

Collegiate Purple Star of Indiana

PART TWO: AWARD CRITERIA

Category One: Core Requirements

These prerequisites establish a foundation of support and play a crucial role in providing service to military-affiliated students. An institution must be able to successfully demonstrate these expectations have been achieved before the full CPSI award application evaluation will begin.

Standard 1.1

The educational institution has a liaison for military-affiliated students to provide general assistance.

- **Guidance:** (at least one of the following)
 - o A permanent Office for Military-Affiliated Individuals (Military Student Success Center, Veterans office, etc.) or similar, within a brick-and-mortar (physical) building and/or a virtual location (interactive, beyond a website).

And/or

- o At least one (1) designated employee (beyond the Veteran's Affairs/School Certifying Official (SCO) or similar financial aid employee) whose job description includes, but not limited to, being the general (on-campus and/or virtual) military-affiliated student contact person.
- **Purpose:** Helps to ensure additional support on campus for the unique circumstances of military-affiliated students and to increase advocacy for the necessary tools and resources to ensure a quality educational experience.
- **Classification:** Customer Service
- **Implementation Examples:**
 - o Publicize the office and/or employee on the institution's website, student newspaper, or similar.
 - o Post about the office and/or employee in the Military Success Center, Admissions Office, Advising Center, etc.
- **Documentation Examples:** Proof of a military center (photo, advertisement, or event program with center address, proof of funding for center, etc.) and/or job description or job title of the employee assigned as a contact person, institution directory, or similar.

Standard 1.2

The educational institution's admission application asks if the applicant is currently serving or has ever served in the United States Armed Forces.

- **Guidance:**
 - o Refer to the definition of a military-affiliated individual.
 - o The application wording is general or generic and not specifically focused on "Veteran status."
- **Purpose:** It is necessary that each applicant with a military service background be identified as military-affiliated, so they are properly coded and receive the appropriate support and resources. Many recently discharged military individuals do not consider themselves as a veteran so the language used to describe their involvement with the military is key. Ultimately, it will ensure that the military-associated population is not underrepresented in the institution's data collection efforts.
- **Classification:** Operations
- **Implementation Examples:**
 - o Include on the admission application the question "Are you serving, or have you served in the United States Armed Forces?"
- **Documentation Examples:** Institution admissions application, link to an admissions application, a screenshot of the page that includes the military question, etc.

Standard 1.3

The educational institution has established a credit for prior learning (CPL) policy that is inclusive of validating military training and experiential learning that crosswalks to academic course credit within a student's degree program.

- **Guidance:**
 - o Awarding CPL credit policy meets the standards of the American Council on Education (ACE)⁵ (e.g., [Military Guide](#)).
 - o U.S. military transcripts include:
 - » Joint Services Transcript (JST) which represents training from the Army, Navy, Coast Guard, and Marine Corps
 - » Community College of the Air Force (CCAF), a degree-granting institution that serves the Air Force and Space Force
 - o Institution awards academic credit for receiving a score of fifty (50) or higher on the College Level Examination Program (CLEP), or a passing score on the Defense Subject Standardized Test (DSST) also known as DANTES, or the Excelsior College Examination.⁵
 - o Clearly communicating the policy by "publishing on the institution's website"⁵ and/or on the military website page.
- **Purpose:** Many adult learners come to higher education with years of life and workplace learning. Military service members typically have many opportunities to acquire diverse experiences. [Indiana Code 21-42-72-2](#) establishes requirements associated with credit for military service courses for military-affiliated individuals; it mandates that higher learning institutions grant educational credit for prior military training and education within their chosen degree path. CPL is the method used to award individuals for the college-level skills and knowledge gained outside of a traditional academic setting.
- **Classification:** Management
- **Implementation Examples:**
 - o Adopt and implement the practices outlined in the [Indiana Model Credit for Prior Learning Policy Guidance \(2024\)](#).
- **Documentation Examples:** Provide approved institution policy and communication methods (institution's website or link to webpage, etc.).

Standard 1.4

The educational institution has approved a definition that describes who is considered a military-affiliated student attending the institution.

- **Guidance:**
 - o A single institution-wide written definition approved by the administration.
- **Purpose:** An institution-wide military-affiliated student definition provides a foundation on which the institution can effectively communicate. It assists in properly categorizing the individual, so they are assigned the most appropriate staff to advocate for them and ensure that the necessary resources are allocated. In addition, it allows the institution to accurately report the number and type of military-affiliated students in order to best tell the institution's story.
- **Classification:** Management
- **Implementation Examples:**
 - o Include the definition in the institution's admissions documents, website, or similar.
 - o Use the Collegiate Purple Star Award Field Guide definition to assist the institution in the development of a definition.
- **Documentation Examples:** Provide approved institution-wide definition that is contained within an institution document or link to a webpage.



Standard 1.5

The educational institution has a data-gathering system or systems in place to track the overall metrics of a military-affiliated student's postsecondary pathway.

