



Student Veteran Handbook



29 Cougar Court, Taft, CA 93268
661-763-7700

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Welcome To Taft College Veterans: A Letter from the President



Greetings,

Welcome to Taft College. I thank you for serving our country with pride. We are honored and appreciative that you have chosen Taft College to continue your educational journey. Our faculty and staff are committed to providing you with the assistance and support you need as you set out to complete your academic and professional goals.

We are proud to serve our veterans, military personnel, and family members and dependents of those who have served our country. It is our hope that the information contained in this handbook will be a helpful resource to you as you work towards your goals at Taft College. I want you to know that the dedicated faculty and staff, who work in our Veteran's Resource Center and across our campus, are ready to assist you. Taft College takes great pride in personally assisting students. I encourage you to ask our faculty and staff for help or how to participate in Taft College activities.

We look forward to celebrating your future success with you. Have a great semester and I look forward to seeing you on campus. Each fall, we welcome you to join us as a guest of honor at our Taft College Foundation Cougar Cookout event. You are a part of the Taft College family!

Sincerely,

Brock McMurray
Superintendent/President
Taft College

Services Provided to Veterans and Dependents

Taft College is an approved institution of higher learning and a training facility for veterans applying for Veterans Administration (VA) educational benefits. Taft College provides educational support to veterans, active-duty servicemen, and dependents of veterans.

Certification Services include:

- Instructions on requesting certification from Taft College
- Monitoring of course enrollment and reporting of enrollment to the VA
- Coordination with Fiscal Services for tuition reimbursement from the VA
- Coordination with other colleges for students who enroll as Guest Students

Counseling Services include:

- Assistance in selecting the appropriate Taft College major
- Assistance in selecting VA approved courses and registration
- Completion of an approved Educational Plan
- Guidance on maximizing benefits at Taft College for graduation and transfer

New Students -- Veterans

- 1. Apply for VA Benefits <http://www.gibill.va.gov>
 - A. Email your Certificate of Eligibility to veterans@taftcollege.edu or bring it to Academic Records to be scanned
- 2. Apply for Financial Aid. Taft College's Federal School Code is 001309. <http://www.fafsa.gov>
- 3. Apply to Taft College at: <https://www.taftcollege.edu/admissions/apply>
- 4. Email your DD-214 to veterans@taftcollege.edu or bring it to Academic Records to be scanned
- 5. Send all previous college official transcripts, including military transcripts to admissions@taftcollege.edu
- 6. Call Counseling 661-763-7748 to make an appointment with Veterans Counselor, Vicki Jacobi, to create a Comprehensive Educational Plan
- 7. Fill out the Request for Certification form approximately 4 weeks prior to the start of the semester. <http://www.taftcollege.edu/admissions/veterans/va-forms/va-online-request-for-certification/>
- 8. Post-9/11 Students who receive Monthly Housing Allowance MHA and/or kicker payments are required to verify enrollment at the end of each month. Please see the section on Post-9/11 GI Bill Students for more information.

New Students -- Dependents

- 1. Apply for VA Benefits <http://www.gibill.va.gov>
 - A. Email your Certificate of Eligibility to veterans@taftcollege.edu or bring it to Academic Records to be scanned
- 2. Apply for Financial Aid. Taft College's Federal School Code is 001309. <http://www.fafsa.gov>
- 3. Apply to Taft College at: <https://www.taftcollege.edu/admissions/apply>
- 4. Send all previous college official transcripts to admissions@taftcollege.edu
- 5. Call Counseling 661-763-7748 to make an appointment with Veterans Counselor, Vicki Jacobi, to create a Comprehensive Educational Plan
- 6. Fill out the Request for Certification form approximately 4 weeks prior to the start of the semester. <http://www.taftcollege.edu/admissions/veterans/va-forms/va-online-request-for-certification/>

Continuing Students

- 1. Renew your Financial Aid <https://www.fafsa.gov>
- 2. Fill out the Request for Certification form approximately 4 weeks prior to the start of the semester. <http://www.taftcollege.edu/admissions/veterans/va-forms/va-online-request-for-certification/>

Transfer Students Who Have Used Benefits At Another College -- Veterans

- 1. Apply for Financial Aid. Taft College's Federal School Code is 001309. <http://www.fafsa.gov>
- 2. Complete Form 22-1995 – Change of Training Place or Program <https://www.vba.va.gov/pubs/forms/VBA-22-1995-ARE.pdf>
- 3. Apply to Taft College at: <https://www.taftcollege.edu/admissions/apply>
- 4. Email your DD-214 to veterans@taftcollege.edu or bring it to Academic Records to be scanned
- 5. Send all previous college official transcripts, including military transcripts to admissions@taftcollege.edu
- 6. Call Counseling 661-763-7748 to make an appointment with Veterans Counselor, Vicki Jacobi, to create a Comprehensive Educational Plan
- 7. Fill out the Request for Certification form approximately 4 weeks prior to the start of the semester. <http://www.taftcollege.edu/admissions/veterans/va-forms/va-online-request-for-certification/>
- 8. Post-9/11 Students who receive Monthly Housing Allowance MHA and/or kicker payments are required to verify enrollment at the end of each month. Please see the section on Post-9/11 GI Bill Students Enrollment Verification for more information.

