



ACADEMIC CREDIT FOR SEPARATING SERVICE MEMBER BEST PRACTICES

SUBJECT: Separating and retiring service members may be held back from finishing a degree. States can assist separating service members to obtain academic credit by not having to repeat requirements completed while in the military.

PRINCIPLES: Through statute and regulation, states can establish requirements for academic institutions to grant separating service members credit toward degree and certificate requirements for education, training and experience gained in the military. The Department of Defense is enhancing its existing processes to assist service members with their professional development and with their transition to civilian jobs. However, these will not by themselves overcome some of the inherent disconnects in converting military training and experience:

- The military services provide service members opportunities while on active duty to work towards obtaining certifications and other credentials that they may need when they transition to civilian occupations.
- Department of Defense and the military services provide service members transcripts of their experience and training. However, these transcripts are not always adequate for civilian institutions to assess for possible academic credit.
- Additionally, academic institutions in many states use the American Council on Education and criteria from other similar organizations to determine the applicability of military training, education and experience in order to grant academic credit for degree requirements as well as electives. These organizations provide the mechanism but not a requirement for academic institutions to accept military training and experience.

EXAMPLES:

Supporting separating service members obtaining academic credit for their military education, training and experience:

1. Washington SB 6357 (2010)¹ directs representatives from:

“(1) The state board for community and technical colleges, the higher education coordinating board, workforce education and training, and two and four-year faculty, private career schools, and business and labor, to develop policies for awarding academic credit for learning from work and military experience, military and law enforcement training, and other training.

“(2) The policies shall address, but are not limited to, issues regarding verification, accreditation, transfer of academic credit, licensing and profession recognition, and financial aid. To the greatest extent possible, the policies shall provide for consistent application by all institutions of higher education and basis for accurate and complete academic counseling.

¹ <http://apps.leg.wa.gov/documents/billdocs/2009-10/Pdf/Bills/Session%20Law%202010/6357-S.SL.pdf>

(3) Policies developed by the state board for community and technical colleges along with recommendations shall be submitted to the appropriate committees of the legislature by December 31, 2010."

2. Louisiana HB 500 (2011)² directs state academic institutions to write policies to award educational credits:

"(1) In addition to any other power, duty, or function authorized by this Section, each board shall adopt, by not later than January 1, 2012, a policy requiring each institution under the board's supervision and management to award educational credits to a student enrolled in the institution, who is also a veteran, for courses that are part of the student's military training or service and that meet the standards of the American Council on Education or equivalent standards for awarding academic credit if the award of educational credit is based upon the institution's admission standards and its role, scope, and mission.

(2) Each board shall adopt necessary rules, regulations, and procedures to implement the provisions of this Subsection, effective beginning with the 2012-2013 academic year and continuing thereafter."

3. New Hampshire HB 519 (2013)³ directs their division of higher education shall develop policies to award academic credit, and to consult with institutions of higher learning in implementing the policy:

"(1) The division of higher education develop and adopt a written policy requiring each public institution of higher education to develop a set of written policies and procedures governing the evaluation of a student's military occupation, military training, coursework, and experience, to determine whether academic credit shall be awarded by the institution for the evaluated occupation, experience, training, and coursework. The division's policy may require that the occupation, training, experience, or courses meet the standards of the American Council on Education or equivalent standards for awarding academic credit. The division may also develop and adopt a written policy requiring each public institution of higher education to develop a set of written policies and procedures to standardize credit-by-exam equivalencies for exams funded through the Department of Defense. The educational credit shall be awarded based upon each institution's admissions standards and shall be consistent with the mission of the state's system of public higher education. Each public institution of higher education shall designate a single point of contact for a student who is enrolled in such an institution and who is also a veteran, as defined in RSA 21:50, I, to conduct such an evaluation and determination."

(2) The division shall consult with the chief executive officers of each public institution of higher education in implementing the policy set forth in paragraph 1 and the policy adopted by the division shall, to the greatest extent possible, provide for consistent application by all of the state's public institutions of higher education and promote accurate and complete academic counseling."

² <http://www.legis.state.la.us/> (bill search HB 500)

³ <http://www.gencourt.state.nh.us/rsa/html/I/21-N/21-N-8-b.htm>