- **Guidance:**
 - o The institution is not required to have a single system of data entry.
 - o The student journey is tracked from application, enrollment, to graduation, or withdrawal.
 - o Output and outcome data are distinguished by type:
 - » military status (active-duty military, reserve, National Guard, veteran)
 - » student status (full-time/part-time, undergraduate/graduate, GPA)
- **Purpose:** To serve military-affiliated students more effectively, it is necessary to track their progress from the beginning to the end of their time at the institution. This allows the institution to gather relevant information and identify trends that will best serve this population.
- **Classification:** Operations
- **Implementation Examples:**
 - o Track GI Bill® users.
 - o Track CPL credit awarded.
- **Documentation Examples:** Sample military-affiliated data report, or similar.



Standard 1.6

The educational institution has publicly issued a formal statement of its support for military-affiliated students.

- **Guidance:**
 - o A fully executed (signed and dated) original statement is authored by the University President and/or Board of Trustees (or equivalent).
 - o Resolution is available to the institution community.
- **Purpose:** This resolution is the institution's official welcome to military-affiliated individuals. This public support displays a commitment to military-affiliated individuals and recognizes they are an asset to the institution.
- **Classification:** Management
- **Implementation Examples:**
 - o Publicize the resolution on the institution's website, student newspaper, or similar.
 - o Post the resolution in the Military Success Center.
- **Documentation Examples:** Adopted formal resolution (signed and dated), Board of Trustee meeting minutes, or similar and how/where the resolution is made available.



Standard 1.7

The educational institution hosts at least one (1) annual military recognition event during the academic year.

- **Guidance:**
 - o Event may include the physical and/or virtual campus.
 - o The focus of the event is on showing support of the military.
- **Purpose:** Demonstrates intention of providing a militarily supportive culture at the institution.
- **Classification:** Event
- **Implementation Examples:**
 - o Organize a Veterans Day program or activity, military appreciation night at a sporting event, a salute to service live virtual event, or similar.
 - o Refer to Appendix, Military-Connected Holidays.
- **Documentation Examples:** Advertisement of event(s), event program, screenshot of virtual attendees, impact data report (number attendees, guest speakers, etc.).

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Category Two: Marketing and Communication Strategies

Effective marketing and communication strategies can support enrollment, retention, and completion of military-affiliated individuals, many of whom have access to guaranteed federal and state funding.

Standard 2.1

The educational institution's website has a dedicated page for military-affiliated individuals.

- **Guidance:**
 - o Focuses specifically on the military-affiliated individuals, students, and their resources.
 - o Contains current information and is regularly updated.
- **Purpose:** Access to and awareness of relevant information for military-affiliated individuals is necessary for their success. A dedicated resource page or link centralizing key information provides a specific space for military-affiliated individuals to be aware of the resources and services available to them. Limiting the number of page clicks to reach relevant information can speak volumes to the institution's emphasis on supporting military-affiliated students. By having information streamlined for the military-affiliated student, the institution is signaling the importance of having the student enroll and feel valued.
- **Classification:** Advertising
- **Implementation Examples:**
 - o Include military-affiliated student resolution.
 - o Include available state and Federal financial grants, supplemental grants, and benefits.
 - o Include policies specific to military-affiliated students (military credit transfer, discounts, housing, military absence, registration, etc.).
 - o Include available resources and services specific to military-affiliated students.
 - o Include trademarked GI Bill® phrase, if applicable.
 - o Include scheduled military-affiliated events and activities.
- **Documentation Examples:** Link to the dedicated web page for military-affiliated individuals.

Standard 2.2

The educational institution promotes financial assistance opportunities that are only available to military-affiliated individuals.

- **Guidance:**
 - o Includes State of Indiana (e.g., National Guard Supplemental Grant (NGSG), National Guard Scholarship Extension Program (NGES), Tuition and Fee Exemption for Indiana Purple Heart Recipients, and Federal (GI Bill®, tuition assistance, etc.) grants, supplemental grants, scholarships, tuition assistance, and benefits.
 - o Display trademarked GI Bill® phrase on electronic and print marketing materials- GI Bill® Institutions Only
- **Purpose:** GI Bill® campuses have a duty to promote and share the resources necessary to ensure proper completion of paperwork. In addition, Indiana Code has several tuition exemptions for the National Guard Tuition Supplement Grant ([IC-21-13-4-1](#)) and the National Guard Scholarship Extension Program ([IC-21-13-5](#)). These various resources that are available to military-affiliated students, if properly communicated, may assist them in attending the institution.
- **Classification:** Advertising
- **Implementation Examples:**
 - o Use phrases such as “administer VA educational benefits.”
 - o Publicize on the institution’s website, other electronic media, or similar that promote these opportunities.
 - o Develop marketing and recruitment print materials (e.g., brochure, flyer, recruitment packet, white sheets, or similar) that promote these opportunities.
- **Documentation Examples:** Link to webpage, marketing, and recruitment materials (brochure, white sheets, or similar), etc.

Standard 2.3

The educational institution provides, at least monthly, military-affiliated student-focused communication.

- **Guidance:** (at least one of the following)
 - o In-person or virtual meeting.
- And/or**
 - o Electronic and/or print material.
- **Purpose:** Communication is essential for sharing information of specific importance to the military-affiliated students and/or military community at the institution to create a culture of connectedness and involvement on campus.
- **Classification:** Customer Service
- **Implementation Examples:**
 - o Publish a military student newsletter or similar.
 - o Host webinars or virtual forums.
 - o Utilize social media blasts (TikTok, Twitter, Facebook, or similar).
- **Documentation Examples:** Provide samples of communications and timelines.

