeat a course successfully completed due to academic renewal purposes.

Exception: Some courses require a specific minimum grade for successful completion or transfer.

Auditing and Correspondence Courses

Audited courses and correspondence courses do not count as part of your course load and do not qualify as part of your benefits.

Continuation of VA Benefits

Due to high volume of Requests for Certification each semester, all veterans are encouraged to submit their schedules in order for the Certifying Official to review all paperwork before certifying the request. If you are a continuing student, take advantage of the early enrollment period. The earlier you submit your schedule, the sooner you will be processed for your benefits. Also, note that Western cannot guarantee when you will receive your benefits. Be advised that multiple class changes may cause delays in processing your request.

POLICIES AND GUIDELINES: CONTINUED

Extending your VA Benefits

If you are using Chapter 30, Chapter 31 or Chapter 35 benefits, you may be able to request an extension of your benefits. You can submit a written request for an extension of your VA benefits to the VA Regional Office.

Status Change

If you change from full-time to part-time status, you must file this change with the certifying official.

Minimum GPA Requirement

Students on VA education benefits (veterans, reservists and family members) must maintain satisfactory progress. This is a VA requirement. If the student on VA benefits falls below a 2.0 GPA over two consecutive semesters, this is reported to the VA as unsatisfactory process and benefits are suspended. To reinstate your benefits, you must complete a semester with a 2.0 or higher GPA.

Non-required Courses

The VA will pay only for required courses listed on your program sheet. These approved courses must meet the minimum requirements for graduation established by Western.



POLICIES AND GUIDELINES: CONTINUED

Attendance

If you do not attend class, you are not entitled to benefits. If you stop attending a class, you must officially drop it and report the drop to the Department of Veterans Affairs Office. This is one of your responsibilities. Federal law requires that students report any changes in their enrollment status that might affect VA educational benefits to the school and the VA. Students who receive a grade of "F" for non-attendance may be charged with an overpayment by the VA. Failure to drop a class can result in overpayment of benefits.

Note: Although the Certifying Official monitors student attendance, it is imperative that you report any changes in your enrollment status to the Certifying Official IMMEDIATELY. When there is an overpayment, the VA will withhold future payments or ask for repayment of the overpaid benefits. Depending on the situation, they can take you to court, charge interest, withhold future tax refunds, attach wages, put a lien on property or deny home loans.

Instructions for Training or Pre- or Post-Deployment

If you are called up for training or active duty, it is your responsibility to contact the Certifying Official as well as one of the Veteran Affairs Coordinators on campus. The Veteran Affairs Coordinator is there to assist you with the necessary paperwork for a leave of absence, to correspond with your professors, to communicate with Housing & Residence Life staff if necessary and any additional non-academic support you require. Please note that this interaction should take place as soon as your orders are received to allow plenty of time for your departure. If you are unable to get to the Veteran Affairs Coordinator prior to your training or deployment, please see the Veteran Affairs Coordinator immediately upon your return.



WCSU VETERAN SUPPORT CONTACTS

Matthew T. Kuchta, VA Coordinator
Old Main 101, (203) 837-8840
kuchtaM@wcsu.edu

Veterans Affairs Office
Old Main 101, (203) 837-8003
vetinfo@wcsu.edu

State of Connecticut Military Department
National Guard
Higgins Hall 013, (203) 791-8270

Elisabeth Werling, AccessAbility Services
Higgins Annex 017, (203) 837-8225

Sharon Guck, Alcohol and Substance Abuse Program
Litchfield Hall 101, (203) 837-8899
gucks@wcsu.edu

Linda Donnelly, Counseling
Student Center 222, (203) 837-8690
donnellyl@wcsu.edu

Isabel Carvalho, Academic Advisement Center
Old Main 202, (203) 837-8411
carvalhoi@wcsu.edu

Nancy Haensch, Health Service
Litchfield Hall, (203) 837-8590
haenschn@wcsu.edu

Friar Brad Heckathorne, Campus Ministries
The Newman Center, (203) 744-5846
heckathorneb@wcsu.edu

Student Veteran Lounge
Midtown campus, Student Center 208

Student Affairs
Old Main 306, (203) 837-9700
Old Main 308, (203) 837-8600



DEPARTMENTS

The **Office of Veterans Affairs** provide support for veterans to ensure a smooth transition to civilian life, assisting with issues such as academic preparedness, health and wellness, socialization issues and administrative requirements. When necessary, we make appropriate referrals to student and academic services, including the Counseling Center, Academic Advisement Center, AccessAbility Services and Student Financial Services.

