



# MILITARY & VETERAN STUDENT BRIEF

NOVEMBER 2015

## SUPPORT PROGRAMS

UAA supports military personnel and their families throughout the UAA service area through UAA Military Programs. With two locations on Joint Base Elmendorf/Richardson (JBER), UAA offers courses for active-duty, National Guard and Reserve personnel, spouses, dependents, and DOD civilian personnel. Course offerings support completion of Community College of the Air Force degrees and courses leading to degrees offered by UAA. Classes are offered in a variety of classroom and distance formats.

## SEAWOLF BOOT CAMP

Seawolf Boot Camp is a faculty and staff training program designed to familiarize the UAA community with the military and veteran student experience so that UAA may better serve those who served. In Seawolf Boot Camp, participants learn information about the military and veteran culture, challenges they face, VA Benefits, how to build a military and veteran friendly environment, and resources available.

Participants receive a Seawolf Boot Camp t-shirt, decal, and magnet. The items serve as an incentive for faculty and staff for making the effort to become better informed on the issues faced by this large student population. The items also signify to students, staff and faculty that the individual displaying them has learned about these student experiences and as a result is better equipped to support and assist our military and veteran students.

## VETSUCCESS ON CAMPUS

The VetSuccess on Campus (VSOC) program, sponsored by the Department of Veterans Affairs, was introduced to UAA in 2012. The VSOC program aims to help veterans, service members and their qualified dependents succeed and thrive through a coordinated delivery of on-campus benefits assistance and counseling, leading to completion of their education and preparing them to enter the labor market in viable careers.



## MILITARY FRIENDLY® SCHOOL

For the seventh year in a row, UAA is a Military Friendly® School, recognizing UAA as a top tier institution with opportunities for military service members and spouses.



## UAA MILITARY & VETERAN STUDENT SERVICES

In FY12, the Chancellor's Cabinet reallocated funding to the Office of Student Affairs to hire a Military & Veteran Community Services Assistant (MVCSA) for one year. This position was base funded in FY13. The MVCSA develops concise resources and information campaigns, coordinates a faculty and staff training program, represents UAA at national military education conferences, and serves as UAA's liaison to DMVA and the VA. The UAA Military & Veteran Community Services Resource Page located online at <http://www.uaa.alaska.edu/veterans> serves as a one-stop information portal for UAA's military and veteran students.



Effective July 1, 2015, the UAA Military & Veteran Student Resource Center combined forces with the

VA School Certification Team to create Military & Veteran Student Services as a part of UAA's Enrollment Services division. Military & Veteran Student Services (MVSS) is dedicated to providing the highest quality and comprehensive support to military, veteran students and their families by encouraging, promoting and counseling students to be successful. The goal of MVSS is to ease the transition from military into college by providing students with the tools needed to succeed while also fostering a receptive, knowledgeable and understanding community within the university to include students, staff and faculty.

# SUPPORT PROGRAMS

## VETERANS AFFAIRS

UAA works in closely with local personnel from Veterans Affairs (VA), State of Alaska Department of Military and Veterans Affairs (DMVA), Department of Labor and Education Officers from the military. This collaboration allows for UAA to stay on the leading edge of trends that affect our military and veteran students.

## VETERANS STUDENT ORIENTATION

New Student Orientation hosts a Veteran Student Orientation during the summer to facilitate the integration of new veteran students into the academic, intellectual, and social culture of UAA in preparation for the university's educational opportunities.

## STUDENT CLUBS & GREEK LIFE

UAA has seen a considerable increase in the number of its veterans participating in student clubs and Greek organizations. Most notably, Phi Kappa Theta fraternity colonized on campus in the spring of 2015. Utilizing his military background, the president of the fraternity made use of the resources of the Military & Veteran Student Resource Center to reach out to other veteran students. After an informational meeting, the fraternity grew to 15 members and reintroduced its members to an actively engaged campus lifestyle. Phi Kappa Theta, along with the other student clubs and Greek organizations, continue to flourish, in part due to the engagement of veteran students.

## STUDENT VETERANS OF UAA

Student Veterans of UAA is a chartered member of the national organization Student Veterans of America (SVA). UAA's SVA chapter is highly active and has played an important role in shining a light on the issues faced by our military and veteran students. SVA members have participated in CAFÉ training sessions to help faculty be better prepared to address the needs of military and veteran students.



## VETERANS WORK HERE

UAA provides staff and faculty members who have served with a "Veterans Work Here" sticker to place in their office. This displays what a large portion of our community has worn the uniform and offers our student veterans examples of veterans who successfully accomplished their academic goals.



## GRADUATE HONOR CORDS

UAA Chancellor Tom Case is pleased to offer the Military & Veteran Honor Cord to any graduating active duty, guard/reserve or veteran student. These cords signify the appreciation that UAA feels toward our military and veteran community for their service and sacrifice.

