

Fanshawe College Military Connected Knowledge Mobilization

FANSHAWE COLLEGE MILITARY CONNECTED KNOWLEDGE MOBILIZATION

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Fanshawe College Pressbooks
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INTRODUCTION

Why Support Military-Connected Students?

Supporting military-connected students is not only the right thing to do, but it is also essential to ensuring their successful transition into post-secondary education. Many members of the Canadian Armed Forces community come from a deeply collectivist, highly structured culture where teamwork, shared purpose, and clearly defined roles shape daily life. Entering a college environment, which is more individualistic and self-directed, can present unique challenges academically, socially, and personally.

In Ontario alone, there are over 149,000 Veterans, 19,000 Current Serving Members, and thousands of military family members whose lives are directly influenced by the demands of service. This is a significant and often under-recognized student population with distinct strengths and needs.

Fanshawe College is exceptionally well-positioned to support Canada's evolving defence priorities by providing a welcoming, informed, and responsive learning environment for this community. Through targeted programming, transition support, and recognition of military-acquired skills, Fanshawe can play a leading role in helping military-connected learners thrive in their educational journey and beyond.



Aim of these Modules

These modules provide a guide to military life and culture, the military education system, and what you would expect to see in the classroom with a veteran, service member, spouse, or dependent of a military member.

MODULE 1 - MILITARY CULTURE AND LIFE

Module 1 Content

[Military Life](#)

[Military Structure](#)

[Military Culture](#)

[Conclusion](#)

MILITARY LIFE

Life in the Canadian Armed Forces: Postings, Exercises, Operations, and Professional Development

A career in the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) offers a dynamic and challenging path filled with purpose, responsibility, and immense opportunities for personal and professional growth. While members enlist to serve in specific occupations, whether as Medical Technicians, Avionics Technicians, or Materials Management Technicians, they enter the CAF as soldiers first.

The Basic Military Occupation Qualification (BMOQ/BMQ) ensures that all members, regardless of trade, are equipped with the essential mindset, skills, and resilience required for military service. This includes accepting the principle of unlimited liability, meaning they may be deployed or relocated wherever the CAF requires. Military life is not only experienced by the member but by the entire family, whose support and adaptability are essential to sustaining a long-term military career.

To understand what this life entails, it is important to explore how postings, exercises, operations, and continuous training shape the experience of a CAF member.

Postings: Mobility as a Way of Life

A *posting* is an official relocation to a new base or unit, determined by operational requirements and career progression. Postings ensure that personnel are placed where their skills are most needed, often accompanied by changes in rank, trade responsibilities, and opportunities to acquire new qualifications.

As demonstrated in *Life in the Canadian Army* (Canadian Armed Forces, 2015), Regular Force members receive their first posting after completing their basic occupational training. The CAF assists with moving the



member from their permanent residence to their new home base. These early postings are often the longest, allowing members to complete initial trade training and consolidate foundational skills.

Typical posting cycles fall between *March and July*, often aligning with promotions. A posting can be to any CAF location across Canada where a position exists for that member's rank and occupation.

- **Non-commissioned members (NCMs):** first postings usually last 2–5 years
- **Officers:** first postings typically last 2–3 years

Members aiming for rapid advancement can expect more frequent moves throughout their careers. Toward retirement, many personnel take a “last posting” that relocates them back to their original home region.

Impact on Families

Postings can be exciting opportunities for professional growth, but they also impose significant strain. Spouses may be required to leave stable employment and move to remote locations with limited services. Children must adapt to new schools and leave long-established friendships behind. Military families continuously demonstrate resilience, but the challenges are real and persistent.

Academic Support for Posted Families

Because postings can interrupt academic progress, inter-institutional Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) play a vital role. Fanshawe, Georgian, Humber, Lambton, and Loyalist Colleges currently share an MoU that allows seamless credit transfer between institutions. This ensures that military-connected learners and their spouses can continue their education without unnecessary disruption as they move across provinces.

Training Exercises: Preparing for Operations

Training exercises are extended practice scenarios designed to simulate the conditions and demands of real operations. Exercises range from one week to six months or more, and while they may be intense, they are conducted in Canada or allied countries where no hostile threat exists.

One of Canada’s most significant training events, Exercise Maple Resolve, prepares Army brigades for deployment readiness each year. Held in Alberta, this large-scale exercise can last anywhere from a few weeks to several months, depending on occupation and required taskings. Exercises like these test soldiers’ endurance, teamwork, technical proficiency, and ability to operate in unpredictable field environments.



A deeper look at CAF training exercises can be seen in [The Maple Leaf: Stories about the Canadian Armed Forces and the Defence Team that supports them](#).

Operations: Domestic and International Missions

Operations involve the coordinated deployment of personnel, equipment, and resources for a specific mission. These can take place:

- **Domestically** – disaster response, search and rescue, sovereignty operations
- **Internationally** – peacekeeping, NATO missions, combat operations, humanitarian relief

Before deploying, units must complete a series of pre-deployment requirements to ensure readiness—medical checks, equipment validation, mission-specific training, and administrative preparation.

Threat levels vary dramatically depending on location. Some missions occur in stable environments, while others involve conditions similar to historic high-threat deployments like Afghanistan.

Domestic Operations

A common example is [Operation LENTUS](#), the CAF’s ongoing support to Canadian communities affected by natural disasters such as wildfires and floods. These operations highlight the CAF’s essential role within Canada—protecting and assisting citizens during times of crisis.

Exposure to Risk

Whether participating in routine training or major operations, CAF members accept a consistent background level of risk. Military service demands physical and mental readiness, adaptability, and the willingness to perform critical duties under demanding conditions.

