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*Photos courtesy of the Department of Defense*
Office of Veteran and Military Education (OVME)

Established by SUNY Empire State College, OVME serves as a central point of services for information and resources for veteran and military students.

1 Union Ave., Saratoga Springs, NY 12866-4309
Email: Military.Programs@esc.edu
Phone: 518-587-2100, ext. 2779 or 800-847-3000, ext. 2779
Fax: 518-587-5483
Web: www.esc.edu/Military
Facebook: www.esc.edu/MilitaryFanpage
Student Veterans and Military Club: escMilitaryClub@esc.edu
Online SVMC Community: https://mahara.esc.edu/group/view.php?id=24 (login required)

Desiree Drindak, Military Academic Development Coordinator: Desiree.Drindak@esc.edu
Susan Bruce, Veteran and Military Services Coordinator: Susan.Bruce@esc.edu
To request a preliminary review of military and institutional transfer credit:
Military.Programs@esc.edu, phone: 800-847-3000, ext. 2779

Paul Stote, New York State Division of Veterans’ Affairs Counselor

Available to answer veterans’ and family members’ entitlement and eligibility questions for both federal and New York state programs. Co-located at SUNY Empire State College in Saratoga Springs, N.Y.

1 Union Ave., Saratoga Springs, NY 12866-4309
Email: Paul.Stote@veterans.ny.gov
Phone: 518-581-5338

Office of the Registrar – VA Certifying Official (VACO)

1 Union Ave., Saratoga Springs, NY 12866-4309
VA Certifying Official at SUNY Empire State College
Email: VCO@esc.edu
Phone: 800-847-3000, ext. 2285 or 518-587-2100, ext. 2285
Fax: 518-580-0105

Student Accounts – Military Accounts Coordinator

111 West Ave., Saratoga Springs, NY 12866-6069
Web: www.esc.edu/StudentAccounts
Phone: Student Information Center at 800-847-3000, ext. 2285 or 518-587-2100, ext. 2285
Fax: 518-581-2782
Financial Aid and TAP Certifying Officer
2 Union Ave., Saratoga Springs, NY 12866-4390
Web: www.esc.edu/FinAid
Phone: Student Information Center at 800-847-3000, ext. 2285 or 518-587-2100, ext. 2285
Fax: 518-581-2782

New York State Veterans Tuition Award – Higher Education Services Corporation (HESC)
Web: http://www.hesc.ny.gov/

Office of Admissions
2 Union Ave., Saratoga Springs, NY 12866-4390
Web: www.esc.edu/Admissions
Phone: Student Information Center at 800-847-3000, ext. 2402 or 518-587-2100, ext. 2402
Fax: 518-587-9759

Office of Collegewide Disability Services
(accommodations for students with disabilities)
Kelly Hermann, Director
1 Union Ave., Saratoga Springs, NY 12866-4309
Web: www.esc.edu/DisabilityServices
Email: Disability.Services@esc.edu
Phone: 800-847-3000, ext. 2201 or 518-587-2100, ext. 2201
NYS Relay Service: 800-421-1220

Contact Information for VA
Call the VA Benefits toll-free number for answers to general questions. For information about the status of your application or payment at Empire State College, ask for the Buffalo VA Regional Office.

Web: www.gibill.va.gov, select "Contact Us," then "Ask Us a Question"
Phone: VA Benefits 800-827-1000 or 888-442-4551 (888-GIBill-1)

Cinda Quattrini, Education Liaison Representative, Buffalo VA Regional Office
Email: Cinda.Quattrini@va.gov
Phone: 716-857-3149
Fax: 716-551-3241

Buffalo VA Regional Office
130 South Elmwood Ave.
Buffalo, NY 14202
Eligibility for VA Education Benefits

Neither SUNY Empire State College nor its VA certifying official can determine whether you are eligible for VA education benefits. To find out, contact a VA representative or advocate, then submit your application to the VA. The Department of Veterans Affairs will review your application and officially grant or deny benefits. To complete and submit your electronic application, go to www.gibill.va.gov and click Apply for Benefits.

