Guide to Establishing Healthcare Military Pathways

Background

Demand for skilled staff in healthcare continues to increase, primarily due to the Affordable Care Act and aging baby boomers. For example, in Pierce County nine of ten in-demand positions are in healthcare, with three of the top ten employers being healthcare systems or hospitals. The military population is a key source of talent to meet these demands. However, the current approach to transitioning military to these professions fails to fully leverage their experience and education and lacks consistency. This creates an unnecessarily lengthy and, sometimes, confusing process.

Funding to address this issue as provided by the State Board of Community and Technical Colleges through a grant in its Workforce Special Projects.

One of the effort’s goals was to complete a statewide process and implementation plan for transitioning Military Medic to Allied Health professions.

Best Practices were researched, with one of the most promising approaches coming from Minnesota State Colleges and Universities. In this program, they evaluate a Military Occupation Specialty (MOS) and grant the student a “floor” or minimum credit for that MOS, based on military education and training. They have 11,000 articulations recorded following this approach. Similarly, Lansing (Michigan) Community College created a Medic to Paramedic pathway that includes awarding 9 credits to medics for their military education and experience and 15 credits for EMT-Basic (medics are certified EMTs).

In addition, we researched other resources and found the following critical to understanding military education and training and how it applies to healthcare:

- Washington State Department of Health (DOH) Crosswalk – A document that compares 27 Allied Health positions to MOS’s and describes the gaps between the MOS and the DOH requirements. Many MOS’s are only missing minor requirements, such as HIV/Aids training.
- MOS training syllabus and/or Course Map - For Health Care Specialists, we used the Course Map and for Army Practical Nurse, we used the 68C Practical Nurse Course Program Syllabus.
• American Council on Education (ACE) – Their online Military Guide provides credit recommendations for formal courses and occupations offered by all branches of the military.

Our process started with establishing a team of Nursing Curricula subject matter experts. In order to keep the scope realistic, we focused first on the Health Care Specialist pathway to LPN. We reviewed the multiple resources compiled to find an efficient process for establishing the minimum credit. Once a process was discovered, using Bates Technical College, we documented, tested, and refined the process with Pierce, Olympic, and Green River Colleges.

The result of this effort is establishment of a systematic process for establishing a “floor” or minimum credit for an MOS and reviewing individual student training and experience for additional credit above the “floor”.

Establishing a “Floor”

A “floor” is the minimum credit the college will award for a specific MOS. Anyone admitted to the school with that MOS is automatically eligible for a specific number of credits.

For example, any Health Care Specialist that demonstrates adequate safety techniques, will be awarded 2 credits for Green River’s NURS 114 (Intravenous Therapy). In addition, at Pierce College, an Army Practical Nurse will be awarded 3 credits for NURS 214, Advanced Concepts in Family-Centered Nursing Care.

The following steps will assist you in determining your “floor”. This is written with the Health Care Specialist or Practical Nurse in mind, but many of the steps can be replicated for other MOS’s.

1. **Gather the following documents:**
   - Your program’s requirements
   - Department of Health Crosswalk
   - Military MOS Course Syllabus or Map (Army Practical Nurse 68WM6 and Health Care Specialist Course Map will be provided)
   - NCSBN Analysis
   - ACE Military Guide

2. **Compare you program’s requirements to the Department of Health Crosswalk.** For Health Care Specialists, look at Nursing Assistant Certified (Health Care Specialists satisfy the requirements for this discipline once they finish seven hours of HIV/AIDS training). Are any of your course requirements satisfied with this certification? For example, Bates Technical College requires an NAC for its LPN program and will award eight credits when the student produces the DOH certification.

3. **Compare your program’s requirements to the course syllabus or map.** Are there any subjects that satisfy your requirements? Are there any that come close? If the latter, check the NCSBN Analysis. If that Analysis rates a “2” for that subject, consider awarding the credit. If there is still uncertainty, consider developing a Challenge for that course.

4. **Compare your program’s requirements to the NCSBN Analysis.** Are there any areas that satisfy your requirements? If some are close or questionable, consider offering a challenge.

5. **Compare your program’s requirements to the ACE Military Guide for that MOS.** Are there any areas that satisfy requirements, including pre-requisites? Again, consider awarding credit or
creating a challenge. **Note the levels.** For example, Health Care Specialists’ ACE recommendations are based on their military level for that MOS. You might consider setting “floors” for each level.

