

Missouri Department of Higher Education
Policy Guidelines for Awarding Educational Credit for Military Training or Service

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Meeting the academic needs of the rising number of veterans returning to Missouri's colleges and universities has become a priority for the state. These students typically spend many years serving their country and have acquired a great deal of knowledge as a result. Allowing veterans the opportunity to obtain educational credits for prior military service or training may serve to significantly reduce the amount of time these students must spend earning a certificate or a college degree, thereby assisting the state in meeting its graduation goals and workforce needs.
- 1.2 Missouri recognizes that students who have previously served in the military are often able to demonstrate college-level learning through their prior service or training. SB 106, passed and signed into law in 2013, directs the Coordinating Board for Higher Education to create a policy that requires all public institutions of higher education in the state to evaluate and award students, who have prior military service or training, with educational credits.

2.0 Policy purpose and objectives

- 2.1 The purpose of this policy is to require all public institutions in the state to afford veterans the opportunity to demonstrate or provide documentation of college and university-level learning that they have obtained through prior service or training in the military. This policy also provides a set of best practices that all public institutions in the state may refer to when evaluating and granting educational credit for such prior learning.
- 2.2 This policy applies to all public two-year and four-year institutions, as well as all vocational and technical schools in the state. These institutions are hereby obligated to conform to the policies by the authority delegated to the CBHE by RSMo 173.1158 (1) and (2). Independent institutions in the state are also encouraged to adhere to the guidelines listed in this policy.

3.0 Statutory Authority

- 3.1 RSMo 173.1158 (1): *By no later than January 1, 2014, the coordinating board for higher education shall adopt a policy requiring every public institution of postsecondary education, including but not limited to every public university, college, vocational and technical school, in this state to award educational credits to a student enrolled in a postsecondary education institution, who is also a veteran, for courses that are part of the student's military training or service, that meet the standards of the American Council on Education or equivalent standards for awarding academic credit, and that are determined by the academic department or appropriate faculty of the awarding institution to be equivalent in content or experience to courses at that institution. All credit that is deemed acceptable must meet the scope and mission of the awarding institution.*

(2) Beginning with the 2014-2015 academic year and for every academic year thereafter, the department of higher education and every governing body of a public institution of postsecondary education in this state shall adopt necessary rules and procedures to implement the provisions of this section.

4.0 Guiding Principles

- 4.1 A primary goal of the policy is to recognize and award appropriate educational credits to students for prior service or training earned in the military, thereby significantly reducing the amount of time and money it takes these students to complete a certificate or earn a college degree.

- 4.2 Missouri institutions of higher education should take affirmative action to reach out to veterans and promote their enrollment in and successful completion of postsecondary education.
- 4.3 The policy should develop and promote flexible and creative guidelines that will benefit all Missouri institutions of higher education as well as students who are also veterans when evaluating and awarding educational credits for prior military service or training.
- 4.4 Previous experience earned through training or service in the military should be deemed eligible for educational credits consistently across all public institutions of higher education in the state.
- 4.5 The policy should support academic expectations and standards while also ensuring that students who are also veterans are awarded due educational credits for their previous military service or training.

5.0 Guidelines for best practices in awarding credit for military service or training

- 5.1 Prior military service or training takes many forms, therefore all public institutions of higher education in the state shall refer to the recommendations provided by the American Council on Education (ACE) *Guide to the Evaluation of Educational Experiences in the Armed Services* when evaluating and awarding educational credits for prior military service or training.
- 5.2 While institutions should evaluate veterans' military transcripts to determine whether prior military service or training meets educational requirements, they should also provide opportunities whereby such students may be evaluated for educational credits. These include, but are not limited to, nationally recognized examinations, course-specific examinations designed by college or university faculty, and/or portfolio or other means of competence demonstration. Institutions should also document which credits may be earned and by which evaluation method.
- 5.3 Institutions should work to award veterans with credits that fulfill major degree requirements whenever possible, if such courses are equivalent to that student's prior military service or training. Otherwise, appropriate credit should be given to fulfill a general education requirement or other elective course.
- 5.4 Any credits awarded to a student whose prior military service or training has been deemed equivalent for such credits should be transferable among all public institutions of higher education in the state according to the state's transfer and articulation policy.
- 5.5 Institutions should promulgate information regarding the awarding of educational credits for prior military service or training, which includes information on course equivalencies, the number of credits awarded, and opportunities to be evaluated for such credit. This information should be easily accessible and made available to all current and prospective students.
- 5.6 Students, who are also veterans, should consult with registrars and/or academic advisors in an effort to determine whether their prior military service or training fulfills any certificate, course or major requirements. These students should also provide any necessary supporting documentation to be used in the evaluation of prior experience by the college or university he or she attends.

6.0 Implementation and reporting

- 6.1 In order to comply with section 3.1 of this policy, all public institutions of higher education in the state shall develop and implement policies and procedures that allow for the effective evaluation and awarding of credit to a student with prior military service or training that are also consistent with the aforementioned guidelines. These policies and procedures shall be established and put

into effect no later than the beginning of the 2014-2015 academic year, and continue every year thereafter.

- 6.2 A system of reporting by all public institutions of higher education in the state that includes how institutions evaluate and award credit to students with prior military service or training will be developed over time.

7.0 Definitions

7.1 *American Council on Education (ACE)*

The American Council on Education is a coordinating body for the nation's institutions of higher education. They provide institutions with recommendations on evaluating and awarding educational credits for college or university-level learning earned through prior military service or training.

7.2 *Educational Credits*

Educational credits refer to those credits that are awarded to students for prior military service or training. These credits can be applied toward the requirements of a certificate, licensure, diploma, or degree.