Applying for VA Education Benefits

To apply, you will need a DD214 Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty for your most recent period of active duty, transcripts for all education after high school, and, if applicable, your Kicker Contract. The Department of Defense may be able to provide this information if you cannot locate a copy of the contract. (See page 8 in this document for more information about the Kicker Contract.)

Direct Deposit: You have the option to provide the routing or transit number and account number of your bank account during the application process to facilitate direct deposit of your benefits. If you are entitled to direct payment of benefits, such as a monthly living allowance or stipend for books and supplies, the funds can be deposited directly into your bank account for quick access.

If you have never applied for VA education benefits, submit an online application at http://VAbenefits.VBA.VA.Gov Vonapp.

• Follow prompts on VONAPP and create a username and password
• Complete the online application (Form 22-1990) and submit electronically
• Print a copy of the completed application for your records

You will receive an acknowledgement via email from the VA that your application has been received and the determination of eligibility process has begun. The VA will mail you a Certificate of Eligibility, which will verify the type of education benefit and the number of months to which you are entitled.
You are required to fax (518-580-0105) a copy of your COE to the VA certifying official at SUNY Empire State College, as part of the verification process.

**Transferring Schools and VA Education Benefits**

If you have applied previously for VA education benefits at another college or university and now want to collect VA educational benefits while attending SUNY Empire State College, you will need to complete the application at [www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/](http://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/) and submit VA Form 22-1995.

**Documents Required for Certification of Enrollment**

You will be required to submit one of the following forms: VA Form 22-1990, VA Form 22-1995, Certificate of Eligibility (COE), VA Form 28-1900 and/or Notice of Basic Eligibility (NOBE) to the college.

**Certifying Enrollments to the VA**

Only the SUNY Empire State College VA certifying official can submit VA Form 22-1999 (Certificate of Eligibility or COE) to the VA electronically. Once it is submitted, you will receive an automated email from the Department of Veterans Affairs. Your verification of enrollment is submitted to the VA after you are enrolled in course(s) and learning contracts are submitted by your instructor or faculty mentor.
Enrollment Verification on WAVE (Web Automated Verification of Enrollment) Website

Processing time begins on the date that the college’s VA certifying official submits the certification of enrollment to the VA. The VA requires you to verify your enrollment monthly. (This does not pertain to Chapter 33.) Verification is required on the last day of each month, or you will not receive benefits for that month.

Verifying Your Enrollment With the VA

To verify your enrollment each month:

- Go to the VA website at www.gibill.va.gov
- Click Verify Attendance (WAVE)
- You will be directed to the WAVE page, where you can login and verify your enrollment.
- If you are not recognized as a VA student by WAVE, it may be because the VA has not received your VA Form 22-1999 (Certification of Enrollment) or has not yet completed processing. You may verify your enrollment by calling the Department of Veterans Affairs Education Certification System at 877-823-2378 and following the prompts.
Create an eBenefits Account to Apply, View and Access Your VA Benefits and Documents

https://www.ebenefits.va.gov/

Receiving VA Payments

Tuition and fees are automatically deferred by SUNY Empire State College for you if you have provided documentation and are using Chapter 31 or Chapter 33 (100 percent eligibility).

Note: Tuition and fees for Post-9/11 GI Bill (Chapter 33) and Vocational Rehabilitation (VocRehab) (Chapter 31) are paid directly to the institution. All other chapter benefits are paid directly to you, the student, and you are, therefore, responsible for payment to the college.

Post-9/11 GI Bill tuition is deferred automatically per the percentage you are approved for by the VA. You, the student, are responsible for the percentage not covered by the VA and may consider using the Time Payment Plan option located on MyESC, MyRecords. All other chapters, excluding 31 and 33, may consider using the Veteran Request for Deferral located on MyESC under “Forms.”
Break (or interval pay) is no longer payable under MGIB-AD except during periods your school is closed as a result of an Executive Order of the President or an emergency (such as a natural disaster or strike). For example, if your fall term ends on Dec. 15 and your spring term begins Jan. 10, your January housing allowance will cover 15 days in December and your February housing allowance will cover 21 days in January.

**Chapter 30: Montgomery GI Bill**

Chapter 30 benefits are for veterans who began active-duty service for the first time after June 30, 1985. These benefits provide veterans with up to 36 months of full-time education pay that must be used prior to the 10-year delimiting end date.