Taskings and Career Courses: Behind-the-Scenes Commitments

While exercises and operations receive the most public attention, much of a military member's time away from home stems from career development obligations. These include:

- Career courses
- Occupational specialty courses
- Leadership development
- Community engagement and professional expectations for promotion

Career Courses

Career courses are structured learning programs tied directly to rank progression and leadership development. Examples include:

- Primary Leadership Qualification (PLQ)
- Junior Officer Development
- Distance-education modules followed by in-house training at CAF leadership schools

These courses build the leadership, management, and operational skills needed for advancement.

Occupational Specialty Courses

These enhance technical expertise within one's trade. Examples include:

- High-reliability soldering for Avionics Technicians
- Night-vision goggle maintenance
- Advanced mechanical repair courses

Specialty courses are shorter, trade-specific, conducted in designated units, and may require temporary duty (short postings) to other bases.

Education and professional development will be explored further in [Module 2](#).

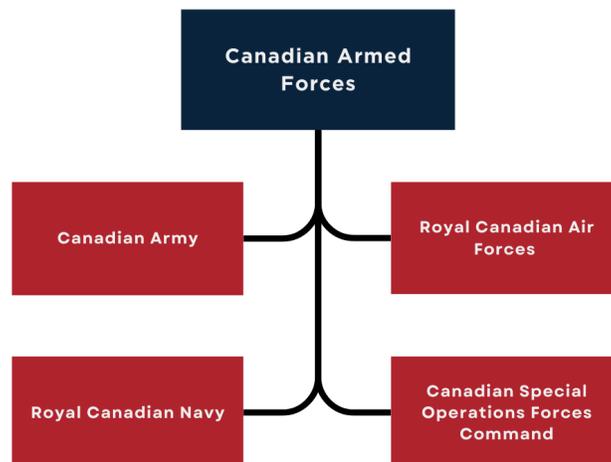
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MILITARY STRUCTURE

Components of the Canadian Armed Forces

The Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) is organized into two primary components, each with a distinct mandate yet united in their mission to protect Canada's interests at home and abroad: the Regular Force (RegF) and the Reserve Force (ARes, NAVRES, AFRES). Within both regular and reserve forces, the CAF is further divided into three environmental elements: the Canadian Army, the Royal Canadian Air Force, and the Royal Canadian Navy.

CANADIAN ARMED FORCES COMPONENTS



Although each element and component fulfills specific roles assigned by the Government of Canada, they operate in close coordination with one another. During training exercises, domestic operations, and international missions, these components seamlessly integrate their capabilities to ensure readiness, effectiveness, and national security.

Rank Structure in the Canadian Armed Forces

The CAF's chain of command is built on two overarching rank categories: non-commissioned members (NCMs) and officers. Among the approximately 67,000 Regular Force and 25,000 Reserve Force members currently serving, non-commissioned members make up roughly 80 percent of the workforce, reflecting their central role in day-to-day operations and mission execution (Department of National Defence, n.d.). The rank system outlines authority, responsibility, and progression within the CAF.

A full chart of these ranks, as well as detailed insignia, is available on the [Military Ranks: Ranks and Insignia](#) page.

The Canadian Armed Forces is a large organization with multiple elements involved. The [Department of National Defence portfolio \[PDF\]](#) is available for viewing to provide a better understanding of the organization as a whole.

Education and Professional Development by Rank

Professional development is a cornerstone of CAF career progression. From the moment members join, education and training remain continuous and essential.

Non-Commissioned Members (NCMs)

At the entry level, privates focus on mastering their occupation and adapting to military life. As they advance, they undertake a structured series of career courses, leadership programs, and technical qualifications. Over time, professional development becomes routine, supporting both operational readiness and long-term career growth.

Officers

CAF officers often begin their academic journey at the Royal Military College of Canada (RMC) in Kingston, combining a university education with military training. However, many officers earn degrees from civilian universities across Canada while completing their military service during summers or designated training periods. Regardless of where their education occurs, academic achievement is closely tied to leadership development and progression.

A Culture of Lifelong Learning

Across all ranks—NCM, NCO, or officer—ongoing education is not only encouraged but embedded in the profession. Members encounter structured learning opportunities from the outset, beginning as Privates or Officer Cadets and continuing throughout their careers. This results in a diverse community with varied academic backgrounds and rich experiential knowledge.

Education Within the Reserve Force

The Reserve Force differs in that many reservists enter service already pursuing, or having completed, post-secondary education. It is common to find junior NCMs working toward bachelor's, master's, or even doctoral degrees. While reservists are **not required** to hold formal education credentials, many choose to pursue them independently, often supported by the Reserve Forces Education Reimbursement Program. This program offers reservists up to \$8,000 over four years of formal education (Diploma & Degree).

This dynamic ensures the Reserve Force benefits from a wide range of academic perspectives and civilian expertise, enriching both military and community-based operations.

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MILITARY CULTURE

Military culture in the Canadian Armed Forces is rooted in discipline, collective responsibility, and a profound sense of duty. From the moment a recruit enters basic training, the CAF reinforces a structured environment where expectations are clear, routines are rigid, and every action is guided by the understanding that individual decisions can have life-or-death consequences. This mission-focused, high-stakes environment shapes behaviour, communication styles, and problem-solving approaches in ways that are fundamentally different from civilian workplaces. Members learn quickly that they are part of something larger than themselves, a tightly knit team built on loyalty, trust, and mutual reliance.

