



**You stood
for your
country.**

Matthew
ACU Student Veteran

**Now we
stand
for you.**

**Student Veteran
Services Handbook
2023**

acu.edu.au/veterans

 **ACU**
AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY



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Overview

ACU's Student Veteran Services supports student veterans entering higher education and their journey through university life in a veteran-centric, friendly and supportive manner. We provide a national service, with staff across three states, and a centralised point of contact for queries relating to higher education opportunities at ACU.

At ACU, we stand for veterans. We recognise the central role of education in post-military life. As Industry Professor Veterans and their Families Andrew Condon has said, "Enriching lives through learning and knowledge, and being job ready, are key elements to a successful transition from defence for veterans and their families."

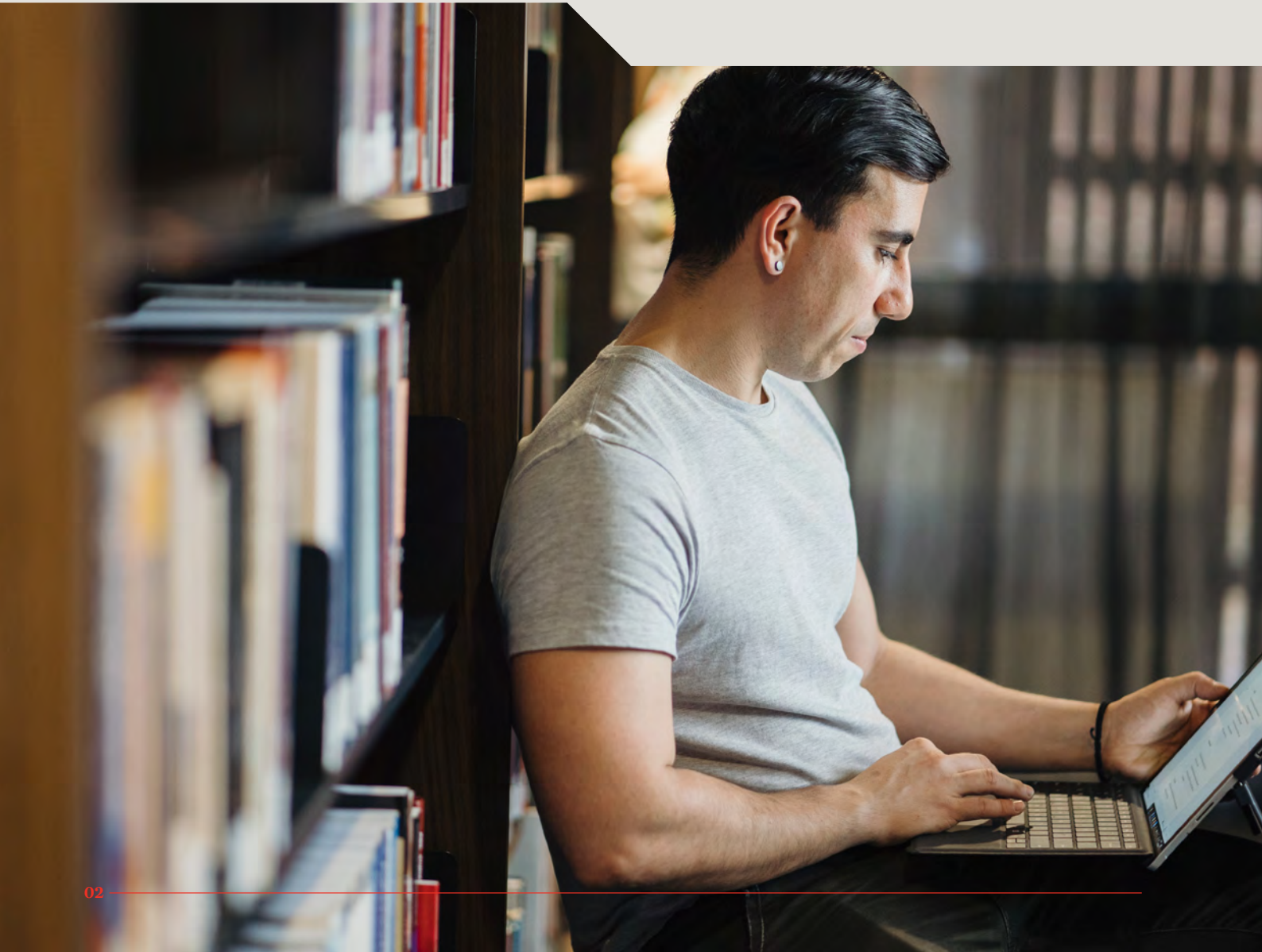
Transitioning out of the military can be difficult for many veterans, with high rates of unemployment and mental health issues. Higher education is an internationally established pathway to help veterans successfully transition from military to civilian life, broaden personal networks and find gainful employment.

