

TraCen Cape May Education Update #297

In this Update:

- Congratulations!
- Question of the week
- Frequently-confused/misused word pairs
- CG Foundation grants & foreign language software
- CG Institute goes green
- Video lectures may slightly hurt student performance
- USMAP
- Are you interested in receiving tutoring or being a tutor?
- Reservists, TA, and the GI Bill
- What happens after I submit my TA application?
- GI Bill & certification/licensing tests
- Avoid taking out student loans!
- CLEP English tests to be replaced
- Attention, parents of college-bound children!
- Servicewide exam deadlines closer than you think
- Reserve servicewide exam (16OCT2010)
- CG Foundation & Vander Putten grants
- Free college reference books
- Is distance learning for you?
- Wondering what to major in?
- TraCen Cape May testing calendar
- Thinking of teaching?
- Leaving the Coast Guard?
- Microsoft software home use program
- Miscellaneous

Congratulations!!

The following personnel in the Cape May area passed Coast Guard Institute end-of-course, AQEs, and other tests since the last update:

Name	Work Site	Test
FS2 Katharine Adams	Station Barnegat Light	CLEP Humanities*
Ms. Kim Tangree	TraCen (FE)	CLEP Humanities*

* First attempt

Well done, all of you!!

And if you've just finished a degree program or have any other noteworthy academic achievement to brag about, please let me know so I can recognize you for it.

Question of the Week

Q: I just went to take my E-PME-6 AQE and the ESO told me I have to have both my E-PME Performance Requirements signed off *and* my DC1 EPQs signed off, before she'll administer the test. Is that right?

A: No, actually, it's not. You're not required to have both EPQs and E-PME Performance Requirements signed off to take the AQE or the EOCT. You're only required to have signed off the items that relate to the test you're taking.

So to take an AQE you have to have the E-PME Performance Requirements signed off that are going to be tested. In your case, you'd have to have *only* your E-5 and E-6 E-PME Performance Requirements signed off to take the E-PME-6 AQE (along with your supervisor's signature in the statement at the bottom of page 2).

Likewise, to be eligible to take the DC1 EOCT, you have to have *only* your DC1 EPQs signed off (including your supervisor's statement at the bottom of page 2).

If you have a question you'd like answered as a Question of the Week, e-mail it to me at andrew.g.webb@uscg.mil.

Frequently-Confused/Misused Word Pairs

The English language includes hundreds of word pairs which leave people unsure as to which they should use in a given situation. Today, the pair in focus is **advice** vs. **advise**.

The word **advice** is a noun meaning a recommendation regarding a decision or course of conduct. Examples: "She gave her son advice on how to invest his money" and "The president makes appointments with the advice and consent of the Senate."

Advise is a verb meaning to provide advice. Examples: "She advised her son on how to invest his money" and "My boss tried to advise me about how to proceed, but I didn't listen."

If there are any words you often mix up, please e-mail them to me at andrew.g.webb@uscg.mil.

CG Foundation Grants & Foreign Language Software

Starting 01 July 2010, The Coast Guard Foundation will once again reimburse eligible personnel for the cost of foreign language software such as Tell Me More (<http://www.tellmemore.com/>) and Rosetta Stone (<http://www.rosettastone.com/>).

Coast Guard Institute Goes Green

To save resources (hundreds of reams of paper, scores of boxes of envelopes, and thousands of dollars in postage – not to mention hundreds of staff hours), the Coast Guard Institute will stop sending out paper results letters for EOCTs and AQEs starting on 01 July 2010. Instead (as is currently the case), you will continue to receive your unofficial results by e-mail immediately after taking the test. Then, once your results have been verified, you'll receive another e-mail, which will be equivalent to the hard copy results letter that's being eliminated. Your official results will continue to be posted to DirectAccess within two work days after your test has been scored and the score verified.

Although DirectAccess is a secure repository for your test results, it can't hurt for you to keep the official results e-mail as a back-up in an Outlook folder set aside for just such info.

Video Lectures May Slightly Hurt Student Performance

An article published on 21 June in the *Chronicle of Higher Education* (<http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/doc/20100621CHE.pdf>) reports the results of a study conducted by professors from Northwestern University and the University of Florida. Their study showed "that live instruction benefits Hispanic students, male students, and lower-achieving students in particular."

