

Department of Defense Voluntary Education Partnership

POLICY STATEMENT

The DoD Voluntary Education Partnership Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between Sampson Community College (SCC) and the DoD Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness (USD(P&R)) articulates the commitment and agreement the College provides to the DoD by accepting funds via each Military Service's Tuition Assistance program in exchange for education services. To ensure compliance with the MOU, Sampson Community College adheres to DoD Voluntary Education program guidelines related to recruiting, marketing, and advertising; financial matters; accreditation and credentialing; and academic counseling and post-graduation employment opportunities.

PROCEDURE

The DoD VolEd program seeks to shape quality educational experiences that result in meaningful value for Military Service members, the Services, and society. SCC's Coordinator of Special Populations & Testing assists students who are eligible for Veterans educational benefits, including Veterans, active-duty personnel, and members of selected reserves and the National Guard.

RECRUITING, MARKETING, AND ADVERTISING

In accordance with [Department of Defense Instruction \(DoDI\) 1322.25](#), VolED, paragraph 1.c.(1)(b), SCC, as an institution providing education programs through the DoD Tuition Assistance (TA) Program, does not use unfair, deceptive, and abusive recruiting practices.

In accordance with DoD MOU paragraph 3.j.(2), SCC refrains *"from providing any commission, bonus, or other incentive payment based directly or indirectly on securing enrollments or federal financial aid (including TA funds) to any persons or entities engaged in any student recruiting, admission activities, or making decisions regarding the award of student financial assistance."*

In accordance with DoD MOU paragraph 3.j.(3), SCC refrains *"from high-pressure recruitment tactics such as making multiple unsolicited contacts (three or more), including contacts by phone, email, or in person, and engaging in same-day recruitment and registration for the purpose of securing Service member enrollments."*

Per DoD MOU paragraph 4.e.(2)-(3), *"DoD personnel are entitled to consideration for all forms of financial aid that educational institutions make available to students at their home campus."* SCC's financial aid officers provide [information and application](#) processes for Title IV student aid programs,

scholarships, fellowships, and grants to DoD TA recipients. SCC does not participate in student loans program. Service members identified as eligible DoD TA recipients have their TA benefits applied to their SCC account prior to the application of their Pell Grant funds.

Per DoD MOU paragraph 4.d.(1), *“if an eligible Service member decides to use TA,”* SCC *“will enroll [them] only after the TA is approved by the individual’s Service.”*

TUITION ASSISTANCE (TA) APPROVAL PROCEDURE FOR SERVICE MEMBERS

SCC’s policy outlines the procedure for service members who wish to utilize TA benefits and mandates that college employees assist them in obtaining approval from their respective Education Services Office (ESO) or military service counselor before enrolling in courses. By implementing this policy, SCC aims to streamline the process for service members using TA benefits while ensuring compliance with military service branch requirements.

1. **Applicability:** This policy applies to all active-duty service members, National Guard, and Reserve members eligible for TA benefits at the college.
2. **Responsibility of College Employees:** SCC employees, including academic advisors, and registration staff, have a responsibility to inform service members about the requirement to obtain approval from their ESO or military service counselor before enrolling in courses. This information should be communicated clearly during the initial advising and registration process.
3. **Communication of Policy:** SCC will ensure that information regarding this policy is readily available through official college communication channels, such as the college website, student handbook, and orientation materials.
4. **Approval Process:** Service members seeking to use TA benefits must follow these steps:
 - a. **Service Member Initiation:** The service member expresses their intent to use TA benefits to the college employee during advising or registration.
 - b. **College Employee Responsibility:** SCC’s employees will provide the service member with information on the requirement to obtain approval from their ESO or military service counselor. They will also provide instructions on how to contact the ESO or counselor.
 - c. **Service Member Contacts ESO/Counselor:** The service member is responsible for initiating contact with their ESO or military service counselor. They must request approval for the specific courses they intend to enroll in.
 - d. **Approval Documentation:** The service member must obtain written documentation or an email confirmation from their ESO or counselor indicating approval for the selected courses.
 - e. **Submission of Approval:** The service member is required to notify SCC’s Finance Office of the approval before the enrollment deadline for the respective term.

5. Enrollment with Approval: SCC will process the service member's enrollment only after receiving the required approval documentation from the ESO or military service counselor.
6. Non-Compliance: Service members who fail to obtain the necessary approval will not be eligible to use TA benefits for the selected courses, and enrollment may be delayed or canceled.
7. Appeals: In the event of a denied approval from the ESO or counselor, service members may follow the appeals process outlined by their respective military service branch.

