



## DoD TA DECIDE Source Document

Welcome to the new Department of Defense (DoD) TA DECIDE. This dynamic information and comparison tool is designed specifically to aide participants of DoD's TA program in making informed choices on schools and education programs. The TA DECIDE engine is fueled by more than 10 recognized and trusted data sources from across the departments of Defense, Education, and Veterans Affairs. It provides a first of its kind experience, uniquely tailored to the needs of the TA participant. We hope TA DECIDE provides you with high value, actionable information on educational costs and outcomes to compare educational institutions that you may be considering. TA DECIDE has been designed to support your individualized searches, but it also has enormous depth of information that your Service's professional education counselors can help you explore.

### DoD Policy

The Department of Defense Instruction (DoDI) 1322.25, Voluntary Education Programs, Change 3, establishes Voluntary Education policy; states eligibility criteria for tuition assistance (TA); institutionalizes with DoD the Principles of Excellence in support of Executive Order 13607 (April 27, 2012); and requires educational institutions that wish to participate in the DoD TA Program to sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) conveying the commitments and agreements between the educational institution and DoD prior to receiving funds from a service's TA program. <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2012/04/27/executive-order-establishing-principles-excellence-educational-instituti>)

The DoD TA Program is designed to provide opportunities for Service members to realize their educational goals while allowing for judicious oversight of taxpayer dollars. All educational institutions providing education programs to Service members and their families are required to 1) provide meaningful information to students about the financial cost and attendance at an institution so military-connected students can make informed decisions on where to attend school; 2) not use unfair, deceptive, and abusive recruiting practices; and 3) provide academic and student support services. In addition, new uniform criteria will strengthen existing procedures for educational institutions' access to DoD installations.

### DoD Voluntary Education Partnership MOU Eligibility

All educational institutions must:

- Be accredited by a national or regional accrediting body recognized by the Department of Education (ED) and conduct programs only from among those offered or authorized by the main administrative and academic office in accordance with standard procedures for authorization of degree programs by the educational institution. The ED recognizes "institutional" accreditation as well as "specialized" or "programmatic" accreditation for Title IV purposes as the recognized specialized agencies accredit nationally.
- Be state-approved for the use of veterans' education benefits (post-9/11 GI Bill). For assistance with VA approval, please contact the National Association of State Approving Agencies for your state.
- Be certified to participate in federal student aid programs through the ED under Title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965. Title IV certification may be provisional so long as the educational institution maintains eligibility to participate in the Federal Direct Loan Program.
- Comply with state authorization requirements consistent with regulations issued by ED, including 34 C.F.R. 600.9. Educational institutions must meet all State laws as they relate to distance education as required." The department provided flexibility with the state authorization language of Change 3, DoDI 1322.25, in recognition of ED's 34 CFR 600.9(c) being vacated by the federal court and ongoing negotiated



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rulemaking activities related to state authorization. ED maintains eligibility regulations for the Title IV programs as codified in Part 600 and 600.9 as a basic eligibility component for participation in the Title IV programs. For purposes of meeting the state authorization provisions of the DoD Voluntary Education

- MOU, participating institutions must comply with 34 CFR 600.9 (a) and (b). Further, DoD recognizes any additional rules ED provides for delayed implementation.

Title IV participants must obtain an Office of Postsecondary Education Identification (OPE ID) number issued by ED. The purpose of this number is to identify schools that have Program Participation Agreements (PPA) so that its students are eligible to participate in Federal Student Financial Assistance programs under Title IV regulations. The OPE ID is a 6-digit number followed by a 2-digit suffix used to identify additional locations (campuses/extensions) and other entities that are part of the eligible institution. For assistance with Title IV eligibility or OPE IDs, please contact the School Participation Team for your state: <https://eligcert.ed.gov/>.

### **About the DoD Tuition Assistance (TA) DECIDE Tool**

Department of Defense (DoD) Voluntary Education has developed a tool to assist Service members and their families in quality education decisions as they relate to DoD tuition assistance. This unique tool combines information relative to the DoD Voluntary Education Partnership Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), DoD Tuition Assistance (TA) data, Department of Education/College Navigator data, and information from the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) GI Bill Comparison Tool in one, easy-to-use format. Note: Only educational institutions eligible to participate in the TA program are available through TA DECIDE. Please submit technical questions or problems with this site to [voledconcerns@navy.mil](mailto:voledconcerns@navy.mil). If you have feedback on how we can improve the TA DECIDE tool, please send us an email at [osd.pentagon.ousd-p-r.mbx.vol-edu-compliance@mail.mil](mailto:osd.pentagon.ousd-p-r.mbx.vol-edu-compliance@mail.mil) with "TA DECIDE" in the subject line.

