

Welcome to Western Illinois University and the Veterans Resource Center!

Thank you for your service. We want to make sure you receive all the benefits and services you deserve! Please make sure to contact us with any concerns or questions.

1. Please make sure WIU has a copy of your Member 4 or Service 2 DD Form 214.

You can provide this to the Veterans Resource Center located at 333 Ward Street, fax it to (309) 298-3509 or e-mail veteransresources@wiu.edu.

Your Member 4 or Service 2 of your DD Form 214 gets you 4 to 8 semester hours of Academic Undergraduate Credit for your military experience absolutely free!

If you are on Active Duty or currently deployed/mobilized for the first time, you may not have a DD-214. In that case the university will accept a Statement of Service letter from your Commanding or Personnel Officer as long as it includes Character of Service similar to what would be on a Member 4 copy of your DD-214 and is written on official letterhead.

The DD-214 is also required for Veterans Priority Registration. To register for classes, you need to make an appointment with your advisor.

2. You may be missing out on additional academic credit! Please submit your JST, CCAF transcript or additional military transcripts after completing AIT, any significant training, or after a promotion. You can request your transcript here: <https://jst.doded.mil/jst/> When selecting the school please use Western Illinois University Extended Studies.

3. If you are on Active Duty or in the Reserves and eligible for Tuition Assistance (TA) we strongly encourage you to apply for it with your base education office as one of the first means to pay for your education. In that regard, if you have questions or trouble in obtaining Tuition Assistance, please call, email or otherwise inform the Veteran Resource Office directly for additional assistance. For more information about tuition assistance, please see the Tuition Assistance link under educational benefits or visit:

http://www.wiu.edu/vpas/business_services/billing/

You would then also complete the following form:

<http://www.wiu.edu/registrar/forms/Military%20Tuition%20Rate%20Application.pdf>

If you are a national guard member or reservist, in particular, I would check out the following website for reserve military branch-specific policies:

<https://www.military.com/education/money-for-school/reserve-tuition-assistance.html>

4. If you are eligible, please apply for the GI Bill. If you are a first-time applicant for Education Benefits Chapters 30, 33, or 1606, and have not done so already, please complete and submit VA Form 22-1990. If you have received the GI Bill previously, please complete Form 22-1995 to transfer your GI Bill benefits to Western or to change programs. Find the application for Educational Benefits online at <https://www.vets.gov/education/apply/>.

Note once you select Chapter 33 Post 9/11 GI Bill, it is irrevocable. Based on where you live and/or other benefits you have available, you should definitely double-check with a VA specialist regarding Chapters 30, 1606, or another benefit (i.e., TA) that might serve you better before selecting Chapter 33.

5. If eligible for the GI Bill, certify your enrollment on your STARS account after you have registered for classes. You can do this by logging into STARS and hovering over the Financials tab at the top of the page. A new box will appear with "GI Bill Information" at the bottom of the box. Click on that box. There will be 3 questions/notes. To ensure it gets done correctly you will want to make sure you see a message stating your information has been submitted. You must complete this step each semester (when you register for classes) if you plan to receive the GI Bill for the term.

In addition to certifying on STARS at the beginning of every semester, Chapter 30, 33 and 1606 recipients must also verify their enrollment with the VA on the last day of every month. If this is your first time verifying you need to call 888-442-4551. Let them know you are verifying for the month and make sure they have everything that they need. They should share the automated number and/or website for you to verify the months following.

Upon your first-time WIU course enrollment, you should also note unless you are using the GI Bill Chapter 31 or 33 Benefits, WIU charges your WIU account \$15 a one-time transcript fee to review your academic records and/or send your future WIU transcripts for free.

6. If eligible apply for the Illinois National Guard Grant here:

[https://studentportal.isac.org/web/guest/student/?p_p_id=Student_WAR_Studentportlet & Student_WAR_Studentportlet_facesViewIdRender=%2Fviews%2Fing%2Fing.xhtml](https://studentportal.isac.org/web/guest/student/?p_p_id=Student_WAR_Studentportlet&Student_WAR_Studentportlet_facesViewIdRender=%2Fviews%2Fing%2Fing.xhtml)

You must apply for the Illinois National Guard Grant (ING) each year. The application deadlines are Fall- October 1, Spring - March 1, and Summer - June 15.