However, because there has been very little research on whether video or live instruction is more effective, no definitive conclusions can be drawn.

USMAP

USMAP (United Services Military Apprenticeship Program), at <https://usmap.cnet.navy.mil/usmapss/static/usmap.jsp>, is a program through which active duty servicemembers can earn certification for skills learned on-the-job and through related technical instruction.

You can complete apprenticeships in 125 trades through USMAP by documenting work experience you acquire on the job, while performing your regular military duties. No after-hours work is required.

The only extra work you have to do is keep track of hours spent in each category of work, fill out your record sheets, and once a quarter send a report of your accumulated hours to USMAP to receive credit for them.

“USMAP enhances your job skills and shows your motivation for more challenging military assignments.” Once you’ve completed the required work hours in each of the skills listed for the trade, your record will be verified then submitted to the U.S. Department of Labor from which you’ll receive a certification that you’ve completed the specified apprenticeship program. This will be “a definite advantage in getting better civilian jobs since employers know the value of apprenticeships.”

For more information about USMAP, go to <https://usmap.cnet.navy.mil/usmapss/static/usmap.jsp> or see Chief Boone (TraCen Cape May’s CDA) or me.

Are You Interested in Receiving Tutoring or Being a Tutor?

A lot of people ask me how to study for CLEP tests, SWEs, ASVAB re-tests, and other exams. When I point them to the many resources I’ve dug up (whether on-line or physical study materials), they look disappointed. So I’m trying to gauge the level of interest in receiving help from a tutor, what subject(s) people would like help in, and how many people with in-depth knowledge of various subjects would be interested in tutoring others.

Possible subjects for tutoring are academic subjects (e.g., math, English, history, physics, biology, etc.), rate-related subjects, and E-PME.

If you’re interested in receiving tutoring, please e-mail me (andrew.g.webb@uscg.mil) and let me know what subject(s) you’d like help in.

If you’re interested in being a tutor, please e-mail me (andrew.g.webb@uscg.mil) and let me know what subject(s) you feel qualified to tutor in.

Reservists, TA, and the GI Bill

Reservists often ask about receiving GI Bill benefits and using tuition assistance (TA) at the same time, as well as other related questions. There are a number of rules, but they’re relatively straightforward.

- If you’re eligible for TA (i.e., haven’t used up your annual \$4,500 allowance) and are taking fewer than 6 credits in a term you must use TA rather than MGIB-SR benefits. [10 U.S. Code §16131] (This assumes the college/university defines “full-time” as 12 credits per term.) This rule does not apply to Reservists filing for REAP or MGIB-AD benefits.
- If you’re **not** on active duty and are eligible for TA and REAP, you may receive both benefits for the same course(s). The total amount of TA and REAP paid for the course (whether to you or to the school) may not exceed the total cost of the course. [ALCOAST 045/06]
- If you’re on active duty and are eligible for TA and REAP, you may use TA or receive REAP benefits, but may not receive both benefits for the same course(s). [ALCOAST 045/06]
- If you’re going to submit a REAP claim for a course, the amount of TA your school will receive will be the difference between the total cost of the course and the amount of REAP payments you receive during the school term. That is, the total benefit you and/or your school receive (TA & REAP) can’t exceed the total cost of the course. In no case may the amount of TA paid to the school exceed the maximum per-credit amount it would receive if you weren’t submitting a REAP claim. [ALCOAST 258/06]
- You may **not** receive GI Bill benefits (MGIB-SR or MGIB-AD) for courses paid for by TA. [Art. 11.H.2.e.11., *Performance, Training, & Education Manual*, COMDTINST M1500.10C]

- You may receive GI Bill benefits (MGIB-SR, REAP, or MGIB-AD) for some courses and use TA to pay for other courses you're taking during the same term whether you're taking them at the same school or at different schools.

What Happens After I Submit My TA Application?

After you submit an application for TA using the on-line eTA system, you'll receive an e-mail from the Navy (<http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/doc/TAAe-mail.pdf>). (The Navy is the Coast Guard's agent for processing TA applications, distributing authorizations, and paying schools.)

In that e-mail, you'll see a link to a web site. Once you've opened that web site and logged in, follow the steps listed in the e-mail.

Don't just print out your authorization and forget about it. Download it to your computer, so if anything happens in the future that makes it necessary to refer to your authorization, you'll have it.

