

TraCen Cape May Education Update #392

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Links from this page to non-Coast Guard sites are provided as a customer service and do not represent any implicit or explicit endorsement by the United States Coast Guard of any commercial or private issues, products, or services presented there.

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
SN Jennifer Nease	TraCen (Ceremonial)	E-PME-4
SN Douglas Mead*	TraCen (Ceremonial)	E-PME-4

* First attempt

Well done, SN Mead and Nease!!!

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 – What do I have to do to take a RAT?

Q: I currently have all my AET1 RPQs completed to take the RAT. Do you want a copy of them now prior to the test? Or just show up the day of the test and submit them to you then?

A: Some ESOs want to see RPQs before letting you schedule a test. I trust my customers to have completed them before they (like you) schedule a test, so just bring them with you when you come to take the test. That assumes, of course, that you've not only completed them all but that your CO or designated RPQ Reviewer has signed off on the statement in the REMARKS section of the "Record of Completion" that says you're eligible to take the Rating Advancement Test (RAT).

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.

Web Page in the Spotlight

There's a lot of stuff on the TraCen Cape May web site you might not check out if you didn't know it was there. So this week, I'm spotlighting three pages: **On-line Sources of College Books** (<http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/books.asp>).

Grammar & Usage Corner

A number of people have asked that I expand my weekly "Frequently-Confused/Misused Words" entry to cover grammar and usage questions other than confused/misused words as well. This week, **alot**, **a lot**, and **allot**. (These definitions are from *Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary*.)

Alot and *a lot* (meaning a large number of people or things) are interchangeable except for one thing: *alot* is wrong. It is used often in informal writing and may one day be standard, but until you get the official memo, hold off on using it if you want to be taken seriously as a writer. ("The recipe calls for a lot of ingredients.")

The word *allot* is a verb meaning to assign as a share or portion ("The rules of the debate will allot ten minutes to each candidate") or to distribute by or as if by lot ("Because there were so many, the sponsors of the conference decided to allot hotel rooms to the delegates").

If there are any word usage, grammar, or similar issues you've encountered, please e-mail them to me at andrew.g.webb@uscg.mil.

Turn Your ICS/IS Courses into College Credit

Frederick Community College (FCC) in Frederick, MD will award college credit for many FEMA courses (including ICS-100, 200, 700, and 800) taken through its Emergency Management Institute (<http://training.fema.gov/IS/>). These credits are applicable to FCC's Associate of Applied Sciences degree in Emergency Management or may be transferred to other schools.

For more information, go to http://www.frederick.edu/courses_and_programs/degree_emergency_management.aspx.

TECEP Tests Now Only \$99/Test

Not many people know that in addition to CLEP tests, they can earn college credit via DSSTs (<http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/dsst.asp>), Excelsior College Exams (ECEs, <http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/ece.asp>), and TECEP tests (<http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/tecep.asp>). TECEPs – from the popular distance-learning school, Thomas Edison State College – used to cost \$80/credit. But they're now only \$99/test which is reimbursable through CGMA Supplemental Education Grants and (for enlisted personnel) Coast Guard Foundation grants (<http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/grants.asp>).

Coast Guard Foundation Grants

You may be unaware that the Coast Guard Foundation offers four different education grants to personnel serving on active duty (both regulars and Reservists).

- The Coast Guard Foundation Education Grant reimburses eligible enlisted personnel up to \$500 per calendar year (CY).
- The Van der Putten Education Grant reimburses eligible enlisted personnel up to \$250 per CY as a supplement for those who have received the maximum under the Foundation Education Grant.
- The Marine Science Education Grant reimburses eligible MSTs up to \$500 per CY.
- The University of Oregon Bookstore Education Grant reimburses up to \$500 per CY to enlisted personnel and officer applicants who have served in a designated Southwest Asia combat zone for 30 consecutive days or 60 non-consecutive days during the CY.

Note that these amounts are maximums and that there are no guarantees that you will receive a grant just because you applied for one. Although the Coast Guard Institute accepts applications for these grants year 'round, be aware that when you apply the pot of money from which these grants are awarded may be empty. Remember that funding for these grants comes from individuals (civilian and military) who contribute money when they can.

