

**VETERAN STUDENT LIFE**  
**AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND**

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**Veteran Student Life (VSL)**  
**Comprehensive Student**  
**Handbook**

*Last Updated: 2024-06-17*

# Table of Contents

<b>Table of Contents</b> .....	<b>2</b>
Veteran Student Life (VSL).....	3
Mission Statement.....	3
Who we are.....	3
Where We're Located.....	4
Get Connected with VSL.....	5
TerpVets Student Organization.....	6
Mission Statement.....	6
About TerpVets.....	6
TerpVets Leadership.....	6
Get Connected with TerpVets.....	7
Thinking About Attending the University of Maryland?.....	8
Application Fee Waiver.....	8
Undergraduate Students.....	8
Transfer Credit & Student Status.....	8
Graduate Students.....	9
Attending the University of Maryland.....	10
Priority Registration, Courses, and Degree Audits.....	10
Student Status.....	10
Veteran Scholarships.....	11
Student Health Insurance.....	11
Resources.....	13
Health & Mental Health Resources.....	13
VA Benefits.....	13
University Career Center.....	14
Study Resources & VSL STEM Tutor Program.....	14
Ammerman Professional Development & Veteran Crisis Funds.....	15
VSL Peer Sponsorship Program.....	15
UMD Departmental Liaisons.....	16

# **Veteran Student Life (VSL)**

## **Mission Statement**

To build and maintain a community of veteran and military-connected students, staff, faculty, and alumni at the University of Maryland that collectively supports the transition from military life to civilian college. Together, the community provides opportunities for development along the 8 Dimensions of Wellness throughout the UMD experience empowering students to develop a renewed sense of purpose and significance during and after their time at the University of Maryland.

## **Who we are**

We are committed to providing an environment that helps veterans pursue their academic and personal goals, explore different learning experiences, and get involved in campus life. At Veteran Student Life hosted in the Engagement Suite within STAMP, we offer a hub for resources that serves veterans and military-connected students, staff, and faculty on campus. We assist in navigating veteran benefits, university policies and procedures, and are here to help assist you in accessing any resources you may need.

We also offer events for all student Veterans, military-connected students, and their families or plus ones. Events typically include Networking Socials, Adventure Program Trips, Sports Games, Spa Days, Celebration Events, and many more!

### ***Will Jones - Program Coordinator***

Will is a returning Terp who recently graduated from the University of Maryland's iSchool. Will served in the US Army as an Airborne Infantryman with the 82ND Airborne Division where he deployed to Iraq in support of Operation Inherent Resolve. He returned to the University of Maryland where he studied Information Science while working within VSL as a VA Work-Study. Will loves technology, tinkering, and playing video games in his free time as well as staying active on the slopes skiing.

Email: [wjones19@umd.edu](mailto:wjones19@umd.edu)

Phone: 301-314-0073

### ***Andre Magowan - VA Work-Study***

[Bio here]

Email: [amagowan@umd.edu](mailto:amagowan@umd.edu)

### ***Ashlee Swanson - VA Work-Study***

Ashlee Swanson was born and raised in suburban Minnesota and joined the US Navy out of high school in 2015 to serve as a Cryptologic Technician. She completed two surface naval deployments on the USS Bataan and USS Mason in 2017 and 2019 respectively. In 2022, she

completed her final contract with the Navy and began using VA benefits to complete her degree. Ashlee is currently attending the University of Maryland full-time as an Electrical Engineering student, simultaneously minoring in Spanish for Professional Contexts. She has worked for Veteran Student Life since Spring of 2023, and also holds the Vice President position for the student veteran organization, TerpVets.

Email: [ashswan2@umd.edu](mailto:ashswan2@umd.edu)

### ***Cole Ready - VA Work-Study***

Cole is from Covington, Georgia. After graduating high school, he enlisted in the United States Marine Corps, and served a total of 5 years, most as a radio technician at 2nd Air Naval Gunfire Liaison Company in Camp Lejeune, North Carolina. After separating, he moved to College Park, Maryland to pursue his Bachelor's in Mechanical Engineering. He has worked with Veteran Student Life since May 2022. He goes where the wind takes him.

Email: [cready1@umd.edu](mailto:cready1@umd.edu)

### ***Enicia Porter - VA Work-Study***

Enicia is from Ferndale, Michigan. After graduating high school, she enlisted in the United States Air Force and served as a Spanish Linguist for six years. Upon separation, she entered the airline industry and worked her way up from flight attendant to staffing manager. In 2022, she began using VA benefits to complete her degree. Enicia graduated with a BS, in Information Science from the University of Maryland May 2024. She is continuing her studies and is expected to receive her MS, in Business Analytics from The Robert H. Smith School in December 2025. One fun fact about Enicia is she has run from another country and back.

