

Regulation on Awarding Credit for Military Training or Experience

I. Purpose. This regulation provides Systemwide consistency and clarity regarding implementation of Session Law 2014-67, Senate Bill 761, Section 3 (S.B. 761), and Section 700.7.1 of the UNC Policy Manual, *Policy on Military Student Success*. Content and definitions contained in this regulation shall comply with Section 700.1.1.2[R], *Regulation on Transfer Student Admission*.

A. Among the goals of Section 700.1 and this regulation are to implement S.B. 761, specifically the requirement for “implementing a uniform system of granting course credits to all students enrolled in the constituent institutions of the University of North Carolina and all students enrolled in State community colleges based on the students’ military training and experiences” and “the procedure to be utilized in evaluating military training or experience.” This regulation will provide clarity and consistency for UNC System constituent institutions to award credit as appropriate.

B. Representatives from all UNC System institutions, the North Carolina Community College System, and experts in the proper course credit procedures (e.g., registrars, admissions staff, offices of articulation) have been engaged in drafting this regulation to ensure the framework adheres to all applicable standards. Implementation shall align with the institution’s accrediting agency and of accrediting bodies for specific disciplines and professions.

II. Definitions. The following operational definitions apply to the policy and this regulation:

A. Database. The UNC System Office will construct, maintain, and make available for use and deployment by the institutions, a database, which will function as *the centralized and definitive resource* the UNC System constituent institutions must utilize to award credit for military courses/experiences. The database will contain, at a minimum, the following elements:

1. A current archive of all American Council on Education (ACE) Military Occupation and Military Course credit recommendations.
2. All course credit equivalencies (see II.D., below) as determined by the Military Credit Review Faculty Panels and by each individual Institution in all cases where the institution awarded credit through their own determination and processes.
3. An interface that allows users to search by military occupation and course and returns the proper and current course credit equivalencies for each UNC System and North Carolina Community College System (NCCCS) institution.
4. A secure interface that allows Military Credit Review Faculty Panels (see II.D.) and--in cases where occupations or courses have not been evaluated by a panel--appropriate institutional staff (e.g., registrars, admissions staff, offices of articulation) to enter their appropriate credit recommendations into the database.

B. Defense Activity for Non-Traditional Education Support (DANTES). DANTES is the Defense Human Resource Activity (DHRA) component responsible for managing a portfolio of education programs and services that help military members achieve their education and career goals. DANTES produces Joint Services Transcript JST; (see II.G.) and contracts with ACE to perform academic evaluation of military occupations and courses.

C. American Council on Education (ACE). ACE is a membership organization that mobilizes the higher education community to shape effective public policy and foster innovative, high-quality practice. ACE convenes faculty panels nationwide to review military occupation and course skills, learning objectives, and competencies, and to create generic credit recommendations based on course definitions common to most two- and four-year postsecondary educational institutions.

D. Military Credit Review Faculty Panels. The UNC System Office and NCCCS System Office will jointly recruit, assign, and administer Military Credit Review Faculty Panels, made up of faculty from across the two systems. These panels shall meet regularly to review ACE course credit recommendations for military occupations and courses and determine the appropriate credit institutions must award.

E. Applicable and appropriate credit. A determined number of credit hours granted for a particular course or courses, each designated by course prefix and course number as contained in the institution catalog, aligned with the subject content and determined by the UNC and NCCCS faculty panels, or by ACE course credit recommendations if not yet reviewed by the faculty panels.

F. Community College of the Air Force (CCAF). Members of the U.S. Air Force may not have a Joint Service Transcript (JST) if they only attended Air Force courses; the USAF established the CCAF in 1972 and the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) accredited CCAF in 1973. Courses on a CCAF transcript are not, and will not be, assessed by the faculty panels or included in these processes. Instead, institutions should grant normal and appropriate transfer credit as applicable.

