Regulation for Military Student Success

I. Purpose. This regulation provides a framework for the constituent institutions of the University of North Carolina System to develop and maintain a comprehensive network of services for military-affiliated students seeking to meet their educational goals. This regulation implements the requirements of Section 700.7.1 of the UNC Policy Manual, *Policy on Military Student Success*, and serves to promote the general welfare of military-affiliated students at constituent institutions.

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

A. Armed Forces. Armed Forces shall mean the United States Air Force, Army, Coast Guard, Marine Corps, Navy, Space Force, and National Guard.

B. Reserve Armed Forces. Reserve Armed Forces shall mean the reserve components of any of the Armed Forces.

C. Military Student. Military Student shall mean a student who is a veteran or actively serving member of the Armed Forces, Reserve Armed Forces, and United States Uniformed Services as defined in 37 U.S. Code §101(3).

D. Military-affiliated Student. Military-affiliated Student shall mean a Military Student and the spouse, child, surviving spouse, or surviving child of a Military Student, or a student who is a Reserve Officers Training Corp (ROTC) cadet.

III. Campus-based Support Structures for Military-affiliated Students. Constituent institutions shall create campus-based military affairs committees to assist Military-affiliated Students in successfully transitioning and succeeding beyond the educational environment. To ensure effectiveness, these committees should, at a minimum, be charged with:

A. Ensuring that faculty and staff are provided for with support and training on issues that are unique to, or commonly encountered by, Military-affiliated Students;

B. Facilitating awareness and communication between key departments with regard to constituent institution-based services for Military-affiliated Students;

C. Coordinating and evaluating programs and services for those students;

D. Factoring those students into institutional planning;

E. Ensuring institutional compliance with all applicable standards and policies implemented by the Department of Defense (DoD), the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), and the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA); and

F. Ensuring institutional compliance with the guidelines and recommendations in the most current version of the VA's School Certifying Official (SCO) Handbook.

IV. Financial Support of Military-affiliated Students.

A. Application Fees. Constituent institutions shall waive the admissions application fee for all Military Students.

B. In-state Tuition Rates for Military-affiliated Students. Constituent institutions shall clearly articulate the process for Military-affiliated Students to establish eligibility for the in-state tuition rate pursuant to state and federal law, and pursuant to the guidelines of the Residency Determination Service. Information regarding eligibility for in-state tuition shall be publicized as part of both the undergraduate and graduate recruitment and admissions processes.

C. Payment Processing Delays. Constituent institutions shall create policies that guarantee that Military-affiliated Students using state or federal Tuition Assistance, or VA education and training benefits, are held harmless from processing delays that result from circumstances outside of their control. These policies shall include provisions:

1. Granting exemption from late payment fees on students whose payments are delayed as a function of tuition assistance or VA educational benefits delays;

2. Maintaining students' course registrations until such delayed payments are received;

3. Adhering to provisions in the Veterans Benefits and Transition Act of 2018 when VA payments are delayed. Penalties prohibited by the act include, but are not limited to, denial of access to classes, libraries, or other institutional facilities, or the requirement that the student borrow additional funds, because of their inability to meet their financial obligations to the institution.

4. Making reasonably available "bridge loans," payment plans, tuition deferments, vouchers, or some combination of these items to cover tuition, fees, housing, books, and other expenses related directly to university life, as defined by campus policy, until payment is received from the DoD, DHS, or VA, subject to availability and other reasonable restrictions that may be in place at the campus. Additionally, if applicable, institutions should not charge interest on any "bridge loans."

D. Scholarships and Grants. Development and advancement offices at constituent institutions are also encouraged to create, fund, and maintain scholarships and grants for Military-affiliated Students.

E. Campus Employment. Constituent institutions are encouraged to apply for designation as an official VA Work Study Site and recruit eligible Military-affiliated Students, when appropriate, for VA work-study positions.

V. Student Support Services for Military-affiliated Students. Constituent institutions are encouraged to support student veteran organizations and/or other Military-affiliated Student organizations. The student organization advisor is encouraged to communicate updates on veterans and military affairs on campus, as well as on topics and announcements related to any Military-affiliated Student groups.

VI. Academic Support for Military-affiliated Students.

A. Orientation/Transition Seminar. Constituent institutions should provide break-out sessions focused on Military-affiliated Students as part of their regular orientation programs. When possible, institutions should make these resources available online. Constituent institutions offering a credit-bearing introduction to the university course should consider providing a section, or sections, exclusively for Military-affiliated Students.