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Category Three: Admissions and Enrollment

Ensures the institution's ability to generate consistent and stable funding by re-evaluating current policies and breaking down barriers that hinder or prevent military-affiliated individuals from enrolling.

Standard 3.1

The educational institution has approved a policy to waive the admissions application fee(s) for eligible military-affiliated students.

- **Guidance:**
 - o Not applicable to those institutions that do not charge an application fee.
- **Purpose:** Removing barriers for military-affiliated individuals encourages their educational attainment. This philosophy is in alignment with [Indiana Code 21-14-12.2-3](#) that discharged veterans or Indiana National Guard members pay the residential (in-state) tuition rate which may be less expensive than a traditional student in similar circumstances. Waiving admission application fee(s) demonstrates this mindset while creating value for the potential student. This is also a gateway policy because it is the first one communicated to prospective students. If it is not available, it may stop a military-affiliated individual from applying or be a red flag that other support systems may not be in place at the institution.
- **Classification:** Management
- **Implementation Examples:**
 - o Include the approved policy in the institution's admissions documents, website, or similar.
- **Documentation Examples:** Provide an approved policy that is contained within an institution document or link to a webpage.

Standard 3.2

The educational institution has approved a priority admission policy for eligible military-affiliated individuals.

- **Guidance:**
 - o Not applicable to those institutions that have open enrollment.
 - o Military status is a consideration in the evaluation and acceptance process to become a student at the institution.
- **Purpose:** Military-affiliated students typically excel in postsecondary education because they bring experience to the classroom which allows them to earn higher grades and they have access to funding to support their educational journey. To increase enrollment of military-affiliated students at the institution, military status should be a factor in being accepted as a student at the institution. This policy removes barriers for military-affiliated individuals and encourages their educational attainment.
- **Classification:** Management
- **Implementation Examples:**
 - o Include the policy in the institution's admissions documents, website, or similar.
- **Documentation Examples:** Provide an approved policy that is contained within an institution document or link to a webpage.

Standard 3.3

The educational institution has approved an excused military absence leave policy for military-affiliated students.

- **Guidance:**
 - o Policy includes, at least:
 - » Short-term duty leave (training, other military orders, or similar).
 - » Long-term duty leave (deployment, or similar).
 - » No financial, academic, or enrollment penalties when leaving or upon return from duty.
- **Purpose:** To be inclusive of the needs of various students, institutions must recognize that in some circumstances, an excused absence from class is unavoidable or is necessary to fulfill a required obligation. A current military service student inevitably comes with military obligations that will, at some point, conflict with the student's academic schedule such as being called for duty. A military leave policy is a way of setting a military-affiliated student up for academic success while also communicating to potential military students the lengths the institution goes to support them.
- **Classification:** Management
- **Implementation Examples:**
 - o Include the policy in the institution's academic catalog, enrollment, financial aid documents, website, or similar.
- **Documentation Examples:** Provide an approved policy that is contained within an institution document or link to a webpage.

Standard 3.4

The educational institution has approved a priority enrollment/course registration policy for military-affiliated students.

- **Guidance:**
 - o Include military-affiliated students among those who are the first in line to register for available courses that are required for their degree track.
 - o Allow the policy to be applicable throughout the student's academic career – initially, after being enrolled, and following the completion of any term.
- **Purpose:** Most military-affiliated students have a limited amount of time (approximately 36 months) to use their federal educational benefits. Depending on the declared major, some classes may be only offered on specific days or specific years. Priority course registration helps ensure that a military-affiliated student can secure class placement, so they are able to complete their educational plans in a timely manner (i.e., before their educational benefits run out) or manage dual responsibilities as students and members of the military.
- **Classification:** Management
- **Implementation Examples:**
 - o Include the policy in the institution's academic catalog, enrollment, financial aid documents, website, or similar.
- **Documentation Examples:** Provide an approved policy that is contained within an institution document or link to a webpage.

Standard 3.5

The educational institution clearly communicates its procedures for how military credits are applied toward degree completion.

- **Guidance:**
 - o Clear communication is achieved by publishing in the institution's course catalog, bulletin, and/or on the military website page.
- **Purpose:** "Understanding the uniqueness and pervasiveness of the military transcript and addressing both with an appropriate institutional policy [Standard 1.5] and set of procedures [Standard 3.5] is essential for higher education leaders"² in their ability to implement CPL. These guidelines demonstrate a commitment to military-affiliated individuals by consistently validating and maximizing military credit recommendations to assist them in achieving a degree before maxing out on GI Bill® funding.
- **Classification:** Customer Service
- **Implementation Examples:**
 - o Utilize the American Council on Education (ACE) Military Guide or equivalent.
 - o Develop M-CPL to institutional credit correlation (Crosswalk) chart or process map, based upon the institution-offered courses as a visual representation of the policy.
 - o Utilize the Department of Veterans Affairs School Certifying Official (SCO) Handbook which provides guidance to the military transcript process.
- **Documentation Examples:** Written process or guidelines for validating M-CPL, use of ACE guidance or similar, and communication methods.

Standard 3.6

The educational institution communicates information specific to the military-affiliated student during an orientation.

