MARINE FOR LIFE
EXPLAINS
College Education for Veterans
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MARINE FOR LIFE

... is an extension of a tenet of the Marine ethos – “Once a Marine, Always a Marine.” M4L is a continuation of our strategic engagement with Marines and their families across the continuum of the Marine For Lifecycle - commencing with their transformational entry into our Corps, symbolized in their earning the Eagle, Globe, and Anchor, through their transition to a Veteran Marine status and the return of these quality citizens back to their communities.
CHOOSING
THE RIGHT COLLEGE OR UNIVERSITY

Do you prefer a two-year associate’s degree program or a four-year bachelor’s degree?

A two-year school is good if you want to slowly start learning and not be overwhelmed. This will be a school in your local community.

A four year school is a great choice if you have no doubts committing to a four year degree.

DISTANCE OR ONLINE

There are three choices for college courses, distance/online, traditional, or blended (combination of distance/online and traditional), all of which allow you to obtain a degree.
TRAITS REQUIRED FOR DISTANCE LEARNING

Works independently.
Takes active approach and does not procrastinate.
Stays motivated and on task to achieve goals.
Has good reading and comprehensive skills and writing abilities.

*If you possess the traits above, distance learning may be for you.*

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TRAITS REQUIRED FOR TRADITIONAL CLASSROOM LEARNING

Enjoys face-to-face lectures.
Enjoys student presence and participation.
Enjoys limited student-to-student interaction.
Enjoys some interaction/group work.
Enjoys fixed routine schedule for classes.

*If you possess the traits above, traditional classroom learning may be for you.*

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If you enjoy traits from both traditional classroom and distance/online learning, then blended or hybrid training may be for you.
Regional accreditation agencies concentrate on specific areas of the country. National accreditation agencies can represent colleges across the United States and even in some other countries. In the United States, there are six regional accrediting agencies.

Each agency covers a different section of the country. When deciding on an accreditation, there are several issues you may wish to consider. The main issue is the transferability of credits from one school to another. While nationally accredited institutions will usually accept credits from regionally or nationally accredited institutions, regionally accredited schools often do not accept credit from nationally accredited institutions.
TIPS
FOR THE "BEST FIT" SCHOOL FOR YOU

Ask yourself who you are and why you are going to school.

Remember the school does not have to have a large population.

A name brand college does not guarantee success.

You do not have to pick a major. You can start with a general studies program the first year. This will provide you the general, required courses you will need while deciding to choose a major.

You can afford to go to school if you are eligible for military education benefits.

You do not have to start college right away. Prepare yourself mentally. Consider taking some college preparation courses.
Do they offer credit for military service and training?

- Is the school accredited through Veterans Affairs?
- Do they accept military education benefits? If so, which benefits?
- Do they participate in the Yellow Ribbon Program?
- Are there any military discounts/scholarships available?
- Is in-state tuition available for non-residents?
- Are there any veterans only classes on base to reintegrate veterans who have had a long break in schooling/have PTSD etc?
- Is there a fulltime Veterans Affairs Certifying Official or Counselor at the school?
- Does the Student Veterans of America (SVA) organization have a chapter at the school?
- How do you get accepted?
- Do they offer credit for military service and training?
Once you have selected a school(s) to apply to, find out who the Veterans Affairs Certifying Official is at the school (they are trained personnel to work with veterans education benefits).

Contact the Veterans Affairs Certifying Official and ask him or her the procedures for applying to the school.

Applications can be completed online or through a paper application in the mail.

As a part of the admission packet, some schools may require you to submit an essay.

Ensure that you have your certificate of eligibility and copy (4) of your DD Form 214 to submit as part of your registration packet once you are accepted into a school.
Cite what potential traits you bring to the school as an athlete, focused learner, student body position, etc.

Explain why you chose the school and what you know about the school, i.e. its history, rankings etc.

Do not overinflate or exaggerate comments about yourself.

Share your ambitions and goals for wanting to attain the degree.

Share experiences that might complement the degree you want to obtain. For example, you may have worked as a camp counselor and want to obtain a teaching degree now.