Effective Date: This policy will become effective immediately.

Review and Revision: This policy will be subject to periodic review and revision as necessary to ensure alignment with current regulations and practices. Any updates will be communicated to relevant stakeholders.

VETERANS

Veterans are referred to School Certifying Officials (SCO) via the College's website and by staff during orientation sessions and advising inquiries. Veterans are asked to complete [intake forms](#) before being certified by an SCO.

In addition, per the College's [admissions policy](#), any student applying for Veterans benefits must provide all official transcripts (high school, high school equivalency, and college). Veterans follow the College's general admissions procedures as outlined within the policy. For support during the admission and enrollment processes, Veterans who decide to use the TA program are [directed to meet with an SCO](#) in the Special Populations & Testing office and speak with the coordinator or counselor within their Military Service prior to completing their enrollment.

SCC focuses on supporting students who are Veterans and refrains from high-pressure recruitment tactics for the purpose of enrolling service members. The College refrains from providing any incentives based on securing enrollments to any person or entity involved in student recruiting or admissions activities or in making decisions regarding financial assistance for students.

FINANCIAL MATTERS

FINANCIAL AID OFFICERS

Per DoD MOU paragraph 3.h.(1) and (4), *"before offering, recommending, arranging, signing-up, dispersing, or enrolling Service members for...student loans, [the College will] provide Service members access to an institutional financial aid advisor who will make available appropriate loan counseling, including...providing a clear and complete explanation of available financial aid, including Title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended...[and] explaining that students have the ability to refuse all or borrow less than the maximum student loan amount allowed."* SCC does not participate in the

student loans program. Financial aid officers provide [information and application processes](#) to Veterans to help them to avoid taking student loans.

NET PRICE CALCULATOR

Per Sec. 132 (h)(1) of the Higher Education Opportunity Act (HEOA) of 2008, *“institutions must make available on their websites a net price calculator. The institution may use the template provided by the Department of Education or may develop a customized version that must include, at a minimum, the same elements as the Department’s version.”* SCC’s [net price calculator](#) is available via the Financial Aid section of the College’s website.

COST OF ATTENDANCE

Per DoDI 1322.25, Voluntary Education Programs, paragraph 3.d.(1)(a), institutions will *“provide meaningful information to students on the financial cost of attendance at an educational institution so Military students can make informed decisions on where to attend school.”* DoD MOU paragraph 3.n.(5) requires that institutions *“disclose basic information about the educational institution’s programs and costs, including tuition and other charges to the Service member. This information will be made readily accessible without requiring the Service member to disclose any personal or contact information.”* SCC publishes this information on each program [web page](#), in the [Course Catalog & Student Handbook](#), and provides additional information via the [net price calculator](#).

STUDENT LOANS

Per DoD MOU paragraph 3.h.(3), *“before offering, recommending, arranging, signing-up, dispersing, or enrolling Service members for...student loans, [the College will] provide Service members access to an institutional financial aid advisor who will make available appropriate loan counseling, including...disclosing the educational institution’s student loan Cohort Default Rate (CDR), the percentage of its students who borrow, and how its CDR compares to the national average. If the educational institution’s CDR is greater than the national average CDR, it must disclose that information and provide the student with loan repayment data.”* Veterans are directed to meet with an SCO as they enter the College; the SCO, the Coordinator of Special Populations & Testing, and financial aid advisors discuss all forms of financial aid with new students and disclose the CDR to students interested in discussing loans. SCC does not participate in student loans program and does not have a CDR available at the College’s website. For further information on default rates, please visit the [Cohort Default Rate Home Page](#) at Federal Student Aid which is operated by the U.S. Department of Education.

UNEARNED TA FUNDS

Per DoD MOU paragraph 4.f.(2)(d), institutions are required to *“have an institutional policy that returns any unearned TA funds on a proportional basis through at least the sixty percent portion of the period for which the funds were provided. TA funds are earned proportionally during an enrollment period, with unearned funds returned based upon when a student stops attending. In instances when a Service member stops attending due to a Military service obligation, the educational institution will work with*

the affected Service member to identify solutions that will not result in a student debt for the returned portion.” SCC’s institutional policy on the return to the government of unearned TA funds is as follows: When a student withdraws, the student may no longer be eligible for the full amount of TA funds originally awarded. SCC will return any unearned TA funds on a prorated basis through the sixty percent portion of the period for which the funds were awarded. These funds are returned to the government, not the student. When students stop attending due to a Military service obligation, SCC will work with the Service member to identify solutions that will not result in student debt for the returned portion. As a general rule, the refund guidelines for sixteen-week courses are as follows:

- If the course withdrawal is submitted before or during the first two weeks of the semester, 100% of the funds are returned.
- If the course withdrawal is submitted during the third or fourth week of the semester, 75% of the funds are returned.
- If the course withdrawal is submitted during the fifth, sixth, seventh, or eighth week of the semester, 50% of the funds are returned.