- **Guidance:** (at least the first two and one of the remaining)
 - o For all incoming and transfer military-affiliated students.
 - o In-person or virtually.

And

- o Specialized orientation for military-affiliated students.

And/or

- o Delivering military-affiliated student information as a component of a general orientation or attending a first-year transition course.
- **Purpose:** Orientation is the institution's opportunity to acclimate and transition the new military-affiliated student and showcase life on campus. It also informs them of the available resources and support, so they are successful within the learning environment. For military-affiliated students, it is particularly necessary that they understand how their benefits work so they meet their financial obligations in a timely fashion.
- **Classification:** Training
- **Implementation Examples:**
 - o Discuss military-affiliated student policies established by the institution.
 - o Provide specific military-affiliated resources (points of contact, military success center location, etc.) available or where they are accessible (handbook, website, etc.).
- **Documentation Examples:** Orientation agenda or orientation materials (PowerPoint, presenter notes, handouts, link to orientation materials, etc.) related to military-affiliated students.

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Category Four: Financial Support

Military-affiliated students, like most students, need to think about where they will go to college, what resources are available to assist in paying for it, and how they will manage their finances during the time they are in school. The ability to provide support that will reduce some of the financial burdens such as tuition and housing helps military-affiliated students excel academically and emotionally.

Standard 4.1

The educational institution has a policy that automatically permits any military-affiliated student to receive the residential (in-state) tuition rate.

- **Guidance:**
 - o Not applicable to institutions that implement a standard or flat tuition rate for all students.
 - o Policy removes any institutional obstacles (mandatory appeal, or similar) that will impede receiving the deduction.
- **Purpose:** This is in alignment with [Indiana Code 21-14-9](#) which provides resident tuition for active-duty military personnel and Indiana National Guard stationed in Indiana. Furthermore, [Indiana Code 21-14-12.3](#) establishes resident tuition for qualified veterans of the U.S. Armed Forces or Indiana National Guard, and [Indiana Code 21-14-14](#) for resident tuition for nonresident veterans who reside in states that border Indiana who served in the U.S. Armed Forces or Indiana National Guard.
- **Classification:** Management
- **Implementation Examples:**
 - o Include the policy in the institution's admissions documents, website, or similar.
- **Documentation Examples:** Provide an approved policy that is contained within an institution document or link to a webpage.

Standard 4.2

The educational institution is approved to administer GI Bill® benefits by the Indiana Department of Veterans Affairs (IDVA).

- **Guidance:**
 - o IDVA is the State Approving Agency (SAA) in Indiana for the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
- **Purpose:** The GI Bill® is a valuable tool that helps military veterans pay for their education expenses. It also provides an approved institution with the opportunity to promote/advertise itself in this regard and tap into a different demographic of students. Overall, this can be leveraged to increase institution enrollment of eligible students whose educational expenses are guaranteed by the federal government.
- **Classification:** Customer Service
- **Implementation Examples:**
 - o Contact IDVA if the institution is interested in applying for GI Bill® benefits provider status or available resources when implementing the program. It typically takes at least four months to have an application approved.

- **Documentation Examples:** IDVA will confirm applicants' GI Bill® provider status or CHE will determine through the [Veterans Affairs GI Bill® Comparison Tool](#).

Standard 4.3

The educational institution has a tuition and fee policy that matches Department of Defense (DoD) Tuition Assistance rates.

- **Guidance:**
 - o Tuition will not exceed DoD-approved Tuition Assistance, per credit, approval rates for at least active-duty military using tuition assistance.
- **Purpose:** Removes financial barriers for students who would only be eligible for Federal Tuition Assistance and encourages their educational attainment. Utilizing the established rates reduces the chance that a military-affiliated student will seek out an institution where the tuition rates are less expensive.
- **Classification:** Management
- **Implementation Examples:**
 - o Include the policy in the institution's admissions and financial aid documents, website, or similar.
- **Documentation Examples:** Provide an approved policy that is contained within an institution document or link to a webpage.

Standard 4.4

The educational institution has a tuition discount policy for military-affiliated students regardless of eligibility for VA education benefits.

- **Guidance:** (one of the following)
 - o Institution provides a reduced rate (e.g., percentage discount), military tuition rate that is less than the standard flat rate, or similar.

Or

- o Institution supplements tuition for military-affiliated students (e.g., military scholarship).
- **Purpose:** A military discount policy demonstrates the value placed on military-affiliated students at the institution and encourages their enrollment. It also removes the financial barrier for those students who may not have Post-9/11, 100% eligibility and are responsible for a portion, or all, of their tuition.
- **Classification:** Management
- **Implementation Examples:**
 - o In line with other institution discount rates, if applicable.
 - o Include in institutions admissions and financial aid documents, website, or similar.

- **Documentation Examples:** Provide an approved policy or pricing guide that is contained within an institution document or link to a webpage.

Standard 4.5

The educational institution has a delayed payment policy for military-affiliated students using service-connected education benefits.