Our Veteran Entry Program assesses applicants on a case-by-case basis, converting military service into an entry rank. Once you're an ACU student, the Student Veteran Support Program will help smooth the transition to student life.

Student Veteran Services oversees the entire journey, supporting current Australian Defence Force (ADF) personnel, veterans and their families. In all we do, our national team lives the ACU mission:

"Within the Catholic intellectual tradition and acting in Truth and Love, Australian Catholic University is committed to the pursuit of knowledge, the dignity of the human person and the common good."

Vice-Chancellor and President Professor Zlatko Skrbis is a firm proponent of ACU's mission. He places it at the centre of what we do as a university: "It is the growth of the whole person through a student-centred educational experience steeped in our mission values. And it is helping our students to develop personally, intellectually and ethically, by offering them a learning experience which is both holistic and values based."



Veteran Entry Program

The Veteran Entry Program (VEP) is a direct entry pathway into higher education at ACU. It makes higher education more accessible for more people.

The VEP recognises your service in the army, navy, air force or reserves. We'll assess your service and convert it to an entry rank, which is similar to an ATAR. We then match that rank to the requirements of the undergraduate or postgraduate course you wish to study and make you an offer based on the outcome.

Individuals from all branches of military service, as well as their spouses and children, are encouraged to apply for the Veteran Entry Program. If you're unsure about whether you qualify, we still encourage you to apply.

If you want to study at ACU, and you have served in the ADF, you can apply directly to ACU.

[Learn more about the VEP](#)

Your service and leadership experience count

As a guide, completion of general training in the ADF with two years' experience, regardless of your military rank, will result in an entry rank of 82. This score would give you entry into most ACU bachelor's degrees. We will provide individualised assessment of your experience and qualifications to determine the highest entry rank available to you.

If you have been an officer or senior non-commissioned officer (SNCO) in the ADF, you've displayed leadership and management capability. We recognise the life and work skills required to achieve this rank, so we're offering unconditional entry to two of our postgraduate courses.

If you have attained the equivalent rank of O-1 or above as an officer or chaplain, or E06 and above as a SNCO, you are eligible for **direct entry** into the [Graduate Certificate in Business Administration](#) or [Graduate Certificate in Occupational Health, Safety and Environmental Management](#).

Gain credit for one unit

In recognition of your service to country and community, ACU will grant all serving and ex-serving personnel credit for the Core Curriculum unit 'Justice and Change in a Global World'. This is available for most undergraduate degrees.

How to apply

To apply for the VEP, [browse ACU's available courses](#) and then register your interest for a course using the online VEP registration form below.

You'll need to share your name and contact details, as well as your ADF service record and educational history. Don't forget to tell us which course/s you are interested in.

After you register, we'll contact you to provide personalised assistance with applying to study at ACU. Applications through the Veteran Entry Program will be automatically registered to the Student Veteran Support Program.

[Register for the Veteran Entry Program](#)





Veteran Entry Program (Families)

Often, the family members of ADF personnel face significant barriers when pursuing educational or employment goals due to service commitments such as posting cycles, deployments and/or location.

The Veteran Entry Program (Families) aims to provide recognition of these challenges and sacrifices. It gives your family the opportunity to access a range of study options, increasing their employability and opening the door to meaningful employment.

This entry pathway is available to the partner, spouse or child (aged 18 or over) of current or former ADF personnel. Applications are handled on a case-by-case basis, but as a rule of thumb two years of service is required. If you are unsure of your eligibility, we encourage you to contact a Student Veteran Services team member to discuss further.

[Learn more about VEP \(Families\)](#)

How to apply

Interested family members can apply directly to ACU through the Veteran Entry Program registration form. Applicants will be required to submit a copy of their family member's ADF service record.

Following their application, eligible applicants will be asked to provide supporting documentation, including a current Curriculum Vitae, existing qualifications and a motivation to study statement.

They will also be able to schedule an interview to discuss study options at ACU.

[**Register for the Veteran
Entry Program**](#)

Recognition of prior learning (ADF specific)



As a member of the ADF, you undergo rigorous training and gain valuable work experience. ACU recognises this and provides the opportunity for you to receive credit for your service.