### **School Details**

#### **School Information**

Data used to populate basic information about the educational institution is extracted from ED's Postsecondary Education Participants System (PEPS). Individual school information residing in PEPS is loaded from the school's Title IV application with ED. For assistance with PEPS data, please contact the School Participation Team for your state: <https://eligcert.ed.gov/>

#### **School Accreditation**

The DoD TA DECIDE utilizes ED's list of accrediting agencies recognized for Title IV purposes. All institutions must be accredited by a national or regional accrediting body recognized by the ED and conduct programs only from among those offered or authorized by the main administrative and academic office in accordance with standard procedures for authorization of degree programs by the educational institution. The ED recognizes "institutional" accreditation as well as "specialized" or "programmatic" accreditation for Title IV purposes as recognized specialized agencies accredit nationally.

ED maintains a database of accredited postsecondary institutions and programs. Accreditation is a recognized credential for schools and some programs. The goal of accreditation is to ensure that the education provided by institutions of higher education meets acceptable levels of quality. The primary accrediting agency and type are extracted from the ED's PEPS as approved on the Federal Student Aid Title IV electronic application.



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Accreditation is an important consideration if you plan to start school at one institution and transfer to another to complete your degree, or if you think you might “ladder” degrees (Associate’s, Bachelor’s, and Master’s). Be sure to ask any potential school about their credit transfer policy.

Schools are accredited by private educational associations of regional or national scope. While the ED does not indicate whether regional or national accreditation is better, a recent ED study revealed that, “Nearly 90 percent of all student credit transfer opportunities occurred between institutions that were regionally, rather than nationally, accredited.” <http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2014/2014163.pdf>

For assistance with PEPS data, please click here. <https://eligcert.ed.gov/>

### DoD TA Participants

Data populated is aggregated from the Service Components (Army, Navy, Marines, and Air Force) as reported annually to DoD.

### Federal Beneficiaries & Funds

**DoD Tuition Assistance (TA)** - Data populated is aggregated from the Service Components as reported annually to DoD.

**Post-9/11 GI Bill** – Click here for more detailed information on GI Bill eligibility requirements and general program benefits. [http://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/comparison\\_tool.asp](http://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/comparison_tool.asp)

- **GI Bill Beneficiaries** - The number of Veterans, Service members, and family members utilizing GI Bill benefits attending this institution the previous calendar year. This number includes all the different chapters of the GI Bill (e.g., Post-9/11, Montgomery GI Bill: MGIB, Reserve Education Assistance Program-REAP, and Vocational Rehabilitation). Please keep in mind that we include this number for informational purposes only and that high or low numbers of VA beneficiaries attending a particular school is not an indication one school is more military friendly than another. This information will be updated annually.
- **Post-9/11 GI Bill Paid** - The total amount of tuition and fees paid to a school on behalf of a student during the previous fiscal year (October 1st through September 30th).

**Federal Student Aid** -Financial aid to help pay for education expenses at an eligible college or career school. Grants, loans and work-study are types of federal student aid. These reports provide recipient and volume data by program for each school participating in the Title IV programs. **Note:** Each of the below forms of aid contain multiple subsets, and individual recipients could receive aid from more than one program type. TA DECIDE rolls these totals up, thus the total number of recipients may be over-reported. Click here for more detailed information on Federal Student Aid to include a breakdown by program (<https://studentaid.ed.gov/sa/about/data-center/student/title-iv>) Information on Federal Student Aid comes from the most recently reported data tables at the Department of Education’s website. To download these data tables, request information, or report data inaccuracies, please go to <https://studentaid.ed.gov/about/data-center/student/title-iv>.

- **Direct Loan** - A federal student loan, made through the William D. Ford Federal Direct Loan Program, for which eligible students and parents borrow directly from ED at participating schools. Direct Subsidized Loans, Direct Unsubsidized Loans, Direct PLUS Loans and Direct Consolidation Loans are types of Direct Loans.



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- **Federal Family Education Loan (FFEL) Program** - Under this program, private lenders provided loans to students that were guaranteed by the federal government. These loans included Subsidized Federal Stafford Loans, Unsubsidized Federal Stafford Loans, FFEL PLUS Loans, and FFEL Consolidation Loans. Federal student loans under the FFEL Program are no longer made by private lenders. Instead, all new federal student loans come directly from the ED under the Direct Loan Program.
- **Grant** - Financial aid that does not need to be repaid and is often based on financial need. (i.e., unless you withdraw from school and owe a refund).
- **Work Study** - A federal student aid program that provides part-time employment while you are enrolled in school to help pay your education expenses.