- **Guidance:**
 - o Includes GI Bill® and any other military benefits that affect enrollment status (e.g., Federal Tuition Assistance, Indiana National Guard Supplemental Grant, Indiana Veterans Benefits).
 - o Also referred to as a payment grace period or late fee policy.
- **Purpose:** Many military educational benefits are tied to federal and/or state funding timelines and are thus outside of the individual student's control. Applying a course registration "hold" or similar by the institution because it has not received funding creates a disadvantage to the military-affiliated student and may affect them being placed in a required class. However, such a policy would allow students who may receive a monthly stipend from the VA to pay their tuition the ability to pay in monthly payments rather than paying all tuition upfront at the beginning of the semester or academic year.
- **Classification:** Management
- **Implementation Examples:**
 - o Establish a military-affiliated student payment plan.
 - o Develop a military-affiliated registration policy to allow for outstanding tuition balances.
 - o Remove registration holds.
 - o Develop a military-affiliated credit policy applied toward books and other expenses.
 - o Develop institution Emergency Fund for books and other expenses.
 - o Include in institutions admissions documents, website, or similar.
- **Documentation Examples:** Provide approved policy(ies) contained within an institution document or link to a webpage.

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Category Five: Institutional Support Systems

Retention is a fundamental element of a higher education institution's ability to achieve its mission by ensuring that every student stays motivated and supported throughout their educational journey. Faculty and staff are encouraged to recognize the needs of this unique student population by educating themselves, actively communicating, and removing barriers.

Standard 5.1

The educational institution routinely solicits specific feedback from all its military-affiliated student population and analyzes the results.

- **Guidance:**
 - o Provide the opportunity for every military-affiliated student to offer feedback.
 - » Surveys can be completed anonymously.
 - » A suggestion box is not the only method of soliciting feedback.
 - o Conducted and analyzed at least one (1) time during the three (3) year CPSI period.
 - » **Not applicable for academic year 2024-2025 (fiscal year 2025).**
- **Purpose:** Engaging military-affiliated students is essential because it gathers relevant information related to their personal experiences and provides them with a voice by which to influence change. When collected and analyzed as a whole, the data ensure the overall implementation and support strategies are successful and can identify new needs, challenges, and opportunities.
- **Classification:** Operations
- **Implementation Examples:**
 - o Utilize surveys (paper or electronic).
 - o Utilize focus groups or town halls.
- **Documentation Examples:** Blank survey instrument and dated analysis of the survey data (written summary or charts/graphs/spreadsheets, or similar) or meeting minutes where the information was discussed. Providing raw survey data is not required as it may contain sensitive information.

Standard 5.2

The educational institution has established a standing cross-functional student success committee, workgroup, or task force that routinely discusses military-affiliated student issues.

- **Guidance:**
 - o May be a group that is dedicated to military-affiliated student issues or discussions that occur as part of an existing group.
- **Purpose:** This team approach is an excellent platform to gather timely input and garner support for emerging issues. Regularly discussing the unique issues of military-affiliated students allows the institution to develop strategies necessary for removing any barriers to their education.
- **Classification:** Customer Service

- **Implementation Examples:**
 - o Conduct regularly held meetings of the committee, workgroup, or task force.
- **Documentation Examples:** Meeting minutes/ notes (no agendas), etc. for each year it's functioning.

Standard 5.3

The educational institution annually conducts professional development training(s) for administrators, faculty, and staff to enhance their knowledge of the military-affiliated student condition.

- **Guidance:**
 - o The trainings are focused on military culture, military student value to the institution, institution resources, military-affiliated students in the classroom, or similar.
 - o Available trainings may be conducted in-house (in-person meetings, internal website, read and understand (newsletters, articles, etc.), virtual (national organization webinar), external trainings (community-based presentations, certification, or conferences), etc.
- **Purpose:** Ensuring that training is appropriately provided to faculty and staff, facilitates accomplishing a key aspect of the institution's commitment to military-affiliated student success. It provides the education necessary to better understand the diversity of this student group and the training to work effectively with them. With the proper understanding, faculty are better equipped to connect with students and every "small effort from their teachers can signal to [military-affiliated] students that they're safe in their classrooms."⁶
- **Classification:** Training
- **Implementation Examples:**
 - o Review institution-approved policies and available resources to support military-affiliated students.
 - o Train appropriate faculty on how to effectively grant credit for prior military training.
 - o Discuss the benefits of military-affiliated students for the institution and their impact on the learning environment.
 - o Provide information incorporating military-specific disability or health issues that may be encountered in the learning environment.
 - o Train about transitioning from military life to college environment (e.g., Green Zone or similar).
- o Review how to provide reasonable accommodations when interacting with students who wish to keep their previous military associations confidential.
- o Facilitate a military-affiliated student panel that covers the military experience and challenges of transitioning to civilian life.
- o Provide military cultural awareness training (e.g., Psych/Armor Institute, Veterans on Campus for Faculty and Staff, or similar).
- o Provide human resource-specific training (e.g., SHRM Veteran Ambassador, or similar).
- o Have membership in an organization designed to provide educational information to institution employees on how to best serve the needs of individuals who have had a military career (e.g., Council of College and Military Educators, or similar).
- **Documentation Examples:** Annual training days/agendas, presentations, attendees list, etc. or link to a faculty/staff webpage with training materials.

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Category Six: Student Support Services

Many military-affiliated students struggle with not being able to find the appropriate resources and support services to enable them to maximize their time at the institution. Student support services facilitate stronger student performance, contribute to overall student success, and increase the chances of degree completion.