Attending Colleges Other Than Taft College

For courses outside Taft College, you must provide Taft College with the following information so they can contact your secondary school with a Parent School Letter:

- College Information
- Course Information (Subject and Course #)
- Course Schedule (start-end dates)

Primary School Letters are subject to approval. Courses offered by secondary colleges must be approved by your Counselor or the Taft College Evaluator to confirm course equivalency.

Upon completion of the approved course(s), please submit an official transcript after the completion of the semester/session.

Number of Units Required

For students enrolled in a degree program under Chapters 30, 31, 35, 1606/1607, the following number of units are required each semester to qualify for educational and training allowance:

12 units or more	full allowance
9-11.5 units	$\frac{3}{4}$ allowance
6-8.5 units	$\frac{1}{2}$ allowance
2-5.5 units	$\frac{1}{4}$ allowance*

*Chapters 32 and 106 only. All other chapters, tuition, and fees only.

Short-term and Summer semester courses are computed proportionately for payment purposes. The VA considers 3 units per 4 weeks as full-time. For example, if you want full-time for the Summer and the Semester is 8 weeks, you will need 6 units to be considered full-time.

Taking only online and/or hybrid classes (considered online by the VA) will result in a partial monthly housing allowance.

Withdrawal/Change of Classes

Veterans and Dependents are required to notify Taft College when they stop attending a class, withdraw from the college, or add/drop a class. Changes should be reported immediately after completing the add/drop procedure through Cougar Tracks. Report changes by filling out the Request for Certification form. Not reporting changes may cause you to be certified for the wrong unit load and overpayments.

Academic Progress

A student on Academic probation status will be disqualified from Certification when their GPA falls below 2.0 the following semester. Taft College is required to notify the Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA) of this status. The DVA will terminate benefits unless it can be shown that the student is pursuing an appropriate objective and has a reasonable chance for success in the chosen program.

Non-Required Courses

The VA will allow certification only for courses listed on your Student Educational Program Plan. These approved courses must meet the minimum requirements for transfer or graduation established by Taft College.

Repeat Courses

The VA will not allow certification for repeated courses that were successfully completed. Letter grades of "A," "B," or "C" are approved for payment of required courses.

Exception: There are some courses that require a specific minimum grade for successful completion. Please refer to the Taft College Catalog for specific course requirements.

Courses taken to obtain academic repeats are NOT eligible for VA certification.

Post 9/11 GI Students Enrollment Verification

Post 9/11 GI students who receive a Monthly Housing Allowance (MHA) and/or kicker payments are required to verify enrollment at the end of each month. Students who receive MHA or kicker payments will have their payments withheld if they fail to verify or report that they are no longer enrolled in their courses. You can opt in to verify your enrollment by text or email at:

https://benefits.va.gov/gibill/isaksonroe/verification_of_enrollment.asp

By regularly verifying your enrollment, you protect your GI Bill entitlement by preventing charges for classes you did not attend. This will help you better manage and access your earned benefits, as well as help prevent overpayments.

Priority Registration

Taft College offers priority registration to all Veterans. Email your DD-214 to veterans@taftcollege.edu or bring it to Academic Records to be scanned and let the office know you want Priority Registration only.

CalVet College Fee Waiver

The College Fee Waiver for Veteran Dependents benefit waives mandatory system-wide tuition and fees at any State of California Community College, California State University, or University of California campus. This program does not cover the expense of books, parking, or room and board. There are four plans under which dependents of Veterans may be eligible. You will need to reapply every Academic Year.

1. Apply for the CalVet College Fee Waiver

<https://www.calvet.ca.gov/VetServices/Pages/College-Fee-Waiver.aspx>

A. Email your College Fee Waiver Authorization letter to veterans@taftcollege.edu or bring it to Academic Records to be scanned

2. Apply for Financial Aid. Taft College's Federal School Code is 001309.

<http://www.fafsa.gov>

Military Withdrawal

If you are a member of an active or reserve United State military service and receive orders compelling a withdrawal from all courses, please bring your Military Orders to Academic Records to be scanned or email to records@taftcollege.edu. If emailing, please include your A# and request a military withdrawal.

