
This paper includes an overview of military structure, a review of existing literature on military undergraduate students, and three core principles of care that can be adopted by campus counselling centers to support their veteran students. The authors define military undergraduates as members of the National Guard and Reserve units, active duty personnel, or prior-service military veterans. The National Guard includes both Army and Air Force units for each state; Reserve units include personnel from across state lines for the Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marines, as well as the Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC); and prior service military veterans include former members of any of these groups. Most military undergraduates at universities are National Guard and Reserve personnel and prior-service military veterans. Military undergraduates are a significant minority population. The limited existing literature on military undergraduates addresses three areas: improving services for veterans with disabilities, mitigating the effect of the deployment cycle on military undergraduate students, and campus support services and programs for military undergraduates. Three principles of care for military undergraduate students are: 1) Identify, appreciate, and become culturally competent to work with military undergraduates; 2) Offer assessment and treatment of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) within the counseling center; and 3) Increase the quantity and quality of outreach programming.


In this article, the author discusses five ways to support veteran transfer students. First, provide sound financial aid and advising. Although the GI Bill provides financial aid to veterans to access postsecondary education, many veterans report their benefits expired before they were able to complete a credential. Thus, it is important for advisers to think
holistically about veteran students’ goals to maximize their education benefits. Second, provide structure and clear points of contact to help veteran students navigate higher education. Veteran students are accustomed to structure and following steps, and they expect established procedures that tell them how to enroll, when to enroll, and where to turn in their paperwork. Third, provide veteran-specific services. For example, institutions can develop financial, social, or academic programs specifically for veteran students; make programmatic changes according to veterans’ needs; target veterans for recruitment; add or expand training on veteran students for faculty and staff; and tailor common services for veterans. Fourth, create clear transfer pathways and award credit for military-based learning experiences. Fifth, create a culture that supports veteran students by hiring veterans to work and connect with veteran transfer students, creating mentoring programs and student veteran organizations on campus, and developing partnerships with community veteran organizations.

**Kirchner, M. J. (2015).** *Supporting Student Veteran Transition to College and Academic Success.* *Adult Learning,* 26(3), 116-123. doi:10.1177/1045159515583813

In this paper, the author discusses several measures to support student veterans in their transition to higher education and sheds light on the research needed to improve these measures. The challenges of reintegrating into the society, coupled with battling stereotypes and entering an unstructured college setting, can make post-secondary education difficult for veteran students. Institutions can address these barriers using direct support, campus support, and faculty support. Direct support includes student organizations and resource centers that provide veteran students an opportunity to meet and interact with others on campus, which makes the college experience less isolating. Campus support includes orientation sessions designed to meet veteran student needs and trained advising staff who can understand the underlying issues involved in the transition to college life. Faculty support includes training to help faculty learn more about active-duty and veteran students, creating a safe learning environment, and establishing ground rules prior to discussing sensitive topics. Further research is needed to explore the impact of veteran student support services on retention, graduation rates and student satisfaction; to learn what faculty believe about student veterans; and to develop more accurate data about student veteran retention and college completion.


In this paper, the authors distinguish between the United States military and higher education institutions to explain the challenges faced by veteran students during their transition and adaptation to civilian and college life. Although today, individuals enter the military voluntarily and are compensated for their work, given responsibilities, and
recognized for their service, the military is still considered a total institution. *Total institution* is a sociological term for an institution in which all aspects of life are conducted under a single authority, each phase of daily activity is carried out in the immediate company of a large group, breaking formal regulations results in punishment, and members are excluded from knowledge of the decisions taken regarding their fate. Transition out of a total institution like the military is often disruptive because it requires learning a new role while simultaneously withdrawing from the previous one. Thus, transitioning from military life to college life can be stressful.

The authors discuss five themes that impact the transition of student veterans: task cohesion, military structure, military responsibilities and release anxiety, combat experience, and social cohesion in combat units. Since the military demands de-individualizing and working together as a team towards a common goal, military personnel develop task cohesion i.e. working together to achieve a common goal. Task cohesion serves veteran students during college as it teaches the importance of being engaged in classroom and the learning process. The military has a strong structure, and deviation from the institutional structure results in punishment. As civilians and students, veterans must learn to navigate on their own, which can be challenging because the college environment is relatively unstructured. Competencies recognized in military are often considered insufficient by civilian institutional standards. Thus, veteran students may experience anxiety and a sense of loss after successfully executing enormous responsibilities in the military, then being stripped of those responsibilities to start the training from scratch for civilian life. Veterans who have experienced combat have learned to adapt their emotions, thinking, and behavior to survive in dangerous situations, but these habits are not always appropriate in civilian settings. Some veteran students may find their survival habits developed during their time in the military difficult to give up. For example, veteran students might misinterpret stimuli as more threatening than they really are resulting in scrapes or behavior that is considered inappropriate in civilian world. Lastly, social cohesion is the degree to which members of a group feel connected to and supported by each other. After leaving the military, veterans lose some of the people who best understand and support them and are surrounded by civilians who are unfamiliar with their previous military experiences.