### Programs & Offerings

- **Learning Method** - Data used to populate basic information about the educational institution is extracted from ED's Postsecondary Education Participants System (PEPS) and from the school's active DoD MOU verification application. Click here for more detailed information on Federal Student Aid. <https://eliger.ed.gov/>
- **Servicemembers Opportunity Colleges:**
  - **SOC DNS:** The SOC Degree Network System (DNS) consists of degree-granting colleges and universities that have adopted policies outlined in the Voluntary Education Partnership Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to help Service members and their adult family members earn college degrees. Many courses offered by SOC DNS institutions have two-way guaranteed transferability, making it easier for Service members to complete associate and bachelor's degrees no matter where they move during their military careers. The SOC Degree Network System was consolidated in Fall 2014 into a 2-year institution and 4-year institution system without Service branch designations (SOCAD, SOCMAR, SOCMAR, and SOCCOAST). DNS institutions will be required to sign the most recent DoD MOU governing institutions providing voluntary instruction to Service members. Click [here](#) for more information on SOC DNS. <http://www.soc.aascu.org/degree-network-system>
  - **SOC CTE:** The SOC Career and Technical Education (CTE) Resource List identifies credit-bearing certificate programs in career and technical education fields. The CTE resource list was developed to assist military education counselors, academic advisers, and Service members with identifying career and technical education pathways to civilian careers with positive growth potential. The institutions and certificate programs included on the resource list have been carefully selected based on the program requirements outlined on the SOC CTE Membership page. The CTE Resource list contains 48 institutions and offers 203 certificate programs representing specific career pathways in six Career Clusters. The certificate programs are offered via traditional classroom delivery, online delivery, and hybrid platform. Click [here](#) for more information on the SOC CTE. <http://www.soc.aascu.org/career-and-technical-education>
- **Degree Levels and Programs** - Data used to populate basic information about the educational institution is extracted from ED's Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) and from the school's active DoD MOU verification application. Click [here](#) for more detailed information on IPEDS. <https://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/>
  - **Degree Level Source:** This section will reflect whether the degree levels and programs were extracted from IPEDS or updated on the school's DoD MOU Application.



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- Degree Level Source Updated: This section will reflect the original date the degree levels and programs were extracted from IPEDS or the latest update from the school's DoD MOU application.
- **Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP)** - The purpose of the CIP is to provide a taxonomic scheme that will support the accurate tracking, assessment, and reporting of fields of study and program completions activity. CIP was originally developed by the U.S. Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) in 1980, with revisions occurring in 1985 and 1990. The 2000 edition (CIP-2000) is the third revision of the taxonomy and presents an updated taxonomy of instructional program classifications and descriptions.

### Cost of Attendance

**First Time, Full Time Tuition/fees (in-state)** - The average in-state tuition/fees for an undergraduate student as reported by the school to the ED through IPEDS. Generally, in-state residents are charged a discounted rate of tuition and fees. Click here to view College Navigator. <https://nces.ed.gov/collegenavigator/>

**Estimated Books/Supplies** – The average cost for books and supplies for an undergraduate student as reported by the school to the ED through IPEDS. This is the same information published on College Navigator. From IPEDS: "The average cost of books and supplies for a typical student for an entire academic year (or program). Does not include unusual costs for special groups of students (e.g., engineering or art majors), unless they constitute the majority of students at an institution." If the school you selected does not display any books and supply costs, note that some schools are not required to report that information to ED.

**Estimated Room/Board** - The estimated cost for an undergraduate student's room and board as reported by the school to the ED through IPEDS. This is the same information published on College Navigator. Note: *For Estimated Room/Board when no data is reported, Department of Education estimates based on the prior year's data.* Click here to view College Navigator. <https://nces.ed.gov/collegenavigator/>

### DoD Tuition Assistance (TA) Information

**DoD Tuition Assistance (TA) Data** - Data populated is aggregated from the Service Components as reported annually to DoD.

### Department of Education Information

**Department of Education Data** - All of the ED data provided on TA DECIDE is for the most recent academic year available from ED.