- **Chapter 30 Kicker:** A kicker is part of the enlistment contract. It is often referred to as the Army or Navy College Fund. Higher monthly benefits are paid to Chapter 30 participants with kickers. The higher benefit rates are paid automatically. If veterans don’t receive the benefit they believe they are entitled to, they should call the VA regarding the discrepancy so that it can be resolved with the Department of Defense.

- **Chapter 30 Buy-up Program:** Some service members may contribute up to an additional $600 to the GI Bill to receive increased monthly benefits. For an additional $600 contribution, service members may receive up to $5,400 in additional GI Bill benefits. The increased benefit is payable only after leaving active duty, and the additional contribution must be made while on active duty. For more information, contact your personnel or payroll office.

**Chapter 31: VA Vocational Rehabilitation Education Program**

VA Vocational Rehabilitation is a program whose primary function is to help veterans with service-connected disabilities become suitably employed, maintain employment, or achieve independence in daily living. The program offers a number of services to help each eligible disabled veteran reach a rehabilitation goal. These services include: vocational and personal counseling, education and training, financial aid, job assistance, and, if needed, medical and dental treatment. Services generally last up to 48 months, but can be extended in certain instances.

Veterans may be eligible for Vocational Rehabilitation (Chapter 31) benefits if they:

- are, or will be, discharged under other than dishonorable conditions;
- incurred or aggravated a service-connected disability which entitles them to VA disability compensation
- need vocational rehabilitation due to their service-connected disability creating an employment handicap.
Eligible veterans generally have 12 years from the date they are notified of entitlement to VA compensation to use their Chapter 31 benefits. The VA may approve an extension of time and/or length of training in certain cases.

Veterans who are eligible for an evaluation under Chapter 31 first must apply for services and meet with a vocational rehabilitation counselor (VRC). The VRC will work with them to determine if an employment handicap exists as a result of their service-connected disability. If an employment handicap is established and they are entitled to services, the VRC will continue counseling to select a track of services and jointly develop a plan to address their rehabilitation and employment needs. For more information, go to www.vba.va.gov/bln/vre.

Form 28-8832 is an application for counseling only. Do not use this form to apply for vocational rehabilitation and employment benefits (Chapter 31). Use VA Form 28-1900, Disabled Veterans Application for Vocational Rehabilitation. These forms are available at www.va.gov/vaforms. You can apply online at www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/.

**Chapter 33: Post-9/11 GI Bill**

The Post-9/11 GI Bill provides financial support for education and housing for individuals with at least 90 days of aggregate service on or after Sept. 11, 2001, or individuals discharged with a service-connected disability after 30 days. You must have received a honorable discharge to be eligible for the Post-9/11 GI Bill. The amount of support that you may qualify for depends on where you live and what type of degree you are pursuing. Please note: You may enroll for up to two terms as a nonmatriculated student and use your GI Bill Educational benefit. For a summary of Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits, see the benefit comparison tool at www.benefits.va.gov/gibill.
Approved training under the Post-9/11 GI Bill includes graduate and undergraduate degrees, and vocational/technical training. All training programs must be offered by an institution of higher learning and be approved for GI Bill benefits. Additionally, book stipend, tutorial assistance, and licensing and certification test reimbursement are approved under the Post-9/11 GI Bill.

The following types of entry level and skill training are now excluded from the computation of total aggregate service needed to qualify for Post-9/11 benefits:

- Army One Station Unit Training
- Coast Guard Skill Training
- Active-duty service obligation (ADSO) associated with Coast Guard Academy graduation

A honorable character of service is now required for all service periods ending on or after Jan. 4, 2011, including those with the following separation reasons:

- A Condition Interfering With Duty (CIWD)
- A Condition Existing Prior to Service (EPTS)
- A Hardship (HDSP)

A Condition Interfering With Duty, EPTS and HDSP discharges prior to Jan. 4, 2011, that are not dishonorable still may be qualifying.

Active-duty members are limited to the net cost for tuition and fees prorated based on the eligibility tiers (40 - 100 percent) previously established for veterans.