Once you've downloaded it (<http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/doc/TAexample.pdf>), open the file and check it over for accuracy. If **anything** is incorrect (including dates, course information, etc.), report it to your ESO by e-mail. Your ESO will submit a request to the Coast Guard Institute to correct your authorization. The Institute will generate a corrected authorization and e-mail it directly to you.

Once you've verified that everything's accurate, print it out and take the authorization to your school's bursar or whomever students go to to pay for courses. Verify with that person that you're registered for all courses listed on your authorization and that they're available. If they are, write your SSN in the space provided on the authorization, sign it on the signature line, and hand it to the bursar. The school will credit the amount shown at the bottom of the "GOV SHARE" column on your authorization to your account. You'll be responsible for paying all other costs.

Finally, once you've completed your course(s), you'll have to provide a copy of your grade report to your ESO (<http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/ta.asp#grades>). If you don't provide a grade report for each course listed on your authorization, the cost of the TA spent on those courses will be deducted from your pay.

GI Bill & Certification/Licensing Tests

Did you know that your GI Bill education benefit program will reimburse you for the cost of license and certification exams (up to \$2,000 per exam) – and that there will be no charge to your 36-month entitlement? It's true!

If you're eligible for benefits under the MGIB-AD, MGIB-SR, or REAP (or if you gave up one of these to get benefits under the new GI Bill), you can take an unlimited number of license and certification tests as long as you're eligible for GI Bill benefits. That means as long as you haven't exhausted your 36 months of GI Bill benefits, you can get reimbursed for licensing and/or certification tests.

If you're eligible for new GI Bill benefits and didn't give up one of the others, you can take only one test during new GI Bill eligibility period.

What kinds of tests fall under this benefit? Here are a few:

- Lawyer license (aka bar) exam
- C++ certification
- HVAC journeyman certification
- Accreditation in Public Relations certification
- Cosmetology license
- Safety professional certification
- Dental assistant license
- Residential mechanical inspector certification

To find out if the test you want to take qualifies for reimbursement, go "Search for Approved License and Certification Programs" on the Department of Veterans' Affairs's web site (http://www.gibill.va.gov/GI_Bill_Info/search_programs.htm).

Avoid Taking Out Student Loans!

There's very little reason to take out student loans when so much money is available from scholarships. TraCen's Education Center has a few copies of a hardback book – *Financial Aid for Veterans, Military Personnel, and Their Dependents* – which lists dozens, if not hundreds, of scholarships, fellowships/grants, grants-in-aid, and awards available to you or your dependents. There are only a couple more of these books available, first come, first served.

When using this book, remember: there are thousands of scholarships that aren't listed in it which you or your son/daughter may qualify for. Leave no stone unturned when looking for scholarships. The Education Center has a number of other references you can use to find scholarships and grants.

CLEP English Tests to be Replaced

On 01 July, the CollegeBoard will replace three CLEP tests with two new tests as shown in the table below.

Old CLEP Test	Replacement CLEP Test
English Composition (with essay)	College Composition
English Composition (without essay)	College Composition Modular
Freshman College Composition	College Composition Modular

Both of the new tests will be available in a paper-based format.

College Composition includes multiple-choice items and two mandatory essays scored by Prometric (the CollegeBoard). You take the multiple-choice portion in one sitting then, after you receive a passing score, your TCO (not all ESOs are TCOs) will order the essays.

College Composition Modular is a multiple-choice test that may be supplemented either with an essay section provided by CLEP and scored by the college, or an essay section provided and scored by the college. (This exam is intended for colleges that want a valid, reliable multiple-choice assessment and greater local control over the direct writing assessment.)

In addition, if you took the Freshman College Composition (multiple-choice) test before 01 July, you can order an optional essay the score from which will be included with the score from your multiple-choice test in what's reported to your college/university.

Attention, Parents of College-Bound Children!