At its core, CAF culture is collectivist. Success is measured not by individual achievement but by how effectively a team accomplishes its mission. Hierarchy is explicit and respected; rank determines authority, responsibility, and decision-making power. This clear chain of command provides structure and certainty, particularly in unpredictable or dangerous situations. Traditions, rituals, uniforms, and shared experiences further reinforce a strong sense of identity and belonging. Over time, these cultural elements foster resilience, adaptability, and unity, qualities that service members carry with them throughout their careers and often long after they leave the military.



Commander of the Canadian Joint Operations Command (CJOC) Vice-Admiral Bob Auchterlonie addresses soldiers of the Canadian Armed Forces. [Photo](#) by Master Sailor Valerie LeClair, Canadian Armed Forces, [Government of Canada](#) used under the [Crown Copyright – NonCommercial Reproduction Licence \(Canada\)](#). This reproduction is not endorsed by the Government of Canada

Post-Secondary Environment



In contrast, entering the post-secondary environment can feel like stepping into an entirely different world. Colleges and universities operate in largely individualistic, flexible, and self-directed cultures. Learners are expected to manage their own schedules, advocate for their own needs, and take responsibility for academic progress with far fewer formalized supports. Authority is more diffuse; instructors may encourage debate rather than compliance, and students often question or challenge established ideas rather than follow directives.

For many CAF members and Veterans, this shift can be jarring. The loss of a clearly defined hierarchy, the emphasis on personal autonomy over collective duty, and the ambiguity found in academic environments can lead to frustration, disorientation, or a sense of isolation. In the military, teamwork is constant—someone always has your back. In post-secondary spaces, students often work alone, and collaboration may be optional rather than essential.

This is why social and institutional support becomes critically important during transition. Peer networks, veteran-friendly services, structured advising, and culturally aware faculty can help bridge the gap between the tight-knit military world and the more decentralized, fluid world of higher education. Support systems help normalize the challenges of reintegration and remind members that while the culture has changed, they are not navigating it alone.

CONCLUSION

Becoming a member of the Canadian Armed Forces is not simply a job; it is a lifestyle shaped by commitment, sacrifice, and a sense of purpose that begins on day one of basic training and lasts until the moment a member hands in their uniform and becomes a Veteran. Every stage of a CAF career, from postings and exercises to operations and leadership courses, demands resilience and adaptability. Yet this journey is never taken alone; it is shared with spouses, children, and extended family who bear the weight of relocations, absences, uncertainty, and the emotional highs and lows of deployments.



Transitioning from military service into the post-secondary world brings its own complexities. Former CAF members enter a system that functions very differently from the culture they have lived in for years, one that values independence over hierarchy, self-direction over command, and personal initiative over collective obligation. This cultural shift can create challenges that are often invisible to those who have not served.

For military-connected students, success in higher education requires more than academic ability; it requires understanding, recognition, and meaningful support from the institutions that receive them. Colleges and universities play a pivotal role in helping these learners navigate an unfamiliar environment, honouring the experience they bring while guiding them toward new futures. With compassion, structure, and culturally informed practices, post-secondary institutions can transform this transition from a daunting challenge into a rewarding opportunity.

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MODULE 2 - MILITARY CONNECTED COLLEGE

Module 2 Content

[Canadian Armed Forces Education System – An Overview](#)

[College Education for the Military](#)

[Maple Scholar Program](#)

[Academic Promise of Support](#)

[Financial Supports Available](#)

[Recognizing Prior Military Learning](#)

CANADIAN ARMED FORCES EDUCATION SYSTEM

Basic Military Qualification

Basic Military Qualification (BMQ) is the foundational training program required of all non-commissioned members entering the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF). It serves as the essential first step in transforming civilian recruits into disciplined, capable, and cohesive members of the military profession. BMQ develops the mental resilience, physical endurance, and behavioural standards expected of CAF personnel, instilling fundamental values such as Duty, Loyalty, Integrity, and Courage. It provides recruits with the military mindset and common knowledge needed before they advance to occupational or environmental training within their selected trade.

Structure and Duration

The structure and length of BMQ can vary slightly depending on whether a candidate joins the Regular Force or the Primary Reserve. Regular Force BMQ typically runs 9–10 weeks at the Canadian Forces Leadership and Recruit School (CFLRS) in Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu, Québec, or its detachment at CFB Borden, Ontario.

Reserve Force BMQ may be delivered in condensed summer blocks or part-time over several weekends. The course blends classroom instruction (approximately 50%), field training (about 35%), and physical conditioning (around 15%), ensuring recruits gain both theoretical knowledge and practical skills.

Core Training Components

Recruits are immersed in a wide range of military skills designed to prepare them for the demands of service. Training includes physical fitness conditioning, drill and ceremonial instruction, first aid, workplace safety (including WHMIS and fire safety), and fieldcraft skills such as navigation,

camouflage, shelter construction, and survival fundamentals. Weapons training is a major component—most notably the safe operation and marksmanship principles of the C7 rifle, along with exposure to live-fire ranges. Recruits also complete specialized training such as Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear (CBRN) procedures, culminating in controlled exposure to the CS gas hut—an intense, memorable milestone in the course.

Trades Training

Trades training is where the focus on your specific trade begins. Think of a trade as the role within an organization. Within the Canadian Armed Forces, there is a wide range of trades that usually specialize in an area. Trades training will become the main focus upon completing Basic Military Qualification. Depending on the selected trade, this course can range from 30 days to 18 months, and almost every trade requires an on-the-job training package to be completed after the course. Each trade has multiple levels of coursing, which may be required for additional promotions. Within the Canadian Armed Forces, you must hold the required courses to hold a specific position permanently.

