



VA Campus Toolkit Handout



Reviewed April 17, 2014

Tips for Making your Syllabus Veteran Friendly

Creating a syllabus that reflects awareness of student Veterans as a student group can communicate your interest and respect for their service and success in school.

One possibility is to include a Veteran-friendly statement in your syllabus. This one has been used at a number of different universities.

"Veterans and active duty military personnel with special circumstances (e.g., upcoming deployments, drill requirements, disabilities) are welcome and encouraged to communicate these, in advance if possible, to the instructor."

Here are some additional considerations for your syllabi:

1. Today's student Veterans are non-traditional students. Many are several years older than traditional students (i.e., only 15% are between 18 and 23 years of age), and many have children and/or are married¹. As a result, many student Veterans are managing multiple roles, such as parent, spouse, employee, and student. In addition, some students may be Active Duty, Reservists, and National Guardsmen, and they may still be participating in drill on the weekend or have the potential to deploy. Drill involves a commitment of a weekend every month, as well as two weeks at some point during the year. This could intensify if a service member is scheduled to deploy.
 - **What can I do?** If possible, provide the syllabus in advance, with specific dates for assignments and tests to allow for planning around work and childcare. While it may not seem helpful to give specific dates for exams, the student can schedule childcare or work schedules around this, or use this as an opportunity to speak to you about rescheduling.
2. Being in combat, or even in the military, may leave a person changed. While many of these changes are positive, there may be some struggles with adjusting to civilian life². For many, this adjustment will resolve with time, but some student Veterans may need additional assistance.
 - **What can I do?** Consider providing assistance when adjustment issues are present. Veterans consistently say that other Veterans are their major support on campus, so encourage contact with the Office of Student Affairs for information on Veteran Service Organizations and peer- support programs. These services may help provide assistance with adjustment. If classroom behavior and academic performance are significantly impacted, consider a referral to the counseling center or the campus disability office. Providing information about the disability office on the syllabus may help students get connected to services. For some, this will be the first time they have navigated the disability service, so they may have to learn a new system. For Veterans with established medical or mental health concerns, they may be pursuing or have established treatment at the Veterans Affairs (VA) Healthcare System. Please consider some flexibility if a Veteran requests time for appointments.

¹See the [Who are Today's Student Veterans?](#) section of the toolkit for more demographics.

²See the [Common Adjustment Experiences](#) section of the toolkit for more information.

VA Campus Toolkit Handout www.mentalhealth.va.gov/studentveteran/

*Links will take you outside of the Department of Veterans Affairs web site. VA does not endorse and is not responsible for the content of the linked websites.