## VETERANS APPRECIATION WEEK

UAA hosted its first Veterans Appreciation Week, November 4-11, 2011. A variety of events were offered for our communities including a panel discussion on teaching student veterans, Veterans Resource Fair, a panel discussion on student experiences by student Veterans, and the National Roll Call event on November 11. Veterans Appreciation Week has been a standing celebration at UAA annually since 2011.

## COUNCIL OF COLLEGE & MILITARY EDUCATORS

UAA is a member of the Council of College and Military Educators (CCME). Annually, UAA representative(s) attend the national conference to exchange ideas and information to better serve the educational pursuits of UAA's military community.

## MILITARY & FAMILY LIFE CONSULTANTS

UAA collaborates with and receives services from the Military and Family Life Consultants (MFLC) group. MFLC is a licensed group of professionals who provide situational, problem-solving consultations anonymously and confidentially for students and employees. The group also provides trainings on topics related to the military lifestyle and the stressful situations created by deployments and reintegration.



## SUPPORT PROGRAMS

### MAPWORKS

Mapworks, a success tool that helps students transition to campus and the academic expectations of college, has a module for military/veteran students which helps UAA identify students that are struggling personally and/or academically. Working in partnership with Military & Veteran Community Services, professional staff and faculty are able to provide follow up and support.

### DISABILITY SUPPORT SERVICES

Staff in the office of Disability Support Services are specially trained to support the unique needs of student veterans with traumatic brain injury and post-traumatic stress disorder to increase their academic success.

### STUDENT HEALTH & COUNSELING CENTER

Mental health counselors in the Student Health and Counseling Center and in the Dean of Students Office are trained to support post-combat veterans in their transition into and through college.

### CAREER DEVELOPMENT

In collaboration with the Alaska Department of Labor and other organizations, the UAA Career Development Center (CDC) co-hosts the annual Veterans and Military Spouses Job Fair each November in Anchorage. CDC also supports military and veteran students through resume and interview workshops, as well as other, more generalized job fairs.

### BENEFITS BY CHAPTER

A new resource for our students is our “Benefits by Chapter” webpage available at [www.uaa.alaska.edu/financialaid/Veterans/benefits-by-chapter.cfm](http://www.uaa.alaska.edu/financialaid/Veterans/benefits-by-chapter.cfm). Here, students can find chapter specific benefit information as well as additional certification requirements and guidelines.

For Chapter 33 recipients, UAA submits two certifications to the VA each term. An initial certification is submitted to notify the VA of term dates and credit hours to kick start their Basic Allowance for Housing and book stipend benefits and a final certification is submitted after the add/drop deadline to report tuition and fee amounts for certified courses. This is to avoid large overpayments or underpayments made to UAA if changes to students’ schedules are done during add/drop period. Doing one certification after add/drop would be more efficient administratively, but would negatively impact students because Basic Allowance for Housing and book stipend would not be paid to the veteran until into the semester.

## SUPPORT PRACTICES

### ADDITIONAL IMPROVEMENTS IN ENROLLMENT SERVICES

- New Military Policy that allows for ease in applying degree applicable courses without negative impact to veteran’s benefits (this also prompts meeting with an advisor who then can work with student to find applicable courses).
- Improved load process for CTAM, reducing barriers to active duty and National Guard TA process for UAA courses.
- Reduced paperwork requirements for evaluation of military training and occupation credits (DD-214, NCOER, and others).
- Overall Transfer improvements made to increase degree applicability of credit to students declared in degree programs.
- Significantly decreased number of help desk cases and response time to help desk cases in GoArmyEd.
- Recently reviewed CLEP/DSST (formerly DANTES) national exam transfer guidelines that resulted in increased number of direct course transfers. A number of military students utilize these tests.
- Loaded full degree plans into Go Army Ed portal.
- Grade loads at end of term into Go Army Ed, which in turn allows for faster processing of TA’s.



# MILITARY CREDIT

## EVALUATION OF MILITARY CREDIT

UAA follows the guidelines in the American Council of Education (ACE) *Guide to the Evaluation of Educational Experiences in the Armed Services*.<sup>1</sup> This guide identifies military training/courses which are comparable to college training/courses. ACE military training and courses are categorized into six levels: vocational, associate, lower division, upper division, graduate, and professional.

UAA accepts 100% of the training/courses within the associate, lower division and upper division levels. Graduate level training/courses are accepted if listed on a student's approved Graduate Studies Plan. Professional level training/courses are not accepted. Less than one percent of military transcript training/courses that UAA evaluates for transfer are at the vocational level, which UAA does not accept.