Training stages and typical timelines

Stage	Description	Duration / Key Points
1. Basic Military Qualification (BMQ)	Foundational training for all non-commissioned members; develops military discipline, fitness, teamwork, and core soldier skills.	Regular Force BMQ is 9–10 weeks. Delivered at CFLRS Saint-Jean or CFB Borden. Includes classroom instruction, field training, physical training, weapons handling, WHMIS, first aid, and fieldcraft.
2. Developmental Period 1 (DP1)	The entry-level training period includes BMQ <i>plus</i> environmental and occupational qualifications. After completing DP1, members become employable at an introductory level.	DP1 includes BMQ and may include additional qualifications before trade school (e.g., environmental training). Members remain on the Basic Training List until they join a unit.
3. Environmental Training (if required)	Training specific to Army, Navy, or Air Force fundamentals.	Timelines vary. Some occupations require completing environmental indoctrination before trade school; others complete it after.
4. Occupational / Trade Training (QL3 / Apprentice Level Training)	The first formal course in a member's specific military occupation (e.g., HRA, Infantry, Naval Communicator, AVN Tech). Often called QL3 or "trade school."	Duration varies by trade (from several weeks to many months). Completion marks the transition from basic trainee to qualified junior member.
5. Posting to Unit & DP2 Progression	Member leaves Basic Training List and begins working in an operational unit within their trade.	After arriving at a unit, members enter Developmental Period 2, which focuses on building intermediate skills through experience and further courses.

Progression through the Ranks

Just like many organizations, promotions are not guaranteed and are usually tied to a level of education. The Canadian Armed Forces is very open when it comes to requirements to be promoted. Each trade within the Canadian Armed Forces will have a matrix that outlines time in rank and coursing required, for ranks past Corporal / Sailor 1st Class you will also have to merit which is an event where senior leaders review the files of all members at that rank and compared to be able to identify the most deserving of that rank, all files are scrubbed of identifiers including name, gender, location, marital status and medical limitation.

Each promotion carries a pay increase, so without moving up, Canadian Armed Forces members are locked at their current pay rate. The Canadian Armed Forces regularly receives pay increases over the year.

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COLLEGE EDUCATION FOR MILITARY

Military Recruitment Programs

The recruitment process for the Canadian Armed Forces has remained quite unchanged over the past few decades when it comes to the process, but one major change has been the valuation of a College Diploma. The Canadian Armed Forces still has baseline requirements of completing Grade 10 in high school, but has incentives for those who hold relevant post-secondary education as it relates to a specific trade. The Non-Commissioned Member Subsidized Training and Education Plan (NCM STEP) is a pathway that allows new Canadian Armed Forces applicants the opportunity to attend one of Canada's top colleges and receive an industry-recognized diploma, which is deemed equivalent to their trade.

Non-Commissioned Member Subsidized Training and Education Plan (NCM STEP)

The NCM STEP program allows a recruit the opportunity to have their college education paid for while being paid by the CAF to attend the post-secondary institution that offers a program suitable for their trade. Below is the list of occupations that are currently eligible for this program.

Occupations Eligible for NCM STEP

- [Aviation Technician](#)
- [Avionics Technician](#)
- [Aircraft Structures](#)
- [Biomedical Electronics Technician](#)
- [Construction Technician](#)
- [Cook](#)
- [Cyber Operator](#)
- [Dental Technician](#)
- [Electrical Distribution Technician](#)
- [Geomatics Technician](#)
- [Marine Engineering Technician](#)
- [Medical Technician](#)
- [Medical Laboratory Technician](#)
- [Medical Radiation Technician](#)
- [Operating Room Technician](#)
- [Paramedic](#)
- [Refrigeration and Mechanical Technician](#)
- [Plumbing and Heating Technician](#)
- [Vehicle Technician](#)
- [Weapons Engineering Technician](#)

Fanshawe College Programs Eligible for NCM STEP

- [*Aircraft Structural Repair Technician*](#)
- [*Aviation Technician – Aircraft Maintenance*](#)
- [*Aviation Technician – Avionics Maintenance*](#)
- [*Aviation Technology – Aircraft Maintenance and Avionics*](#)
- [*Culinary Skills*](#)
- [*Dental Assisting*](#)
- [*Geographic Information Systems*](#)
- [*Medical Radiation Technology*](#)
- [*Motive Power Technician \(Diesel\)*](#)
- [*Paramedic*](#)
- [*Practical Nursing*](#)



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MAPLE SCHOLAR PROGRAM

Maple Scholar is a specialized admissions pathway at Fanshawe College designed to recognize the advanced military experience of Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) members and Veterans. This initiative provides a unique opportunity for those who have progressed through the military ranks to leverage their professional development and leadership experience toward admission into Fanshawe's graduate certificate programs. Unlike traditional Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR), Maple Scholar does not grant academic credits for military experience; rather, it streamlines program entry by treating Developmental Period 2 (DP2) experience as a valid substitute for the diploma or work-experience prerequisites normally required for graduate-level studies.

Eligibility

For eligible CAF members who have successfully completed DP2 and achieved, or are eligible for, promotion to the next rank, Maple Scholar serves as a bridge between military service and advanced civilian education. The structure acknowledges that leadership, operational decision-making, and specialized training acquired through military progression represent significant, high-level learning. Fanshawe College incorporates this recognition into its admissions process, ensuring that military-connected learners do not face barriers related to traditional credential pathways when seeking to upgrade their education or pursue new career opportunities through graduate programs.

