



COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY
CENTER FOR VETERAN
TRANSITION AND INTEGRATION

WORKING PRACTICES for Building Veteran and Military-connected Support on Campus

WORKING PRACTICES for Building Veteran & Military-Connected Support on Campus

How can we build stronger cultures of support for veteran and military-connected students that are distinctive to your own environment and unique to your own population, even with limited staff, scarce financial resources, and other constraints?

Flash Diagnostic Workbook

To help your administrators, faculty, staff, and other stakeholders assess and co-design stronger, regionally relevant cultures of support for your veteran and military-connected students, **first, navigate the metrics and working practices in this workbook and find your institution's maturity level using the scoring matrix (step 1), and second, participate in a listening session with other stakeholders to review the results and discuss your development goals (step 2).** This tool can help jumpstart or fortify your strategic planning.

	Initiating Stage	Rising Practice	Robust Foundation	Transformative Leader
Maturity Levels	Your institution is currently at the beginning of its journey of adopting practices, or has few practices in place.	Your institution is currently implementing some practices but is not yet implementing the majority of practices.	Your institution is currently implementing the majority of practices and developing some unique practices.	Your institution is currently implementing all or nearly all practices, with leadership buy-in.

The 8 Metrics	Initiating Stage (1 pt)	Rising Practice (2 pts)	Robust Foundation (3 pts)	Transformative Leader (4 pts)
1. Understanding Your Population	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Connecting Communities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Self-Inventorying Campus Resources	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Implementing Empowering Policies	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Mentoring Students	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Developing Veteran Talent	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Building Institutional Capacity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Advocating Commitment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Total Score: ____ / 32

- 1–12: Initiating Stage → *Begin foundational planning.*
 13–20: Rising Practice → *Time to deepen consistency.*
 21–27: Robust Foundation → *Scale and innovate.*
 28–32: Transformative Leader → *Mentor and advocate regionally.*

Name: _____ Date: _____

Institution: _____

Department: _____



1. Understanding Your Veteran and Military-Connected Population

Do you utilize the following working practices?

- A. Centralized Veteran Resources
- B. Data Infrastructure and Collection Practices
- C. Analytics
- D. Story-Driven Insights
- E. Participatory Observation and Embedded Listening

➤ *How do you rate yourself in **understanding** your veteran and military-connected students?*

Use the worksheet on the next page to find your score. Take the score and  Check only one box

Initiating Stage	No centralized hub; minimal data on veteran population; ad hoc support with no systematized listening practices.	<input type="checkbox"/> (0-3pts)
Rising Practice	Emerging veteran center or contact; basic demographic and academic tracking; one-time surveys or periodic listening efforts.	<input type="checkbox"/> (4-7pts)
Robust Foundation	Active use of centralized data systems; narrative-based focus groups; use of metrics in strategic planning.	<input type="checkbox"/> (8-11pts)
Transformative Leader	Dynamic ecosystem with analytics, student-driven narrative, and co-designed practices informed by data and embedded ethnography.	<input type="checkbox"/> (12+pts)



1. Understanding Your Veteran & Military-Connected Students – WORKSHEET

Use the boxes for notes, rate yourself on the right, add the points, and check off the corresponding box on the previous page

	Deficient (0pt)	Competent (1pt)	Proficient (2pts)	Accomplished (3pts)	Points
A. Centralized Veteran Resources					
B. Data Infrastructure and Collection Practices					
C. Analytics					
D. Story-Driven Insights					
E. Participatory Observation and Embedded Listening					
Total Points					
F. (write-in)					



2. Connecting Your Communities to Resources and Each Other

Do you utilize the following working practices?

- A. Veteran-Specific Student Organizations
- B. Cross-group Networking Structures
- C. Communications Infrastructure
- D. Orientation and Onboarding Practices
- E. Distinct Belonging and Affinity Space Integration

➤ *How do you rate yourself in **connecting** your communities to resources and each other?*

Use the worksheet on the next page to find your score. Take the score and  Check only one box

Initiating Stage	Disconnected communication, no student group opportunities, no orientation or events for veteran and military-connected students.	<input type="checkbox"/> (0-3pts)
Rising Practice	Communication lists in place; informal student group activity; limited events or orientation sessions.	<input type="checkbox"/> (4-7pts)
Robust Foundation	Regular veteran-led events, institutional communication strategy, affinity space, and embedded orientation components.	<input type="checkbox"/> (8-11pts)
Transformative Leader	Fully integrated communications, cross-campus affinity culture, embedded leadership pathways, and peer networks.	<input type="checkbox"/> (12+pts)



2. Connecting Your Communities to Resources and Each Other – WORKSHEET

Use the boxes for notes, rate yourself on the right, add the points, and check off the corresponding box on the previous page

	Deficient (0pt)	Competent (1pt)	Proficient (2pts)	Accomplished (3pts)	Points
A. Veteran-Specific Student Organizations					
B. Cross-group Networking Structures					
C. Communications Infrastructure					
D. Orientation and Onboarding Practices					
E. Distinct Belonging and Affinity Space Integration					
Total Points					
F. (write-in)					



3. Self-Inventorying Campus Resources

Do you utilize the following working practices?