FAQ

- You are required to fill out a Request for Certification to utilize and continue your educational benefits.
- The Certification Process may take up to 14 days.
- It takes 4-8 weeks for the VA Regional Office to process educational benefits. Payment is paid retroactively to the beginning of the semester.
- Overpayment is your responsibility, and you will owe money to the Department of Veterans Affairs. The DVA may deduct the funds from ANY Federal payments (retirement, taxes, disability, etc.)
- A DD-214 (with at least six months of active-duty service and an honorable discharge) will meet the Health and PE requirements for the AA/AS degree and CSU Area E General Educational requirements. If you plan on using your DD-214 to meet these requirements, please let your counselor and the Academic Records office know. “

Veterans Club

The mission of the Taft College Veterans Club will be to serve as a support system for student veterans, as well as family members of veterans and supporters. This organization will help provide information and referrals regarding services through Veterans Affairs and other agencies. In addition, the Veterans Club will strive to coordinate information and services to assist veterans, family, and friends toward successful transitions to careers and/or higher education. The Taft College Veterans Club will be an impartial club having no political or religious affiliation. For club information please contact, Tina Mendoza tmendoza@taftcollege.edu

Financial Aid

Veterans and Dependents are encouraged to apply for federal and state financial aid opportunities. The application form is available online at <https://www.fafsa.ed.gov>. Taft College's Federal School Code is 001309. Financial aid programs such as fee waivers, grants, work-study, and loans are available to assist with educational expenses. Eligible students may receive both VA benefits and financial aid funds during the same semester.

Disability Support Programs & Services (DSPS)

Disability Support Programs and Services focuses on servicing students with disabilities. Specific services and accommodations for each student are determined on a case-by-case basis and only authorized by DSPS faculty. To request services please visit: <https://www.taftcollege.edu/disabled-student-program-services/> or contact 661-763-7799

The Learning Center/Tutoring

The Learning Center is in the library and provides Taft College students access to learning assistance and academic support. Services include walk-in tutoring, small group tutoring, one-on-one tutoring appointments, and supplemental instruction. For more information or to make appointments visit: <https://www.taftcollege.edu/learning-center/> or contact 661-763-7938.

Student Resource & Basic Needs Center

The Student Basic Needs and Resource Center supports students in need of additional assistance by providing and connecting students with all the essential resources needed not only to survive but thrive. The Student Basic Needs and Resource Center includes a food pantry which includes non-perishables and a clothing closet, CalFresh Outreach, and more. For more information or to make an appointment visit: <https://www.taftcollege.edu/support-programs-services/basic-needs/>

Campus Resources

Lisa Brettschneider

School Certifying Official

Located in the Administrative & Student Services building in Academic Records

661-763-7756

veterans@taftcollege.edu

Vicki Jacobi

Veterans Counselor

661-763-7719

vjacobi@taftcollege.edu

Tina Mendoza

Veterans Club

tmendoza@taftcollege.edu

Counseling Center: To Make Appointments with Veterans Counselor, Vicki Jacobi

Located in the Administrative & Student Services Building

661-763-7748

Financial Aid

Located in the Administrative & Student Services Building

661-763-7762

<https://www.taftcollege.edu/financial-aid/>

Disability Support Programs & Services (DSPS)

Located in the Administrative & Student Services Building

661-763-7799

<https://www.taftcollege.edu/disabled-student-program-services/>

Learning Center

Located in the Library

661-763-7938

<https://www.taftcollege.edu/learning-center/>

Student Basic Needs and Resource Center

Located in the building west of the Administration & Student Services Building

661-763-7783

<https://www.taftcollege.edu/support-programs-services/basic-needs/>

Kern County Resources

Kern County Veterans Service Department

661-868-7300, toll-free 866-218-5367

1120 Golden State Ave, Bakersfield

<https://www.kerncounty.com/government/veterans-service>

Kern Patriot Partnership

Connects Kern County Veterans with local employers

661-868-7300

Email: info4vets@kerncounty.com

<https://www.kernpatriot.org/>

Wounded Heroes Fund

Service organization for Kern County Veterans and their families

661-328-8600

<https://thewoundedheroesfund.org>

Bakersfield Vet Center

Provides readjustment counseling for veterans and their families. All services are confidential and available to those still on active duty or reserve status, without risk of becoming known to your chain of command.

661-323-8387

1110 Golden State Hwy, Bakersfield

Taft Salvation Army

Emergency Food, Help with Water Bill once a year, Help with gas or bus passes to medical appts, Clothing Closet, Counsel and Guidance in Crisis Situations

661-765-5557

630 North St, Taft (located in the Methodist Church)

Taft Laborers of the Harvest

Food

661-745-4536

201 ½ Harrison, Taft

Taft NEEDS Center

Food

518 Main St, Taft

U.S. Resources

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

GI Bill (Education): 1-888-442-4551

<http://va.gov>

<https://www.va.gov/education>

US Vets

213-542-2600

<https://usvets.org>

Warrior-Scholar Project

202-796-8777

<https://www.warrior-scholar.org>

Foundation for Women Warriors

Enhancing the personal and economic wellbeing of women veterans and needs of military women transitioning to civilian life

<https://www.objectivezero.org/>

Objective Zero Foundation

Connects the military and veterans to peer support, wellness activities, and mental health resources online

<https://www.objectivezero.org/>

Crisis Resources

Veterans Crisis Line

988

Military Crisis Line

800-273-TALK (8255)

National Call Center for Homeless Veterans

877-424-3838

VA Caregiver Support Line

855-260-3274