

# Fanshawe College and Military-Connected Students: A Promise of Support

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## Introduction

Military-connected students form a unique and underrepresented element of the student population who encounter non-traditional challenges in the pursuit of post-secondary education. In concert with existing Fanshawe College policies, this promise of support amplifies how military-connected students will maintain access to barrier-free learning. Institutional support is based on viewing the following pillars through a military-connected lens:

- a. Education;
- b. Student well-being; and
- c. Procedure

This pledge acknowledges the obligation Fanshawe College has made to military-connected students, ensuring no institutional disadvantage is encountered as a result of continued military service or its effects.

## Definitions

Military-connected students: learners who have a tangible connection with the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF). This includes six sub-categories: (a) current serving regular force, (b) current serving primary reservist, (c) Veteran, (d) Department of National Defence – Civil Servant, (e) immediate family of CAF member or Veteran, and (f) foreign military Veteran.

Military-connected campus: alignment of campus efforts in developing, synchronizing, and allocating resources that support military-connected students.

## Vision

The guiding vision for this promise of support is:

To ensure military-connected students are immersed in an inclusive learning environment supported by the provision of specialized, relevant, and credible programming. Fanshawe College will foster the realization of excellence by unlocking student potential.

## Three Pillars

Fanshawe College recognizes that a positive, post-secondary learning environment is supported by additional factors that contribute to the successful realization of learning outcomes. For military-connected students who may periodically face competing priorities, this promise of support focuses on three mutually-supportive areas: education, student well-being, and procedure.

## **Education**

Current serving military-connected students may be presented with a number of scenarios that may delay continued learning, temporarily or otherwise. Examples, but not limited to, may include:

- a. unexpected military training opportunity;
- b. domestic deployment;
- c. international deployment;
- d. illness or injury due to service; or
- e. reoccurring military commitment.

Fanshawe College realizes the unpredictable nature of military service and its inherent implications. When presented with a dilemma, this promise of support encourages a collaborative exploration inclusive of faculty, staff, administration, and the military-connected student in developing options that support learning. Potential solutions should be predicated on the most efficient and appropriate pathway to continue learning.

## **Student Well-being**

Fanshawe College recognises that military-connected students face real and perceived barriers to education, where the well-being of learners is a critical issue. Fanshawe College fosters an environment which strives to achieve a balance between scholarship and student well-being. Military-connected students fall into a non-traditional student population where social supports must consider the individual challenges faced by this underrepresented group.

Fanshawe College will continue to cultivate an environment that aims to synchronize program administration, culture, social support, alignment of student services and programs that positively contribute to military-connected student well-being.

## **Procedure – A Flexible Approach**

In the event that military-connected students encounter crucial competing priorities as a result of CAF service or well-being concerns, procedures as outlined in Fanshawe College's Faculty Guide should be considered whenever possible. Resolution should be sought at the lowest possible level of engagement.

The nature of military service is such that advance warning is not always afforded to its members. In the event of short notice, military deployments, the military-connected student must contact the Program Coordinator and faculty Associate Dean simultaneously. The Program Coordinator will make the most appropriate recommendation with the Associate Dean authorizing the action.

The military-connected student remains responsible to identify potential concerns as early as practical and may be required to provide verifiable substantiation from their military chain of command.

## **Academic Record**

In the event of military-connected student withdrawal related to imperative military service or military-connected well-being, the notation in the student record will be **Withdrawal without Academic Penalty** (A106). This will be applied regardless of the date of course or program withdrawal.

## **Conclusion**

Military-connected students are an underrepresented element of the student body. These learners face situations which are dynamic, cannot always be forecasted, and are often not well-defined. Whilst fostering an inclusive environment, Fanshawe College will empower and support military-connected students during the pursuit of post-secondary education. This is achieved through a flexible, ethically grounded, and learner-centric approach. This promise of support underscores the commitment Fanshawe College has made to all military-connected students.

## **References**

- a. Academic Policies <https://www.fanshawec.ca/about-fanshawe/corporate-information/policies/academic-and-research>
- b. Fanshawe College Faculty Guide <https://www.fanshawec.ca/student-success/student-success/student-services/accessibility/plan-success/faculty-guide-0>