

VETERANS PROGRAM VAR MANUAL

The purpose of this manual is to provide a very short summary of the project, answer basic questions, and provide program-specific information. It should be used in conjunction with the more general VAR User Manual.

Brief Background of Vision-Aligned Reporting

In spring 2020, the Chancellor's Office convened a cross-functional internal working group to design and pilot a new, comprehensive program reporting structure and process that would:

- Maximize colleges' time and resources;
- Enable institutions to evaluate, learn and evolve to better support student success;
- Make it easier for decision-makers to interpret and act on data from our institutions; and
- Activate Vision for Success core commitments and achieve the Vision 2030 goals.

The resultant Vision-Aligned Reporting structure was borne out of a three-year development, planning, piloting, and refinement effort to create a reporting process that focuses on collecting information that offers direct visibility into how programs' efforts impact student outcomes. Vision-Aligned Reporting will be implemented statewide for 11 programs beginning in fall 2024.

Additional information about the development and implementation of this process can be found in the VAR User Manual.

How/why were Veterans Centers chosen to report via VAR?

The VAR was piloted between 2020-2021 and 2022-2023 and 15 college program reports were chosen to test and refine the new process. After receiving feedback from pilot colleges, 11 programs were deemed appropriate for the first year of statewide scaling based on potential impact and the ease of integration into VAR. Veterans Centers are one of those 11 programs.

Next, the project team met with Chancellor's Office veterans services staff to (1) review current reporting requirements and align them with VAR via an activity crosswalk (refer to Table 1) and (2) ensure that data provided via VAR would meet the program's needs for statewide reporting as well as provide information that is necessary to design and deliver statewide support and technical assistance. Feedback from those meetings was incorporated into this manual.

VAR reporting for Veterans Centers is required by the Chancellor's Office under 5 CCR § 52012.

Besides using the new tool, what else is changing related to Veterans Centers reporting?

Policy Changes

After careful review, it has been determined that no changes to statute or regulation are needed to align Veterans Centers reporting with the VAR requirements. Starting with the 2024-2025 academic year, VAR reporting for Veterans Centers is required by the Chancellor's Office under Title 5 CCR § 52012.

New MIS Submission Requirement Starting in 2025-2026 Reporting Year

However, a Veterans Center MIS data table will be created with all the VAR activity categories and subcategories and program staff will be required to submit student IDs by activity category and subcategory via MIS starting with the 2025-2026 academic reporting year. ***Additional information on this process will be provided by the Chancellor's Office in late spring 2024 and colleges will have 15 months to prepare for the MIS changes.***

A crosswalk between the common Veterans Centers activities and the VAR categories and subcategories is provided in the Appendix to this document.

Engagement in Cross-Functional Conversations

The new reporting process has two levels of reporting. The first is a program-level reporting component during which programs report data on activities conducted during the academic year. The second is the college-level component. The college-level reporting requires that all program information be reviewed and analyzed by a cross-functional team for the purpose of answering a set of Vision goal specific narrative questions. Those questions are:

- Provide 3 specific highlights in which specific disproportionately impacted groups were served with the goal of closing equity gaps.
- Aligning and organizing the efforts of multiple programs to support shared goals will create larger impact. Name 3 concrete steps the college has taken to braid the efforts/funds of programs to increase impact.
- List the 3 most effective strategies or tactics used to achieve this goal.
- Identify 3 important barriers the college faced in trying to achieve this goal.
- Identify the top three changes your college **will** make to achieve this Vision goal.

Veterans Center staff should ensure they are participating in these cross-functional conversations so that their insight, priorities, and program activities are appropriately represented in Vision goal narratives.

Categories/subcategories specific to Veterans Centers reporting

To complete the VAR report, each activity undertaken by the Veterans Center must be reported under a VAR category and subcategory. There are six main categories to choose from and each has its own set of subcategories (see the appendix in the more general VAR User Manual).

Given the number of category/subcategory combinations, the Chancellor's Office is providing program-specific crosswalks to identify the most common activities included in past reporting and specify the appropriate category and subcategory for each (refer to the Appendix to this document). However, ***there are many new activity categories and subcategories that must also be reported if conducted by the Veterans Centers program, so staff should review those new categories and subcategories to ensure they are reported, if necessary.***

Where to get additional information

Moving forward, college program staff with questions about completing Veterans Center reporting through the VAR have a variety of resources to support them. First, each college CEO has identified an implementation lead for their campus that can be a first source of information. Those implementation

leads will receive training on the new process during fall 2023. Second, implementation leads will conduct training for affected college program staff in spring 2024, with support from the VAR project team. Third, your regular Chancellor’s Office veteran services contacts are always available to assist. Refer to Table 1 for that contact information.