- ED Composite Scores - Section 498(c) of the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended, requires for-profit and non-profit institutions to annually submit audited financial statements to the Department to demonstrate they are maintaining the standards of financial responsibility necessary to participate in the Title IV programs. One of many standards, which the Department utilizes to gauge the financial responsibility of an institution, is a composite of three ratios derived from an institution's audited financial statements. The three ratios are a primary reserve ratio, an equity ratio, and a net income ratio. These ratios gauge the fundamental elements of the financial health of an institution, not the educational quality of an institution. Click here to view ED composite scores. <https://studentaid.ed.gov/sa/about/data-center/school/composite-scores>



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- ED 90/10 Rule - Section 487(d)(4) of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (HEA), as amended, requires the Secretary to annually submit a report to Congress containing information regarding the amount and percentage of each proprietary institution's revenues from Title IV sources and non-Title IV sources as provided by the institution in its audited financial statements. This information relates to the requirement that a for-profit institution of postsecondary education derive at least 10 percent of its revenue from non-Title IV sources (the 90/10 rule). The 90/10 rule was amended by the enactment of the Higher Education Opportunity Act (HEOA) in 2008 to permit an institution that fails the 90/10 requirement for one year to continue its eligibility to participate in the Title IV programs. However, the institution's participation would become provisional for two fiscal years. If the institution does not satisfy the 90/10 rule for two consecutive fiscal years, it would lose its eligibility to participate in the Title IV programs for at least the following two fiscal years. This two-year provision was effective upon enactment of the HEOA of August 14, 2008. Click here to view ED's 90/10. <https://studentaid.ed.gov/sa/about/data-center/school/proprietary>
- Median Borrowing - The median amount of Federal student loans borrowed for students' undergraduate study at the institution is displayed. Data used to calculate the median amount of Federal student loans borrowed by students for their undergraduate study is from the U.S. Department of Education's National Student Loan Data System (NSLDS). Data represent all undergraduate borrowers who graduated or withdrew from the institution between July 1, 2010, and June 30, 2011. All Federal loans for undergraduate study, including Parent PLUS loans, are included for this cohort of borrowers. Only the debt associated with the students' attendance at the institution is included in the calculation. The estimated monthly repayment amount has been calculated using the Department's standard graduated repayment calculator based on an interest rate of 6.8%. Click here for more information about repayment calculators and interest rates. Note that a student's actual borrowing, interest rate, and monthly repayment amount may be different. <https://studentaid.ed.gov/sa/repay-loans/understand/plans>

**College Navigator Institution Data** - School information is published on College Navigator.

**Graduation rate** - The graduation rate displayed is for first-time, full-time degree or certificate-seeking undergraduate students who began at the institution.

The institution's graduation rate is displayed with an indication of how it compares with graduation rates among institutions that primarily grant the same level of award. For example, the comparison group for an institution that primarily awards bachelor's degrees is all institutions that primarily award bachelor's degrees.

Data used to calculate an institution's graduation rate and transfer-out rate, if applicable, come from an institution's annual submission to the U.S. Department of Education's Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS). Click here for more information about IPEDS. <https://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/>

### Complaint Information

**DoD Tuition Assistance (TA) Complaint Data** - Data populated is aggregated from the DoD Postsecondary Education Complaint System (PECS). The DoD PECS is a centralized online reporting system that allows service members and their families to provide feedback about education institutions. The initiative, part of the president's Executive Order for Principles of Excellence, empowers students and their families to report experiences related to misleading or unfair acts or practices by education institutions. **Note: Complaints can include multiple categories.** Click here for more information on the Postsecondary Education Complaint System.

[http://www.militaryonesource.mil/education-and-employment/higher-education-for-service-members?content\\_id=287986](http://www.militaryonesource.mil/education-and-employment/higher-education-for-service-members?content_id=287986)



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**VA Complaint Data** - Data populated is aggregated from the VA GI Bill Feedback System. **Note: Complaints can include multiple categories.** Click here for more information on the GI Bill Feedback System.

<http://www.benefits.va.gov/GIBILL/Feedback.asp>

Click here to read VA's Overview of the GI Bill Feedback System with CY 2014 Complaint Data.