6. Adopt, as part of your “floor”, the statewide Nursing Fundamentals Challenge that is under development by a team led by Dianne Nauer (Bates Technical College). More details will come when it is complete, but at least four colleges plan to adopt this challenge. For example, Bates will award 7 credits once a Health Care Specialist passes the exam.

7. Document your potential “floor”, seek necessary approval, update policies, publish, and communicate.

**“Floor” Process**

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Gather key documents: Crosswalk, Course Map or Syllabus, NCSBN Analysis, ACE recommendations

Review Dept. of Health Crosswalk, NCSBN Analysis, ACE recommendations

Compare to Institution’s requirements

Determine redundancies for each branch/MOS

Adopt the statewide Nursing Fundamentals Challenge

Calculate credits that can be awarded

Seek approval, as needed. Prepare/modify policies & procedures

Publish

Communicate

Individual Student Assessment
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Individual Student Assessment

Now that you know the minimum credit or “floor” for that MOS, it’s time to find additional credit for each individual student. While the student should provide the needed materials, it’s important to understand that this may be their first time experiencing this process and may need reminders. The following describes the recommended process:

1. Potential student visits the WDVA website to learn and understand benefits

2. Student gathers/orders the following documents:
   - Joint Services Transcript (JST) and all other relevant transcripts
   - Community College of the Air Force (CCAF) and all other relevant transcripts
   - Verification of Military Experience and Training (VMET), except Coast Guard
   - DD 214 Member 4 Copy or NGB-22 (ARNG), Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty
   - Visit Department of Health website for any desired certifications or registrations

3. Potential student applies

4. College reviews the application. If there is military experience, be sure the student orders his/her JST. Once ordered, you can view the transcript online, if you have an account (instructions for account set up). If the student was NOT in the Coast Guard, ask for the student’s Verification of Military Experience and Training (VMET)

5. Review information and award credit based on “floor” established for the MOS and/or instruct student in how to complete challenges, certificates, etc. to gain credit

6. Review JST and other information, to determine further credits. For example, Bates will award 5 more credits for an Interpersonal Communication class if an Army Health Care Specialist has taken the Basic Leader Course.
   - Watch for the opportunity to award credit based on ACE recommendations, College Level Examination Program (CLEP), Dantes Standardized Subject Tests (DSST), etc.

7. Determine credits to be awarded and communicate with the student

8. Student completes challenges or other steps required to be awarded credit
Individual Assessment Process

- Potential student visits WDVA
- Student gathers needed documents
- Applies
  - College reviews applications. Notes military experience
  - As appropriate or needed, the college obtains JST and VMET and other documents
  - College determines total credit and communicates
  - Student completes challenges or other activities required for additional credit
  - College reviews information for further credit
Resources

- **American Council on Education (ACE) Military Guide**
  - ACE represents the presidents of U.S. accredited, degree-granting institutions, which include two- and four-year colleges, private and public universities, and nonprofit and for-profit entities. One of its services is College Credit Recommendation Service (CREDIT), which helps adults gain access to academic credit for formal courses and examinations taken outside traditional degree programs. This includes the military.
  - Their online Military Guide provides credit recommendations for formal courses and occupations offered by all branches of the military. For further information on ACE, view the video: Demystifying Military Evaluations. Also be sure to check out How to use the Military Guide.

- **Army Cool** – Credentialing Opportunities Online. This site helps Army Soldiers find information on certifications and licenses related to their Military Occupational Specialties (MOSs). COOL explains how Soldiers can meet civilian certification and license requirements and provides links to numerous resources to help get them started.

- **CAEL** - Council for Adult and Experiential Learning offers a variety of programs to make it easier for people to get the education and training they need. They find practical ways to link people’s education to their jobs or future careers and support ways to link learning from their work and life experiences to their educational goals.

- **Careeronestop.org** – A US Department of Labor site that provides one-stop service that gives employment information and other career management tools. It includes a special section for Veteran’s Re-employment, including a tool to match military skills to a civilian career.

