

2.03.01.04 Admission, Enrollment, and Readmission of Service Members



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Policy/Guideline Area

Academic Policies

Applicable Divisions

TCATs, Community Colleges

Purpose

To establish consistent policies and practices at Tennessee Board of Regents (TBR) institutions applicable to eligible service members, veterans, reservists, and others covered by the Post 9/11 GI Bill and the Department of Defense Tuition Assistance Program (collectively, “service members”) for the admission, enrollment, and readmission of those returning from periods of active service that are compliant with the requirements of federal law and Executive Order 13607.

Policy/Guideline

- I. Admission and Enrollment of Service Members
 - A. Service Members shall be admitted as students pursuant to the same standards and policies applicable to all other applicants for admission.
- II. Special Provisions and Services for Service Members Applying for Admission and Financial Aid Pursuant to the Post 9/11 GI Bill and the Department of Defense Tuition Assistance Programs
 - A. An institution may enact an institutional policy consistent with the requirements of this policy. Alternatively, an institution may operate under this system policy. An institutional policy, and/or any amendment thereof, shall be submitted to the Vice Chancellor for Student Success and the Office of General Counsel for review and approval prior to promulgation.

- B. Each institution shall designate a point of contact for academic and financial advising (including access to disability counseling) to assist service members with the successful completion of their studies and with their job searches.
- C. Service members, eligible for the Department of Defense Tuition Assistance Program (“TA”) must be directed to the appropriate Education Service Officer of the applicable branch of the armed forces to determine branch-specific eligibility criteria prior to enrollment in courses.
- D. The institution shall inform service members that they are responsible for the timely submission of requests for TA to the appropriate Education Service Officer prior to enrollment and that they will be responsible for payment of the costs of tuition and fees if they fail to receive TA approval prior to branch-specific TA deadlines.
- E. The institution shall provide prospective student service members who are eligible to receive Federal military and veterans educational benefits with a personalized and standardized form to help those prospective students understand the total cost of the educational program, including tuition and fees; the amount of that cost that will be covered by Federal educational benefits; the type and amount of financial aid they may qualify for; their estimated student loan debt upon graduation; information about student outcomes; and other information to facilitate comparison of aid packages offered by different educational institutions.
- F. The institution shall provide prospective student service members who are eligible to receive Federal military and veterans education benefits information about the availability of state financial aid and federal financial aid before arranging any private student loans or alternative financing programs.
- G. The institution shall provide refunds in accordance with the refund of unearned student aid rules applicable to Federal student aid provided through the

Department of Education under Title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965, as required under section 484B of that Act when students withdraw prior to course completion.

- H. The institution shall provide educational plans for all service members using Federal military and veterans education benefits that detail how they will fulfill all the requirements necessary to graduate and the expected timeline of completion. Such educational plans are permitted to be consistent with educational plans provided to other students.

III. Readmission of Service Members

- A. Institutions shall take the following actions relating to readmission of service members.
 - 1. Designate one or more offices that a service member may contact regarding notice of the need to suspend educational efforts and to request readmission.
 - 2. Accept any reasonable notice of intent to reenroll and not require that the notice of intent to return be provided in any particular form.
 - 3. Promptly readmit a service member who meets the requirements of this policy with the same academic status as when they last attended or were accepted for admission to the college prior to deployment for military service.
- B. Service members requirements:
 - 1. When possible, the service member, or an appropriate officer of the Department of Defense, must provide oral or written notice to the institution's designated office or contact that the reason for withdrawal from enrollment is due to receipt of orders or instructions to report for military service of at least 30 days. Notice must be provided as far in advance as reasonably possible and prior to withdrawal unless precluded

from doing so by the military, e.g. service i related to a classified mission, etc.

2. When notice cannot reasonably be provided prior to the date of withdrawal, the service member may submit an attestation of military service that necessitated the absence from school at the time of readmission.
 3. Pre-withdrawal notice does not have to indicate whether the service member, intends to return to the school and may not be subject to any rule of timeliness. Timeliness must only be determined by the facts in each case.
 4. The service member, must provide notice of intent to re-enroll, along with documentation that eligibility for admission has not been terminated for a dishonorable discharge or other disqualifying event, after an absence of no longer than 5 years and;
 - a. Within 3 years of completion of service or
 - b. Within 2 years of the completion of any convalescence for any injury or illness related to their service.
- C. For purposes of this policy prompt readmission is:
1. Re-enrollment in the next available class in the same or most similar program as that in which the service member was enrolled prior to withdrawal;
 2. With the same enrollment status (e.g., full-time), unless the service member requests or agrees to a different enrollment status;
 3. With the same academic status as before withdrawal;
 4. With the same academic progress as before withdrawal, unless the service member is admitted to a different program and the hours are not transferable; and

5. With the same number of credit or clock hours as had been completed before withdrawal.
- D. Exceptions to the prompt readmission requirement include:
1. When the service member fails to meet the requirements of section III above. In such circumstances however, the service member shall be permitted to be readmitted pursuant to the same policies or requirements as all regular students.
 2. When the institution reasonably determines that the service member is not prepared to return to their program of study at the status, rank, and/or level of academic progress previously achieved or is unable to complete the program, provided the institution has made reasonable efforts, at no extra cost to the student, to prepare the student to re-enroll. The institution shall bear the burden of proof in establishing that the service member is not prepared to resume their course of study at the level obtained prior to withdrawal.
 3. When the service member requests to enroll in a different program, or
 4. When the service member requests to re-enter their program of study at the beginning, or at any earlier point, of the program of study.
- E. Tuition Upon Readmission
1. The tuition and fees charged the service member for the first academic year upon readmission shall be:
 - a. The same as that charged at the time of withdrawal;
 - b. Up to the limit of available TA benefits if not greater than that charged to other students; or
 - c. If starting in a new program, the same tuition and fees charged to other students in that program.

2. For subsequent academic years or for a different program, the tuition and fees shall not be more than the standard charges for other students.
- IV. The provisions of federal law requiring or otherwise relating to this policy shall supersede any state laws to the contrary.

Sources

Authority

Executive Order 13607; Post-9/11 GI Bill; Department of Defense Tuition Assistance Program

History

TBR Board Meeting, June 16, 2023.