Email: [eporter@umd.edu](mailto:eporter@umd.edu)

### ***Esperanza Lint - VA Work-Study***

[Bio here]

Email: [elint@umd.edu](mailto:elint@umd.edu)

## **Where We're Located**

### ***Adele H. STAMP Student Union Engagement Suite***

3972 Campus Drive  
College Park, MD 20742  
Base floor around the corner from the food court

## ***UMD Veteran Center***

LeFrak Hall, Room 2123

Thanks to a generous donation from Board of Trustee members and former Secretary of the Navy Gordon England, a Veteran Center is available exclusively for UMD student veterans.

This center includes:

- Computers and free printing
- Free coffee and tea
- Kitchenette
- Peer Support

The Veteran Center is protected with a key system that allows you to open the space through an app on your phone!

To gain access to the Veteran Center, please go to [stamp.umd.edu/VetCenter](http://stamp.umd.edu/VetCenter). Fill out and submit the form along with your supporting documentation.

## **Get Connected with VSL**

### ***Newsletter***

We send out weekly newsletters with information regarding our events, VA Benefits updates, UMD updates, and general information pertaining to being a student veteran. To sign up for the newsletter, reach out to [vetstudentlife@umd.edu](mailto:vetstudentlife@umd.edu) to be added to the mailing list!

### ***[Instagram](#)***

### ***[Facebook](#)***

# TerpVets Student Organization

## Mission Statement

To provide services to new and existing veterans attending the University, as well improve student-to-student and student-to-teacher relations with veterans. We want to create a veteran-friendly environment on campus and see to it that veterans have a positive impact on the community through volunteer and social events.

## About TerpVets

TerpVets is a student-run organization established to provide its members the opportunity to recognize and support the community of veterans on and off campus through a variety of volunteer and social events, while building a network that enhances personal and career growth.

They are also joined by faculty, staff, alumni, friends and families of veterans and others who wish to support our brothers and sisters who have or are serving our country.

## TerpVets Leadership

### ***Tim White - President***

[Bio here]

Email: [timw27200@gmail.com](mailto:timw27200@gmail.com)

### ***Ashlee Swanson - Vice President***

Ashlee Swanson was born and raised in suburban Minnesota and joined the US Navy out of high school in 2015 to serve as a Cryptologic Technician. She completed two surface naval deployments on the USS Bataan and USS Mason in 2017 and 2019 respectively. In 2022, she completed her final contract with the Navy and began using VA benefits to complete her degree. Ashlee is currently attending the University of Maryland full-time as an Electrical Engineering student, simultaneously minoring in Spanish for Professional Contexts. She has worked for Veteran Student Life since Spring of 2023, and also holds the Vice President position for the student veteran organization, TerpVets.

Email: [ashswan2@umd.edu](mailto:ashswan2@umd.edu)

### ***Michael Cortese - Treasurer***

[Bio here]

Email: [cortese1@terpmail.umd.edu](mailto:cortese1@terpmail.umd.edu)

## **Norman Cofer - Communications**

[Bio here]

Email: [ncofer@terpmail.umd.edu](mailto:ncofer@terpmail.umd.edu)

## **Get Connected with TerpVets**

### ***Email***

TerpVets holds monthly meetings, social events, and community volunteering opportunities. Email [terpvets@gmail.com](mailto:terpvets@gmail.com) to receive more information.

[\*Instagram\*](#)

[\*Facebook\*](#)

[\*Discord\*](#)

## Thinking About Attending the University of Maryland?

Embarking on the journey of higher education is an exciting yet crucial decision for student Veterans considering the University of Maryland. As you plan your academic future, it's essential to have all the necessary information to make an informed choice. Whether you're transitioning from military service or seeking to advance your career through education, the University of Maryland offers a supportive and enriching environment for Veterans and their families. Below is a comprehensive list of resources and contacts to keep in mind while you are deciding on your academic career here at the University of Maryland.

### Application Fee Waiver

If you are interested in applying to the University of Maryland, Veterans and military-connected students are eligible for a free admissions application. This waiver is applied once you submit your DD-214 while submitting your application through [CommonApp](#) for undergraduate students or when applying for [graduate programs](#). For more information or help getting your application fee waived, please contact Will Jones (contact information found on page 3).