The Illinois National Guard Grant (ING) covers full tuition and only the Activity Fee and the Fine Arts Activity Fee. Other fees per credit hour are not covered by the ING grant.

The other fees can be covered by the Illinois MAP grant (if you qualify), the Federal Pell grant (if you qualify) or Federal Student loans (if you file a FAFSA and accept federal loans). A full list of fees charged to every student can be found at http://www.wiu.edu/business_services/tuition/fees.php

7. Apply for the Illinois Veterans Grant (IVG), if you are eligible. The eligibility criteria and application can be obtained at http://www.isac.org/students/during-college/applying-for-financial-aid/applications/ivg_applying/index.html

Note: if both ING and IVG are available to you, the ING should be pursued prior to IVG.

8. If you want to be considered for financial aid, apply for Federal Student Aid as soon as possible. Applications begin for FAFSA for the following year at fafsa.ed.gov on October 1st. Many scholarships are available for veterans and/or their dependents who might not qualify for other financial aid. Completion of FAFSA may be a requirement, so we strongly recommend individuals complete FAFSA. More financial aid information can be found at the following link: http://www.wiu.edu/student_services/financial_aid/

9. If at any point in your college career you are activated or deployed, please make sure that you fill out the following form EVERY time. You will also need to submit your orders. This allows us to be able to assist you with any accommodations that may be needed to make sure you are able to use all available benefits.

https://www.wiu.edu/users/cms300/provost/military_activation/index.php

The full policy can be read at: <http://www.wiu.edu/policies/military.php>

10. You must also send the Beu Health Center a copy of your immunization record (including childhood shots) if you intend on taking classes on campus. You may obtain your records from your high school or childhood physician. Although your military records will reflect some of your current immunizations, you will also need to provide those you obtained as a child as well. Visit the Beu Health Center: http://www.wiu.edu/student_services/beu_health_center/ or call 309-298-1888.

11. If you are eligible to reside off-campus, you may need to submit a housing petition based on your active duty veteran status (one year or more), age, living with parents within 45 miles, etc.

12. Parking: There are 6 locations on campus that are reserved for veterans and service members. It is important that you purchase a parking pass if you have a vehicle on campus. In order to get the Veterans discount please follow these steps. Step 1. Go to <http://wiu.parklpr.com/> and establish an account. Step 2. Add your vehicle (do not purchase a pass at this point) Step 3. Physically go into parking services at Mowbray Hall/Office of Public Safety (1 W Murray St, Macomb, IL 61455) Step 4. Provide your Military ID or a copy of your DD214 to parking services so they can apply your discount.

If you have already purchased a parking pass and did not receive a discount, go into the OPS office and explain to them that you have already purchased a parking pass and present them with either your Military ID card or DD214. You can reach out to parking services at 309-298-1921 with questions.

13. Based on your status as Active Duty Military, Drilling Reservists, or National Guard Personnel we want you to know CLEP and DANTES proficiency exams are free on campus for Active Duty Military, Drilling Reservists, and National Guard Personnel. You may want to consider using these exams in completing your degree and/or have a discussion with your Academic Advisor and/or the Veteran Resource Center Director about them. Similarly, know veterans as well as Active Duty and Reservists using any of the following benefits: Chapter 30 (MGIB), 33 (Post 9-11), 35 (DEA), or Sections 1606/1607 (Reserve MGIB or REAP) can also take these, Excelsior and some other exams at any location and submit their receipts to the VA for full reimbursement. <https://www.va.gov/education/about-gi-bill-benefits/how-to-use-benefits/test-fees/>

14. If helping veterans and service members is an interest you have. Please contact us. For veteran students and/or their dependents on campus receiving benefits, we accept resumes on an ongoing basis for those who might be interested in working within our office. We have both Federal and VA Work-Study positions and/or other volunteers/internship opportunities in our office and other areas on campus. We encourage all interested to apply.