- The same limitations apply to transferee spouses of active-duty service members.
- This applies to degree programs with a rate of pursuit of more than one-half time (7 credits undergraduate, 6 credits graduate).

For veterans and their transferees: This simplifies the tuition and fee rates for those attending a public school and creates a national maximum for those enrolled in a private or foreign school.

- It pays all public school in-state tuition and fees.
- Private and foreign school costs are capped at public school in-state rate annually and are prorated based on eligibility tiers (40 - 100 percent).
- It prorates housing allowance by the student's rate of pursuit (rounded to the nearest tenth). Example: A student training at a rate of pursuit of 75 percent would receive 80 percent of the BAH rate.
For active-duty members and their transferees: This creates a national rate for those active-duty members enrolled in a private or foreign school pursuing a degree.

- Pays all public school in-state tuition and fees. If you are applying for Federal Tuition Assistance (TA), provide a copy of your approved TA document to the college's Student Accounts office as soon as you receive it. Active-duty students receiving TA must send an approved copy of their TA document to the Buffalo VA Regional Office immediately upon receipt.
- Private and foreign school costs are capped at public school in-state rate annually and are prorated based on eligibility tiers (40 - 100 percent).

Housing Allowance rates will change effective Aug. 1 of each year, not Jan. 1. This allows those who are eligible for both Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (Chapter 31) benefits and Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits to choose a higher subsistence allowance equal to the basic allowance for housing payable to an E-5 with dependents based on the facility code of the school.

It allows VA to pay MGIB (Chapter 30) and MGIB-SR (Chapter 1606) “kickers” or college fund payments on a monthly basis instead of a lump sum at the beginning of the term. Kickers will be paid regardless of rate of pursuit or eligibility for the monthly housing allowance. The applicable (MGIB or MGIB-SR) full-time kicker rate will be multiplied by the rate of pursuit.

The Post-9/11 GI Bill includes National Guard members who are on active service under title 32 U.S.C. orders, “for the purpose of organizing, administering, recruiting, instructing, or training;” or under section 502(f) “for the purpose of responding to a national emergency.”

This allows a student on active duty to receive a books and supplies stipend.

This allows students to use the Post-9/11 GI Bill for:

- noncollege degree (NCD) programs: Pays actual net cost for in-state tuition and fees at public NCD institutions. At private and foreign institutions, pays the actual net costs for in-state tuition and fees.
- on-the-job and apprenticeship training: Pays a monthly benefit amount prorated based on time in program.
- flight programs: Per academic year, pays the actual net costs for in-state tuition and fees assessed by the school.
- correspondence training: Per academic year, pays the actual net costs for in-state tuition and fees assessed by the school.

Monthly housing allowance (MHA) is payable to students (other than those on active duty) enrolled solely in distance learning. The housing allowance payable is equal to one half the national average BAH for an E-5 with dependents.
Notes

• Both the in-resident BAH and distance learning MHA are prorated based on rate of pursuit and rounded to the nearest 10th. A 100 percent eligible student studying at a rate of pursuit of 75 percent would receive 80 percent of the BAH rate. If you cross register for the in-resident BAH, your rate of pursuit will be based on the total number of credits at both institutions.
• The distance learning MHA allocation is equal to half the national average BAH for an E-5 with dependents. Allocations are determined by the VA.

Transfer of Post-9/11 GI-Bill Benefits to Dependents (TEB)

While they are on active duty, service members enrolled in the Post-9/11 GI Bill program can transfer unused educational benefits to their spouses or children.

You must fill out the DoD transferability application online to determine if your dependents are eligible. This website is available only to military members at www.defense.gov/home/features/2009/0409_gibill/.

Upon approval, family members may apply to use transferred benefits by submitting VA Form 22-1990e to the VA after DoD has approved the request for TEB. To access the electronic version of VA Form 22-1990e (VONAPP), go to http://vabenefits.vba.va.gov/vonapp/main.asp.
To access the paper version of VA-Form 22-1990e, go to www.vba.va.gov/pubs/forms/VBA-22-1990e-ARE.pdf.

