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Voluntary Education

Background

The Department of Defense off-duty Voluntary Education Program assists service members in planning and paying for their education expenses. This program constitutes one of the largest continuing education programs in the world. Service members and their adult family members receive guidance and assistance from counselors at the installation education center regarding the various types of continuing education programs and the eligibility requirements associated with each of these programs.

Program highlights:

- Military Tuition Assistance Program is standardized across the services, providing tuition and fee assistance for voluntary, off-duty college courses and degree programs. Participants receive up to \$4,500 of assistance per fiscal year. Installation education counselors provide information and guidance to service members on the Montgomery GI Bill® and MGIB Tuition Top-Up Programs, which are funded by the Department of Veterans Affairs for tuition and fees not covered by TA.
- Postsecondary degree programs enable service members to enroll in college, receive tuition assistance and earn degrees. Classes are conducted on the military installation or on board ships or submarines to which they are assigned.
- Independent study and distance learning programs provide opportunities to learn and earn college credit at a distance using video, interactive CD-ROM, teleconferencing or the Internet.
- Examination program is a testing program allowing service members to earn certificates, licenses, college credits and high school diploma or satisfy school entrance and employment requirements. Tests are offered to service members at no cost.
- High school diploma costs, studies and testing leading to the achievement of the high school diploma or equivalency, are entirely paid for by the TA program.
- Academic skills programs are designed for service members who need to update or enhance their basic academic competencies. Programs offer opportunities to improve skills in areas such as English, reading, writing, speaking and mathematics.

Program availability:

Approximately 350 voluntary education centers exist worldwide including contingency areas such as Saudi Arabia, Iraq and Afghanistan.

For more information:

DoD Voluntary Education, <http://www.militaryonesource.mil/voluntary-education>