- The U.S. Department of Education has produced a really excellent booklet (*College Preparation Checklist*) people at all stages in life. The first section ("Money for College") covers student aid; the second section ("Your 'To Do' List") provides check-off lists for elementary, junior high/middle, high school students and their parents and for adult students. You can stop by the Education Center to pick up a copy, or download this pub from http://studentaid.ed.gov/students/attachments/siteresources/College_Prep_Checklist.pdf. The DoEd's web site has many other useful pubs which you can download. Check 'em out: <http://studentaid.ed.gov/PORTALSWebApp/students/english/publications.jsp>.
- If you're looking for a financial aid (including scholarship) search engine that won't try to steer you toward specific loans or scholarships, check out the Department of Education's various wizards: https://studentaid2.ed.gov/getmoney/scholarship/scholarship_search_select.asp?13817/.
- So you've decided you want to take college courses, but you're not sure which school's right for you. Or you've already decided on college but made your choice more by gut feeling or based on others' recommendations than through deliberate process. In either case, check out the Department of Education's College Matching Wizard.

There are two versions. One is for people who already have an idea what kind of college they would like to attend. The other asks more questions so as to provide you with a more tailored college fit. You can find them both at https://studentaid2.ed.gov/gotocollege/collegefinder/wizard_intro1.asp.

- The Scholarship and Financial Aid Explorer (SFEX) was developed by the Marine Corps to make it easier for military personnel to find scholarships directly relevant to them and their dependents. SFEX provides a listing of over 600 scholarships and is open to all servicemembers at no cost. You can check it out at <http://www.mcsfex.net/Default.aspx>.

Servicewide Exam Deadlines Closer Than You Think

Coast Guard regulars: remember that your deadline for completing *all* qualifications for the servicewide exams (SWEs) is 01 August 2010. Reservists: your deadline is 01 July.

Reserve Servicewide Exam (16 October 2010)

The message announcing the Reserve Servicewide Exam (RSWE) was published this week. If you're a Reservist, please read it through, paying particular attention to paragraph 4.A. (Member Responsibilities). To see a reader-friendly format, go to <http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/doc/ALCGRSV027-10.pdf>.

CG Foundation & Vander Putten Grants

Many recipients of grants under the Coast Guard Foundation and Vander Putten grant programs are unaware that the money they receive is a generous gift of individuals who contribute their own money to fund the programs. Many tens of thousands of dollars of their own money.

That is, when you apply for one of these grants, there is no guarantee that there will be money available to fund it and you shouldn't expect there will be. Moreover, common courtesy dictates that when you receive one of these grants you should thank those who made it possible. You can easily send a quick thank-you note via the Coast Guard Institute's web site (http://www.uscg.mil/hq/cgi/tag/fg_feedback.asp).

Those who contribute to these grant programs are truly interested in knowing if the money you receive made a difference to you and, specifically, how it made a difference. Without feedback, they may assume it's not all that helpful or (worse) that it's going to people who are ungrateful. Take five minutes to send some feedback.

Free College Reference Books

The following books are available in limited quantities in the Education Center:

- *Financial Aid for Veterans, Military Personnel, and Their Dependents (2008-2010)*
- *Guide to Online Learning*
- *College Majors That Work*

Also available, are the following:

- *Need a Liff?* (this is the American Legion's guide to educational opportunities, scholarships, grants, student loans, careers, and employment)
- *DANTES College Career Workbook*
- *College Success Tips for Adult Learners*
- *College.edu – Online resources for the cyber-savvy student*
- *Don't Miss Out – the ambitious student's guide to financial aid*
- *Best Career and Education Web sites: A Quick Guide to Online Job Search*

If any or all of these interest you, drop by and pick one up – first come, first served.

Is Distance Learning for You?

The University of Georgia has come up with an on-line assessment tool you can use to determine if computer-based distance learning is for you. It's called SORT (Student Online Readiness Tool, <http://www.alt.usg.edu/sort/html/sortlau1.html>) and is based on research that says there are "six main topics closely related to a student's success in the online learning environment". These are, Experience with Technology, Access to Technology, Study Habits, Lifestyle, Goals and Purposes, and Learning Preferences. "Each section of SORT has a brief description followed by a questionnaire. Based on your responses to questions, feedback is provided on your personal readiness profile, along with suggested strategies for success and links to more information."

Wondering What to Major In?

Are you interested in getting a college degree, but unsure about what to major in? Drop by the Education Center and pick up a copy of *College Majors that Work*. This book has an excellent, easy-to-follow system for determining what major best matches your interests.