You may submit a grant request up to one year after you incur an eligible expense. All applications will be held for a year (in the order in which they were received) **OR** until a grant has been awarded, whichever occurs first. After that, your application will be shredded.

Even if it's been less than a year since the expense was incurred, you may **not** resubmit a grant request for amounts not reimbursed during the previous calendar year.

EXAMPLE: You submitted a request for a \$1,100 grant on 10 March 2012 and receive \$500 from the Foundation grant and \$250 from the Vander Putten grant in October 2012. You can't then submit an application for the 2013 funding cycle for the \$350 worth of items not reimbursed in 2012.

For more information (including a link to the current application form), go to http://www.uscg.mil/hr/cgi/active_duty/pay_for_college/foundation_grants/feg_vpeg.asp.

Finding Cheap Textbooks

If you're taking college courses and are wondering where to find textbooks you don't have to sell your car to pay for, don't assume you'll find the best prices at Amazon or Barnes & Noble. You can find more than two dozen web sites at <http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/books.asp> most of which allow you to compare prices from other sites.

New Fiscal Year & Tuition Assistance

If you're using or thinking of using TA, keep in mind that you can't currently apply for TA for any courses starting on or after 01 October 2012. The Coast Guard Institute can't obligate funds until Congress has signed a check to us for TA funding, via an appropriation bill.

If you've been hearing rumors that TA will be cut drastically or even eliminated in FY13, because of the country's fiscal problems, they're nothing more than rumors. Do **not** assume anything you hear about TA's future is true. No one – except, perhaps, a few flag officers – knows what shape TA will take in the coming FY. It *could* be that maximum amounts would be set lower than they are now (e.g., less than \$4,500 per FY and less than \$250/credit), whole classes of people *could* be prohibited from using TA (e.g., Reservists or civilians), the number of credits a person can use TA to pay for *could* be limited, or things *could* remain the same. We just don't know what TA will look like after 30 September.

If anyone says s/he knows what TA will be like in the coming months, do your part to control rumors and ask exactly where she got that information. If she starts out with "Well, I heard that", tell her she's spreading unfounded rumors that do nothing but stir people up and to knock it off.

Enlisted Rating Advancement Training System (ERATS)

ALCOAST 577/11 (<http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/doc/ALCOAST577-11.pdf>) describes the changes now underway with respect to the Coast Guard's training system in place for enlisted advancement. For an overview of the new Enlisted Rating Advancement Training System (ERATS) and how it relates to the system still in use for most rates, go to <http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/doc/ERATS.pdf> and <http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/doc/EASchart.pdf>. At the moment, only the MST rating has made the transition to ERATS. The next candidates for this transition are OS and the aviation ratings.

Is Distance Learning for You?

If you're trying to decide between taking courses in a classroom or via distance learning (aka distance education), you owe it to yourself to use one or more of the on-line assessment tools available from DANTES and various colleges (<http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/distance.asp#01>). Spending some time with these tools could save you time and a lot of aggravation down the road.

Scholarships

Below are descriptions of a number of scholarships open to military personnel, their dependents, or both. ***Be aware, however, that these are just a few of thousands of scholarships you or your dependents may be eligible for.*** They're

the low-hanging fruit, the ones most often publicized and (as a result) the ones that have the most applicants. If you really want some serious money from scholarships, you'll apply to all you're eligible for – especially those not widely known. For more about scholarships (including how to find and apply for them in a systematic manner), go to <http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/scholarships.asp>.

Alaska Sea Services Scholarship

(courtesy of Mr. Jose Velazquez)

If you're an Alaska resident, and are pursuing a college degree, you should apply for the Alaska Sea Services Scholarship. Even though the application deadline is 01 March 2013, don't procrastinate. For complete information, go to http://www.netc.navy.mil/documents/NewsReleases/pr_13512.pdf.