The Office of **Student Financial Services** (SFS) evaluates students for financial need and provides assistance, when possible, through grants and loans.

Admissions - After veterans are accepted to the university and upon presentation of the DD Form 214 and Report of Transfer or Discharge, they receive exemption from the university's exercise science requirement. The university may also accept college level credits earned through the United States Armed Forces Institute and for service schools completed, as recommended by the American Council on Education, providing credit is applicable to the individual's degree program. The university accepts results of the College Level Examination Program, administered at no charge to military personnel on active duty through Defense Activity for Non-Traditional Education Support.

The **Registrar's Office** is responsible for registration, add/drop, overrides, transcripts, address changes, verification of enrollment, grade changes, graduation and evaluation of military transcripts.

AccessAbility Services provides disability accommodations and support services, academic coaching, advocacy and registration assistance.

The **CHOICES** office provides confidential counseling and other services to those struggling with alcohol and other drug issues.

The **Counseling Center** provides a safe, confidential and supportive environment to discuss life concerns, challenges and opportunities. The Counseling Center's mission is to assist personal and educational development through therapy, consultation, educational outreach and, if needed, referral.

The **Academic Advisement Center** provides assistance with course selection, scheduling and assessments to aid in the choice or change of a major. When necessary, we interpret policies and procedures and refer students to resources.

The university's **Health Service** provides quality health care to all full-time students by appointment. The staff addresses primary and preventive care issues based on a wellness initiative.

The **Career Development Center** provides a wide variety of career-related services including career counseling, an extensive career information library, employment opportunities through on-campus recruiting, an online job posting system, co-op internships, career fair and other job search assistance including resume writing, interviewing skills and job search workshops.

The **Newman Center** offers Sunday and weekday masses for students, weekly holy hours and sacramental preparation for Catholics. We also have Bible Study and bi-weekly Newman dinners and opportunities for all students to engage in charitable works with the poor. One of our projects, Project Care Package, collects donations for troops overseas.



THE STUDENT VETERANS ORGANIZATION

The Student Veterans Organization (SVO) is a club established in 2009 to acknowledge the needs of Western's military servicemen and women who wish to better integrate into the university community. Officially recognized and endorsed by the Student Government Association, the SVO is comprised of students who wish to support and serve other students — at WCSU and abroad — in a number of ways.

For example, the SVO plans to host a number of benefit dinners and workshops and will sponsor a variety of fundraising activities in the coming year. These "Combat to College" events will assist Western's military servicemen and women from all branches of the military who are in the process of transitioning to civilian life and the college environment.

With the continued help and support of Western's dedicated faculty and staff and generous contributions made by members of the Danbury area, the SVO plans to continue expanding its support of veterans at Western and our troops around the world.

The SVO is located in the Student Center, Room 208, on the Midtown campus. The veterans room was dedicated for use by WCSU to honor and support our student veterans.

Services available at the VETS Center:

- Four semi-private work stations, equipped with computers
- TV lounge
- Snacks
- 24-hour access with WestConnect Card/Veteran ID Card

For more information on the SVO or for access to the veterans room, please call (203) 837-8003, Old Main 101 or email vetinfo@wcsu.edu.

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the VETS organization is to help veterans and members of the armed forces to assimilate into college. It provides outreach and resources and raises awareness about veterans and their rights. The organization also promotes camaraderie and provides information about the armed forces to the general student body. The VETS Center is open to all active duty, National Guard, Reserve and veteran students, current students of Western and their family members.