B. Priority Registration. Military-Affiliated students using VA education benefits, students using DoD or DHS Tuition Assistance, students on national service academy graduate degree sponsorship, and students who have been released from active duty for a specific amount of time to attend college through a military degree completion program often face unique scheduling challenges. Constituent institutions should provide these students with priority enrollment and registration and/or other scheduling assistance to ensure those with time constraints attributable to their benefits can utilize those benefits fully, or to the maximum extent possible.

C. Academic Assistance. Constituent institutions shall evaluate, review, adapt, and monitor academic assistance, including mentoring and tutoring, for their Military-affiliated Students.

D. Service Cords. Constituent institutions are encouraged to provide military service cords for graduating Military Students. When offered, service cords should be provided free of charge, when possible. Constituent institutions should consider recognizing these graduates in graduation ceremonies or materials.

VII. Admitted Students Called to Duty or Entering Military Service.

A. Constituent institutions shall accommodate Military-affiliated Students who are "called to duty" or receive orders for military service. A call to duty or military service may include, but is not limited to:

1. Service in the uniformed services as defined in 34 CFR §668.18;

2. Guard or Reserve duties, such as participation in weekly or monthly meetings, weekend drills, annual trainings, military schooling, or other training or official military events; or

3. Active duty, Guard, or Reserve military members on extended training and/or deployments, or a Permanent Change of Station (PCS) move.

B. Deferral of Enrollment. In accordance with N.C.G.S. §116-44.9C, constituent institutions shall provide for enrollment deferment for members of the Armed Forces, reserve components of the Armed Forces, and Merchant Marine, and their spouses. Constituent institutions shall:

1. Describe the process by which the student (or an appropriate officer of the Armed Forces or official of the DoD or DHS) gives advance written or verbal notice of call to duty or military service to the designated campus body or official;[1]

2. Identify the designated campus body or official and describe the process by which the student informs the appropriate campus body or official of intent to return to the institution upon completion of period of service;

3. Publish the details of the process in the appropriate sections of the university catalogue and website;

4. Include provision for a full refund on all deposits paid by the student; and

5. Clarify the notification process of all relevant offices on campus.

C. Short-term Absences Due to Call to Duty. Any Military Student called to duty for a short period (fewer than 30 days) during a semester/term, which does not require withdrawal, shall:

1. Notify their institution immediately, including the course instructor(s), advisor(s), and military-affiliated student services office. Military Students who believe their military requirements may affect their enrollment/attendance during a specific semester should inform their institution at the beginning of the semester or as soon as the potential call to duty is reasonably known;

2. Provide a copy of orders or a letter from the unit command to the institution once the call to duty is confirmed and if the student needs to be excused from class(es);

3. Be given an excused absence for the period of time the student is called to duty;

4. Be given the opportunity to make up any test or other work missed during the excused absence. The course instructor is encouraged to permit the student a reasonable amount of time to make up missed assignments;

5. Be given the option, when feasible, to continue classes and coursework during the academic term through online participation for the period of time the student is called to duty;

6. Be given a temporary grade of incomplete (I) for any course that the student was unable to complete as a result of being called to active duty. However, the student must complete the course requirements within the period of time specified by the constituent institution in order to avoid receiving a failing grade for the course; and

7. Be permitted to drop, with no penalty, any course that the student was unable to complete as a result of being called to duty.

[1] No notice is required if the giving of such notice is precluded by military necessity, such as a mission, operation, exercise, or requirement that is classified or a pending or ongoing mission, operation, exercise, or requirement that may be compromised or otherwise adversely affected by public knowledge (34 CFR §668.18).

D. Military Withdrawal. Due to call to duty situations, Military Students may need to withdraw from coursework during the course of a semester.

1. Military Students who believe their military requirements may affect their enrollment/attendance during a specific semester should inform their institution as soon as practicably, including course instructor(s), academic advisor(s), and military-affiliated student services office.

2. Military Students who have scheduled/known calls to duty during a semester should avoid registering for courses in which their military commitments will affect their academic attendance, performance, and learning. In those cases, the Military Students should work to seek a deferral or other arrangements and constituent institutions should work with the students on the program of study to rearrange the academic planning.