- A. Financial Aid & GI Bill Expertise
- B. Family Support and Housing Access
- C. Academic Advising
- D. Health & Wellness
- E. 4-Year Support, Grad School Resources, and Career Education

➤ *How do you rate yourself in self-inventorying campus resources?*

Use the worksheet on the next page to find your score. Take the score and  Check only one box

Initiating Stage	No audit or understanding of resource-fit for veterans; inconsistent referrals.	<input type="checkbox"/> (0-3pts)
Rising Practice	Resource development in progress; working relationships with a few offices; awareness growing.	<input type="checkbox"/> (4-7pts)
Robust Foundation	Cross-functional alignment between key service areas and veteran and military-connected student needs.	<input type="checkbox"/> (8-11pts)
Transformative Leader	Resource inventory continuously updated; proactive partnerships and tailored services in place.	<input type="checkbox"/> (12+pts)



3. Self-Inventorizing Campus Resources – WORKSHEET

Use the boxes for notes, rate yourself on the right, add the points, and check off the corresponding box on the previous page

	Deficient (0pt)	Competent (1pt)	Proficient (2pts)	Accomplished (3pts)	Points
A. Financial Aid					
B. Family Support and Housing Access					
C. Academic Advising					
D. Health and Wellness					
E. 4-Year Support, Grad School Resources, and Career Education					
Total Points					
F. (write-in)					



4. Implementing Empowering Policies

Do you utilize the following working practices?

- A. Reserve Duty, Absence, and Reentry Policies
- B. Disability Accommodations Specific to Veteran Contexts
- C. Support for Spouses, Dependents, and Caregivers
- D. Prospective Students - Recruiting, Advisory Structures with Student Veteran Representation
- E. Embedded Institutional Flexibility

➤ *How do you rate yourself in **implementing** empowering policies?*

Use the worksheet on the next page to find your score. Take the score and  Check only one box

Initiating Stage	Little to no formal policy consideration for veteran and military-connected needs.	<input type="checkbox"/> (0-3pts)
Rising Practice	Some reactive accommodations; student advisory group in planning.	<input type="checkbox"/> (4-7pts)
Robust Foundation	Active policy updates reflecting service-related needs; spouse and dependent support visible.	<input type="checkbox"/> (8-11pts)
Transformative Leader	Veterans co-author institutional policy; adaptive, anticipatory policies in place.	<input type="checkbox"/> (12+pts)



4. Implementing Empowering Policies – WORKSHEET

Use the boxes for notes, rate yourself on the right, add the points, and check off the corresponding box on the previous page

	Deficient (0pt)	Competent (1pt)	Proficient (2pts)	Accomplished (3pts)	Points
A. Reserve Duty, Absence, and Reentry Policies					
B. Disability Accommodations					
C. Support for Spouses, Dependents, and Caregivers					
D. Prospective Students - Recruiting, Advisory Structures with Student Veteran Representation					
E. Embedded Institutional Flexibility					
Total Points					
F. (write-in)					



5. Mentoring Students and Relational Support

Do you utilize the following working practices?

- A. Peer-to-Peer Mentorship Programs
- B. Faculty/Staff Veteran Advocate Networks
- C. Structured Academic and Professional Mentoring
- D. Life-Stage and Transition Support (e.g., post-discharge to graduation)
- E. Cross-Campus and Alumni Mentorship Networks

➤ *How do you rate yourself in mentoring students and relational support?*

Use the worksheet on the next page to find your score. Take the score and  Check only one box

Initiating Stage	No mentorship programs; isolated support via informal relationships.	<input type="checkbox"/> (0-3pts)
Rising Practice	Emerging peer support or interest in mentoring; faculty allies uncoordinated.	<input type="checkbox"/> (4-7pts)
Robust Foundation	Peer and professional mentorship tied to academic and career milestones.	<input type="checkbox"/> (8-11pts)
Transformative Leader	Scalable, resourced, and longitudinal mentorship ecosystem spanning pre-admissions through alumni engagement.	<input type="checkbox"/> (12+pts)

5. Mentoring Students and Relational Support – WORKSHEET

Use the boxes for notes, rate yourself on the right, add the points, and check off the corresponding box on the previous page

	Deficient (0pt)	Competent (1pt)	Proficient (2pts)	Accomplished (3pts)	Points
A. Peer-to-Peer Mentorship Programs					
B. Faculty/Staff Veteran Advocate Networks					
C. Structured Academic and Professional Mentoring					
D. Life-Stage and Transition Support (e.g., post-discharge to graduation)					
E. Cross-Campus and Alumni Mentorship Networks					
Total Points					
F. (write-in)					



6. Developing Veteran and Military-Connected Talent

Do you utilize the following working practices?