[http://www.benefits.va.gov/GIBILL/docs/Overview\\_GI%20Bill\\_Feedback%20System\\_CY14.pdf](http://www.benefits.va.gov/GIBILL/docs/Overview_GI%20Bill_Feedback%20System_CY14.pdf)

### School Eligibility

#### Department of Defense

**DoD Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)** - The Department of Defense Instruction (DoDI) 1322.25, Voluntary Education Programs, Change 3, establishes Voluntary Education policy; states eligibility criteria for tuition assistance (TA); institutionalizes within DoD the Principles of Excellence in support of Executive Order 13607 (April 27, 2012); and requires educational institutions that wish to participate in the DoD Tuition Assistance (TA) Program to sign a MOU conveying the commitments and agreements between the educational institution and DoD prior to receiving funds from a service's TA program. Note: Only educational institutions eligible to participate in the TA program are available through TA DECIDE. Click here to read more about the DoD Voluntary Education Partnership MOU. <https://www.dodmou.com/>

#### Department of Veterans Affairs

**Principles of Excellence** - The Principles of Excellence is a voluntary initiative through the Department of Veterans Affairs. Schools that agree to participate will:

- Provide students with a personalized form covering the total cost of an education program.
- Provide educational plans for all Military and Veteran education beneficiaries.
- End fraudulent and aggressive recruiting techniques and misrepresentation.
- Provide accommodations for Service Members and Reservists absent due to service requirements.
- Designate a Point of Contact for academic and financial advising.
- Ensure accreditation of all new programs prior to enrolling students.
- Align institutional refund policies with those under Title IV.

Click here for more information on VA's work on the Principles of Excellence criteria.

[http://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/comparison\\_tool/about\\_this\\_tool.asp#principles](http://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/comparison_tool/about_this_tool.asp#principles)

**Yellow Ribbon** - The Post-9/11 GI Bill can cover all in-state tuition and fees at public degree granting schools, but may not cover all private degree granting schools and out-of-state tuition. The Yellow Ribbon Program provides additional support in those situations. Institutions voluntarily enter into an agreement with VA to fund uncovered charges. VA matches each dollar of unmet charges the institution agrees to contribute, up to the total cost of the tuition and fees.

Only Veterans entitled to the maximum benefit rate (based on service requirements) or their designated transferees may receive this funding. Active duty Service members and their spouses are not eligible for this program (child transferees of active duty service members may be eligible if the service member is qualified at the 100% rate). Click here to read more about VA's Yellow Ribbon Program.

[http://www.benefits.va.gov/GIBILL/yellow\\_ribbon.asp](http://www.benefits.va.gov/GIBILL/yellow_ribbon.asp)

#### Department of Education



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**8 Keys to Veterans Success** - The 8 Keys is a voluntary initiative through the Department of Education. Schools that agree to participate will:

- Create a culture of trust and connectedness across the campus community to promote well-being and success for veterans.
- Ensure consistent and sustained support from campus leadership.
- Implement an early alert system to ensure all veterans receive academic, career, and financial advice before challenges become overwhelming.
- Coordinate and centralize campus efforts for all veterans, together with the creation of a designated space for them (even if limited in size).
- Collaborate with local communities and organizations, including government agencies, to align and coordinate various services for veterans.
- Utilize a uniform set of data tools to collect and track information on veterans, including demographics, retention, and degree completion.
- Provide comprehensive professional development for faculty and staff on issues and challenges unique to veterans.
- Develop systems that ensure sustainability of effective practices for veterans.

Click here to read more about ED's 8 Keys to Veterans Success. <https://www.ed.gov/veterans-and-military-families/8-keys-success-sites>

## School Comparison Summary

### ***How Much Does TA Pay Per Course?***

The current DoD cap for TA is \$250 per Semester Hour or equivalent and \$4,500 per fiscal year. Use of TA for fees and books is not currently authorized. Most college courses are 3 Semester Hours, so the maximum that TA might pay in this case is \$750 per course. Some institutions charge more than the DoD cap, some charge less. This graph shows the current DoD average as the red dotted line, and what DoD TA paid per course to the comparison schools in the bar graph.

### ***What Are My Chances of Passing My Course?***

Many factors can influence whether a student passes a course. These factors can include distance learning options, deployment schedules, difficulty and rigor, personal planning, among many other factors. This graph shows the current DoD average as the red dotted line, and the comparison schools' course completion rates for courses taken using DoD TA.

### ***Do Military Students Graduate?***





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This is a very rough estimate, taken by simply dividing the number of enrollments in the most recent year by the number of graduates in that same year. If a program is rapidly changing its size over a short number of years (either growing or shrinking), this can skew the results, but otherwise it's a good snapshot of positive outcomes. It is best to compare like schools, if known: Two-year to two-year, etc. As a general rule, a higher number indicates a higher likelihood of graduating.

### ***How Long Does Graduation Take?***

This graph is a simple extension of the "Do Military Students Graduate?" chart. If the ratio of military graduates to military enrollees in any given year is 1 in 5, then it should stand to reason that it would take about five years to graduate. Individual results will vary depending on the kind of schools, the strength of planning, the number of credits already earned, and persistence, among many other factors.