



Veteran and Military Students

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The following summary describes state legislative policies related to veteran students that align with the following policies in the [Lumina State Policy Agenda](#):

- [Develop Lower-cost Pathways to Degrees](#)
- [Ensure Availability of Competency-Based Programs](#)
- [Re-enroll Adults with Some College and No Degree](#)

Several state legislatures have considered policies that aim to ameliorate the challenges veteran students can face with postsecondary enrollment, persistence and completion. According to the [Student Veterans of America](#), 24 states provide in-state tuition classification for veteran students and more states are considering similar policies aimed at increasing affordability.¹

In addition to affordability concerns, states have also addressed prior learning assessments, veteran student support services and course registration concerns specific to veteran students. In 2013 and 2014, 16 states enacted 22 policies addressing these areas.

State	Prior Learning Assessment	Student Support Services	Course Registration
Alaska	H.B. 84		
Alabama	H.B. 338		
Connecticut	Executive Order 36		
Hawaii		H.R. 72	
Illinois			S.B. 2245
Indiana		S.B. 115	
Montana	H.B. 317		
New Hampshire	H.B. 519		
New Jersey		H.B. 1961	
Oklahoma			S.B. 1830
Pennsylvania			H.B. 1164
Rhode Island	H.B. 5711 S.B. 638		
South Carolina	S.B. 417		
Utah	H.B. 32 H.B. 254	S.B. 68	
Washington	S.B. 5969		H.B. 1109 S.B. 5343
West Virginia		H.B. 2490	H.B. 2491
TOTAL	11	5	6

¹ Student Veterans of America, <http://www.studentveterans.org/what-we-do/in-state-tuition.html>

Prior Learning Assessment (PLA)

A valuable component in the movement toward assessing student competencies to fulfill degree requirements originated with veteran students. In many cases, these students have completed extensive military training that may be applicable to their degree program. In nine states, legislatures have recently directed institutions to consider such training for credit:

- The **Connecticut** governor issued Executive Order 36 in 2013, which required policies to ensure that credit is awarded for relevant military experience. Under the order, state departments which issue occupational certificates, the Commissioner of Labor, the Commissioner of Veterans Affairs, the Executive Director of the Office of Military Affairs, the president of the Board of Regents and the president of the University of Connecticut, along with other state agencies, are all required to review existing military credit policies and develop improvements.
- In 2013, eight state legislatures required systems or institutions enact their own PLA policies: **Alabama** (H.B. 338), **Alaska** (H.B. 84), **Montana** (H.B. 317), **New Hampshire** (H.B. 519), **Rhode Island** (H.B. 5711 and S.B. 638), **South Carolina** (S.B. 417), **Utah** (H.B. 254), and **Washington** (S.B. 5969).

Additionally, in **Utah**, a unique approach to prior learning assessment includes required college counseling. Through H.B. 32, enacted in March 2014, students must meet with a college counselor to have prior learning earned through military credit considered.

Student Support Services

Recognizing that veteran students have unique needs that may not be met in a traditional higher education setting, at least five states have directed institutions to enhance veteran student support services.

- In **Hawaii**, the 2013 legislature enacted H.R. 72, which studied the feasibility of aligning the efforts of the U.S. Armed Forces and the Military Affairs Council of the Chamber of Commerce of Hawaii. Both groups were tasked with studying the costs associated with developing a consolidated Military Transition, Immersion and Education Center.
- **Indiana's** S.B. 115 created the Combat to College program, which requires any institution enrolling at least 200 veterans to employ a program coordinator and provide targeted veteran support services on campus.
- **New Jersey** created the Veterans Higher Education Commission through S.B. 1961. The commission is charged with advising the legislature and governor regarding policies and programs targeted at increasing veteran student degree attainment, methods for increasing awareness of veteran student issues among faculty and staff, and communicating with prospective veteran students regarding their postsecondary options.
- The **Utah** State Board of Regents is tasked with examining the feasibility of providing veteran services centers on each campus through S.B. 68, signed into law in March 2014.
- H.B. 2490 directs higher education institutions in **West Virginia** to enact measures to improve veteran student access, retention and degree completion. It also requires campuses to designate veteran student advocates.

Course Registration

Veteran students, who may be deployed unexpectedly during an academic term or return from service with little time prior to the start of the term, face specific course registration challenges. At least six

states have enacted innovative policies aimed at streamlining the course add, drop and withdrawal procedures for veteran students.

- In **Illinois**, S.B. 2245 requires that veteran students are given the earliest possible opportunity to register for courses. Veteran students are also given course-scheduling preference in **Pennsylvania** through H.B. 1164.
- For students called to active duty in **Oklahoma**, institutions are required to grant students a leave of absence and a full refund of tuition, without any penalty to their admission status or GPA, due to S.B. 1830. If a student has completed more than half of the term, they also have the option of taking an incomplete grade and finishing the course at a later date.
- Institutions in **Washington** that allow priority registration for other student populations are required to offer priority registration for veteran students through H.B. 1109.
- Students ordered to 30 days of service or less in **Washington** must be granted excused absences from courses with the passage of S.B. 5343. The legislation also grants faculty the flexibility to award the student a grade based on their individual understanding of the course material, rather than requiring the student to make up classes or complete additional assignments as a result of their absence.
- Military students in **West Virginia** cannot be affected by course withdrawals as a result of being called to active duty through H.B. 2491.

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State Policy Citations

State	Bill Title & Brief Description
Alaska	H.B. 84 (2013) Allows institutions to accept academic credit for military education, training or service
Alabama	H.B. 338 (2013) Requires policies for awarding credit for prior military training or service
Connecticut	Executive Order 36 (2013) Revise policies to allow for military credit
Hawaii	H.R. 72 (2013) Study feasibility of Consolidated Military Transition, Immersion and Education Center
Illinois	S.B. 2245 (2013) Requires early enrollment opportunity for veteran students
Indiana	S.B. 115 (2014) Creates the Combat to College Program
Montana	H.B. 317 (2013) Authorizes development of prior learning assessment policies
New Hampshire	H.B. 519 (2013) Requires Division of Higher Education to develop policy regarding academic credit for military service
New Jersey	S.B. 1961 (2013) Creates the Veterans Higher Education Commission
Oklahoma	S.B. 1830 (2014) Allows leaves of absence for military students called to active duty
Pennsylvania	H.B. 1164 (2014) Enacts scheduling preferences for veteran students
Rhode Island	H.B. 5711 (2013) and S.B. 638 (2013) Requires postsecondary institutions to adopt regulations for awarding credit for military service
South Carolina	S.B. 417 (2013) Allows institutions to award academic credit for military service
Utah	H.B. 32 (2014) Requires college counseling to apply credits earned through military service
	S.B. 68 (2014) Study feasibility of Veteran Service Centers on each campus
	H.B. 254 (2013) Requires postsecondary institutions to award academic credit for military service
Washington	H.B. 1109 (2013) Mandates early registration opportunity for veteran students for certain postsecondary institutions
	S.B. 5343 (2013) Allows excused course absences for military students called to active duty
	S.B. 5969 (2014) Obligates postsecondary institutions to adopt policies to award credit for military service
West Virginia	H.B. 2490 (2013) Implement measures to improve veteran student access, retention, and degree completion
	H.B. 2491 (2013) Establishes course completion policy for military students called to active duty