**Fry Scholarship (Post-9/11 GI Bill)**

The Department of Veterans Affairs is accepting applications for the Post-9/11 GI Bill: Marine Gunnery Sergeant John David Fry Scholarship. The program offers up to 36 months of education benefits. Select VA Form 22-5490 for original applications in the Veterans Online Application (VONAPP) to apply.

**Who is eligible?** Children and spouses of an active-duty member of the armed forces who died in the line of duty on or after Sept. 11, 2001, are eligible for this benefit.

Eligible children are entitled to 36 months of benefits at the 100 percent level; have 15 years to use the benefit beginning on their 18th birthday; may use the benefit until their 33rd birthday; cannot use the benefit before age 18, even if they have completed high school; and are not eligible for the Yellow Ribbon Program. For more information, call 888-GIBILL-1 (888-442-4551) or visit www.gibill.va.gov.

Eligible spouses will be entitled to up to 36 months of the full, 100 percent level, of the Post-9/11 GI Bill. This includes the tuition and fee payment, a monthly housing allowance, and a books and supplies stipend. Surviving spouses are eligible for Dependents’ Educational Assistance (DEA) or the Fry Scholarship and must make an irrevocable election for terms beginning on or after Jan. 1, 2015.

**Chapter 35: Survivors’ and Dependents’ Educational Assistance Program**

The Dependents’ Educational Assistance (DEA) program provides education and training opportunities to eligible dependents and survivors of certain veterans. To be eligible, a student must be a spouse, son or daughter (including stepchild or adopted child), of a veteran who is permanently and totally disabled as the result of, or dies of, a service-connected disability. The disability must arise from, or be aggravated by: active duty; a veteran with a permanent and total service-connected disability who dies from any cause; a service member who is missing in action or is captured in the line of duty and is currently being held by a hostile force; or a service member who is currently forcibly detained or interned in the line of duty by a foreign government or power. Dependents are required to pay college fees. To apply, complete VA Form 22-5490.

**Chapter 1606: MGIB Selected Reserve**

This is an educational program for active members of the Selected Reserve. Basic eligibility requires a six-year obligation to serve in the Selected Reserve and satisfactory participation in required Selected Reserve training. Participation in Chapter 1606 requires no monetary contribution on the part of the service member. The Selected Reserve components of the Ready Reserve include the Army Reserve, Naval Reserve, Air Force Reserve, Marine Corps Reserve, Coast Guard Reserve, Army National Guard, and Air National Guard. Chapter 1606 eligibility is determined by the DoD or the Department of Transportation (Coast Guard), not by the VA. To apply complete VA Form 22-1990.

1606 Kicker: A kicker may be added to the benefit of some Chapter 1606 students. A Chapter 1606 kicker may be part of the original enlistment contract or part of a re-enlistment contract.
Chapter 1607: Reserve Educational Assistance Program

Reserve Educational Assistance Program (REAP) was established in 2004 as part of the Ronald W. Reagan National Defense Authorization Act. It is a DoD education benefit program designed to assist members of the Reserve components called or ordered to active duty in response to a war or national emergency. This program makes certain individuals who were activated or mobilized for more than 90 consecutive days after Sept. 11, 2001 eligible for either education benefits or increased benefits. To apply complete VA Form 22-1990.

MyCAA

Military OneSource career and education counselors have assumed a more active role in supporting military spouses. In addition to advising about financial aid resources available via DoD, they provide support and assistance in identifying and gaining access to other federal, state and local programs. All military spouses of active-duty service members are eligible for career counseling and support.

The MyCAA program is open to all eligible spouses under the new program guidelines below:

- Spouse of an active-duty Army, Navy, Air Force or Marine service member, or activated Reserve member in pay grades E1 - E5, W1 - W2 or O1 - O2.
- If the spouse of National Guard and/or AGR member, the sponsor must be on federal Title 10 active-duty orders as reported in Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System.
- Spouses of Guard/Reserve members in an alert, transition assistance or post-deployment status are not eligible.
- MyCAA accounts will be limited to the new $4,000 maximum benefit with a $2,000 fiscal year cap. Waivers to the fiscal year cap will be available for spouses pursuing licensure or credentials with a cost that exceeds the $2,000 fiscal year cap up to the total maximum assistance of $4,000.
- Spouses have 24 months to finish their associate degree or graduate certificate. Or with a waiver, they have a maximum of three years from the start date of their first course to complete their studies.
- Funding is limited to only associate degrees, certificates, credentials and licensure programs.
- Please allow for 14 days for approval of all financial assistance documents.