- **CLEP** – College Level Examination Program. CLEP offers 33 exams in five subject areas, covering material taught in courses generally taken in the first two years of college. Passing a CLEP exam may mean earning college credit

- **College Credit for Heroes** - partnership between the Texas Workforce Commission and the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board to ensure our active duty, former and retired military personnel receive the credit they earned for their service to our country.
• **DSST** - DANTES Standardized Subject Tests (owned and administered by Prometrics). DSST offers a suite of more than 30 exams in college subject areas such as Social Sciences, Math, Applied Technology, Business, Physical Sciences and Humanities. Passing a DSST exam may mean earning college credit

Another difference is that CLEP basically only covers general education topics, while some DSST tests are actually upper level, and can be applied towards a major.

• **DOH Crosswalk** - A document that compares 27 Allied Health positions to MOS’s and describes the gaps between the MOS and the DOH requirements. Many MOS’s are only missing minor requirements (e.g. 7 hours of HIV/Aids training). To obtain a copy, contact tommy.simpson@doh.wa.gov. You may also call Customer Service at 360.236.4700.

• **DVA or VA** – Department of Veteran’s Affairs offers a wide variety of programs and services for the nation’s veterans and is the key source of information on military student benefits

• **JST – Joint Services Transcript** is the official transcript tool for Army, Marine Corps, Navy and Coast Guard personnel. It is an academically accepted document approved by the American Council on Education (ACE) to validate a service member's military occupational experience and training along with the corresponding ACE college credit recommendations
  - See a sample here
  - Once the student orders a transcript (remember to ensure the student orders the transcript), you can gain online access through your account. To set up an account use the following process:
    1. Contact Heather Robertson at heather.roberston@navy.mil or 850-473-6358
    2. Provide the following:
       - School name and mailing address
       - Name, email address, and phone number for each person who needs access to a JST
    3. Heather will set up an account and notify you when it's ready

• **METC** – Medical Education and Training Campus at Fort Sam Houston is a state-of-the-art Department of Defense healthcare education campus that trains enlisted medical personnel


• **Navy Cool** - Credentialing Opportunities Online is a site for both active and reserve (less IRR) Navy service members that defines civilian credentials which best map to Navy ratings, jobs, designators, and collateral duties/assignments. It outlines the path, work, training and experience required to achieve them.
- **United States Coast Guard Academy** - provides a four-year Bachelor of Science degree program with a full scholarship for each individual.

- **SOC/SOC DNS** - The Servicemembers Opportunity Colleges Degree Network System or SOC DNS consists of degree programs for Army (SOCAD), Navy (SOCNAV), Marine Corps (SOCMAR), and Coast Guard (SOCCOAST). The Services select specific degrees for participation and the participating colleges are required to issue SOC DNS Student Agreements for the selected degrees. The SOC DNS Student Agreement indicates that the student has selected a participating college as his/her “home college”, the college from which the student plans to graduate. The SOC DNS Student Agreement is the official evaluation of all prior learning (both traditional and non-traditional), indicates guaranteed-transferability where SOC DNS Course Category Codes appear and serves as the student’s long-range degree plan through military moves across the nation and world. It prevents the college from changing the degree plan under the catalog policies indicated.

- **VMET** – Verification of Military Experience and Training lists military experience and training, which may apply to employment in the private sector. It is **not an official transcript** for purposes of granting college credit, but it can be used to **support** the fact that the student has met training and/or course requirements to qualify for civilian occupations, certificates, licenses, or programs of study.

- **CCAF** – Community College of the Air Force is a federally-chartered degree-granting institution that serves the United States Air Force’s enlisted total force. They partner with over 106 affiliated Air Force schools, 82 Education Service Offices located worldwide, and more than 1,500 civilian academic institutions to serve more than 305,000 active, guard, and reserve enlisted personnel, making CCAF the world’s largest community college system.
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Glossary

- **ACE/Ace.net** - American Council on Education
- **ACES** - Alamo Colleges Educational Services
- **DVA** - Department of Veteran’s Affairs
- **JST** - Joint Services Transcript
- **CCAF** - Community College of the Air Force
- **CLEP** - College Level Examination Program
- **DANTES** - The Defense Activity for Non-Traditional Education Support
- **DSST** - DANTES Standardized Subject Tests
- **O*NET** - detailed descriptions of the world of work for use by job seekers, workforce development and HR professionals, students, researchers, and more!
- **MOS** - Military Occupation Specialty
- **NCSBN** - National Council of State Boards of Nursing
- **METC** - Medical Education Training Campus
- **MOS** - Military Occupation Specialty
- **PLA** – Prior Learning Assessment
- **SOC** - Servicemembers Opportunity Colleges