Chief Warrant Officers and Warrant Officers Association

(courtesy of CWO4 Dianne Trawick)

Check out the Art and Eleanor Colona Scholarship (<http://www.cwoauscg.org/cwoa-forms/Colona-Scholarship-Application-and-Instructions.pdf>) for enlisted personnel and CWOA members' dependents, and the Chief Warrant Officer John A. Keller Scholarship (http://www.cwoauscg.org/cwoa-forms/Keller_Scholarship_Application_2012.pdf) for members of the CWOA and their dependents.

Council of College and Military Educators

(courtesy of MSTCS Lumpkin at Sector Delaware Bay, from military.com)

"Each year the Council of College and Military Educators offers fifteen \$1000 scholarships for Servicemembers, Military Spouses, and Veterans who are working towards the completion of higher education degrees. The 2013-14 CCME Scholarship Applications must be submitted online at <http://ccmeonline.org/scholarship>. This year's online application will be available July 16 must be completed by the October 1, 2012 scholarship application deadline.

Read the Military Advantage Blog (<http://militaryadvantage.military.com/2012/07/scholarship-update-ccme-2013/>) for more details."

Waldorf College

(courtesy of Mr. Marc Fagenbaum, full-time ESO at Base Miami)

To recognize the sacrifices made by the family members of military servicemembers and public safety personnel (firefighters, law enforcement officers, EMTs & dispatchers) Waldorf College in Iowa will award eight scholarships for on-line students and two for residential students in 2012 through the Hero Behind the Hero Scholarship Program.

Two scholarships (one for the military spouse or dependent and one for the firefighters/law enforcement officer spouse or dependent) will be presented on the award dates listed. Applicants not selected may continue to apply for a maximum of five scholarship award dates.

Scholarship Application Periods

01 AUG 2012 – 30 SEP 2012
01 OCT 2012 – 30 NOV 2012

Scholarship Award Dates

October 2012 (on-line)
December 2012 (on-line)

Go to <http://www.waldorf.edu/Online/Tuition---Financing/Scholarships/Hero-Behind-the-Hero> for more information and a link to an on-line application. Or you can e-mail hero@waldorf.edu or call 877-267-2157.

Space Camp & Space Academy Scholarships

The Military Child Education Coalition funds up to 15 scholarships every year for children enrolled in grades 6 through 9 to attend a six-day Space Camp or Space Academy program in Huntsville, AL. Its purpose is to show young men and women firsthand what it takes to be an astronaut. Activities include simulated Space Shuttle missions, training simulators, rocket building and launches, scientific experiments, and lectures of the past, present, and future of space exploration. The program takes a unique, fun, and hands-on approach to learning outside the classroom. Students leave with a greater appreciation for school and their studies.

For more information about the scholarship and a link to the application form, go to <http://www.militarychild.org/parents-and-students/programs/bernard-curtis-brown-ii-memorial-space-camp-scholarship>. And to check out the programs themselves, go to <http://www.spacecamp.com/>.

Which College?

OK, you've decided which degree and major to pursue, but you don't know which school offers a degree in your chosen major. Where can you find that information? DANTES (the Defense Activity for Non-Traditional Education Support) may have just what you're looking for. On its web site, DANTES has a catalog of colleges which offer complete degrees by distance learning and which you can search by majors and degrees (<http://www.dantescatalogs.com/DEDC.aspx>). And if you just need to take an individual course or two that your school doesn't offer, check out the DANTES Independent Study Catalog (<http://www.dantescatalogs.com/DISC.aspx>).

Online Academic Skills Course

"Peterson's Online Academic Skills Course (OASC) is designed for individuals who want to build a solid academic foundation by improving their math and verbal skills in order to score well on exams, advance their education, and excel in their careers. . . . OASC is available for free 24 hours a day, seven days a week on the web to service members (regular and Reserve), civilian employees, and their families."

The course (at <http://www.nelnetsolutions.com/dantes>) includes

- a pre-test (to gauge your strengths and weaknesses)
- a Customized Learning Path™ (a personalized set of lessons based on your pre-test results)
- lessons which include interactive activities, flash cards, quizzes, and practice tests,
- a post-test (to evaluate your progress).

