

Example Admission and Enrollment Checklist for Military-Connected Students

___ **Calculate cost.** It's important to understand the cost of the school you are interested in attending. Certain degree programs may have additional fees so it's important to sit down with an admissions counselor to discuss the full cost of attending the school. For those receiving GI Bill benefits, you will also receive a monthly housing stipend based on the zip code of your institution (E-5 w/ dependents) and up to a \$1,000 books and supplies stipend annually.

___ **Apply!** You can find information on admission to most colleges online, and many have an online application that can be completed as well. Depending on the school you are interested in, additional materials may need to be submitted:

- An official copy of your high school transcript.
- A letter(s) of recommendation from your chain of command, counselor or instructor who is familiar with your academic background and can speak to your abilities. Additional letters from teachers, friends or family members who are familiar with your academic achievements and interests.
- A personal statement (usually included as part of the online application). This is a great time to discuss your military service. You may wish to write a personal statement to communicate how your military service has been instrumental in developing your educational goals. This is also an opportunity to help you stand out among other applicants for admission.

___ **Complete the free, online Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) by June 30** for fall semester entry. This application can be accessed online at www.fafsa.ed.gov. State aid may also have aid available. Talk to the admissions or financial aid office for guidance. Although the GI Bill covers much of the cost of attendance, it's important to apply for FAFSA because you may be eligible for federal grants that you will not have to pay back. You may also be eligible for subsidized and unsubsidized loans, which will have to be paid back. Make sure to discuss this decision with a financial aid officer.

****Be sure to ask the Admissions Office for the FAFSA Code for the College you are applying to.**

___ **Transfer Students should contact** previous colleges or universities to request official transcripts, including the Community College of the Air Force (CCAF). Don't forget about your military Joint Service Transcripts (JST) (previously known as ACE, SMAART, etc.) To request military transcripts visit <https://jst.doded.mil/official.html>

___ **Transfer of credit and CLEP/DSST.** Be sure to discuss the transfer of credit policy for the applied institution. Many colleges support CLEP and DSST, which allow you to test out of certain courses for college credit.

___ **Apply for your federal GI Bill education benefits** utilizing the Veteran On-line Application (VONAPP): <http://vabenefits.vba.va.gov/vonapp/default.asp>, which can be accessed at www.ebenefits.va.gov in order to receive a Certificate of Eligibility. Keep in mind that this process can take some time and it's important to know which benefits you are eligible for and which you would like to utilize.

___ **Submit a copy of the Certificate of Eligibility** to the VA School Certifying Official (SCO) on campus to complete the application process. Chapter 33 education payments will be sent directly to the university. The Monthly Housing Allowance (MHA) payment and books and supplies stipend will be sent to the student utilizing the benefit.



___ **Register for medical benefits!** OIF/OEF veterans are eligible for enhanced enrollment health benefits for five years after the date of their most recent discharge from active duty. Submit or mail VA Form 10-10EZ and a copy of your discharge papers [DD-214] to the Department of Veterans Affairs. Form 10-10EZ is available on the Department of Veterans Affairs website: <https://www.1010ez.med.va.gov/sec/vha/1010ez/>

___ **Attend student orientation.** New student orientation is offered at most colleges and universities. Be sure to ask if an orientation is offered specifically for military and veteran students.

___ **Coordinate with student support services.** Most institutions have specific offices that are able to assist with any disability concerns. This information can be found on the institutional website and/or the admissions office should be able to provide you with this important information.

___ **Join a Student Veterans' Organization (SVO).** SVOs are student run organizations that serve to support student service members and veterans transitioning to campus. They promote camaraderie between military-affiliated students and students with a passion for serving the veteran community.