G. Joint Service Transcript (JST). The JST is an academically accepted document approved by ACE to validate a service member's military occupational expertise and training, along with the corresponding ACE college credit recommendations. Institutions should only use official JSTs, marked "Official," and transmitted from DANTES to the evaluating institution, for actual credit articulation.

H. Military Credit Advisory Council (MCAC). The UNC System Office will create and maintain (as needed), a Military Credit Advisory Council as a resource to assist and advise the System Office and the UNC System chief academic officer (CAO), regarding requested areas of expertise on military credit issues. The System Office CAO, after communicating the change to all constituent institution's CAOs and requesting nominations, may alter the composition of the MCAC as needed. The UNC System Office will invite North Carolina Community College System officials to MCAC meetings.

I. Military Occupational Specialty (MOS). A coded system used by the military services to identify specific jobs and levels of expertise in those jobs. Specifically, only the U.S. Army and the U.S. Marine Corps uses the MOS acronym. The U.S. Air Force uses Air Force Specialty Codes (AFSC); the U.S. Navy uses ratings and the Navy Enlisted Classification (NEC); and the U.S. Coast Guard uses a system of naval ratings. However, many documents often use "MOS" generically.

This document will use the general terminology of military specialty or military specialty codes, but we may use “MOS” in charts and areas when required by allowable space as an acronym for military duty identifiers.

J. Other Official Academic Records. UNC System institutions may evaluate other documents as official academic records (military academic forms, e.g., DA-1059 (Army), Enlisted Record Briefing (ERB), Officer Record Brief (ORB)). Official academic records should include the following: name or type of training, description of training, dates of training, and performance outcome.

K. Recommended Course Credit. The credits published in the database, agreed upon by the faculty panels, and approved by each system’s provost/CAO, approved for awarding academic credit for specific military occupations and courses.

III. Affected Students. The requirements of this regulation shall affect all active duty, Reserve, National Guard, and veteran students who present an official JST, official CCAF transcript, or other official military academic record for review. This regulation, in conformance with S.B. 761, does not distinguish between type and/or status of any discharge. This regulation does not mandate any disposition regarding enrollment eligibility or institutional acceptance for enrollment. If DANTES transmits a valid JST for the student, the institutions must review the JST and apply approved credit in accordance with this regulation.

A. Institutions should encourage prospective military/veteran students to provide a JST (and other official academic records) during the application process.

B. Institutions should evaluate the JST and other official academic records for transfer credit as early as possible, but shall evaluate the JST prior to enrollment. Institutions are encouraged to evaluate non-official JSTs as part of the recruiting/application process. Early application of credits could affect course sequencing and failing to apply credits in a timely manner could adversely affect the student’s ability to register for courses, or cause students to take unneeded courses for credit.

C. Institutions may review unofficial JSTs/documents to provide information on possible credits, but they may award/implement the credit only after receiving an official JST, transmitted by DANTES.

D. Institutions shall not impose a penalty if a student chooses not to identify as an active duty service member or veteran. Once an active duty service member or veteran chooses to self-identify, the institution should request the official JST and evaluate it for transfer credit as soon as possible.

IV. Student Responsibilities.

A. Students seeking credit for military training or experience must submit a JST and other official academic records and/or notify the registrar or admissions personnel that they have potential military credit as part of the application process.

B. If they did not do so during the application process, students receiving VA benefits must submit their JST to the registrar by the end of the first semester of enrollment (or earlier) to maximize the amount of information for the cataloguing official. Registrars should work with the VA certifying officials to enter credit by the end of the first semester of enrollment to maximize the amount of information for the cataloguing official.

C. Some students on active duty may have applicable courses added to their JST while enrolled and at different points in their institutional enrollment. Students should request an evaluation of any new JST credits as soon as possible after the military course is completed by submitting an updated official JST for evaluation.

