This guide was developed to assist UWRF faculty and staff with meeting the needs of the rapidly growing student veteran population, essential to becoming a military-friendly institution.

Information in this guide will cover:

- Military Veteran Resource Center
- Military Veteran Lounge
- Veterans Club
- Student Veteran Comparisons to Regular Student Body
- Understanding Student Veterans
- Class Tips and Information
- Campus Resources
- Additional Resources

Please contact Military Veteran Student Service Coordinator Peter Johnston if you have any questions by emailing peter.johnston@uwrf.edu or calling 715-425-4042.
Military Veteran Resource Center (MVRC)

Mission Statement
Our mission is to ensure student veterans, reservists, national guard, active duty and family members receive university support in achieving academic success.

Our mission is accomplished through the following goals:

1. Assisting students receiving their requested educational benefits.
2. Raising awareness of campus resources available to students.
3. Raising awareness of federal and state resources available to veterans.

Our office is located in 283 Rodli Hall and is open from 7:45 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. It is staffed by one full-time veteran service coordinator and up to two part-time federal work study students. The Military Veteran Resource Center is a space for students to come to and ask questions about military benefits, resources, and any military/veteran related items.

Military Veteran Lounge
The Military Veterans Lounge is designated for military members, veterans and family members to have a central place to relax, study, and socialize with others. Located in the Veteran Service Complex in 283 Rodli Hall, this study and lounge space has computers, snacks, beverages, a refrigerator and a microwave. It is a great place to find up-to-date veteran information and talk with other veterans.
The UWRF Veterans Club is a national chapter of Student Veterans of America (SVA). The purpose of the club is to support and honor the United States military services, family members, supporters, and community. The club provides an avenue to disperse information to its members and serve as an advocacy for veterans on campus and in the community. It also provides a social and business network to Veterans Club members.

Student Veteran Comparisons to Regular Student Body

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Military Culture</th>
<th>College</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Decisions made by others and compliance is non-negotiable</td>
<td>Individuals are free to make their own decisions, change their minds and opt out on an individual basis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part of a very cohesive group</td>
<td>Autonomous, alone and individual-focused</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Often told when, what, where and why of solving problems</td>
<td>Little guidance on addressing issues and problems, course work is often creative and fosters individual perspectives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critical thinking is NOT reinforced</td>
<td>Critical reflective thinkers are cultivated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Absolute respect for authority</td>
<td>Negotiable respect for authority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taught black-and-white thinking and tactical sequences to use when events arise</td>
<td>The very nature of college life is about exploring ideas and expanding personal perspectives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develops strong personal leadership. Experiences develop members with considerable world experience often beyond their same age peers</td>
<td>Students are often at the early stages of self-exploration and personal discovery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hierarchy or command staff clearly identified and utilized to resolve problems</td>
<td>When compared to the military</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quick and decisive decision making is often a matter of survival</td>
<td>Group processing and collaborative discussions facilitate the arrival at a group decision</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*From: Inver Hills Community College Faculty & Staff Military Friendly Guidebook*
Student veterans have had a variety of experiences, from being in combat zone to being posted in administrative positions in the U.S. or all over the world. If a student identifies him/herself as a veteran, do not make assumptions about what his/her experience has been.

The transition from military to [college] life can be jarring for students, and students transitioning into civilian life and working to assimilate to be a college student can be overwhelming. Be patient with students who are transitioning out of military life and into the [classroom] and know that they are working to understand a system which [may] seem very foreign to them.

Often student veterans are adult learners who have not been in a classroom since high school. As such, they may need academic support to get them up to speed. Be familiar with the academic support services available to support your class so that you can refer the student should they need additional help. In addition, student veterans are also likely to have broad life experiences that have matured them and have a global perspective that can inform their studies.

Like other adult learners, student veterans generally are goal-oriented and motivated students. They may be frustrated by other students in the classroom who do not take their studies and their roles seriously. They tend to have high expectations of themselves and others which can lead to frustration in the classroom if they are placed in groups with students who are not as motivated.

Although many student veterans are leaders in the classroom and may be outspoken, never assume that the veteran wants to talk about his/her military experience. You can’t know whether the student has positive or negative feelings about their experience in the military. Similarly, never ask the student veteran to give her/his opinions on a war or to speak about her/his experience unless you have developed a relationship with the student and are confident that they are comfortable speaking about it.

It is never appropriate to ask a military veteran “Did you kill anyone?” Veterans say that they are frequently asked this question, and it is important that should this question come from another student in your class, you address its insensitivity and inappropriateness in the classroom.

Student veterans, especially those who are transitioning to college from combat zones, may be agitated or distracted by loud noises, or become “on alert” if they hear particular sounds. Instructional technology such as laser pointers, if accidently directed at a combat veteran, can lead to a reaction. Be aware that a student veteran may need to leave the classroom because of anxiety related to unfamiliar sounds or distractions. These students may also feel more comfortable and secure sitting with their backs against a wall, so they may be inclined to sit in the back of the classroom. Be sensitive to this need for security and refrain from asking these students to move closer to the front of the room. If you notice a student who seems to be struggling with this sort of anxiety, and you have concerns, talk with that student in a private setting rather than in class or in front of other students.