Supports

Maple Scholar sits within the broader suite of supports offered by Fanshawe's Military-Connected College (MCC). This ecosystem provides advisory services, transition support, academic guidance, and tailored resources for Regular Force members, Reservists, Veterans, military families, and defence community civilians. The Maple Scholar pathway reinforces Fanshawe's commitment to honouring and validating military experience, creating an educational environment where CAF learners feel understood, valued, and supported. Within this model, students can access advising through Fanshawe's Admissions and Pathways team, who assist with program selection, documentation, and transition planning to ensure a smooth entrance into graduate-level academic work.

Importantly, while Maple Scholar does not award course credits for military training, it does ensure that military learners can meet admissions criteria without undergoing PLAR or obtaining additional civilian

credentials beforehand. This allows CAF members and Veterans to focus fully on their studies rather than navigating unnecessary administrative hurdles. Fanshawe's recognition of DP2 experience exemplifies a forward-thinking approach to supporting the military-connected population—one that acknowledges the depth and rigour of military professional development, while providing clear and accessible pathways into meaningful civilian careers through advanced education.

ACADEMIC PROMISE OF SUPPORT

Fanshawe College’s Academic Promise of Support is a formal commitment to ensuring that military-connected students—those with any tangible link to the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF)—face no institutional disadvantage in their pursuit of post-secondary education. This promise is grounded in the recognition that military service often introduces unpredictable demands, unique responsibilities, and non-traditional barriers to academic continuity. Fanshawe acknowledges these realities and pledges to uphold barrier-free access to learning by adapting institutional processes, academic expectations, and student supports through a military-connected lens.

Military-connected students at Fanshawe are defined across six categories: Regular Force members, Primary Reservists, Veterans, Department of National Defence civilians, immediate family members of CAF personnel or Veterans, and foreign military Veterans. This broad and inclusive definition ensures that the full spectrum of military-connected learners—whether serving, transitioning, or studying- receive equitable and informed academic assistance. This commitment is part of the wider Military-Connected College (MCC) framework, which aligns college-wide resources to create a cohesive, supportive learning environment tailored to the lived experiences, educational pathways, and service obligations of this community.

At its core, the Promise of Support focuses on **three pillars: education, student well-being, and procedure.**

Pillar 1: Education

For the educational pillar, Fanshawe recognizes that military duties—such as domestic or international deployments, unexpected training opportunities, or service-related injury—may interrupt a student’s academic progress. The institution commits to collaborative problem-solving among students, faculty, staff, and administrators to maintain academic momentum. This may involve exploring flexible deadlines, modified learning pathways, or alternate arrangements to ensure students can continue their studies despite competing service obligations. Solutions are tailored to the individual and prioritize the most efficient route to course and program completion.

Pillar 2: Student Well-Being

Student well-being forms the second pillar and acknowledges the complex personal and family pressures that military-connected learners may face. Frequent relocations, family separation, reintegration challenges, and other service-related stressors can affect academic performance and overall wellness. Fanshawe prioritizes a responsive, empathetic environment where trained staff understand these pressures and proactively connect students with resources such as advising, mental-health supports, funding opportunities, and military-connected community events. This holistic approach ensures that academic success is supported by a stable and inclusive campus experience.

Pillar 3: Procedure

The third pillar, procedure, focuses on institutional consistency and fairness. Fanshawe pledges that military-connected students will not encounter administrative barriers resulting from their service. This aligns with broader initiatives such as inter-college memorandums that streamline credit transfer, enable seamless mobility for posted CAF members, and simplify enrolment processes across partner institutions. These commitments help ensure that a student's academic journey is not disrupted by geographic relocations or service-related changes.

Together, these pillars form a comprehensive academic promise that positions Fanshawe College as a national leader in military-connected education. By recognizing both the strengths and challenges associated with CAF service, Fanshawe ensures that military-connected learners are not only supported but also empowered to pursue their educational goals within an environment that values their experiences and invests in their long-term success.

FINANCIAL SUPPORTS AVAILABLE

Military-connected students at Fanshawe College, including serving members, veterans, military spouses, and dependents, have access to a wide range of scholarships, bursaries, and federal programs designed to reduce financial barriers to post-secondary education. These supports recognize the unique contributions of Canada's military community and help ensure that students can pursue academic and career goals with confidence.

Below is an overview of key financial supports available to MCC students.

Scholarships & Bursaries for Military-Connected Learners

Army, Navy & Air Force Veterans in Canada (ANAVETS) Scholarships

[Army, Navy, & Air Force Veterans in Canada \(ANAVETS\) Scholarships](#) are open to descendants of ANAVETS members. This scholarship assists students attending accredited Canadian post-secondary institutions. It supports learners with military lineage and recognizes the long-standing service of Canada's veteran community.

Canada Company Scholarship

[Canada Company Scholarship](#): This scholarship supports dependents of CAF members who lost their lives during domestic or international deployments. It provides crucial financial stability for families who have made profound sacrifices.

Educational Assistance Program

Educational Assistance Program: This federal assistance program offers funding for post-secondary education to children of CAF members or Veterans who died as a result of military service, or who passed away with a disability pension or award of 48% or greater.

Education & Training Benefit (ETB)

Education & Training Benefit (ETB): Veterans pursuing education after release may receive up to \$80,000 (taxable) to cover tuition, learning materials, and some living expenses. A portion can also be used for personal development courses, making it one of the most impactful benefits available to former CAF members.

George & Helen Vari Foundation Education Bursary

George & Helen Vari Foundation Education Bursary: Available to Reserve Force members and Canadian Rangers, this bursary complements military education reimbursement programs and reduces the financial burden for reservists continuing their studies.

National Scholarship Program

National Scholarship Program: Supports spouses and dependents of active CAF members. Students must be enrolled in undergraduate, graduate, or vocational programs at accredited Canadian institutions.