SCC’s military refund policy is established by the State Board of Community Colleges Code ([1E SBCC 900.4](#)) and is published in SCC’s [Course Catalog & Student Handbook](#).

ACCREDITATION AND CREDENTIALING REQUIREMENTS

Per DoD MOU paragraph 3.b and 3.l, institutions are required to *“be accredited by a national or regional accrediting agency recognized by [the Education Department] ... [and to] obtain the approval of their accrediting agency for any new course or program offering, provided such approval is required under the substantive change requirements of the accrediting agency...before the enrollment of a Service member into the new course or program offering.”* Sampson Community College is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) to award the associate degree. Questions about the accreditation of Sampson Community College may be directed in writing to the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges at 1866 Southern Lane, Decatur, Georgia 30033-4097, by calling (404)-679-4500, or by using information available on SACSCOC's website (www.sacscoc.org). The College provides written notification to SACSCOC of substantive changes in accordance with Commission policies and timetables.

ACADEMIC COUNSELING AND POST-GRADUATION EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

POINT OF CONTACT FOR ADVISING & SERVICES

Per DoD MOU paragraph 3.g, institutions are required to *“designate a point of contact or office for academic and financial advising, including access to disability counseling, to assist Service members with*

completion of studies and with job search activities." SCC's Coordinator of Special Populations & Testing, located in Student Services (North Building), provides academic and financial advising and accessibility services. The Employee Credentialing procedure and the coordinator's job description has been developed and is periodically reviewed to ensure staff are highly qualified for their positions.

DEGREE REQUIREMENTS AND SEMESTER BY SEMESTER PLANS

Per DoD MOU paragraph 4.c.(1) and (4), institutions are required to *"disclose general degree requirements for the Service member's educational program (evaluated educational plan) to the member and [their] Service before the enrollment of the Service member at the educational institution...[and] degree requirements in effect at the time of each Service member's enrollment will remain in effect for a period of at least one year beyond the program's standard length, provided the Service member is in good academic standing and has been continuously enrolled or received an approved academic leave of absence."* Refer to the [Course Catalog & Student Handbook](#) for academic information and degree requirements.

SCC's Course Catalog & Student Handbook offers clear guidance to students, and academic program pages (e.g., [Electrical Systems Technology](#) program page) detail the specific plans of study for each program. Students develop individual course plans, by semester, in the Self-Service advising system, with support from their assigned advisor and their SCO. SCC's website lists all programs that have programmatic accreditation, and programs that require professional credentials and/or licensure are listed on the State Authorization, Complaints, and Professional Licensure page. Students who live outside the state of North Carolina are sent an email message with state licensure information when they apply to the College (e.g. [Associate Degree Nursing](#)).

TRANSFER CREDIT

Per DoD MOU paragraph 3.n.(1), institutions are required to *"disclose its transfer credit policies and articulated credit transfer agreements before a Service member's enrollment. Disclosure will explain acceptance of credits in transfer is determined by the educational institution to which the student wishes to transfer and [will] refrain from making unsubstantiated representations to students about acceptance of credits in transfer by another institution."* SCC evaluates transfer credit for equivalent courses with the grade of "C" or better from member institutions of the North Carolina Community College System (NCCCS) and other post-secondary institutions. Refer to the [Transfer Credit Award](#) policy for additional information.

SCC currently grants military students with credit for prior learning under the Transfer Credit Award policy. The NCCCS Office will provide access to a database used by public institutions, allowing each college to expand credit for prior learning; updates to the [Military Credit for Prior Learning policy](#) will be implemented as they are approved.

READMISSION

Per DoD MOU paragraph 3.i.(1), institutions are required to *“have a readmission policy for Service members that allows Service members and reservists to be readmitted to a program if they are temporarily unable to attend class or have to suspend their studies due to Service requirements.”*

This policy outlines the guidelines and procedures for readmitting Department of Defense (DoD) service members into SCC’s programs in accordance with Chapter 3 of Volume 2 of the Federal Student Aid Handbook. The purpose of this policy is to ensure a fair and streamlined process for readmission, taking into consideration the unique circumstances and challenges faced by DoD service members.