These new guidelines reflect a return to the original purpose of the program – to assist spouses of service members achieve portable careers. These changes also align the program with responsible fiscal planning by DoD to help sustain it. Additional program details are posted on https://aiportal.acc.af.mil/mycaa. Check the site often for updates. Or call 800-342-9647 to speak to a Military OneSource counselor.
Scholarships for Military Families

Reserve Officers’ Training Corps (ROTC) Scholarships
These scholarships are awarded on the basis of merit rather than financial need.

Army ROTC
Army ROTC scholarships are offered at hundreds of colleges. Application packets, information about eligibility, and the phone number of an ROTC advisor in your area are available from

College Army ROTC
Phone: 888-550-ARMY (888-550-2769)
Website: www.goarmy.com/rotc

Air Force ROTC
The Air Force ROTC (AFROTC) college scholarship program targets students pursuing certain foreign language and technical degrees, although students entering a wide variety of majors may be accepted. Information about AFROTC scholarships is available from

College Scholarship Section
Phone: 866-4-AFROTC (866-423-7682)
Website: www.afrotc.com

Navy ROTC
Navy ROTC offers both four-year and partial scholarships. For information and applications, contact

Scholarship Office
Phone: 800-NAV-ROTC (800-628-7682), ext. 29395
Website: https://www.nrotc.navy.mil

Veterans Service Organization Scholarships
The following organizations offer scholarships primarily to active duty military, veterans, and/or their families. Further information is at the websites listed.

American Legion
www.legion.org/scholarships

AMVETS
www.amvets.org/programs/scholarships.html

Disabled American Veterans
www.dav.org/volunteers/scholarship.aspx

Paralyzed Veterans of America
www.pva.org/scholarships

Veterans of Foreign Wars
www.vfw.org/community/programs

Vietnam Veterans of America
www.vva.org/scholarship.html

U.S. Department of Education Grants
The U.S. Department of Education makes grant funds available to students whose parent or guardian died as a result of military service in Iraq or Afghanistan after the events of 9/11. At the time of the parent’s or guardian’s death, the student must have been younger than 24 years old and/or enrolled at least part-time at an institution of higher education. Before a student can receive such grant funds, he or she must fill out the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA®) at www.fafsa.gov. Additional information about the FAFSA and finding money for college is at www.studentaid.ed.gov.
SECTION III: New York State Education Benefits

Apply for Financial Aid

Complete the Free Application for Student Aid (FAFSA) at www.fafsa.ed.gov to determine eligibility for a free Pell Grant that can supplement veteran benefits. New York state students, including active-duty service members and dependents stationed in NYS, can check their eligibility for state grants by indicating they are NYS residents on the FAFSA. Full-time NYS students can complete a NYS Express TAP Application online by linking to it from the FAFSA confirmation page at www.hesc.com/content.nsf/SFC/Apply_for_TAP. Students attending less than full time during a term can complete an Aid for Part-time Studies (APTS) form. New York state students who complete a paper FAFSA will have a NYS Express TAP application mailed to them automatically by the Higher Education Services Corporation (HESC). Questions can be directed to the college through FinancialAid@esc.edu. For information on financial aid for veteran and military personnel go to www.esc.edu/FinAidMilitary.

New York State Veterans Tuition Awards

Veterans Tuition Awards (VTA) are for full-time and part-time study for eligible veterans matriculated at an undergraduate or graduate degree-granting institution or in an approved vocational training program in New York state.

Awards are available for New York state residents who meet any of the following criteria: served in Indochina between Dec. 22, 1961 and May 7, 1975; served in the Persian Gulf on or after Aug. 2, 1990; served in Afghanistan during hostilities on or after Sept. 11, 2001; or served in hostilities after Feb. 28, 1961 and received an expeditionary medal.