Standard 6.1

The educational institution offers military-affiliated peer support initiative(s) to assist in navigating through higher education.

- **Guidance:**
 - o Formal (individual or group session) or voluntary group for new students.
 - o In-person or virtual
 - o Provide support leader with the appropriate resources to conduct meetings.
- **Purpose:** A commitment to a peer support system can increase retention among military-affiliated students by creating a sense of belonging. It is part of an institution's dedication to enriching the whole student, mentally, emotionally, and academically.
- **Classification:** Customer Service
- **Implementation Examples:**
 - o Offer a military-affiliated peer mentoring program or cohort.
 - o Schedule touch-base meetings.
 - o Establish a mentor/group leader training program.
- **Documentation Examples:** Support group listed hours, meeting date/agenda, or similar and describe the resources available to the support leader.

Standard 6.2

The educational institution has established a military-affiliated support system to assist in navigating through higher education.

- **Guidance:** (one of the following)
 - o Institution-wide military information system (e.g., hub or network) or similar for military-related matters.
- Or**
 - o Responsibilities rest within multiple staff's administrative work assignments/duties (e.g., success team or points of contact/specialist) or similar.
 - » This is beyond the general point of contact staff member established in Standard 1.1.
- **Purpose:** An institution of higher learning is a complex organization whose business is education. Like any business, customer service is a key element to success. It requires many different modes of engagement with various ways to access relevant information to serve its military-affiliated customers. A strong military support system streamlines the process so military-affiliated students can successfully navigate the institution and therefore feel more connected to it.
- **Classification:** Customer Service

- **Implementation Examples:** Key functional areas could include, but not be limited to, the following roles or responsibilities:
 - o Admissions/outreach counseling (e.g., Military Admissions Office or similar).
 - o Veterans' administration and military educational benefits.
 - o Mental health or counseling professional (preference being a veteran or familiarity with the military).
 - o Military Academic Advisor (advocate on behalf of the military-affiliated student, as needed).
 - o Success Coach/mentoring.
 - o Career Coach/counselor.
 - o Military Program Manager (MPM) who addresses challenges in military duty assignments (e.g., deployment, training, or other required military orders).
- **Documentation Examples:** Link or contact information to the hub/network and/or list of various assigned staff member placements within the institution to assist military-affiliated students.

Standard 6.3

The educational institution offers course tutorial instruction at special rates for military-affiliated students.

- **Guidance:**
 - o Not applicable if free tutoring sessions or roundtables are available at the institution for all students.
 - o Discounted amounts for one-on-one, group sessions, and/or workshops.
- **Purpose:** Engaged students are more likely to achieve academic success. Tutorial sessions are a positive way for a postsecondary education institution to support military-affiliated students and assist in meeting their educational needs.
- **Classification:** Operations
- **Implementation Examples:**
 - o Offer study skill training.
 - o Offer tutoring/academic success coach.
 - o Offer study tables.
 - o Provide available computer to access Military. Tutor.com
- **Documentation Examples:** Provide approved discount fee policy that is contained within an institution document, tutoring schedule, service fees, academic services offered, etc.

Standard 6.4

The educational institution has available a dedicated computer with a military Common Access Card (CAC) reader and Department of Defense (DoD) licensed software.

- **Guidance:**
 - o Not applicable to online-only institutions.
 - o Must include maintenance with ongoing updates of licensed DoD software.
- **Purpose:** Federal Tuition Assistance, a benefit available to current service members who are also students, can generate hundreds of thousands of dollars in tuition funds for an institution. A common issue with accessing this educational benefit is that the service member must use a CAC card and computer software to reach the website to apply for the funds. The CAC reader meets or exceeds applicable privacy laws. It provides the ability to military-affiliated students to electronically access DoD's computer network, their military email accounts (which may be connected to their federal tuition aid), and other military systems, devices, and accounts that will aid in their academic status (Federal Tuition Assistance, JST, etc.). Institutions that commit a computer to the military-affiliated student population maximize their opportunity to obtain any necessary documents while providing valuable customer service.
- **Classification:** Customer Service
- **Implementation Examples:**
 - o Locate within a computer lab, library, military success center, etc.
- **Documentation Examples:** Photo of device attached to a dedicated computer, software licensing agreement, or similar, and screenshot of most recent software update.

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PART TWO: AWARD CRITERIA

Category Seven: Student Engagement

Learners are more emotionally engaged when they feel good about college, find value in their career pursuits, and identify with the school culture. There are various but meaningful ways, an institution can connect to an active student or alumni to promote a feeling of belonging.

Standard 7.1

The educational institution has established a designated social gathering space for military-affiliated students.

- **Guidance:** (Both)
 - o Physical and/or virtual gathering space.
- **In addition**
 - o Actively promote/publicize the location of this space, hours, etc.
- **Purpose:** A designated social gathering space is a great place for military-affiliated students to relax among fellow students who have similar experiences, encouraging peer support, community, and networking.
- **Classification:** Customer Service
- **Implementation Examples:**
 - o Located in a military/veterans student success center or similar.
 - o Located in a military/ veterans lounge or similar.
 - o Establish military-affiliated student hours inside an existing student gathering place (e.g., student union).
 - o Utilize funding from the Federal VA money provided to institutions each time military-affiliated students are certified.
- **Documentation Examples:** Proof of a military center (photo, etc.), link to virtual meeting webpage, list of sponsored events/activities, or similar, and advertisement of location.

