



Integrated Disability Evaluation System (IDES)

A joint DOD and VA program to deliver timely, transparent, and consistent disability outcomes to ill and injured service members

THE INTEGRATED DISABILITY EVALUATION SYSTEM (IDES)

IDES is a joint Department of Defense (DOD) and Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) disability evaluation process. Under this system, VA helps DOD determine if wounded, ill, or injured service members are fit for continued military service and provides disability benefits to service members, if appropriate. Service members found fit for duty continue their military service. Service members determined to be unfit for duty receive a single set of disability ratings to determine the appropriate level of DOD and VA disability benefits. Integration with the VA provides medically separated or retired veterans timely access to their VA benefits.

HIGHLIGHTS

Integrating DOD and VA disability systems provides service members:

- **Collaborative Case Management:** DOD and VA staff members work together to ensure consistent case management.
- **Simplified Medical Exams:** Service members undergo a single set of comprehensive VA disability examinations to help determine fitness for duty and eligibility for DOD and VA disability compensation and benefits.
- **Consistent Disability Ratings:** VA assigns disability ratings according to the VA Schedule for Rating Disabilities (VASRD) that are accepted by both DOD and VA.
- **Transparency:** Service members receive their VA and DOD disability ratings prior to separation.

IDES PROCESS

Referral Criteria: Service members are referred into IDES when a healthcare provider determines the member, within 12 months of the onset of their condition, is not likely to return to duty. Service members may be referred earlier if progression of the illness/injury is predictable and stable.

Phases: Once referred into the IDES process, a service member's case will be reviewed by DOD and VA medical and non-medical personnel to help determine fitness for duty and the appropriate level of DOD and VA benefits, if appropriate. IDES consists of four main phases:

1. **Medical Evaluation Board (MEB):** The MEB is the medical phase of the IDES process. The MEB consists of referral into the process, medical exams, and forensic medical review of conditions that potentially affect the service member's ability to perform the duties of the officer, rank, grade, or rating of the service member.
2. **Physical Evaluation Board (PEB):** The PEB is the personnel phase of IDES where a service member's fitness for duty is determined. The PEB phase consists of an informal board, receipt of disability ratings and disposition (if found unfit), and a formal board (if requested by the service member).
3. **Transition:** Service members found fit are returned to duty while those with a final disposition of unfit are separated or retired from military service.
4. **Final Benefits:** VA processes the final disability rating and the former service member, now veteran, receives his or her VA benefits.