### Undergraduate Students

The University of Maryland offers over 100 undergraduate majors across 12 colleges and schools. The University has Limited Enrollment Programs (LEPs) which are competitive majors and include programs such as engineering, computer science, chemistry, and many others. These programs require 45 credits to apply and specified gateway courses must be completed. To get a better understanding of these programs, please visit the link [here](#).

If you are interested in applying for undergraduate admissions, email [ApplyMaryland@umd.edu](mailto:ApplyMaryland@umd.edu), call 301-314-8377, or visit the undergraduate admissions website [here](#). Should you need help with your application, please contact Taylor Duvall who is the liaison for veterans applying to the university at [tduvall1@umd.edu](mailto:tduvall1@umd.edu). A list of required documents can be found [here](#) for your reference.

### Transfer Credit & Student Status

A common question among veterans is credit transfer. The University of Maryland only awards military credit earned through regionally accredited institutions. Currently, we recognize comparable credit from the Community College of the Air Force, the Defense Language Institute, the National Cryptologic Institute, or one of the service academies, in addition to any other regionally-accredited institutions. We do not award credit based on ACE, the Joint Service Transcript, nor Dantes recommendations.

The University of Maryland does not award credit for non-traditional or experiential learning not supervised by our own faculty. Examples include internships, externships, practicum, or co-op work. Nor will UMD allow transfer credits awarded at other institutions for such work. In some



instances, advisors may recommend sitting for a departmental exam or attempting to earn credit through the College-Level Examination Program.

The university has a database explicitly for transfer credits, detailing which courses transfer directly from other institutions. This database can be found [here](#).

Applicants with a minimum of 12 semester hours or 18 quarter hours at a regionally accredited college or university are classified as transfer students. Many veteran applicants meet this criteria; however, it is essential that the applicant check which prior courses will receive transfer credit. To apply as a transfer student, please visit the transfer applicants website [here](#).

## **Graduate Students**

The University of Maryland offers over 230 graduate programs. These programs include PhD's, traditional and professional master's programs, and certificate programs. More information about the various programs that are offered to graduate students can be found [here](#), and a comprehensive guide for the application process can be found [here](#).

## Attending the University of Maryland

Attending the University of Maryland is truly exciting! Being a Terp isn't just about earning a degree, it's about joining a vibrant community driven by innovation, diversity, and excellence. As a Terp, you'll have access to world-class faculty, cutting-edge research opportunities, and a supportive network of fellow students and alumni. You'll find endless possibilities to challenge yourself and make a positive impact on the world. Being a Terp means embracing the spirit of fearlessness, resilience, and collaboration as you strive to reach your fullest potential.

We have many traditions and offer many resources to help you succeed in your academic career. For incoming student veterans and military-connected students, we have created a checklist to make sure your transition here is as smooth as possible. This checklist can be found [here](#).

### Priority Registration, Courses, and Degree Audits

As a student veteran or military-connected student using veteran benefits, you qualify for **priority** registration, which allows access to reserve your spot in classes weeks before it opens to the rest of your peers! The university's website, [Testudo](#), is where you view the course catalog, register for classes, check your transcripts, and view your registration date. Another important tool housed on Testudo is the degree audit tool which allows you to run a check on your degree progress to view your current status within your program.

After you register for your classes on Testudo, you **MUST** submit a [VA Enrollment Certification Request](#) form to our VA Certifying Officials here on campus. This is extremely important as this step ensures that your education benefits are awarded. We HIGHLY recommend that as soon as you have registered for classes you email your VA Enrollment Certification Request to [vabenefits@umd.edu](mailto:vabenefits@umd.edu). This process must be completed **every semester** that you are planning to take courses, and it is recommended that you submit it as soon as you are registered for classes in a term.

## Student Status

### *Undergraduate Students*

Full-time status for undergraduate students requires that students be registered for the following amount of credits:

- At least **12 credits** during the **Fall and Spring** semesters
- At least **3 credits** during the 3-week **Winter** session
- At least **4 credits** during **Summer 1** and **3 credits** during **Summer 2**

It is important to understand your student status as this affects your GI Bill benefits; not adhering to full-time enrollment will result in a reduction in your housing allowance. One other thing to keep in mind is that you must be registered for at least **one in-person class** to receive your full

housing allowance benefit. If you are only enrolled in online courses during a specific term, the housing benefit will revert to the national online average, which can be found on the VA website [here](#).

### **Graduate Students**

For programs on the semester term, to be certified as full-time, a graduate student must be officially registered for a combination of courses equivalent to 48 units per semester. For programs on the 12-week term, to be certified as full-time, a graduate student must be officially registered for a combination of courses equivalent to 36 units per 12-week term.