We also recognise the challenges involved in transitioning from the ADF into tertiary education.

That's why we are the first Australian university to formally recognise the courses you have completed during your ADF service by offering you recognition of prior learning (RPL).

What is RPL?

Recognition of prior learning is a **formal process of reviewing** previously undertaken study or work experience. If this study or work experience is similar to ACU units, then you may be eligible for credit towards your course.

RPL can reduce the amount of time it takes to finish your degree and make your degree more cost effective.

The courses you undertook while you were serving in the ADF are considered formal learning by ACU.

[Learn more about RPL](#)

How much RPL can I receive?

ACU has a tailored approach towards RPL for student veterans. To do this, we assessed the Initial Employment Training (IET) courses and promotion courses delivered by the ADF to define how many credit points they each merit.

The amount of credit you can receive depends on the duration of your IET and the rank you achieved during your service. There can be individual variations in a student veteran's service record, so we assess each one individually.

Your **course rules** will also influence how much RPL you are eligible for. The next two pages show examples of the credit you may be able to receive.

How to apply for RPL

All student veterans can apply for RPL. Simply share the relevant aspects of your service record when you apply through the Veteran Entry Program pathway. Your course coordinator will discuss these with you when they assess your application.

If you have any questions about recognition of prior learning or applying for credit, contact Student Veteran Services. Email studentveteranservices@acu.edu.au or call (07) 3623 7422.

[Register for the Veteran Entry Program](#)

RPL for other ranks

There are four packages of RPL available to student veterans based on:

- your rank and IET course
- ACU's course rules.

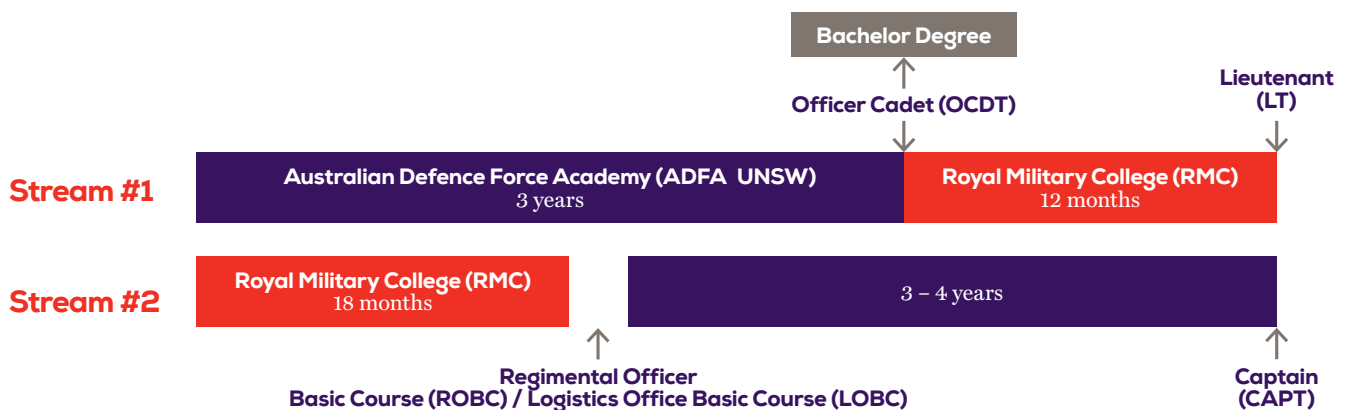
Anyone who is Private Proficient, or the equivalents in the RAN and RAAF, can access Package 1.

Package 1 Private (RAN & RAAF equivalent)	IET 4 Months – 10 Credit Points unspecified elective (Course Rules allowing) IET 6 Months – 30 Credit Points unspecified elective (Course Rules allowing) IET 12 Months – 60 Credit Points unspecified elective (Course Rules allowing) IET 18 Months – 80 Credit Points unspecified elective (Course Rules allowing)
Package 2 Lance Corporal (RAN & RAAF equivalent)	Package 1 plus BUSN113 as specified credit (Course Rules allowing)
Package 3 Corporal (RAN & RAAF equivalent)	Package 1 plus BUSN113 as specified credit (Course Rules allowing) MGMT214 as specified credit (Course Rules allowing)
Package 4 SGT & WOs (RAN & RAAF equivalent)	Package 1 plus BUSN113 as specified credit (Course Rules allowing) MGMT214 as specified credit (Course Rules allowing) HRMG204 as specified credit (Course Rules allowing) OHSE201 or 1 unspecified elective (Course Rules allowing)

RPL for officers

Officers will be eligible for 40 points of credit towards the ACU Master of Business Administration (MBA) if you have completed:

- Stream 1 and your rank is Lieutenant or above
- Stream 2 and your rank is Captain or above.





