

# VETERANS' SERVICES

Website: [www.swccd.edu/veterans](http://www.swccd.edu/veterans) (<http://www.swccd.edu/?page=343>)  
Phone: (619) 482-6324

The Veterans Services Office provides information and services to support veteran students who qualify for education benefits. Students are provided assistance with filing for benefits, completing required forms and information, and communicating with the Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA). The Veteran Services Office is located in Building 67-188.

## New students are required to:

1. Complete the online Southwestern College Application for Admission.
2. Visit the Veterans Service Office to submit your Certificate of Eligibility and create a file or email us at [swcveterans@swccd.edu](mailto:swcveterans@swccd.edu) for guidance on how to electronically submit your documents. please indicate the benefit chapter you are using with us.
3. Complete the Guided Self Placement process.
4. Make an appointment with the Veterans counselor to develop a Student Education Plan (SEP) and submit it to the Veterans Services Office, or you may email them at [counseling@swccd.edu](mailto:counseling@swccd.edu) to make an appointment.
5. Complete the online orientation process
6. Register for classes. Students are responsible for paying their enrollment fees (excluding Chapter 33 & Chapter 31).
7. Complete the online Benefit Declaration Form at [www.swccd.edu/veterans](http://www.swccd.edu/veterans) (<http://www.swccd.edu/?page=343>) by clicking on "Declaring Classes" to initiate the process to certify benefits. This term declaration must be completed for **every term** a student wishes to receive benefits. In order for our office to see your declaration **you must first register then declare for your classes**.

The DVA determines eligibility for VA education benefits and will only pay for courses that apply directly to the student's declared educational objective. It is the student's responsibility to enroll only in courses required to complete their declared academic program. Students are financially responsible for any courses taken outside the required coursework on their Student Education Plan (SEP). The DVA will not pay for courses for which the student has previously received credit or was assessed into a higher-level course.

## Transcripts

Official transcripts of all prior college work and military schools, including SMART and JST transcripts covering all periods of military service, must be on file at the Admissions and Records Office. Benefit certification will be delayed or withheld if transcripts are not received and evaluated by the end of the student's **first term**. Transcripts must be sent directly from the issuing institution to the Southwestern College Admission & Records Office, 900 Otay Lakes Road, Chula Vista, CA 91910. Hand carried transcripts will not be accepted.

## Credit for Prior Military Experience

Southwestern College conducts an evaluation of all previous education and training of military-affiliated students, and awards credit for prior military experience that is deemed equivalent to Southwestern College coursework. Students may receive up to 30 units of credit that may be

used to satisfy general education, core program, or elective requirements. No more than 9 units may be used for elective credit unless approved by the School Dean and discipline faculty. Awarding credit for prior military experience will be based on a collaborative process between the Veterans Services Office, the Evaluations Office, and the discipline faculty based on common course description found in the Chancellor's Office for California Community Colleges Common Numbering System (C-ID) and pertinent recommendations of the American Council on Education (ACE) in accordance with the associate/baccalaureate credit recommendations contained in *A Guide to the Evaluation of Educational Experiences in the Armed Services* published by ACE. Students must provide a copy of their DD-214 or DD-295 to the Veterans Services Office for processing.

All military service members who have completed their initial active-duty recruit training and received an honorable discharge will be awarded the following educational credits:

- 3 college credits applied toward Health Education
- 2 college credits applied toward Exercise Science

**Important:** Credits awarded by Southwestern College for military experience will not automatically transfer to another institution and students planning to transfer to a four-year institution should consult with the individual college or university regarding its military credit policy.

## Enrollment Priority

Veterans are eligible for first level priority registration after completing online orientation, Guided Self Placement and receiving a Student Education Plan (SEP). Please see "Enrollment Priorities" for more information.

## CalVet Fee Waiver

Under the California Education Code, dependents of veterans whose death or disability was service connected may be eligible for exemption from enrollment fees. Students can download a CalVet Fee Waiver packet online at [www.calvet.ca.gov](http://www.calvet.ca.gov). Students must complete the DVS40 form, submit it to the County Veterans Services Office for processing and, when approved, upload a copy of the eligibility letter to the Veterans Services Office using **CalVet Request Form** to electronically submit your application. The award is good for one academic year (**which covers the summer, fall and spring semesters**) and to ensure ongoing benefits, students are required to reapply each year at the end of tax season. A student must be a California resident to apply for the CalVet fee Waiver. For more information, contact the Veterans Services Office or visit the CalVet website at [www.swccd.edu/veterans](http://www.swccd.edu/veterans) (<https://www.swccd.edu/student-support/more-services/veterans-services/>).

## Withdrawal Policy for Members of the Military

A student who is a member of an active or reserve US military service and who receives orders compelling a withdrawal from courses shall be permitted to withdraw upon verification of such orders. A withdrawal symbol may be assigned which may be a "W" or "MW". Military withdrawal will not be counted in progress probation or dismissal calculations or in calculating the permitted number of withdrawals.

## Changes in Enrollment

Payment of benefits is based on the student's continued enrollment and participation in all enrolled classes for which the student is certified. All adds, drops, and withdrawals must be reported to the

Veterans Services Office promptly, which may be done via email to [swcveterans@swccd.edu](mailto:swcveterans@swccd.edu) or in person. Changes in enrollment may result in an overpayment or underpayment of benefit payments.

Important: Students are liable for any overpayment of benefits.

## Academic Progress and Suspension of Benefits

Southwestern College is responsible for enforcing standards of academic progress and the Veterans Services Office is responsible for notifying the DVA promptly when a student receiving VA education benefits is placed on academic probation.

**Reinstatement of Benefits:** In addition to not receiving VA educational benefits for one semester, students on probation must complete an Academic Success Seminar, have a written evaluation completed by an academic counselor, sign a Reinstatement Agreement and submit a copy into the Veterans Services. The evaluation must certify that the student has a reasonable chance of academic success in the future. Students who change their academic programs must face more stringent requirements, including submission to the DVA of a request for reinstatement of benefits. Once reinstated, students are required to maintain a GPA of 2.0 or greater every semester until they achieve a 2.0 cumulative GPA. Failure to do so will result in immediate suspension of VA benefits for an additional semester. Go to [www.gibill.va.gov](http://www.gibill.va.gov) (<https://benefits.va.gov/gibill/>) for more information.

For more extensive information on veterans' benefits, certification and academic requirements, please visit our webpage at [www.swccd.edu/veterans](http://www.swccd.edu/veterans) (<http://www.swccd.edu/?page=343>), consult the Student Veterans Handbook (available online and at the Veterans Services Office) or email us at [swcveterans@swccd.edu](mailto:swcveterans@swccd.edu).