### **Veteran Scholarships**

Veteran Student Life and the University of Maryland offer more than 70 Veteran scholarships! Applications open in April of every year and close the third week of May. The application and additional information can be found [here](#) on TerpLink and takes on average 45-60 minutes to complete. Once completed, you will be considered for all scholarships for which you are qualified. The Veteran Scholarships are typically awarded in July, however, the Veteran Reception where veteran scholars are recognized does not occur until November.

To be eligible to apply for these veteran scholarships, the following conditions must be met:

- Wish to start, finish, or further their education at the University of Maryland, College Park
- Have served in active duty or reserve capacity for any branch of the U.S. Armed Forces or are the dependent of someone who has served
- Are registered as full or part-time students at UMD and are pursuing undergraduate, graduate, or postgraduate degrees

If you are a returning scholar from a previous year(s), you will be contacted via email with a separate link to confirm your information and decision about renewing your scholarship.

For maximum consideration, please ensure that you complete your FAFSA as well! Even if you are receiving education benefits or other scholarships, depending on your financial situation, veterans may still qualify for additional assistance from Pell Grant or Subsidized Loans. Find more information here: <https://studentaid.gov/>.

### **Student Health Insurance**

The university requires all students to carry comprehensive health insurance in order to enroll in courses and avoid unexpected medical bills. UMD offers a [student health insurance plan](#) (SHIP) which can be waived if you are already enrolled in a health insurance plan. Because health insurance is a requirement by the university, **Chapter 31** and **33** benefits will **COVER** the cost of this SHIP.

Students have a period of time to waive the university's SHIP, which typically lasts until the add/drop period in Fall semesters. If you do not submit a SHIP waiver to the university, you will be automatically enrolled into SHIP. To confirm your coverage of benefits under SHIP, be sure to sign up at the beginning of the yearly enrollment, typically starting August 1st. Students who have health care provided by the VA or any other insurance can submit proof of coverage in order to waive the SHIP.

## Resources

This section will cover the resources that VSL and the University offer to you as student Veterans. Although most of these resources are static, some change depending on the time of year and priorities of the University. Should you have any questions, please reach out to VSL so that we can better assist you.

## Health & Mental Health Resources

The [University's Health Center](#) partners with the [Counseling Center](#) to offer mental health resources to all students, regardless of Veteran status. As a student, you are eligible for 8 free counseling sessions per academic year, group therapy, urgent services for those in crisis, and wellness workshop series. VSL is thrilled that we have a wonderful student Veteran Liaison at the Counseling Center, Grace Mahoney, to reach out to for additional information.

Grace Mahoney  
301-314-7671  
[gmahone1@umd.edu](mailto:gmahone1@umd.edu)

The University Health Center can be found on Campus Drive, directly across from the STAMP. The Counseling Center can be found on the first floor of the Shoemaker Building which is next to LeFrak Hall where our Veteran Center is temporarily located. Both the Health and Counseling Centers are during the following times:

- **Fall and Spring Semester:** Monday – Thursday 8:30 a.m. to 7:00 p.m., Friday 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
- **Summer Semester:** Monday – Friday 8:30 a.m to 4:30 p.m.
- **After-Hours Crisis Support:** 301-314-7651. Anytime outside of business hours (including weekends, holidays, and university closures)

The University Health Center (Counseling Center included) accepts the following In-Network Insurance Plans:

- Aetna (PPO/EPO)
- Blue Cross Blue Shield (Omnia Silver is excluded, PPO/EPO)
- Carefirst (PPO/EPO)
- United Health Care (PPO/EPO)
- Tricare Prime (PPO/EPO)
- Cigna (PPO/Open Access)
- Maryland Medicaid
- Student Health Insurance Plan through the University

## VA Benefits

As a Veteran, you are eligible for a variety of benefits including VA Health Care, Disability Compensation, Education Benefits (GI Bill), and more. VA Health Care includes treatment for

illnesses and injuries, preventative medicine, Primary Care Providers, pharmacists, and more. For more information about VA Health Care, please visit their [website](#).

Disability Compensation is a hot topic for Veterans and obtaining it requires you to put in a claim through the VA website or by filling out the paper version of the form. You can receive assistance in filling out your disability claim from Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW), American Legion Post, or decide to fill it by yourself. To begin your claims process for Disability Compensation, we recommend you contact your nearest VFW or American Legion Post as these Veteran partners offer claim support free of charge. Should you have questions related to Disability Compensation, please visit the VA's [website](#) or reach out to us for help.