Veteran Transition Program

The Veteran Transition Program (VTP) is a free, two-week intensive preparatory program that supports commencing student veterans as they transition from the military service to ACU.

The VTP has been designed, based on research and successful American models, to address some of the key challenges student veterans face when transitioning into higher education. Student veterans often experience issues such as increased time since last attending formal education, feelings of isolation and alienation, and loss of identity.

Through workshops, lectures, tutorials and sessions focusing on reflective thought and critical thinking, the program equips student veterans with key academic skills and provides a better understanding of what to expect during the first year of higher education.

The program is student-centred and aims to:

- familiarise students with the ACU environment and foster a sense of support from the academic staff, services and peer network
- provide knowledge of basic academic techniques, with an opportunity for practical application
- generate a sense of belonging through exposure to campus culture and greater peer networks.

The VTP runs twice a year, before Semester 1 and Semester 2. This program is offered online nationally, and face-to-face in Brisbane, Melbourne and Townsville.

[Learn more about the VTP](#)

Why is my participation in the VTP important?

Research suggests that student veterans transitioning into university life face unique challenges.

Navigating the cultural shift from military service to academia can be daunting.

The VTP aims to address these challenges by offering you an opportunity to:

- develop self-confidence and a sense of belonging
- familiarise yourself with ACU staff and your campus
- learn about available support services and programs
- prepare for the demands of university study
- connect with peers and expand your support network.

Having a support network on campus will help you transition to university study.

Within the program, there are opportunities to meet other student veterans who are already studying at ACU and hear about their experiences in higher education.

Find out more

If you are interested in participating in the VTP or have any questions about the program, contact Student Veteran Services at studentveteranservices@acu.edu.au.

**Register for the Veteran
Entry Program**



Student Veteran Support Program

The Student Veteran Support Program (SVSP) provides ACU student veterans with access to a range of support services and academic resources to help ease the transition into uni life. From the big exam to balancing your studies, we'll be in your corner every step of the way.

The SVSP is open to ACU students who have completed or are completing a specific term of military service in either the army, air force or navy, as well as those in the reserves. Students with international military service are also encouraged to apply.

SVSP member benefits:

- You'll be able to negotiate your study around your external or service commitments. ACU recognises military commitments and will work with you to maintain these.
- Your requests to lecturers and course coordinators for academic adjustments will be supported (where evidenced) by the SVSP team.
- You'll have access to priority timetabling, allowing you to better schedule your classes around your commitments. This is applied automatically upon enrolment within the SVSP.
- If you have received results for at least one semester in your course, you can apply to take a break, or interrupt your studies.

- If you have a disability or long-term condition that impacts upon your studies, the SVSP offers support, special consideration, and flexible options such as exams deferral and online or part-time study.
- If you are struggling to complete assignments, the SVSP can provide administrative assistance and advice.
- You can develop your academic skills with help from the Academic Skills Unit (ASU). The ASU runs free classes and workshops throughout the semester.

How to access SVSP

All students enrolled through the Veteran Entry Program are automatically registered to the SVSP and all its benefits, with no further action required.

Register for the Veteran Entry Program



Other available support

Financial support options

If you are an Australian citizen, you may be eligible for a variety of different options to help finance your study. For more information, visit the [financing your studies](#) page on the ACU website.

Additionally, as a current serving or ex-serving member of the military, you may be eligible for study assistance through a variety of government and non-government agencies. Visit the websites below to explore your options:

- Department of Veterans' Affairs
- RSL Queensland

Other ACU support services

- **ACU Health Clinic** offers ACU student veterans an initial free physiotherapy assessment and treatment, as well as ongoing discounted treatment.
- The **Counselling and Disability Service** provides free, confidential counselling and disability support to ensure you can participate fully in university life.
- **Campus Ministry** can support you, connect you to the community, offer meaningful ways to explore life's big questions, and provide you with unique opportunities to make a difference in the world.
- The **Career Development Service** helps with career planning, job search, application reviews, interview coaching and more.
- The **Student Advocacy Service** is an information, advice and referral service that helps you to navigate university policies and procedures. The service is confidential, free and available to all ACU students.
- ACU students can access **Wisewould Mahony Lawyers** for basic legal advice at no cost. Wisewould Mahony is an Australian law firm with over 150 years' experience in providing individual and corporate legal services.