- A. Targeted Recruitment and Enrollment Strategies
- B. Onboarding Courses (e.g., “How to be a Student-Veteran”)
- C. Career Development and Translational Skills Support
- D. Access to Fellowships, Internships, and Research Opportunities
- E. Graduate/Professional Pipeline Building

➤ *How do you rate yourself in **developing** veteran and military-connected talent?*

Use the worksheet on the next page to find your score. Take the score and  Check only one box

Initiating Stage	Minimal outreach; no tailored onboarding or graduate or career planning for veterans	<input type="checkbox"/> (0-3pts)
Rising Practice	Some admissions language and staff support in place; interest in onboarding courses.	<input type="checkbox"/> (4-7pts)
Robust Foundation	Veteran-specific academic and career programming exists with measurable outcomes.	<input type="checkbox"/> (8-11pts)
Transformative Leader	Pipeline from recruitment to advanced degree and career placement is tracked, resourced, and community-driven.	<input type="checkbox"/> (12+pts)

6. Developing Veteran and Military-Connected Talent – WORKSHEET

Use the boxes for notes, rate yourself on the right, add the points, and check off the corresponding box on the previous page

	Deficient (0pt)	Competent (1pt)	Proficient (2pts)	Accomplished (3pts)	Points
A. Targeted Recruitment and Enrollment Strategies					
B. Onboarding Courses (e.g., “How to be a Student-Veteran”)					
C. Career Development and Translational Skills Support					
D. Access to Fellowships, Internships, and Research Opportunities					
E. Graduate/Professional Pipeline Building					
				Total Points	
F. (write-in)					



7. Building Institutional Capacity and Cultural Awareness

Do you utilize the following working practices?

- A. Military Cultural Awareness Training for Admin, Staff, Faculty, and others
- B. Narrative Engagement Initiatives
- C. Practices for Addressing Misconceptions
- D. Inclusion of Veteran Voices in Curricular and Pedagogical Design
- E. Assessment, Evaluation, and Iterative Improvement Processes that Measure Outcomes

➤ *How do you rate yourself in **building** institutional capacity and cultural awareness?*

Use the worksheet on the next page to find your score. Take the score and  Check only one box

Initiating Stage	No training or awareness efforts; institutional ignorance of veteran and military-connected experiences.	<input type="checkbox"/> (0-3pts)
Rising Practice	Training modules being piloted; a few admin, staff, and/or faculty engaged in awareness efforts.	<input type="checkbox"/> (4-7pts)
Robust Foundation	Routine training and feedback systems for staff/faculty; faculty champions	<input type="checkbox"/> (8-11pts)
Transformative Leader	Institutional norms, teaching practices, and frameworks actively include and evolve with veteran and military-connected perspectives.	<input type="checkbox"/> (12+pts)

7. Building Institutional Capacity and Cultural Awareness – WORKSHEET

Use the boxes for notes, rate yourself on the right, add the points, and check off the corresponding box on the previous page

	Deficient (0pt)	Competent (1pt)	Proficient (2pts)	Accomplished (3pts)	Points
A. Military Cultural Awareness Training for Admin, Staff, Faculty, and others					
B. Narrative Engagement Initiatives					
C. Practices for Addressing Misconceptions					
D. Inclusion of Veteran Voices in Curricular and Pedagogical Design					
E. Assessment, Evaluation, and Iterative Improvement Processes that Measure Outcomes					
Total Points					
F. (write-in)					



8. **Advocating** for Institutional Commitment

Do you utilize the following working practices?

- A. Public-Facing Institutional Statements and Visibility
- B. Leadership Investment in Military-Connected Inclusion
- C. Cross-Institutional Partnerships and Policy Engagement
- D. Veteran and Military Family Inclusion in Strategic Planning
- E. External Advocacy for Regional/National Collaboration

➤ *How do you rate yourself in **advocating** for institutional commitment?*

Use the worksheet on the next page to find your score. Take the score and  Check only one box

Initiating Stage	Commitment to veterans is vague or non-existent; no leadership visibility.	<input type="checkbox"/> (0-3pts)
Rising Practice	Campus statements exist; limited top-down support or regional collaboration.	<input type="checkbox"/> (4-7pts)
Robust Foundation	Executive leadership champions initiatives; institutional partnerships emerge.	<input type="checkbox"/> (8-11pts)
Transformative Leader	Institution is a regional/national leader in advocacy; veterans are central to strategic and public affairs efforts.	<input type="checkbox"/> (12+pts)



8. Advocating for Institutional Commitment – WORKSHEET

Use the boxes for notes, rate yourself on the right, add the points, and check off the corresponding box on the previous page

	Deficient (0pt)	Competent (1pt)	Proficient (2pts)	Accomplished (3pts)	Points
A. Public-Facing Institutional Statements and Visibility					
B. Leadership Investment in Veteran and Military-Connected Inclusion					
C. Cross-Institutional Partnerships and Policy Engagement					
D. Veteran and Military Family Inclusion in Strategic Planning					
E. External Advocacy for Regional/National Collaboration					
Total Points					
F. (write-in)					



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