Eligibility:

- a. DoD service members who have been previously enrolled in an SCC program and wish to be readmitted.
- b. DoD service members who were unable to complete their studies due to active military service, deployment, or other military-related obligations.
- c. DoD service members who meet SCC's general eligibility requirements for readmission.

Documentation:

- a. DoD service members seeking readmission must provide documentation of their military service and any related interruptions in their education.
- b. Acceptable documentation may include official military orders, deployment records, or other relevant official documents.

Application Process:

- a. DoD service members must complete SCC’s standard readmission application within the specified deadlines set by SCC.
- b. DoD service members must also submit a DoD Service Members Readmission form to Student Services where they can provide details about their military service and the reasons for their previous interruption in studies.
- c. SCC should clearly communicate the application process and deadlines to DoD service members, ensuring that they are aware of any additional requirements or supporting documents needed.

Priority Consideration:

- a. DoD service members who are readmitting after completing military service or deployment should be given priority consideration for admission to the program.
- b. SCC staff should work with the DoD service members to identify any specific academic accommodations or support service that may be needed due to their military service.

Credit Transfer and Academic Progress:

- a. Whenever possible, SCC should make efforts to maximize the transfer of previously earned credits from the DoD service member's prior enrollment.

b. SCC's academic advisors should work closely with readmitted DoD service members to develop an individualized academic plan that considers their prior coursework and ensures timely progress towards their educational goals.

Financial Aid and Tuition Assistance:

- a. DoD service members seeking financial aid should follow the standard federal student aid application process outlined in Chapter 3 of Volume 2 of the Federal Student Aid Handbook.
- b. DoD service members who wish to utilize Tuition Assistance (TA) benefits must obtain approval from their respective ESO or military service counselor before being readmitted to SCC.

Support Services:

- a. SCC offers specialized support service tailored to the needs of DoD service members, such as success coaching, academic advising, and career guidance, which are published in the SCC Course Catalog & Student Handbook.

Review and Evaluation:

- a. SCC will periodically review and evaluate the effectiveness of this policy to ensure it remains aligned with Chapter 3 of Volume 2 of the Federal Student Aid Handbook and meets the needs of DoD service members.

Compliance:

- a. The college administration, faculty, and staff are responsible for implementing and adhering to this policy in a fair and consistent manner.
- b. Any deviations from this policy should be documented, approved by appropriate authorities, and communicated transparently to all stakeholders.

This policy will go into effect immediately and should be communicated to all relevant departments, faculty, staff, and DoD service members. Regular training and updates will be provided to ensure ongoing compliance with the policy.

EXCUSED ABSENCES

State Board of Community Colleges Code ([1B SBCCC 500.1](#)) requires each North Carolina community college to adopt a policy to give an excused absence to any student who is in the United States Armed Forces and has received temporary or permanent re-assignment as a result of Military operations and to any student who is a National Guard service member placed onto State active duty status during an academic term for the period of time the student is on active duty. SCC's attendance policy and procedures are outlined in the [Course Catalog and Student Handbook](#).

Upon notification, the College shall provide the student the following accommodations:

- The opportunity for the student to make up any test or other work missed during the excused absence,
- The option, when feasible, to continue classes and coursework during the academic term through online participation for the period of time the student is placed on active duty,
- The option of receiving a temporary grade of "Incomplete (I)" or "Grade Not Yet Reported (X)" for any course that the student was unable to complete as a result of being placed on State active duty status; however, the student must complete the course requirements within the period of time specified by the College to avoid receiving a failing grade for the course (consult the [Grading System](#) policy for more information),
- Permission to drop, with no penalty, any course that the student was unable to complete as a result of being placed on State active duty status; and permission to drop, with no financial penalty, any course that the student was unable to complete as a result of the excused absence as set forth in 1E SBCCC 900.4 ([Military Refund](#)).

Students receiving Veterans benefits, Pell Grants, or any other source of financial aid should meet with their financial aid advisor to discuss their particular situation related to any extended absence for Military service. Students called into active duty are referred directly to the SCC's Registrar for assistance.

CAREER SERVICES AND JOB PLACEMENT

SCC's Work Based Learning Coordinator is available to assist all students with career development services such as resume writing, job applications, job search referrals, and interview preparation. Depending on the student's need, the Work Based Learning Coordinator is also available for job placement assistance.

Effective Date: March 30, 2023

Next Review Date: 2024-2025