You should also check out chapters 3 ("Career Exploration Information") and 5 ("Researching Employer and Labor Market Information") of the book *Best Career and Education Web Sites*. Before you dive into a major, with the intention of going into a particular career field, read these chapters. They can help you figure out if there's actually a future in your chosen field. The last thing you want is to invest a lot of time and money in getting a particular degree only to find when you're done that there aren't many jobs available in the field you prepared for or that advancement in that field is slow or frozen.

TraCen Cape May Testing Calendar

Tests at TraCen Cape May are administered by appointment according to the following schedule:

Mondays (0800): Defense Language Proficiency Tests

Tuesdays (0800): EOCTs and AQEs*

Thursdays (0745): colleges tests, CLEP tests, DSSTs, SATs, ACTs

* If operations or your work schedule make it impossible for you to take an EOCT or AQE on a Tuesday morning, you can take it on a Thursday morning.

This schedule leaves most of the day on Tuesdays, as well as all day on Wednesdays, Fridays available for other occasional tests, counseling, and other face-to-face interactions with you. When no one is taking a language test, the doors to the Education Center are open on Mondays, as well.

If you call and I don't answer the phone, I'm usually administering a test (and, because of the noise, can't talk on the phone) or otherwise busy with someone in the office. E-mail is the best way to get in touch with me.

Thinking of Teaching?

Are you interested in teaching after you leave the Coast Guard? Troops to Teachers also provides counseling and referral services to military personnel interested in beginning a second career in public education as a teacher. And the DANTES Troops to Teachers office will help you identify teacher certification requirements, programs leading to certification, and employment opportunities. The main web site

(http://www.dantes.doded.mil/dantes_web/troopstoteachers/index.asp) has all kinds of information about the program.

Including a new on-line way to determine if you're eligible to participate in Troops to Teachers:

http://www.dantes.doded.mil/dantes_web/troopstoteachers/eligibility.asp.

Leaving the Coast Guard?

If you're leaving the Coast Guard within the next twelve months (whether through retirement, resignation, or expiration of your enlistment), you should be making plans for what you'll be doing after you take off your uniform for the last time. Check out the information on my web site related to career transition (<http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/careertrans.asp>).

You should also request an education assessment from the Coast Guard Institute (<http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/collegefaq.asp>) to get a transcript of college credit you've acquired through your service in the Coast Guard. If you don't request an assessment before you leave active duty, you can't get one later. If you're not planning to go to school right away, you'll probably need to find work. Here are two excellent resources for finding a job – or even a second career. Also, Military.com has a very good series of web pages devoted to veterans (<http://www.military.com/Careers/Home/0,13373,,00.htm>).

And don't discount the idea of working in the public sector. Not only are there thousands of jobs in the federal government, identical to private-sector jobs in which you can put your skills, knowledge, and experience to use while maintaining job security unavailable in the private sector (<http://www.fedjobs.gov/>), governmental entities at all levels – state, county, municipality, school district, port district, etc. – provide similar benefits.

Microsoft Software Home Use Program

If you're on the Coast Guard's payroll (i.e., not a contractor), you're eligible to participate in Microsoft's Software Assurance Home Use Program. The program enables you to get a licensed copy of most Microsoft® Office desktop PC applications to install and use on your home computer. You're also eligible for discounts on other Microsoft software via the Employee Purchase Program.

For more information, go to <https://cgportal.uscg.mil/lotus/my poc/?uri=wcm%3a5b18ff004d89b9a6ae7fbe259abd3cf4>.

ACCC's Library Open for Studying

One more thing: the new campus's classrooms, labs, and library are all state-of-the-art. Even if you're not ready to register for classes right away, you should take the opportunity to visit the campus and look around. The Director of Academic and Student Services has extended a personal invitation to anyone who'd like to use the library to study, for research, or for pleasure reading. It's very quiet, well-lit, and has very comfortable furniture.

Quick Reference Study Guides

The TraCen Education Center also has a binder full of SparkCharts Quick Reference Guides on almost 40 subjects. You're welcome to use these in the Education Center or make copies to take with you. You can check out the subjects available at <http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/books.asp#spark>.

Education Center Library

In addition to SparkCharts, the Education Center also has a library of books on leadership, management, Coast Guard history, and other topics. Also in the library are the latest Professional Qualification Guides (PQGs) for each rating.

The Education Center also has dozens of brochures and books on college, financial aid, the officer program application process, and other things. If there are multiple copies, you're welcome to take one.