Standard 7.2

The educational institution has an active sanctioned organization for military-affiliated students.

- **Guidance:**
 - o On-campus or virtual.
 - o A sanctioned student organization may be unique to the institution campus (internal), offered as a system-wide organization to regional campuses (internal associated), or in partnership with an external entity for one or more institutions.
- **Purpose:** Provides a sense of belonging and encourages peer-to-peer support and interaction. Military-affiliated students may isolate themselves. A structured organization provides an opportunity to connect with other service members in a safe environment. This is of particular importance when the institution is not in close proximity to a military installation or other military service organization post.
- **Classification:** Customer Service

- **Implementation Examples:**
 - o Establish Student Veterans of America chapter.
 - o Establish a college club.
 - o Establish a virtual club in partnership with other institutions in the state.
- **Documentation Examples:** Institution approval letter, organization charter or constitution, or similar. Partnerships provide proof of relationship (e.g., MOA, MOU, or similar) and active participation in the organization.

Standard 7.3

The educational institution has a designated military-affiliated student representative seat on the student governing body, such as a government association board, Student Senate, or College Council.

- **Guidance:**
 - o Not applicable if the institution does not have a student government association board or equivalent.
- **Purpose:** The military-affiliated student seat on the student governing body represents the interests and concerns of the military community within the institution by being their voice. It is an opportunity to promote future-state conversations centered on military-affiliated students' necessities, so they can thrive in the classroom.
- **Classification:** Management
- **Implementation Examples:**
 - o Create a selection process for military-affiliated student representatives and a student government meeting schedule.
- **Documentation Examples:** Student government membership list with sector of representation, institution campus newspaper article highlighting student representatives, or link to a webpage.

Standard 7.4

The educational institution has visible recognition for the presence and contributions of those with military service.

- **Guidance:**
 - o Permanent space dedicated to recognizing the military or military service of students.
 - » Physical space or online.
 - o Accessible to the full student body.
 - » Visible recognition is not considered a military-specific office space (i.e., Military Success Center, ROTC office, or similar).

- **Purpose:** Visible military recognition firmly establishes the institution's commitment to military-affiliated students, past, present, and future, by recognizing their contributions and even sacrifices. It is a small way of thanking and honoring military-affiliated students for their patriotism. It supports the institution's culture of acceptance for everyone.
- **Classification:** Event
- **Implementation Examples:**
 - o Monument.
 - o Memorial.
 - o Wall of Honor.
 - o Connected to another institution space (student center, gallery, etc.).
- **Documentation Examples:** Photo of designated area or link to a webpage

Standard 7.5

The educational institution has established an alumni association subgroup dedicated to military-affiliated graduates.

- **Guidance:**
 - o Not applicable if the educational institution does not have an alumni association.
 - o On-campus or virtual alumni association sanctioned subgroup.
- **Purpose:** Military alumni donate funds for capital campaigns, endowments, scholarships, programs, services, emergency funds, and special projects that will improve the current military-affiliated students' college experience or ease any financial pressures that might delay them from earning a degree. Alumni are also able to speak to the experiences of military-affiliated students from a mature perspective and advocate through the collective voice as an alumni association subgroup.
- **Classification:** Customer Service
- **Implementation Examples:**
 - o Utilize social media or similar (LinkedIn, Facebook, etc.).
 - o Host regional social gatherings.
 - o Establish subcommittee of the alumni association.
- **Documentation Examples:** Alumni association committee chart, military-alumni webpage, or similar.

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PART TWO: AWARD CRITERIA

Category Eight: Career and Community Engagement Opportunities

To holistically support military-affiliated individuals, an institution must go beyond a student attending class. On one side it includes capitalizing on work-based learning opportunities where a student is able to utilize their academic knowledge and apply it in a work environment. On the other side, it is about developing the skills and communication strategies necessary to obtain employment through effective career coaching. Each experience builds confidence so the military-affiliated student can successfully take the next step in their career journey.

Standard 8.1

The educational institution has established academic opportunities that connect and engage students with external military-focused organizations.

- **Guidance:**
 - o Course graded assignments/projects, work study program(s), and internships, etc.
 - o **Not applicable for academic year 2024-2025 (fiscal year 2025).**
- **Purpose:** There are many national, regional, and local government and nonprofit organizations that provide a vast array of services to military-affiliated individuals. An educational institution is in a position to leverage its student body as academic manpower to strengthen and assist those organizations. This provides an opportunity for the student to demonstrate a practical application of the skills learned in the classroom and apply them, for course credit, in a real-world setting. These educationally purposeful activities are positively related to academic outcomes. In the meantime, an organization, which typically has budgetary constraints, is the beneficiary of this individual's work product that will advance its mission.
- **Classification:** Training
- **Implementation Examples:**
 - o Utilize Governmental Agencies
 - » **Federal:** U.S. Veterans Administration (VA), Department of Defense (DoD), etc.
 - » **State:** Indiana Department of Veteran Affairs (IDVA), Indiana National Guard, etc.
 - o Solicit Military/Veteran-Serving Organizations
 - » **National:** United Service Organization (USO), etc.
 - » **State:** American Legion- Department of Indiana, INvets, etc.
 - » **Local Posts:** American Legion, Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW), American Veterans (AMVETS), etc.
 - o Utilize employers.
 - o Coordinate through an Office of Service and Community Engagement.
- **Documentation Examples:** Assignments/projects/activities, and the organizations receiving assistance.