STEPS TO NAVIGATING THE TRANSITION FROM MILITARY TO COLLEGE

1. The Office of Veterans Affairs is located in Old Main, Room 101. We will assist you in beginning your process of admission through receiving your benefits.
2. Start with a few courses to ease into the transition. If possible, choose a mix of courses that utilize different skills and include varying amounts of reading and written assignments. (For example, math and English, science and music or sociology/psychology).
3. Taking notes during class and recording lectures will help to ensure that you stay on top of the material. If you find that you need assistance, the university's AccessAbility Services office is available to assist you.
4. Study. Find a quiet and comfortable location and take notes while reading (i.e. the Veterans Lounge or the library). This will help you to retain the information. Be sure to build in several short breaks, more if you find yourself easily distracted. Visit the Tutoring Resource Center for more tips on studying.
5. Take advantage of the university's resources such as the Tutoring Resource Center, the Math Clinic and the Writing Lab, the Counseling Center, the Veterans Affairs Office and one of your two Veteran Affairs Coordinators. If it's been several years since you were in school, seek out the many academic and counseling resources available.
6. Consider joining a student organization as a way to break down barriers between you and other students. In addition to joining the local student veteran's club, you might consider getting involved in other on-campus activities. Such involvement may help you to feel more connected to other students and the larger campus community.
7. Recognize that others may not agree with you or understand your service in the military. Agree to disagree – nearly everyone has an opinion about war and the military. Respectfully decline to answer any question that makes you feel uncomfortable.
8. Exercising will help reduce anxiety. The university has two fitness centers, one located on each of the universities campuses.
9. Learn to recognize signs of stress and seek help before you are overwhelmed. You can utilize the services on or off campus. The Danbury Vet Center offers a wide range of services free of charge.
10. Get plenty of rest and exercise and eat right – these habits will help keep you strong physically and mentally.

SELF-CARE CHECKLIST:

Adapted from Advice Pamphlet from the Raleigh NC Vet Center

- Ease back into course work. Don't take on too much too quickly
- Keeping good notes will help you focus
 - Consider getting a recording device
- Get involved in school activities in order to build relationships
- Talk with your Campus Veterans Benefits Advisor to make the most of your benefits
- Talk with peers and teachers but accept that they may not appreciate your perspective or understand your military experiences
- Take good care of yourself
 - Three meals a day
 - Plenty of sleep
 - Lots of exercise
- Decrease unhealthy behaviors
- Look beyond yourself and give back to your community (volunteer!)
- Seek spiritual fulfillment through prayer, meditation, fellowship
- Follow a daily schedule to stay organized
 - A PDS may be a big help, especially if you find yourself having concentration problems
- Set reasonable expectations and reasonable boundaries for yourself
- Learn to recognize the physical and emotional signs and symptoms of stress, their environmental triggers and the behaviors associated with your responses to them
- Develop the skills you need to break the cycle of stress
- It takes the strength of a warrior to ask for help:
 - Enroll in VA and use their services
 - Know about the National Suicide Hotline
1-800-273-8255 (1-800-TALK)
- Have fun!

IMPORTANT WEBSITES & PHONE NUMBERS

Apply for Benefits

www.vets.gov/education/apply

VA Regional Office Buffalo, NY Customer Support

Toll-free: (888) 442-4551

Fax: (716) 857-3192 or (716) 857-3296

Address: Department of Veterans Affairs

Regional Office

PO Box 4616

Buffalo, NY 14240-4616

State of Connecticut Military Department

National Guard

WCSU, Higgins Hall 013, (203) 791-8270

181 White Street, Danbury, CT

Military.com

images.military.com/registration/welcome/html

CT Dept of Labor

ctdol.state.ct.us/veterans/default.htm

Wave Automated Verify Enrollment (WAVE) for Ch 1606

Toll-free: (877) 823-2378

gibill.va.gov/wave/

(for verifying enrollment and status of benefits)

Veterans Affairs Medical Center

(800) 222-8387

Department of Veterans Affairs

va.gov

VA Educational Benefits

gibill.va.gov/benefits/index.html

Danbury Vet Center

(203) 790-4000

Student Veterans of America

studentveterans.org

CT Department of Veterans Affairs

(860) 616-3603/3609
ct.gov/ctva/site/default.asp

Federal Financial Aid

fafsa.ed.gov/

Testing and Certifications

dantes.doded.mil

How to Obtain Your DD-214

vetrecs.archives.gov
currentacadcal.asp

WCSU Academic Calendar

wcsu.edu/newsevents/

Military One Sourcemilitaryonesource.mil/MOS/

WCSU Tuition and Fees

wcsu.edu/registration/

MILITARY TRANSCRIPT WEBSITES

Joint Services Transcripts

Army / Coast Guard / Marines / Navy
jst.doded.mil

Air Force

au.af.mil/au/ccaf/transcripts.asp



181 White Street
Danbury, CT 06810
wcsu.edu/veterans