Elective Credits may be awarded to students who have completed active duty military service, in accordance with the ACE Guide. In addition, credits may be granted for formal service schools and the primary/secondary MOS/Rating as recommended in the ACE Guide.<sup>2</sup>

UAA accepts DSST (formerly DANTES) and CLEP exams and evaluates military training for admitted degree-seeking students. UAA is a member of Servicemembers Opportunity Colleges Degree Network System. This membership provides servicemembers throughout the country access to transparent degree plans and tuition rates.

## WHAT DOES NOT TRANSFER

Many courses that transfer in as elective credit may not apply to specific degree programs. For example, how would "Missile Loading," an actual military college course, fulfill the requirements for a UAA history degree? Each degree represents a specific body of knowledge and/or skill particular to the discipline, and program requirements are developed to maximize a student's mastery of the required body of knowledge. If a transfer course does not contribute to the body of knowledge needed to complete a specific degree—even if accepted as elective credit by the university—it is not used to meet that degree's requirements.

These credits are often interpreted as being "not transferred or accepted or lost" when they are actually accepted as transfer credit but not applied to a particular degree program because they are not applicable to the degree. Students have the option to petition these credits if they think they can demonstrate that the credits do, in fact, apply to the body of knowledge of the degree.



Photo courtesy of the U.S. Army: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/soldiersmediacenter/>

## TRANSFER OF MILITARY CREDIT

The University of Alaska Anchorage follows the policies articulated in the Joint Statement on the Transfer and Award of Credit, developed by American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (AACRAO), American Council on Education (ACE), and the Council on Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA).<sup>3</sup>

UAA has entered into an agreement with the U.S. Department of Defense whereby we agree and affirm to recognize, accept, and award credit where appropriate, from the Joint Services Transcript (JST), Army/ACE Registry Transcript System, the Sailor/Marine ACE Registry Transcript System, the Community College of the Air Force (CCAF), and the Coast Guard Institute transcript as the official sources of military training and experience documentation with corresponding college credit recommendations, when processing the individual's documented educational plan.

UAA accepts transfer credit from regionally accredited military institutions. Some examples of military institutions that are regionally accredited include: U.S. Naval Academy, U.S. Military Academy - West Point, U.S. Coast Guard Academy and U.S. Air Force Academy. UAA maintains a "Military Transfer Credit" website ([www.uaa.alaska.edu/records/tce/military.cfm](http://www.uaa.alaska.edu/records/tce/military.cfm)) to better inform students of opportunities for transferring military credits.

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.acenet.edu/news-room/Pages/Military-Guide-Online.aspx>

<sup>2</sup> 2015 UAA Catalog, "Nontraditional Credit Policies," (<https://catalog.uaa.alaska.edu/policies/academicstandardsregulations/nontraditionalcreditpolicies/>).

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.acenet.edu/news-room/Documents/2001-Joint-Statement-on-Credit.pdf>



# MILITARY CREDIT

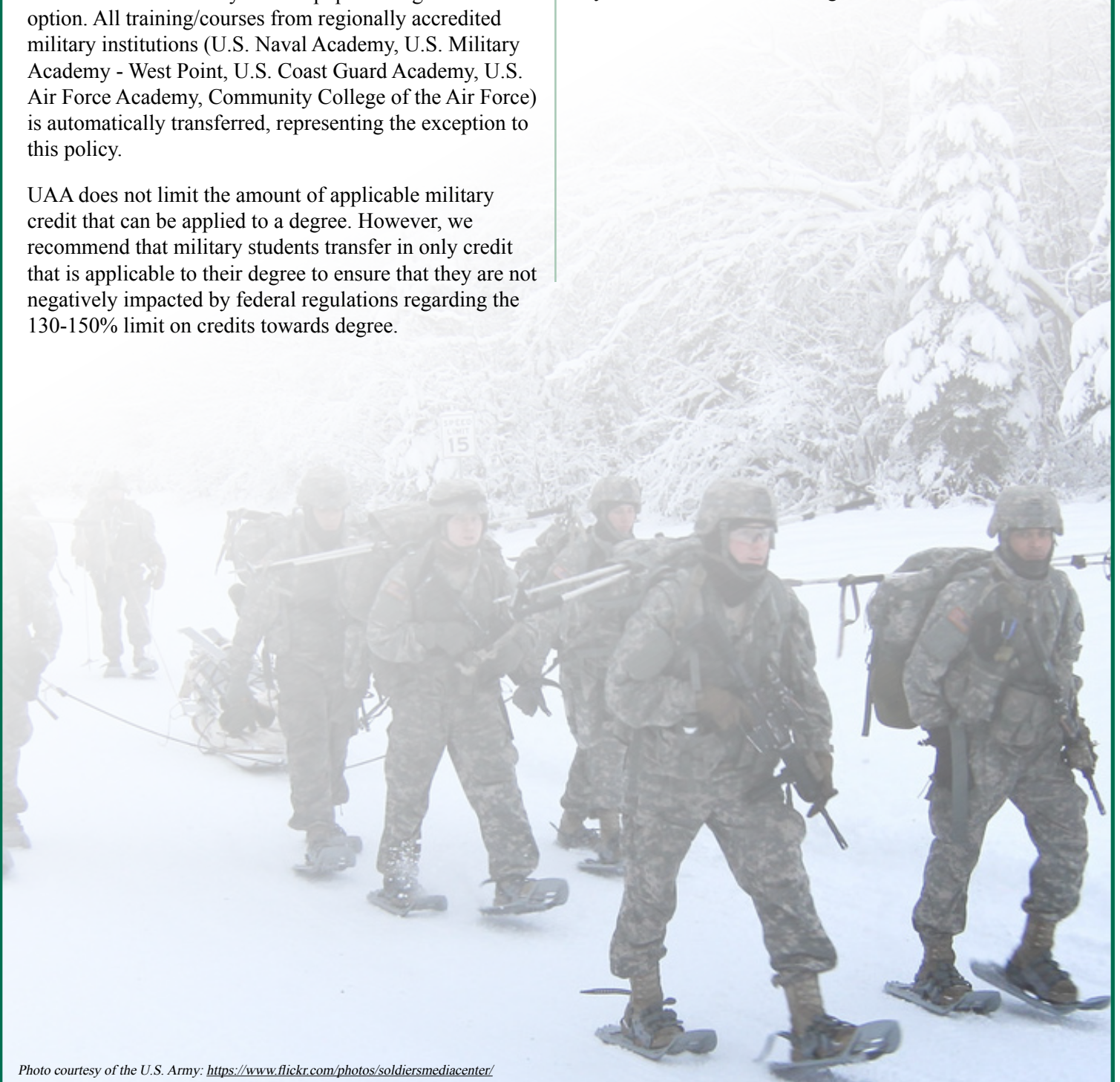
## “150% RULE”