RCAF Foundation Scholarships

RCAF Foundation Scholarships: Designed for students pursuing studies in aviation, aerospace, and STEM fields. These awards encourage innovation and help build the next generation of Canadian aerospace professionals.

Royal Canadian Legion – Ontario Command Bursary

Royal Canadian Legion – Ontario Command Bursary: Available to active CAF members, veterans, their spouses, children, and grandchildren. Supports Ontario students entering or continuing their studies at accredited post-secondary institutions.

Royal Canadian Sea Cadets Scholarship

Royal Canadian Sea Cadets Scholarship: For individuals who have completed at least 24 months in the Sea Cadets program and are enrolling in undergraduate or graduate studies.

Canadian Military Engineers Association (CMEA) Bursary

Canadian Military Engineers Association (CMEA) Bursary: Open to all CMEA members and dependents of current or deceased members who are pursuing post-secondary studies.

Garrison Community Council Bursary

Garrison Community Council Bursary: Supports eligible reservists from HMCS Prevost and 31 Canadian Brigade Group. Awards are competitive and based on demonstrated merit and commitment.

Royal Canadian Regiment Association Bursary

Royal Canadian Regiment Association Bursary: Assists children, grandchildren, partners, and affiliated cadets of the RCR Regimental Family who are attending post-secondary programs.

Veterans Bursary Program

Veterans Bursary Program: Provides funds to eligible veterans through a Federal Court–mandated bursary system.

Additional Programs Supporting Education & Training

Vocational Rehabilitation & Vocational Assistance

Vocational Rehabilitation & Vocational Assistance: Covers education and training expenses for eligible veterans participating in approved rehabilitation or career transition programs.

Women in Defence & Security (WiDS) Memorial Scholarship

Women in Defence & Security (WiDS) Memorial Scholarship: Awards up to \$10,000 annually to women pursuing studies related to defence and security, supporting leadership and gender representation in the field.

WSIB Scholars Program

WSIB Scholars Program Offers:

- Up to \$2,500 per year for 2–3-year diploma programs
- Up to \$5,000 per year for four-year degree programs

Schulich Builders Scholarship (Not MCC Specific)

Schulich Builders Scholarship (Not MCC Specific): Recipients receive \$10,000 per academic level in eligible skilled trades programs.

Canarector Scholars Program (Not MCC Specific)

Canarector Scholars Program (Not MCC Specific): Provides \$2,000 in Level 1 and \$1,000 for each subsequent academic level.

Dr. Leonard Reeves Entrance Award for Women in Skilled Trades (Not MCC Specific):

Dr. Leonard Reeves Entrance Award for Women in Skilled Trades (Not MCC Specific):

Provides \$2,500 per level for women entering eligible skilled trades programs.

Fanshawe College MCC students can access an extensive ecosystem of scholarships, bursaries, federal education benefits, and specialized supports. Whether a student is a serving member, a Veteran, a spouse, or a dependent, these programs help ensure that financial need does not become a barrier to academic success.

RECOGNIZING PRIOR MILITARY LEARNING

Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) allows learners to receive academic credit for skills and knowledge gained through military service, training, work experience, and other forms of experiential learning. In Ontario, PLAR is a well-established, provincially supported process that evaluates learning against course outcomes using challenge assessments, portfolios, and other evidence-based methods.



This framework is outlined in [Ontario's Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition Guide for Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology](#) and further expanded in Ontario's PLAR Resource Document.

For military-connected learners, which includes Veterans, Reservists, Regular Force members, and family members, PLAR recognizes the depth of skills acquired in structured, high-responsibility military environments. This can shorten the time to credential completion, reduce financial burden, and create a more efficient transition into post-secondary education.

Why PLAR Matters for Military-Connected Learners

Military training is intensive, outcomes-based, and continuously assessed, making it highly compatible with PLAR frameworks used in Ontario colleges. Many competencies gained through service align with college-level learning outcomes.

- Leadership and supervision
- Technical knowledge and equipment operation
- Communication and reporting
- Teamwork and collective problem-solving
- Safety, standards compliance, and professionalism

PLAR ensures these capabilities can be formally recognized, reducing duplicated learning and acknowledging the student's prior mastery.



For those looking for more information on PLAR, Fanshawe College has developed a resource specifically for this – [Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition \(PLAR\) at Fanshawe College](#)

Fanshawe's Military Credit Bank (*In Development*)

Fanshawe College is actively developing a Military Credit Bank to award *immediate academic credit* for key Canadian Armed Forces training courses. This initiative will provide pre-evaluated equivalencies so that military-connected learners can receive credit without undergoing full PLAR assessments. This credit bank would not be possible without the support of the Ontario Council on Articulation and Transfer (ONCAT). In November of 2025 ONCAT made a significant funding announcement aimed at supporting military-connected learners, more information can be found in their press release – [ONCAT supports military-connected learners](#)

Courses currently being evaluated for automatic or streamlined credit:

- Basic Military Qualification (BMQ)
- Primary Leadership Qualification (PLQ)
- Rank Qualification – Private (RQ-Pte)

This credit bank will:

- Reduce assessment wait times
- Provide predictable, transparent transfer pathways
- Support quicker entry into advanced portions of academic programs
- Recognize CAF training as rigorous, outcomes-based learning equivalent to college-level coursework

Once finalized, Fanshawe will publish a full list of recognized credits and program transfer opportunities.

