



State Tuition Assistance for Decorated Veterans

Does the state provide tuition assistance for veterans who have received combat decorations?

Yes. Institutions in the State University System (SUS) and Florida College System (FCS) are statutorily required to waive undergraduate tuition¹ for recipients of the Purple Heart or other combat decorations superior in precedence to the Purple Heart, which include the:

- ❖ Medal of Honor
- ❖ Distinguished Service Cross
- ❖ Navy Cross
- ❖ Air Force Cross
- ❖ Silver Star
- ❖ Legion of Merit (must be "V" designation or device)
- ❖ Distinguished Flying Cross
- ❖ Bronze Star Medal (must be "V" designation or device)

The "V" designation or device represents that the medal was presented as a combat decoration.²

What are the student eligibility requirements for receipt of the undergraduate tuition waiver?

To receive the waiver, a recipient of the Purple Heart or other qualified combat decoration must:

- ❖ Enroll in a SUS or FCS institution as a full-time, part-time, or summer-school student in an undergraduate program that terminates in a degree or certificate.
- ❖ Reside currently in Florida and have been a Florida resident at the time of the military action that resulted in receipt of the combat decoration.
- ❖ Submit to the SUS or FCS institution the DD-214 form issued at the time of separation from service as documentation verifying receipt of the combat decoration.³

How many hours are covered by the tuition waiver?

The waiver is applicable to 110 percent of the number of credit hours required for the degree or certificate program in which the student is enrolled.⁴

¹ "Tuition" is statutorily defined to mean, "the basic fee charged to a student for instruction provided by a public postsecondary educational institution in this state. A charge for any other purpose shall not be included within this fee." Section 1009.01(1), F.S.

² Section 1009.26(8), F.S.; Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs, *Technical Assistance on Senate Bill 122: Waiver for Recipients of Purple Heart or Superior Combat Decorations*, available at www.floridavets.org/pdf/ph_waiver.pdf.

³ Section 1009.26(8), F.S.

⁴ *Id.*

How many students have taken advantage of the tuition waiver?

According to the latest information available from:

- ❖ The Florida Department of Education, 135 veterans used the tuition waiver at a FCS institution during the 2008-09 academic year for a cost of \$201,042.⁵
- ❖ The Board of Governors, 37 veterans used the tuition waiver at a SUS institution during the 2008-09 academic year for at a cost of \$94,691.⁶

Where may I obtain additional information?

Financial Aid Offices at SUS and FCS institutions

Florida Department of Education

Division of Florida Colleges

(850) 245-0407

<http://www.fldoe.org/cc/>

Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs

Division of Veterans' Benefits and Assistance

1-727-319-7421

www.floridavets.org/saa/saa.asp

Florida House of Representatives

Education Committee

(850) 488-7451

<http://www.myfloridahouse.gov>

⁵ Email, Florida Department of Education (March 16, 2010).

⁶ Email, Board of Governors (March 24, 2010).