Standard 8.2

The educational institution has established academic opportunities that interact with Indiana K-12 Purple Star designated school(s) through student participation.

- **Guidance:**
 - o Student participation means any of the institution's college students and/or the K-12 students, not just focused on military-affiliated students.
 - o Dual credit opportunities, partnerships, placement of student teachers, college visits, mentorship programs, etc.
- o **Not applicable for academic year 2024-2025 (fiscal year 2025).**
- **Purpose:** This connects Purple Star ideals and establishes an interactive bridge from K-12 to college, allowing military-affiliated individuals to serve as a tangible example for K-12 students who may share a similar experience and creates a feeder system between K-12 schools and the educational institution.
- **Classification:** Training
- **Implementation Examples:**
 - o Refer to the Indiana Department of Education K-12 Purple Star School lists at <https://www.in.gov/doi/educators/purple-star-school-applications/>.
- **Documentation Examples:** Assignments/projects, formal agreements, etc. for the postsecondary institution and the corresponding K-12 Purple Star school.

Standard 8.3

The educational institution offers opportunities for career coaching services to military-affiliated students.

- **Guidance:**
 - o Educate the military-affiliated student so they can effectively communicate the value of their previous military experience and current degree/credential.
- **Purpose:** Assist military-affiliated students with the application and interview process so they'll be more prepared when it comes to being hired post-graduation. This service can increase confidence in their learned abilities. This aids a student in translating their military experience into civilian language and showcases their marketability in a professional environment.
- **Classification:** Customer Service

- **Implementation Examples:**
 - o Provide a career service department or center (on-campus or virtual).
 - o Conduct mock interview training.
 - o Utilize external consultants or partnerships.
- **Documentation Examples:** Provide career service brochure or link to a webpage, etc., interviewing/coaching techniques for military-affiliated students, contract, or partnership agreement with a consultant, or similar.

Standard 8.4

The educational institution has established a career service department or program for military-affiliated students to assist with post-graduate employment.

- **Guidance:**
 - o May be a standalone program specifically for military-affiliated students or part of an institution-wide department.
 - o Also referred to as the Industry Employer Relationship program.
- **Purpose:** A career service department or center to assist students with almost any aspect of their career search from reviewing resumes to helping students decide what jobs they will pursue after graduation. This ensures that military-affiliated students are equipped to translate the skills gained during both their collegiate and military experiences in a professional setting.
- **Classification:** Customer Service
- **Implementation Examples:**
 - o Host an annual Military Career Day Employment Fair or similar event(s).
 - o Support or advertise existing community activities (e.g., Indiana Department of Workforce Development veterans' resource and hiring events, or similar).
- **Documentation Examples:** Provide a career service brochure or link to a webpage, list of available employment fairs, etc.

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Category Nine: Beyond Expectations

Bonus opportunities are to reward institutions for going above and beyond to raise the level of success in supporting a military-affiliated student through the completion of a postsecondary credential and beyond.

Bonus Standard 9.1

The educational institution meets the U.S.

Department of Veteran Affairs (VA) School

Certifying Official (SCO) recommending ratio.

- **Guidance:**
 - o Effective December 5, 2023, VA [SCO Handbook] revised the suggested ratio to one (1) SCO full-time employee (FTE) [of the institution] for every 125 GI Bill® students and/or dependents enrolled in the educational institution.⁷
 - o An SCO has primary responsibility for certifying GI Bill® benefits.
 - o GI Bill® Institutions Only
- **Purpose:** This recommended ratio will assist the institution in properly staffing and delivering quality services in a timely manner to GI Bill® students, especially “due to increased complexity of monitoring and reporting GI Bill® students.”⁷ A commitment to this staffing ratio can also have a positive impact on additional enrollment and improved retention of military-affiliated students.
- **Implementation Examples:**
 - o This number should be adjusted as appropriate by the educational institution when the SCO’s duties are expanded beyond certifying GI Bill® beneficiaries’ enrollments.⁷
- **Documentation Examples:** Number of full-time SCOs with the primary responsibility of certifying GI Bill® benefits and a report showing the number of GI Bill® students and/or dependents enrolled at the institution.

Bonus Standard 9.2

The educational institution has implemented at least one (1) additional initiative to support military-affiliated students.

- **Guidance:**
 - o Beyond any of the Collegiate Purple Star (cps) standards identified above.
- **Purpose:** The Indiana Collegiate Purple Star standards are the minimum that an institution can accomplish to create a military-affiliated supportive culture. However, an institution should raise the bar and strive to do more. “Doing so with an honest commitment will ensure campuses are respectful environments that benefit these students and the broader community alike.”⁶
- **Implementation Examples:**
 - o Create a unique activity, standard, or recognition for military-affiliated students not previously described herein.
- **Documentation Examples:** Provide supporting information that demonstrates the activity, policy, etc.