Further support options

You might find yourself in need of additional services throughout your studies, and the SVSP aims to put you in touch with services that might be able to help you best. Some of these include:

1. **Soldier On** – Offers counselling services for current and ex-serving ADF members and their families. Provides volunteer opportunities for members to get involved and give back to the community. Aids with resumes, navigating the job market, supporting individuals through the application process etc.
2. **Open Arms** – Aids current and ex-serving ADF members and their families. This assistance can be through psychological support, workshops, programs and crisis accommodation support.
3. **Beyond Blue** – Provides a range of psychological support to both the defence and civilian communities. These services include crisis counselling, counselling and support in finding the right professional services.
4. **Mates4Mates** – Provides a range of services for current and ex-serving ADF members and their families. Services include physical rehabilitation and wellbeing services, exercise physiology, group fitness, yoga, physiotherapy, counselling and psychology. Also offers employment services and psychosocial opportunities.
5. **Australian Veterans Employment Coalition (AVEC)** – Connects current and ex-serving defence members with employers looking for skillsets associated with military service.

A vertical photograph of a modern university interior. The scene is dominated by glass railings and a staircase. In the foreground, a person is sitting at a white desk, working on a laptop. In the background, another person is standing at a desk with a computer monitor displaying the ACU logo. The lighting is bright, and the overall atmosphere is professional and academic.

Uni Taster Program

ACU's Uni Taster Program is designed to provide current and ex-serving ADF personnel and their families with information about university and their study and career options.

The Uni Taster Program is free to attend and currently runs twice a year in Townsville. It can also be streamed live online and all these sessions are interactive.

Participants in this program can:

- find out how ACU will support veterans and their families as they transition to university and during their studies
- learn how to apply to ACU
- discover what courses they may be eligible for based on military experience
- find out what support services are available
- experience an academic lecture
- talk with current student veterans and more.

What to expect

The event runs over six days and is comprised of multiple standalone sessions that cover a range of topics. Sessions include workshops, mini academic lectures, panel discussions, student presentations and staff presentations.

Participants can join as many sessions as they like.

Do I need to attend all sessions?

No. You can attend one, many or all the sessions – it is entirely up to you.

How to register

Registrations are encouraged but not essential – drop-ins are welcome. Proof of registration to attend will be provided by email for those who require it.

[Register now](#)

ACU Student Veteran Exercise Lifestyle Program

The Student Veteran Exercise Lifestyle Program (ELP) provides access to health and wellness support to student veterans and their families throughout their studies. There is a strong body of evidence indicating how increased physical activity supports both physical and mental health.

Current and ex-serving ADF personnel understand the importance of fitness, but balancing it with day-to-day demands can be difficult. The Student Veteran ELP is designed to help you find your equilibrium.

First developed in 2020, the Student Veteran ELP gives student veterans studying at ACU access to the Exercise Lifestyle Clinic (ELC) and health professionals on campus. The program generated a high level of interest, its offerings were expanded to families of student veterans, and it is now a fixed program with high participation from students and families alike.

Who can get involved?

The Student Veteran ELP is available to all current student veterans and their families. The services offered include:

- one-on-one coaching with clinical exercise physiologists and professional placement students
- group training sessions with other veterans
- support to design personalised goals
- access to high performance training facilities during study
- opportunities to connect with other students and faculty members
- a chance to learn new skills and challenge yourself in ways that you may have never considered.

Access and support

ELP staff are university accredited with qualifications in high performance sport, exercise and sport science, and clinical exercise physiology. Exercise Lifestyle Clinics are available across all of ACU's main campuses and have dedicated staff to facilitate training.

Telehealth bookings are also available for those unable to access the facilities, meaning you can work out in your own home with professional support.



“After leaving the ADF, fitness became difficult to incorporate into my day-day life. Commencing study compounded this as it was difficult to find time to train. Being able to use the facilities whilst on campus has been a real game-changer and having staff to guide me through has made a big difference.”

Stephen
Student veteran

Grants and scholarships

Commencing study can bring with it many financial demands. ACU and several other organisations offer financial assistance to student veterans to help with the transition into higher education.

These awards are designed to ease the financial burden of study, with an allocation of funds for tuition fees and educational resources such as books and a laptop.

Australian Veterans' Children Assistance Trust

Children and grandchildren of ex-serving veterans may be eligible for a scholarship of \$4,000 – \$6,000 each year for three years, funded by ex-service organisations and private sponsors. A bursary of the same amount and duration, the Long Tan Bursary, also exists and is for children and grandchildren of Vietnam veterans.

