



VETERANS EDUCATION SUCCESS

ALERT!

Students of ITT Technical Institute: Carefully consider your options to preserve your GI Bill.

The Facts

On September 6, 2016, ITT Technical Institute announced it is closing immediately. ITT's press release is [here](#).

This followed an order from the U.S. Department of Education to:

1. Stop enrolling new students who use federal financial aid;
2. Post a bond of credit of \$153 million within 30 days to cover federal student aid in case the school closes;
3. Create "teach-out" plans for students to move to another school, in case ITT closes; and
4. Not pay any executive bonuses without government permission, in order to protect taxpayer dollars.

More information from the U.S. Department of Education about its order to ITT is [here](#).

In addition, ITT Tech was at risk of losing its accreditation. ITT's accreditor, ACICS (the Accrediting Council for Independent Colleges & Schools) had put ITT Tech on a "show cause" order for why ITT should not lose accreditation, to be decided at a December 2016 meeting. At the same time, the U.S. Department of Education has been advised to withdraw recognition for ITT's accreditor, ACICS, and is likely to do so in September 2016, thereby leaving ITT unaccredited. More information from the U.S. Department of Education about the accreditation changes is [here](#).

What Should GI Bill Beneficiaries Do?

You may want to consider your options carefully.

- You could transfer to a new school. If you act quickly to transfer to a new school, you can preserve your remaining months of GI Bill eligibility and avoid the possibility of any break in your housing allowance (BAH). If the housing allowance is critical to you, then you may want to act now to transfer. (But if you have a lot of federal loans, please read the next item

below.) If you want to transfer, look first at your local community college, as they are properly respected and lower cost.

- You could apply to get your federal loans forgiven. If you haven't yet transferred your credits to "a comparable educational program at another school," then, because ITT has closed, you are now eligible to have your federal loans discharged (forgiven) by the U.S. Department of Education under the "closed school discharge" rules (more information [here](#)). If you have a lot of federal student loans at ITT, you may want to get your loans discharged. If you decide you want a "closed school discharge," please understand that you may not be able to prevent a break in your housing allowance – unless you transfer to a program that is not "a comparable program at another school" (for example, if you transfer to a totally different program at a new school, then you'd be still eligible for the "closed school discharge"). Please also know that you will not be able to get your GI Bill months of eligibility back once you use them at ITT, even after it closes. Also, be aware that most private loans cannot be forgiven (discharged), but you should check the specific promissory note you signed when taking out the loan.
- There may be some private loans you can apply to have discharged (forgiven), depending on state programs. A list of state programs that offer some loan cancellation are [here](#)

If You Want to Transfer, Where Should You Transfer To?

If you want to transfer to a new school, there are helpful resources:

- The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs' college search engine, "GI Bill College Comparison Tool" is [here](#).
- The U.S. Education Department's college search engine, "College Scorecard" is [here](#).
- A reliable, non-profit, community college search engine is [here](#).
- Tips on choosing a college for veterans are [here](#).

Please steer clear of private company websites, which often push you to schools that pay to be listed on the website. The U.S. government websites don't accept any money to promote schools; the U.S. government provides fair and accurate information.

One of the best schools to transfer to is your **local community college**. Community colleges are properly accredited, their credits are respected by other colleges and universities, and their degrees are often more respected by employers than schools like ITT Tech. Also, they have very low tuition, so that if you have to repeat credits and your GI Bill months are running out, you won't face financial hardship. Many community colleges have been reaching out to ITT students to offer them space, so check with your local community college.

You may want to avoid ITT's "articulation agreements" with other for-profit colleges that are under law enforcement action for deceiving students, and that are not properly accredited, may be overpriced, and may not have credits that can transfer.

Many experts believe the best education is not online, but in a classroom. However, if you really want to study online, you should look into a **public online** college, such as Penn State World Campus, Arizona State University Online, or Georgia Tech University Online. Many community colleges also have online offerings.

Unfortunately, you might face the hard truth that some of your credits may not transfer to a new school and you may need to repeat credits. Why? Because ITT's credits were often not respected by other schools (and likely wouldn't be respected by many employers) and because of ITT's imminent loss of accreditation. That's a hard truth to face, especially after ITT probably promised you they were great.

Bottom line, it is critically important that you carefully consider your options now to make the most of your hard-earned GI Bill benefits.

GI Bill (™) is a registered trademark of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). More information about education benefits offered by VA is available at the official U.S. government Website at <http://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill>.