For full-time study, a recipient shall receive an award of up to the full cost of undergraduate tuition for New York state residents at the State University of New York, or actual tuition charged, whichever is less. Full-time study is defined as 12 or more credits per semester (or the equivalent) in an approved program at a degree-granting institution, or 24 or more hours per week in a vocational. Awards are prorated by credit hour for part-time study. Veterans must apply annually for the award through HESC by completing the FAFSA and TAP, as well as the NYS Veterans Tuition Award Supplement. Part-time students receive awards prorated by credit hour. If a student receives TAP and it exceeds tuition, TAP will be reduced accordingly. The award(s) should be processed in two to three weeks.

NYS Regents Awards for Children of Deceased and Disabled Veterans

These awards are for the children of veterans who are deceased, 40 percent or more disabled, or a former POW or MIA as a result of service during certain specified conflicts. Candidates must be a legal NYS resident at the time of application and their parent must have been a legal NYS resident at the time of induction, death or disability. Benefit: $450 per year to all eligible candidates for up to five years, depending on the normal length of the undergraduate program.
Military Enhanced Recognition Incentive and Tribute (MERIT) Scholarship, also known as Military Service Recognition Scholarship (MSRS)

The Military Enhanced Recognition Incentive and Tribute (MERIT) Scholarship, also known as Military Service Recognition Scholarship (MSRS), provides financial aid to children, spouses and financial dependents of members of the armed forces of the United States or state organized militia who, at any time on or after Aug. 2, 1990, while New York state residents, died or became 100 percent severely and permanently disabled while engaged in hostilities or training for hostilities.

The award covers up to four years of full-time undergraduate study (or five years in an approved five-year bachelor’s degree program). If attending a SUNY or CUNY college, it includes the tuition and mandatory educational fees, room and board charged to students living on campus (or an allowance for room and board for commuter students) and money for books, supplies and transportation.

Iraq and Afghanistan Service Grant

For students whose parent or guardian was a member of the U.S. armed forces and died as a result of performing military service in Iraq or Afghanistan after the events of 9/11.

Must be ineligible for a Federal Pell Grant due only to having less financial need than is required to receive Pell funds.

Must have been less than 24 years old or enrolled at least part-time at an institution of higher education at the time of the parent’s or guardian’s death.

Tuition Benefits for Active New York State National Guard Members

The Recruitment Incentive and Retention Program (RIRP) is a NYS program designed to recruit and retain quality service members for the state military forces (Army and Air National Guard, and Naval Militia). It provides 100 percent of the tuition for state-supported courses offered by 270 New York state colleges, universities and community colleges. Candidates must complete FAFSA as part of the application process. Details about this program and application information are on the NYS Division of Military and Naval Affairs website at http://dmna.state.ny.us/education/education.php?page=rirp.

ARMY National Guard (ARNG) members must request TA through GoArmyEd:

1. All TA for active-duty soldiers must be requested through the GoArmyEd portal. The first step is for you to obtain a username and password via the GoArmyEd public website: www.goarmyed.com.

2. The next step is to establish your educational goal. In order to obtain TA, you must declare a specific degree/credential as an educational goal and obtain a degree map. Tuition assistance will only be
approved for courses that are listed on the degree map or lead to the goal. You should review your personal goals and look at information available on the GoArmyEd portal.

3. You must contact an education center counselor for validation of your chosen educational goal and activation of your access to the TA functionality of the GoArmyEd portal.

4. It’s strongly recommend that you take the GoArmyEd training course, which is available on the portal.

How to Apply for NYS Education Benefits

To apply for the Veterans Tuition Award, the Regents Award for Children of Deceased and Disabled Veterans, the MERIT Scholarship, and Iraq and Afghanistan Service Grant, students must complete both FAFSA and the New York State Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) applications, along with the appropriate supplemental application.

- Go to www.hesc.ny.gov
- Scroll on “Pay” tab
- Click on “Military” located under “Additional Information” column
- Complete FAFSA application (federal code 010286)
- Complete TAP application (school code 0913)

Awards

If a Tuition Assistance Program award also is received, the combined academic year award cannot exceed tuition. Thus, the TAP award may be reduced accordingly. **Note:** Tuition payments received by a veteran under the Chapter 33 program and Yellow Ribbon component will be considered duplicative of any VTA award students may have received. However, payments received under the Montgomery GI bill do not duplicate the VTA award.