Both of these awards are means tested and criteria includes being an Australian citizen, being a child or grandchild of an ex-serving veteran with operational service, and enrolment or plans to enrol at a full-time study load.

For further information on eligibility and how to apply, please read about scholarships and bursaries at [Australian Veterans' Children Assistance Trust](#).

ACU Student Veteran Commencing Student Technology and Book Grant

ACU has developed the Student Veteran Commencing Technology and Book Grant, valued at \$500, to support your transition into higher education.

Grant applications will be assessed based on the eligibility criteria below. The supporting rationale will also be considered. Applications open after the census date each semester and the recipients are announced in Week 8 of semester.

This grant is open to applicants who meet all of the following criteria, as of the grant application closing date:

- Citizenship – all student veterans registered with the Student Veteran Support Program (SVSP) at ACU within their first year of study
- Faculty – any
- Course – any ACU undergraduate degree
- Campus – any
- Study load – full-time
- You must be enrolled in at least 30 credit points, but not have completed more than 80 credit points at ACU in an undergraduate/postgraduate degree (excluding non-award undergraduate units).

[Apply for this grant](#)

The American Australian Association Scholarship

The Veteran's Fund provides support of up to US\$40,000 to honourably discharged post-9/11 military veterans from Australia and America who are undertaking, or interested in undertaking, undergraduate or postgraduate study for one-year full-time in the other country.

For Australian applicants who wish to study in the US, applications open 1 January and close 31 March each year.

[Learn more about the American Australian Association's Veterans' Fund](#)

United States GI Bill

If you're a US army veteran, you may be eligible to receive education funding from the US Department of Veteran Affairs (VA).

We are authorised to certify funding under the following education programs:

- Post 9/11 GI Bill®
- Montgomery GI Bill
- Veterans' Education Assistance Program.

Your chosen course must be approved by VA.

To confirm if your chosen course has been approved for VA benefits, [email the ACU International Admissions team](#). If your course has not been approved, we can seek approval from the department for you.

If you need more information about the education benefits offered by VA, [visit the official US government website](#).



SOLDIERS FIVE TO STUDY

Tips for soldiers
from soldiers



Soldiers' five to study: tips for soldiers from soldiers

A 'soldiers' five' is a common army phrase used to describe a brief of five key points or five minutes' duration. The Student Veteran Services team has used this as a basis for the *Soldiers' five to study: tips for soldiers from soldiers* – a resource to help support veterans transitioning to tertiary study.

This guide offers informal learnings from student veterans who have transitioned to study and is also informed by research. Tips were developed to address areas of need as identified by research, along with what students thought most valuable for a commencing veteran to know.

ACU is proud to share this invaluable resource. We've made it available to all veterans and external organisations.

Download *Soldiers' five to study: tips for soldiers from soldiers* ([PDF, 987KB](#))

ACU Student Veteran Impact Awards

One of ACU's core values is service to the wider community and the common good. ACU students are encouraged to contribute to campus life, take part in our Core Curriculum and give back through community engagement.

About the Student Veteran Impact Awards

The Student Veteran Impact Awards recognise the positive impact our student veterans have on the community during their time at ACU.

These awards represent ACU's core values of service and the common good. Throughout their study at ACU, students are encouraged to acknowledge their responsibility to the common good, the environment and society.

In line with our mission, identity and values, the Student Veteran Impact Awards celebrate the efforts of student veterans who significantly contribute to the university and the wider community.

Award nominations

ACU student veterans are encouraged to self-nominate or nominate a mate for any of the three **award categories**. To be eligible for the Student Veteran Impact Awards, the nominee must:

- be a current student veteran studying at ACU
- provide evidence of service if not registered to the Student Veteran Support Program (SVSP)
- have completed at least 60 credit points of study
- demonstrate academic merit through a GPA of more than 5, calculated based on total study.

[Register now](#)

Student Veteran Employability Program

The Student Veteran Employability Program (SVEP) is a pilot project that provides access to career guidance and advisory support to student veterans and their families who are exploring higher education opportunities.

Our friendly career advisors can guide you with study options to suit your goals and lifestyle in a free online or phone consultation.

No matter your end goal, our career advisors will help you explore the endless possibilities of study, choose a course that best suits your current lifestyle and commitments, and forge your own path to your dream career.

Book a 30-minute consultation with ACU Career Advisor Agatha Ang today or email careers.service@acu.edu.au.