In response to a growing issue of veterans and soldiers becoming ineligible for tuition benefits and federal financial aid because they've reached what's known as the “150% rule,” a policy was developed giving students more choice in how many credits are transferred in. The 150% rule cuts off Title IV benefits and aid when a student has exceeded 150% of the credits needed to complete a degree. The past practice of transferring in all credits, even if as electives, caused many to reach this limit. Veterans and soldiers are the only student population given this option. All training/courses from regionally accredited military institutions (U.S. Naval Academy, U.S. Military Academy - West Point, U.S. Coast Guard Academy, U.S. Air Force Academy, Community College of the Air Force) is automatically transferred, representing the exception to this policy.

UAA does not limit the amount of applicable military credit that can be applied to a degree. However, we recommend that military students transfer in only credit that is applicable to their degree to ensure that they are not negatively impacted by federal regulations regarding the 130-150% limit on credits towards degree.

## TUITION ASSISTANCE

UAA signed the Department of Defense Voluntary Education Partnership Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), which provides overall guidance and policy for provision of education to active duty soldiers and dependents and allows UAA to participate in the Tuition Assistance (TA) program. Since October 2011 two Voluntary Education Partnership MOU's have been issued by the DoD and UAA has signed both.



## POLICIES

### CLASS ATTENDANCE<sup>4</sup>

Regular attendance and active participation are expected in all classes. Students are responsible for class work even if there are legitimate reasons for their absence. Unexcused absences may result in a student being withdrawn from the class or receiving a failing grade. Unreasonable refusal to accommodate an emergency absence or class absence as described below may be appealed under the Academic Dispute Resolution Procedure.

### CLASS ABSENCES<sup>5</sup>

Students who receive short-term military orders or obligations are responsible for making advance arrangements with faculty members to enable them to meet course requirements. Students participating in official intercollegiate activities on behalf of UAA, including, but not limited to, athletic competitions, debate and performing arts, are responsible for making advance arrangements with faculty members to enable them to meet course requirements. Faculty are encouraged to make reasonable accommodations for such students. In some cases accommodation may not be possible.



Photo courtesy of the U.S. Army: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/soldiersmediacenter/>

### ACTIVE DUTY OR DEPLOYMENT<sup>6</sup>

Students called to active duty or involuntarily activated, deployed or relocated during an academic term may be able to make arrangements with their faculty members to complete their courses via e-learning. In those cases where this is not possible or desirable, these students are eligible for the 100 percent refund of tuition and fees, and a prorated adjustment on housing and meal plans. Returning military students are not required to reapply for admission and are welcomed back as in-state residents for tuition purposes. Military students who return after their admitted catalog expires should meet with an academic advisor for assistance.

<sup>4</sup> 2015 UAA Catalog, "Academic Standards and Regulations: Course Performance," (<https://catalog.uaa.alaska.edu/policies/academicstandardsregulations/courseperformance/>).

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

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<https://www.uaa.alaska.edu/veterans/>

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