MODULE 3 - IMPLEMENTATION STAGES

Module 3 Content

[Implementing the Academic Promise of Support](#)

[Implementing Self-Identification](#)

[Implementing Student Club](#)

IMPLEMENTING THE ACADEMIC PROMISE OF SUPPORT

Implementing the Academic Promise of Support for Military-Connected Students at Fanshawe College

Fanshawe College's Academic Promise of Support is a formal, institution-wide commitment to ensuring military-connected students experience barrier-free learning and equitable access to academic success.

Acknowledged and endorsed by the Senior Vice-President, Academic in 2020, this promise serves as a guiding framework across multiple faculties, ensuring that the unique needs, responsibilities, and lived experiences of Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) members, Veterans, Reservists, and military families are recognized and supported at every stage of their academic journey.

1

Institution-Level Commitment

The endorsement of the Academic Promise of Support by the Senior Vice-President, Academic, affirms that this is not a localized initiative but a college-wide expectation. Faculties are encouraged to be informed about the Academic Promise of Support, how students use it, and the approval process.

- Consistency across academic schools and programs.
 - Accountability in delivering support equitably.
 - Visibility of the needs of military-connected learners at the senior leadership level.
-

2

Application Across Multiple Faculties

Fanshawe has implemented the Academic Promise of Support across several faculties, each adapting the framework to meet the realities of course delivery, program scheduling, and discipline-specific requirements. Examples of implementation include:

Flexible Academic Arrangements

Faculties routinely offer:

- Modified deadlines.
- Alternative assessments.
- Short-term academic pauses.
- Remote or asynchronous learning options when appropriate.

These adjustments ensure that students balancing CAF duties—such as training, postings, or short-notice taskings—can maintain academic progress without penalty.

3

Supporting Students Facing CAF Obligations

A key component of implementation is the college's recognition that military service is unpredictable. Exercises, emergency deployments, domestic operations, and short-notice postings can disrupt academic timelines. The Academic Promise ensures:

- Students are not academically disadvantaged by fulfilling their military duties.
- Faculty work collaboratively with students to develop realistic academic plans.
- Students can navigate both worlds without having to choose between service and education.

This collaborative approach has proven effective, especially in programs where lab-based, clinical, or placement requirements must be carefully coordinated around service availability.

4

Building a Military-Connected Learning Environment

The Academic Promise of Support is not only reactive—it also shapes the learning environment in proactive ways:

- Course expectations are communicated clearly and early, allowing students to plan around service schedules.
- Advisors maintain open lines of communication with students and faculty, acting as navigators between academic and military obligations.
- Faculty champions within programs help normalize the presence and needs of military-connected learners.
- The Promise feeds into Fanshawe's broader Military-Connected College strategy, ensuring alignment between academic and student-service supports.

5

Strengthening Transition Into Post-Secondary Education

Transitioning from the collectivist, hierarchical culture of the CAF into the self-directed culture of higher education can be challenging. Implementation of the Promise ensures that:

- Students are not left to navigate the transition alone.
- Faculty members remain aware of the cultural gap between military life and academia.
- Support is embedded, not optional.

This reduces student frustration, increases retention, and helps ensure military-connected learners experience a sense of belonging within their new academic community.

Conclusion

The Academic Promise of Support is more than a policy—it is a living commitment shaping how Fanshawe College engages with, teaches, and supports military-connected learners. With senior academic leadership backing the initiative and multiple faculties integrating the Promise into their daily practices, Fanshawe has created a model of inclusivity and responsiveness that directly addresses the realities of military service. By embedding flexibility, understanding, and proactive support into academic operations, Fanshawe ensures military-connected students can thrive both in the classroom and in their ongoing service to Canada.

IMPLEMENTING SELF-IDENTIFICATION

How OCAS Self-Identification Transformed Support for Military-Connected Learners

The introduction of the military-connected self-identification option in the Ontario Colleges Application Service (OCAS) has significantly improved Fanshawe College's ability, and the ability of all Ontario colleges to provide timely, targeted, and high-quality support to military-connected learners.

This advancement was the result of a multi-stage, collaborative effort that began at Fanshawe and grew into a province-wide systems change.

1

Identifying the Blind Spots Through Institutional Research

The process began when Fanshawe's Military-Connected College (MCC) team partnered with the Fanshawe Research Office to explore how well the institution understood and supported its military-connected population. Through surveys and data collection, the research team uncovered a significant challenge: the college had no reliable, consistent way to identify military-connected applicants at the point of admission.

Without this information, students often had to self-advocate after starting their program, sometimes well after facing service-related challenges such as postings, training absences, or funding issues. This delay limited Fanshawe's ability to provide timely accommodations, advising, and support.

2

Collaboration With the Office of the Registrar

After reviewing the research findings, the MCC team worked closely with Fanshawe's Office of the Registrar to outline the systemic blind spots affecting military-connected students.

These included:

- No early indicator of who might need flexible academic arrangements.
- Difficulty proactively connecting students to MCC advising.
- No mechanism to track the size, needs, or distribution of military-connected learners across programs.
- Inconsistent data collection methods across Ontario colleges.

The Registrar recognized that these were not Fanshawe-specific issues but system-wide barriers affecting all colleges.

3

Taking the Initiative Province-Wide

Fanshawe's Registrar brought the issue to the Ontario College Registrars' Working Group, advocating for improved identification methods across the sector. The group collectively approached OCAS with a request to incorporate a military-connected self-identification option directly into the college application process.

OCAS accepted the request and implemented a military-connected checkbox on the standardized application form. This was the first time Ontario colleges gained a unified way to identify these learners at the point of application.

4

How the OCAS Button Improved Support

✓ Early Identification = Early Intervention

Colleges can now see, *before* the student begins their program, whether they are military-connected. This allows MCC staff to reach out proactively with:

- Academic advising.
- Funding and scholarship information.
- Navigation supports for postings, training, or deployments.
- Transition resources tailored to military culture.