* From the Central Oregon (created by UW-La Crosse) Supporting Student Veterans: A Guide for Staff and Faculty
Tips for showing support
(https://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/student-veteran/info-for-faculty-staff.asp)

- Recognize that a veteran may be a nontraditional student with multiple roles, such as parent, spouse, employee, or reservist/guardsman. Encourage communication and show flexibility to help the veteran cope with these many demands.

- Veterans bring to the campus a variety of life experiences and skills such as a capacity for leadership and teamwork. Encourage their participation in campus groups and activities.

- Many veterans leave higher education because they grow frustrated with the process and inability to obtain benefits, to interact with students after class and during breaks, or to use office hours and email. A relationship with a faculty member or adviser can be the single thing that helps a veteran remain in school. Your relationship with a veteran may help him or her feel more connected to the campus, navigate this new system, or feel support from an authority figure.

- Student veterans serving in the Reserve or National Guard must attend Battle Assembly one weekend a month, and annual training for two weeks during the year. Training could fall anytime during the semester. This could affect the student’s ability to complete an assignment or study for an exam. Consider providing some flexibility with assignments, tests, or attendance policies, based on a particular situation.

Suggested Faculty Course Syllabi Statement Example

UWRF is dedicated to assisting veterans, servicemembers and eligible family members in achieving their educational goals. Military members that are currently serving should advise their instructor of all regularly scheduled military appointments and duties that conflict with scheduled course requirements. Instructors will work with the student to address issues that arise.

*From: Inver Hills Community College Faculty & Staff Military Friendly Guidebook

Other Ideas

If available, please provide:

- Audio clips and videos that are captioned, as many vets have experienced hearing loss. Captioning can also help keep them on track.

- Handouts and lecture notes

- If you think a veteran would benefit from a quiet testing area, encourage them to seek out guidance from Ability Services.

* From the Central Oregon (created by UW-La Crosse) Supporting Student Veterans: A Guide for Staff and Faculty
Military Orders Vs. No Military Orders Clarification

Students who are/were in the military may miss class due to military related reasons. Situations and documents that may be presented include:

**No Orders Available**

**National Guard**
- Weekend Drill (Thursday evening through Sunday evening)
  - Please have students show you a copy of the Guard Newsletter that shows drill dates.

**Veterans**
- VA Medical Appointments
  - Students have medical appointments scheduled three months to one year in advance and they cannot miss these appointments, which is a VA requirement. Please have students show you a copy of the medical appointment.

**Orders Available**

**Title 10 Orders**
- Federal level for all branches of service
- Missions/deployments (active duty supporting named contingency operations)

**Title 32 Orders**
- State level (National Guard)
  - Personnel (organizing, administering, recruiting, or instructing)
  - Training
  - Responding to a national emergency
  - State emergencies

*Please note that Orders for Deployment or Letter from Commander about deployment are available about 3-6 months from the deployment.*

*All students who use services through the Military & Veteran Services Office are instructed to contact their instructors immediately when they find out they will be gone for military purposes.*

*Used from: Inver Hills Community College Faculty & Staff Military Friendly Guidebook*

---

**UWRF 9.2.13.3 Policy on Class Absence due to Military Service**

Students shall not be penalized for class absence due to required military obligations, as long as such class absence does not exceed 10% of course contact hours. Special permission for additional time may be granted by the instructor. Students are responsible for notifying faculty members of such circumstances as far in advance as possible and for providing documentation to the instructor to verify the reason for the absence. The instructor is responsible for providing reasonable accommodations or opportunities to make up exams or other course assignments that have an impact on the course grade. In all cases, the student is responsible for completing all course requirements.
Resources

Campus Resources
- School Certifying Official - Peter Johnston, Veteran Services, 715-425-3529, veterans@uwrf.edu
- Financial Aid - Holli Powell, 715-425-3141, finaid@uwrf.edu
- Student Ability Services - Alicia Reinke-Tuthill, 715-425-0740, alicia.reinketuthill@uwrf.edu
- Student Health and Counseling Services - Keven Syverson, 715-425-3293, keven.syverson@uwrf.edu
- Registrar’s Office - Ryan Bench, 715-425-3342, ryan.a.bench@uwrf.edu
- Student Billing - Mary Miller, 715-425-4434, mary.c.miller@uwrf.edu
- Veteran Crisis Line - 1-800-273-8255

Additional Resources
- Information for Faculty & Staff - https://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/student-veteran/info-for-faculty-staff.asp

References
- VA Campus Toolkit - https://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/student-veteran/info-for-faculty-staff.asp
- Inver Hills Community College Faculty & Staff Military Friendly Guidebook: https://www.inverhills.edu/BTYR/pdfs/Faculty_and_Staff_Guide.pdf