Table 1: Veterans Centers Chancellor’s Office Contacts

Name	Campus or CO Role	Contact Information
Heather McClenahen	Veterans Program Specialist	hmcclenahen@cccco.edu
Campus Implementation Lead	Varies	Email VARSupport@foundationccc.org to request the name and contact information for your campus.
VAR Project Team	Project directors	VARSupport@foundationccc.org

Finally, throughout 2023-2024 there will be a variety of electronic and other resources made available to campus program staff including those in Table 2.

Table 2: VAR Resources for Veterans Centers Program Staff

Tool	Information Provided	Date Available
VAR module on the VRC (You must be logged into the VRC first for the link to function)	A general overview of goals, background, structure, and implementation steps for the new process	Now
General VAR User Manual	Detailed explanation of how to accurately complete the reporting requirements using the online reporting tool	Link will be available on the Chancellor’s Office VAR website soon
Veterans Program VAR Manual	Short brief covering specific changes to your program’s specific reporting process and activity crosswalk to support accurate reporting	Link will be available on the Chancellor’s Office VAR website soon
User Helpdesk	Responses to specific questions either through a self-help process or by contacting project team staff	Summer 2024

Appendix: Crosswalk to VAR for Most Common Veterans Program Activities

General Category of Activity VRC May be Providing	Subcategory of activity	Appropriate VAR Category/Subcategory	Notes
Mental health services/counseling	Services/counseling in VRC	Counseling: Mental health	
	Wellness classes, events, sessions	Student Support Services: Other [Mental health wellness event]	
	Mental health screenings in VRC	Student Support Services: Other [VRC mental health screenings]	
	Referrals to other mental health services	Student Support Services: Other [Referrals to non-VRC mental health screenings] OR Counseling: Mental health (Campus-based mental health services or campus-based external contractor)	Depends upon where student was referred – either on-campus or off-campus
	Professional development for other faculty/staff about veteran mental health needs	Misc. Program Support Costs: Professional Development [<i>specify audience and topic</i>]	
	Conferences for staff	Misc. Program Support Costs: Professional Development [<i>specify audience and topic</i>]	
Staff not related to a specific activity	Staff salaries	Misc. Program Support Costs: Program staff salaries and benefits [<i>specify, if required by program</i>]*	Should only include staff salaries NOT included in another category/subcategory

Direct Aid to Students	Grant	Direct Aid to Students: Grant Programmatic	
	Emergency aid	Direct Aid to Students: Emergency aid	
	Gift cards/cash	Direct Aid to Students: Gift cards	
	Food	Direct Aid to Students: Food	
	Technology	Direct Aid to Students: Technology	
	Graduation regalia	Direct Aid to Students: Other	
	Basic need other than food (e.g., personal items)	Direct Aid to Students: Other [<i>specify</i>]	
	Academic supplies	Direct Aid to Students: Academic Supplies	
	Textbooks	Direct Aid to Students: Textbooks	
Student Support Services	Student activities/retreats	Student Support Services: Program specific [<i>specify</i>]	
	Student conferences	Students Support Services: Program specific [<i>specify</i>]	
	Events	<i>Various Student Support Services subcategories based on purpose of the event*</i>	See Student Support Services listed in the Appendix to the General VAR User Manual
Capital outlay (e.g., sofas, refrigerators, tables, etc.)	Misc. Program Support Costs: Other [<i>specify</i>]	Misc. Program Support Costs: Other [<i>specify</i>]	
VA Related Activities	Staff VA Training	Misc. Program Support Costs: Professional Development [VA Training]	
	VA Reporting	Misc. Program Support Costs: Other [VA Reporting]	
	Student counseling re: VA benefits, certification, etc.	Counseling: Program-specific	

Outreach/Inreach	Tabling on campus	Outreach or Inreach: Event inreach	
	Face-to-face outreach	Outreach or Inreach: Event inreach OR Outreach or Inreach: Event outreach <i>[community type]</i>	
	Classroom presentations	Outreach or Inreach: Event inreach	
	Peer to peer	Outreach or Inreach: Inreach Other [Peer to peer]	If this is less about outreach and more about support, then use Student Support Services: Peer support
	College website	Outreach or Inreach: Marketing Outreach <i>[community type, if appropriate]</i>	
	Social media	Outreach or Inreach: Marketing Outreach <i>[community type, if appropriate]</i>	
Advocacy efforts w/local, regional, state or national organizations	E.g., military bases, veteran foundations, legislative offices, mental health services, etc.	Misc. Program Support Costs: All other operating expenses <i>[Advocacy and specify organization name or type]</i>	
Biggest successes		Narrative: Closing equity gaps OR Narrative: Most effective strategies	Depends on the nature of the success. Will require VRC staff to participate in the development of the college-level narratives.
CO Support needed		Narrative: Most important barriers	Will require VRC staff to participate in the development of the college-level narratives.
Biggest challenges		Narrative: Most important barriers	Will require VRC staff to participate in the development of the college-level narratives.