3. Constituent institutions shall develop policies that permit a Military Student to withdraw from a course or courses at any time and without academic penalty due to a call to duty. These policies must:

a. Be published in the appropriate sections of the university catalogue and website;

b. Describe the process by which the student (or an appropriate officer of the Armed Forces or official of the DoD or DHS) gives advance written or verbal notice of call to duty to the designated campus body or official;[2]

c. Describe the process by which the student informs the appropriate campus body or official of intent to return to the institution upon completion of period of service.

d. Establish the process for adjustment of any time limits for degree completion – particularly graduate degrees – including review in the case of required repetition of coursework that might be outdated.

e. Provide a separate transcript notation appropriate for students who withdraw for call of duty situations.

f. Provide a full refund of tuition and mandatory fees, and/or adjust the student financial aid account, as appropriate. This includes:

i. Issue a full refund for textbooks purchased through the university bookstore for the semester in progress. The student being called to duty must present the textbooks, purchase receipt(s), and a copy of the applicable military order.[3]

[2] No notice is required if the giving of such notice is precluded by military necessity, such as a mission, operation, exercise, or requirement that is classified or a pending or ongoing mission, operation, exercise, or requirement that may be compromised or otherwise adversely affected by public knowledge (34 CFR §668.18).

[3] Campuses with a rental program should consider a refund or prorating of the rental fee.

ii. Issue a prorated refund of room rent for a campus residence facility. This refund will be based on the student's official check-out date.[4]

iii. Issue a prorated refund of general and special fees.

iv. Issue a prorated refund of any campus dining, meal plan or other prepaid auxiliary services.

v. Allow unpaid account balances to be subject to a payment plan formulated with the student. No collection actions will occur during a deployment.

E. Readmission to the University. No student shall be denied readmission to a constituent institution solely because of a call to duty situation. Constituent institutions shall:

1. Readmit students who seek readmission no later than three years after the completion of the period of service,[5] at the same academic standing as the time of their call to duty, pursuant to 34 CFR §688.18, and subject to campus safety policies and procedures.

2. Clarify all conditions that would lead to change in academic standing or admission status and publish such details in appropriate sections of the university's website.

3. Describe and publish details of the process required to seek readmission, if required by the institution.

4. Waive any new application fees.

5. Adjust the registration window for students to allow for early registration, if possible.

6. Clarify variations in regulations for readmission for students:

a. Who were on academic probation or suspension; or

b. Who were away longer than three calendar years following the completion of service.

7. Indicate a process for reinstatement to a specific undergraduate program of study.

[4] If the student is receiving a Basic Allowance for Housing Benefit from the VA for housing, they are entitled to keep all funds through their last date of attendance (as certified on campus). Any funds received from the VA for any period after the last date of attendance become a VA student debt.

[5] A student hospitalized or convalescing from an illness or injury suffered during the performance of military service shall notify the institution of the intent to return no later than two years after the end of recovery. A student who fails to apply for readmission within the period described shall not automatically forfeit such eligibility for readmission to the institution of higher education, but shall be subject to the institution's established leave of absence policy and general practices (34 CFR §668.18).

F. Termination of Eligibility for Readmission. Pursuant to 34 CFR §688.18, a student's eligibility for readmission is terminated in any of the following events:

1. Separation due to dishonorable or bad conduct discharge.

2. Dismissal of a commissioned officer by sentence of a general court martial; in commutation of a sentence of a general court-martial; or, in time of war, by order of the President of the United States; or

3. Dropping of a commissioned officer from the rolls due to absence without authority for at least three months; separation by reason of sentence to confinement adjudicated by a court martial; or sentence to confinement in a federal or state penitentiary or correctional institution.

G. Tuition Rates and Scholarship Status Upon Readmission to the University. Constituent institutions shall follow federal and state law in charging appropriate tuition rates for students who defer enrollment or return to the institution after the completion of military service or call to duty. Constituent institutions shall:

1. Readmit service members in accordance with 34 CFR §688.18.

2. Establish a process for students to request a military service waiver to extend fixed tuition periods beyond eight consecutive semesters as described in N.C.G.S. § 116-143.9, and process for the institution to adjudicate and track such waivers.

3. When possible, and depending on the availability of funds, Military-affiliated Students receiving university scholarships at the time of their call to duty should be eligible to apply to receive the remainder of the scholarship upon their return. Constituent institutions shall develop policies related to the impact of call to duty on the scholarships they award. These policies must:

a. Include provisions to notify students about the status of their scholarships at the time of a military withdrawal or leave of absence; and

b. Describe the rules related to reinstatement of scholarships and the process to initiate reinstatement when possible.

VIII. Other Matters

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

B. Relation to Federal and State Laws and Policies. 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 which may govern or relate to the subject matter of this regulation.

C. Relation to Professional Certifications and Licensure Standards. Institutions should recognize that this regulation relates to UNC System policy only, and not to professional

certifications or applicable licensure standards set by external agencies and associations. In cases where adherence to this regulation may conflict with university or academic program accreditation standards, institutions should prioritize adherence to accreditation standards.