Education Benefits for Veterans and their families can be challenging to navigate. We at VSL are here to help you navigate attending the University of Maryland and getting the full use of your benefits. Although we cannot act on behalf of the VA, we are familiar with the programs and systems, in addition to having a highly experienced team; including our University VA Certifying Officials, Mike Vivian and Andre Fletcher. Mike and Andre work with the VA to certify your courses, ensuring that the VA is paying the University on your behalf as well as making sure you get paid your housing allowance. Should you have questions for Mike or Andre, you can reach out to them via email at [vabenefits@umd.edu](mailto:vabenefits@umd.edu) or call them 301-314-8255. You can also visit the VA's [website](#) to review your statement of benefits, check out the GI Bill Comparison Tool, or apply for education benefits.

## University Career Center

The University has a [Career Center](#) to help our students explore career options, gain experience through internships, review and offer feedback for resumes, and offers interview practice. VSL partners with our Career Center to bring employers to our Networking Events and to provide resume workshops for student Veterans. The Career Center also provides a Liaison for our student Veterans, Lydia Woods, who is experienced in helping Veterans and their families find employment and internship opportunities.

Lydia Woods  
301-314-7235  
[lwoods13@umd.edu](mailto:lwoods13@umd.edu)

## Study Resources & VSL STEM Tutor Program

The University of Maryland is dedicated to student success both as enrolled scholars and alumni. We as a university offer a tremendous amount of study resources including the Math Test Bank, Math Tutoring Center, Writing Center, and much more! Please reach out to us to find out more information about these campus resources if you're interested.

In addition to our University resources, VSL offers free STEM tutoring to student Veterans and military-connected students through our STEM Tutor Program. We offer tutoring services for introductory courses in Physics, Chemistry, Mathematics, and Computer Science. Additionally,

we understand that academic needs vary, and we are open to accommodating requests for tutoring in other subjects based on the availability of qualified tutors. To request a tutor or receive additional information, please use the following [link](#).

## **Ammerman Professional Development & Veteran Crisis Funds**

VSL offers financial support through the Ammerman Professional Development Fund as well as the Veteran Crisis Fund. The Ammerman Professional Development Fund provides support to student Veterans in need of assistance to participate in professional development opportunities that will enhance and strengthen their career readiness. This includes things such as professional certifications, professional conference attendance, unpaid internships, and testing expenses. Please note, this is a reimbursement fund, meaning that the student Veteran is required to pay for the opportunity before being reimbursed. To apply for funds from the Ammerman Professional Development Fund, please visit this [link](#).

In addition to the Ammerman Professional Development Fund, we also offer a Veterans Crisis Fund. This fund exists to support student Veterans through times of unforeseen economic hardship that would otherwise prevent you from continuing your education at UMD. Be prepared to provide supporting documentation (receipts, contracts, etc.) and note that some awards will require follow-up consultations. After initial screening, VSL will contact you if more information is needed. VSL makes every attempt to finalize decisions on Crisis Fund requests as soon as possible after being received. To apply for funds from the Crisis Fund, please visit this [link](#).

## **VSL Peer Sponsorship Program**

VSL is proud to announce our new peer sponsorship program! This program is similar to our old Battle Buddy Mentorship program with an emphasis on sponsoring incoming student Veterans and military-connected students. Incoming student Veterans will be paired with a seasoned UMD student Veteran to help with their transition from the military to higher education. This program is extremely important to the success of our student Veterans and helps us to build a larger, more-inclusive Veteran network.

As a sponsor, you can expect to be paired with 1-5 incoming student Veterans and will be there to help support them in their transition to UMD. This includes showing them the ropes of being a Terp, pointing them in the right direction with their benefits and courses, and making sure they feel welcome among our Veteran population. You can expect a time commitment of roughly 5-10 hours per semester while being a sponsor. If you are interested in becoming a sponsor for incoming student Veterans and military-connected students, please fill out this [form](#).

The VSL Peer Sponsorship Program's student leader is Ashlee Swanson. If you have any questions regarding the program, please contact her via email at [ashswan2@umd.edu](mailto:ashswan2@umd.edu).

## **UMD Departmental Liaisons**

We at VSL are hard at work attempting to get a Liaison for our student Veterans in every academic department within the university. This is similar to the liaisons provided for student athletes to support their academic affairs with an expert on their unique circumstances in each program. So far, we have confirmed a few liaisons and we hope the program will continue to expand. Once we have additional information on this program and have trained our liaisons, we will provide their contact information in the section below.