Combined tuition benefits available to a student cannot exceed the actual tuition. Students attending high tuition schools may be eligible to receive both the federal and state benefits. Additionally, students whose “Percentage of Maximum Benefit Payable” under the Chapter 33 program is less than 100 percent of tuition also may receive both federal and state benefits.

Duplicative Benefits

The combined tuition benefits available to a student cannot exceed the student’s total tuition costs. Tuition payments received by a student under the Post-9/11 GI Bill (Chapter 33 veteran benefits) and Yellow Ribbon program are considered duplicative of any VTA and/or TAP award. Students receiving tuition assistance through these programs may, and in most cases will, have their state VTA and/or TAP payment reduced or denied due to these other benefits. However, payments received under the Montgomery GI Bill do not duplicate the purpose of the VTA and/or TAP.

**Note:** Students attending high-tuition schools may be eligible to receive both the federal and state benefits. Additionally, students whose “Percentage of Maximum Benefit Payable” under the Post-9/11 GI Bill (Chapter 33 veteran benefits) Program is less than 100 percent and students continuing to receive
benefits under the Montgomery GI Bill also may receive both federal and state benefits. Questions? Contact HESC’s Scholarship Unit at 888-NYSHESC (888-697-4372), or chat with HESC online.

SECTION IV:
Admissions and Enrollment at SUNY Empire State College

Apply and/or Enroll at SUNY Empire State College

Apply for admission (This can be done at the same time as applying for VA eligibility.)

• Complete an application at www.esc.edu/Apply. If you indicate your veteran status on the application, the waiver of the $50 orientation fee will be automatic.

• You will need to submit proof of high school completion and official transcripts, including military training.

You may request a preliminary review of your military and institutional credits, free of charge, from SUNY Empire State College. Please contact Military.Programs@esc.edu to learn about the transcript submission process.

Note: Chapter 31 – Students using VocRehab (vocational rehabilitation) are required to submit a preliminary review from SUNY Empire State College to their case manager. Once it is approved, the case manager will fax Form 28-1905 to the certifying official, who will verify your enrollment with the VA. Department of Veterans Affairs then will issue a COE statement which outlines the percentage of benefits. Fax a copy of your VONAPP application and your COE statement to our certifying official at 518-580-0105.
Nonmatriculated Study

Students who are not interested in pursuing a degree (nonmatriculated status) but who still want to take courses, can do so, by completing the nonmatriculated application at www.esc.edu/nmApply to register. The VA will pay for two terms for a nonmatriculated student.

Enroll at SUNY Empire State College

Once you have been accepted to the college and have completed the orientation process, you will be assigned a faculty mentor, who will work with you to create a degree plan and assist you with course selection each term. Register online at https://www.esc.edu/reghomeMyESC.

Rate of Pursuit
Undergraduate Studies

- Full time = 12+ credit hours
- Half time = 6 to 8 credit hours
- 7 credit hours is more than half time for undergraduate studies

Tuition and Fee Structure

- Tuition: low tuition rate regardless of location (subject to change; current rate is always on our website)
- Most fees waived for active-duty military and veterans (spouse and dependents are required to pay college fees)
SECTION V: Academic Assistance

Additional Information and Resources

CLEP/DANTES exams are free for active-duty military. Go to www.dantes.doded.mil/Dantes_web/examinations/CLEP.htm for information and ordering form.

Online Library and Learning Resource Center

Library: www.esc.edu/Library
Writing Center: www.esc.edu/WritingCenter
Math Center: www.esc.edu/Math

Smarthinking

www.esc.edu/Smarthinking

Tutoring in the following subject areas:
- Mathematics and statistics (basic math to calculus)
- Spanish (introductory to intermediate levels)
- Writing (undergraduate to graduate levels, includes ELL/ESL writing)
- Science (introductory, undergraduate level sciences, biology, chemistry and physics)
- Business (introductory, undergraduate level accounting, economics and finance)

Trauma and Stress

This site provides basic information and extensive resources related to post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), acute stress disorder (ASD) and traumatic brain injury (TBI):
http://commons.esc.edu/trauma-and-stress