✓ Sector-Wide Consistency

Because the self-identification tag is available to all Ontario colleges, students receive consistent recognition and support no matter where they apply or transfer, even during unexpected postings.

✓ More Timely, Personalized Support

Instead of waiting until a problem arises, MCC advisors can:

- Anticipate challenges linked to CAF obligations.
- Coordinate with faculty in advance.
- Prepare flexible learning pathways.
- Assist with navigating Veterans Affairs funding or Reservist reimbursement.

✓ Richer Data to Inform Policy and Programming

Colleges can now track:

- How many military-connected students are enrolling?
- Which programs do they choose?
- What support do they require most?
- How operational demands (e.g., postings, deployments) affect academic timelines.

This data helps institutions design evidence-based policies and improve the overall student experience.

A System-Level Success with Direct Student Impact

What began as a Fanshawe-led research inquiry has now become a provincial best practice. The OCAS self-identification feature ensures that military-connected learners, who often face mobility, scheduling challenges, and funding complexities, are recognized from the moment they apply. It also ensures they receive faster, more comprehensive, and more culturally informed support.

The result is a more responsive, equitable, and military-informed post-secondary system, one that better honours the contributions and realities of CAF members, Veterans, and their families.

IMPLEMENTING STUDENT CLUB

As Fanshawe College continues to expand its support for students connected to the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF), the creation of a Military-Connected Student Club represents an exciting next step in strengthening community, belonging, and peer-to-peer support on campus. Military-connected students—including serving Regular and Reserve Force members, Veterans, military spouses, and dependents bring unique experiences shaped by mobility, discipline, teamwork, and service. A student-led club provides them with a dedicated space to connect, lead, and support one another throughout their academic journey.

Why a Military-Connected Student Club Matters

Transitioning into post-secondary education can feel overwhelming for many former or serving CAF members. They move from a structured, collectivist environment to a more individualistic academic culture where expectations, communication styles, and daily routines look vastly different. At the same time, military-connected students often juggle additional responsibilities: training schedules, operational obligations, sudden postings, reintegration challenges, and family commitments.

A student club helps bridge this cultural and social gap by offering:

- ***A sense of belonging:*** A space where students with shared backgrounds can connect authentically.
- ***Peer-based navigation:*** Members can share strategies for balancing academics, military obligations, and family life.
- ***Leadership opportunities:*** Military-connected students often excel in leadership roles; the club gives them a platform to continue developing these skills.
- ***Community outreach:*** Opportunities to partner with local CAF units, Veteran organizations, and military-connected support networks.
- ***Advocacy:*** A collective voice that can identify challenges and work with Fanshawe departments to improve services and awareness.

Laying the Foundation: Steps to Establish the Club

Starting a Military-Connected Student Club at Fanshawe follows the same process as any student organization, but benefits from the college's existing MCC infrastructure.

1

Form a Founding Group

A minimum core group of interested students is required. This can include Regular Force members studying through NCM-STEP, Reservists, Veterans, military spouses, or dependents. Diversity of experience within the founding group ensures the club reflects the full spectrum of the military-connected community.

2

Connect With the Fanshawe Student Union (FSU)

The FSU oversees the recognition and support of student clubs. The founding group will need to:

- Complete the FSU club application package
- Develop a constitution outlining the club's mission, membership criteria, and leadership structure
- Identify a president, vice-president, and treasurer

The MCC team can support the group by providing sample constitutions or helping articulate the club's purpose.

3

Align With the Military-Connected College (MCC)

The MCC can provide:

- Guidance on club structure
- Access to military-connected events and guest speakers
- Space on MCC communications channels to attract student members
- Help coordinate with CAF units, advisory groups, or Veteran organizations

This alignment ensures the club complements and extends the work already being done through the Academic Promise of Support and other MCC initiatives.

4

Plan Initial Activities

Early events set the tone for the club's identity. Examples include:

- Meet-and-greet sessions for military-connected students
- Social gatherings during key military recognition dates
- Workshops on transition, mental wellness, funding supports, or Veterans Affairs resources
- Peer study sessions
- Community service or volunteer outreach
- Joint events with local units like HMCS Prevost or 31 Canadian Brigade Group

These activities help build momentum and visibility across campus.

5

Establish Partnerships

Fanshawe's position as a Military-Connected College opens doors to collaborations with:

- Military charities and foundations
- Military family resource centres
- Veteran service organizations
- Local Reserve units
- Academic departments interested in research or student support

These partnerships strengthen the club's programming and offer members additional professional and personal opportunities.

A New Chapter for MCC Students at Fanshawe

The establishment of a Military-Connected Student Club marks an important milestone in Fanshawe College's ongoing commitment to supporting military-connected learners. It gives students a place to build community, strengthen identity, and develop leadership skills that extend beyond the classroom. Most importantly, it recognizes that military-connected students thrive when surrounded by peers who understand their experiences and can walk with them through the transition into post-secondary education.

With the support of the MCC, the Fanshawe Student Union, and the broader college community, the Military-Connected Student Club has the potential to become a vibrant, empowering, and enduring part of student life at Fanshawe.

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VERSION HISTORY

This page provides a record of edits and changes made to this book since its initial publication. Whenever edits or updates are made in the text, we provide a record and description of those changes here. If the change is minor, the version number increases by 0.1. If the edits involve a number of changes, the version number increases to the next full number.

The files posted alongside this book always reflect the most recent version.

Version	Date	Change	Affected Web Page
1.0	March 10, 2026	First publication	N/A