Use spell check and proofread before submitting your essay.
SCHOOL
INTERVIEWING TIPS

- Dress is business casual (no torn jeans, t-shirts) also no suits for women or men.
- First, relax, it’s not a job interview.
- Sit up straight, make eye contact, and speak clearly.
- Share lessons you learned from your military experience. (No derogatory comments or non-support of war)
- Avoid military acronyms and jargon.
- Be honest.
- Explain how you may add to the community at the school if accepted.
TIPS ON
HOW TO BE A SUCCESSFUL STUDENT

- Join Student Veterans of America (SVA) if your school has a chapter. SVA is an organization of former veterans who advocate for education rights; they have functions year round for camaraderie. It is also great networking.

- Ensure you are ready for college level work (libraries have preparation books for college courses).

- Start with only the required courses to be eligible for your Monthly Housing Allowance (MHA). Do not overload with courses.

- Get to know your professors and ask for help if you need it.

- Take advantage of your school's academic tutoring and counseling services.

- Recognize your signs of physical and psychological stress. Seek help if overwhelmed.

- Ask questions about the school (review the school website so you know the history, etc. of the school)

- Participate in student activities to break down barriers and become a part of the campus community.

- Recognize that others may not agree or understand your military service.

- Agree to disagree and respectfully decline any questions that make you uncomfortable.

- Do not drop courses if using Post 9/11 Education benefits. You might be required to pay back tuition and some of the Monthly Housing Allowance (MHA). Speak to Veterans

- Congratulations, you have been accepted to one or more of the schools you selected. Now choose one!

- Contact the Veteran Affairs Certifying Official at the school you were accepted to.

- Stay the course to graduate with a degree.
10 THINGS TO DO TO PREPARE FOR SELECTIVE INSTITUTIONS

1. **Research Your Intended Occupation** – Arguably, the top reason for dissatisfaction in a career is not having a good foundation for what that career entails. Successful LSP Marines are able to articulate exactly what they want to do with their education and can see themselves excelling in their chosen professions.

2. **Discuss Aspirations with a Marine Corps Voluntary Education Expert** – Preparation begins with a conversation. Marine Corps Education Service Officers and Education Service Specialists are trained to guide Marines toward educational opportunities that fit skill sets and aspirations.

3. **Research College and University Web sites** - It is all about *Fit*. Choosing the right college or university involves more than simply choosing two or three schools based on name recognition. Successful LSP candidates spend time getting a feel for what life will be like at various institutions and whether those institutions match their needs. Fit also means considering that not every institution is a good fit for every major. For example, MIT might not be the best place to pursue a degree in English Composition.

4. **Assess Academic Readiness** - The idea that a poor academic record is overcome by a stellar Marine Corps career is a myth. A strong academic foundation is the key to successfully being admitted to any LSP institution. LSP Marines may be asked to attend a community college for a semester or two to prove to Admission Committees that they have what it takes to succeed at selective institutions. The fortitude to overcome a less than perfect academic record is a trait all successful LSP Marine candidates possess.
5. Review SAT or ACT Scores
- Many LSP partner schools require one of these scores as part of the admission package. LSP provides Marines with information on competitive scores by school for both the SAT and ACT and advice on retaking the exams when necessary.

6. Gather Required Documentation Early
- Failure to submit a single piece of documentation can delay or prevent admission to the school of your choice. LSP provides Marines with information on the necessary documentation for each partner institution and advice on how to obtain these items.

7. Begin Crafting Application Essays/Short Answers Early
- A good essay or short answer requires several drafts and revisions and usually feedback from a reviewer. Successful LSP Marines begin writing their college application essays and short answer responses as soon as they apply to the Leadership Scholar Program and present polished works to schools with their applications.

8. Find Quality Letter Writers
- A good letter of recommendation can be the difference between getting into a program or having to wait another year and try again. The person you select must be able to convey a personal connection to you and your skill set within the letter. Make sure to provide the writer with plenty of time to get the letter to the selected institution.

9. Research Financial Aid Options
- GI Bill benefits may not cover all necessary expenses associated with attending school full-time. Consider other options provided through Federal Student Aid such as College Work Study, grants, and student loans.

10. Talk to Other Successful LSP Marines
- Marines should contact the college or university's Veteran Office / Veteran Alumni Association to connect with service members who have been through the process. LSP alumni are also willing to speak to Marines about their experiences and guide them through the process.

To Learn more about Leadership Scholar and get on the smart track to college visit our website!

www.leadershipscholarprogram.com