V. Awarding Applicable and Appropriate Credit. UNC System constituent institutions shall determine and award applicable and appropriate credit to students who have presented an official JST (and/or other official academic records) as outlined below. The institution shall retain a copy of all official JSTs used to evaluate credit for each student in conformance with the UNC System and institution's records retention policy. Institutions must use the database and its credit transfer functions to apply all credit articulations into the student's record. This requirement ensures that the UNC System Office has a reliable audit trail of all military credit articulations to demonstrate system-wide conformance to S.B. 761.

A. Initial JST Evaluation:

1. **If the occupation(s) and course(s) listed on the official JST are included in the database, which indicates a review and approval by UNC System-NCCCS faculty panels, institution officials shall award the student the specified course credit and specified credit hours listed in the database.** Institutions shall record the credit specifically, as a course prefix, number, and name as indicated in the database (e.g., specifically MATH 1150, and not as a "three hours of math," etc.). Institutions seeing any errors in the database should bring the matter to the attention of the appropriate staff at the UNC System Office as soon as possible.

2. **If the UNC System-NCCCS faculty panels have not reviewed a course presented by the student, and thus no recommendation exists in the database, then the institution shall grant credit based upon ACE recommendations.** The institution will ensure timely evaluation of credit and the credit given shall be specific to an institutional course equivalency, and not generic credit.

a. When the institution awards any credit for military courses/experiences, it shall enter the information into the database and it shall award the same credit for future students who present the identical military occupation or military course on or after the date of credit award.

b. If the UNC System-NCCCS faculty panels later award credit for the same military course/occupation/experience, the institution need not change previous credits awarded. The updated equivalent credit decided by the faculty panel will apply to future students as-of the panel decision date.

B. Updated JST Evaluation:

1. Registrars and institutional faculty/staff shall utilize the database (as described in V.A., above) to evaluate new content on a previously evaluated JST when a student presents a JST. Students on active duty may complete training while enrolled in an institution, and after the initial JST Evaluation (see V.A., above). When presented with an updated JST, registrars and institutional faculty/staff need only evaluate those elements of the JST added since the last evaluation.

2. Transfer Students from another UNC System institution shall have their entire JST re-evaluated by the gaining institution prior to starting classes. The gaining institution shall evaluate the student's JST against the current data in the database, and shall award the appropriate credit shown for their institution. Additionally, the gaining institution will make every reasonable effort to retain any previously granted credit that is not represented in the database for their institution, as appropriate regarding their transfer evaluation policies (e.g., as elective credit).

C. Refusal of Credit by Institution:

1. **The default position for the institutions and registrars shall be to award credit per the database or (if not evaluated) ACE recommendations.**

2. **If an institution objects to awarding credit, either via the database or ACE recommendations, they must request to do so in writing from the institution's CAO to the UNC System CAO.** The letter must contain specific evidence to counter the panel or ACE recommendations. At a minimum, the institution must base the objection upon the faculty's review of the military course in question (to include a review of the syllabus and learning objectives and outcomes) and compared to the same criteria of the institution's course for which the student is seeking credit. Evidence in support of an institution's compelling reasons for an exception to transfer equivalents shall be supported by the most recently available and practicable data on academic outcomes of that constituent institution's own students from the discipline most analogous or relevant to the content area of the credit under consideration.

3. The UNC System CAO will evaluate the institution's request. If the CAO grants the waiver, it will be for that institution only and the System Office will annotate the waiver in the database. If the CAO denies the waiver, the institution must grant the credit and cannot petition for a waiver again for the specific military course/training associated with the specific course credit.

D. As of August 1, 2023, any institutional policy or practice of awarding credit for military courses that differs from the above processes is considered null and void and the UNC System regulation takes precedence. Institutions may seek specific exceptions, following the processes outlined above (see paragraph V.C.2.). Any limits on the transfer of military credits shall be discontinued effective August 1, 2023. This regulation does not in any manner alter the graduation requirements that every student must meet in order to receive a degree; students must still satisfy graduation requirements (e.g., coursework taken in residence, capstone courses, cohort requirements, etc.).

E. Repeated Credit. Students may choose to take a course that meets credit they have already earned under this policy.

1. The student must make the request in writing, which will become a part of their academic record. The request should state the reasons for wanting to take the course rather than the transfer credit (e.g., military course was too far in the past and they wish to have updated information).

2. If appropriate under Department of Veterans Affairs and/or Department of Defense regulations, the institution's registrar may award the transfer credit in a way that

preserves the student's eligibility for the institution's course (which is not normally given for taking a repeated course if the student earned a non-punitive grade). If such a change/coding is not possible, the student must understand that they may have to personally pay for tuition and fees associated with taking a repeated course, in order to abide by Department of Veterans Affairs and/or Department of Defense policies.

3. If the student wishes to audit the course, the institution should allow the student to do so at no charge for tuition and fees (required textbooks and supplies are the student's responsibility).

F. Effective immediately, institutions should announce and publish credit that is available for currently enrolled military and veteran students and invite them to submit any JSTs for review. Prior credit given to currently enrolled students may remain as granted or the student and/or institutional faculty/staff may request an additional review. The institution shall award additional credit if advantageous to the student.

G. Additionally, UNC constituent institutions:

1. Shall establish and publish a process whereby active duty military, reservists, and veterans receive credit for the general education health and/or physical education requirements, based on military recruit training.

2. Shall accept foreign language coursework completed through the Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center (DLIFLC) as transfer credit. Institutions are encouraged to establish a process for students to demonstrate proficiency and to waive campus language requirements for other foreign language skill development outside of DLIFLC. Examples include, but are not limited to, the following examples: College-Level Examination Program (CLEP) credit, Defense Language Proficiency exams, and continuing education mission specific language training.

3. Are encouraged to develop equivalence mapping for credit by exam for CLEP and DANTES Standardized Subject Tests (DSST), and to publish a chart showing the minimum allowable CLEP and DSST scores (no lower than 50 for CLEP) and the credit/course equivalences.

4. Are encouraged to train admissions counselors, registrars, academic advisors, department chairs or heads, and deans on the principles and practices of military credit transferability. The UNC System Office will provide training and consultation as requested or required.

5. Shall consult with the UNC System Office CAO (or designated representative) on any questions regarding evaluation of military training and experience not covered in this regulation.

VI. Student Choice Regarding Award of Transfer. A student may decline to accept the offered credit and either audit or enroll in a course or credit option aligned with the course in question, depending on institutional practice. When a student declines to accept an offered credit, they should do so in writing and the institution will make that request a part of the student's academic record.

A. Whenever possible, appropriate institutional staff (military/veterans services office, advisors, VA Representatives, etc.) should inform eligible students of the above-described options available to them under the policy and this regulation, along with the potential benefits and disadvantages of those options.

B. Institutions may choose to complement advice from academic advisors with a standardized communication to incoming students regarding transfer credit and the potential benefits and disadvantages of the above-mentioned options.

VII. Documentation Requirements.

A. All institutions will record all credit granted to veterans from JST evaluations in their Student Information System (SIS) and/or degree audit systems, in a manner that makes it clear that the credit originated from a JST evaluation.

B. The UNC System Office will maintain records of all transfer transactions that utilize the database to transfer credit into the institutions' SIS and/or degree audit systems.

VIII. Assessment of the Policy and this Regulation's Effectiveness. At least every three years, the UNC System Office will assess effects of the policy and this regulation, at the level of the UNC System and across its constituent institutions. Recommendations for altering the policy and this regulation shall be made accordingly to the president (for this regulation) or Board of Governors (for the policy), based on appropriate evidence.

IX. Other Matters.

A. Effective Date. The requirements of this regulation shall be effective upon the date of adoption of this regulation by the president.

B. Relation to Federal and State Laws. The foregoing regulation as adopted by the president is meant to supplement, and does not purport to supplant or modify, those statutory enactments, regulations, and policies that may govern or related to the subject matter of this regulation.