For more information, go to <http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/doc/oasc-faq.pdf>.

NOTE: On Saturday, 25 August, Peterson's will be updating the software that controls access to OASC. As a result, you won't be able to use OASC until sometime on Sunday, 26 August.

New College Info

Periodically, the TraCen Cape May's Education Center receives flyers, brochures, posters, and other information from colleges and universities around the country. This material is available any time during working hours (including lunch time). *The fact that this information is printed here does not constitute an endorsement of the corresponding schools or programs.*

Atlantic Cape Community College offers many career training programs

(<http://www.atlantic.edu/conted/CareerTraining.htm>) as well as academic degrees. Its new Aviation Studies degree "is designed to provide pathways for students seeking careers in aviation and will include tracks in air traffic control, commercial pilot, and airport management." ACCC "will continue to offer an AAS degree in Air Traffic Control Terminal for those who are interested in taking the FAA's Air Traffic Selection and Training (AT-SAT) exam."

(<http://viewer.zmags.com/publication/c4e2afeb#/c4e2afeb/8>) Check out ACCC's complete offerings at <http://www.atlantic.edu/program/degrees/degreePrograms.htm>.

Are You Preparing for an ASVAB or Other Math Test?

TraCen Cape May has acquired the DVD course, "The Secrets of Mental Math" to help you prepare to re-take the AR or MK parts of the ASVAB or to learn short-cuts that will help you in college courses or in everyday life. The course includes 12 half-hour lectures. Here's a bit about it the course.

"One key to improving and expanding your math potential lies in the powerful ability to perform mental math calculations. Solving basic math problems in your head is a gateway to success in understanding and mastering higher mathematical fields such as algebra, statistics, and calculus. It's a skill that offers other lifelong benefits, including

- giving you a competitive edge in school or at work;
- keeping your mind active and sharp at any age;
- improving your performance on standardized tests; and
- learning to solve problems by using a variety of methods.

"Mental mathematics also is valuable when you're shopping for groceries or figuring out how much to tip at a restaurant. Believe it or not, learning how to do mental math can be fun. "The Secrets of Mental Math" is Professor Arthur T. Benjamin's exciting 12-lecture course which guides you through all the essential skills, tips, and tricks for improving and enhancing your ability to solve a range of mathematical problems right in your head."

Read more on this course at http://www.thegreatcourses.com/tgc/courses/course_detail.aspx?cid=1406. If you decide it's up your alley, individuals and groups are welcome to use it in the Education Center.

No More Paper & Pencil CLEP Tests

DANTES Test Control Officers (TCOs, who are ESOs with authorization from DANTES) can no longer order CLEP tests to administer locally. At the moment, you'll have to find a national test center

(http://apps.collegeboard.com/cbsearch_clep/searchCLEPTestCenter.jsp) at which to take it. Because the closest test site to TraCen Cape May for computer-based tests is Rowan University (in Glassboro, NJ – about an hour and a half's drive), I'm working to find alternatives for Coast Guard personnel in southern New Jersey. It's unlikely my efforts will bear fruit before the end of the year, however.

For the time being, Prometric (another testing company) will continue to offer DSSTs in a paper format. Check out the offerings (<http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/dsst.asp>) and see if some of them might fit into your degree plan.

You or Your Children Can Become SuperStar Students

TraCen Cape May acquired the DVD course, “How to Become a SuperStar Student”. The course includes 18 half-hour lectures. Here’s a bit about it the course.

“The number one problem facing many high-school students: They haven’t been taught how to learn. Because our current educational system focuses on test results, on making sure students memorize the facts and material needed to pass standardized tests, few students are deliberately taught about learning — about developing the particular mind-set and using the specific skills that can help them graduate with exemplary grades and an exemplary mind.

“In fact, learning is a skill that your student can easily make a part of his or her everyday life and use as a powerful tool for success, both inside and outside the classroom. All it takes is a mastery of research-proven strategies, including

- recognizing one’s learning style, and tapping into its specific strengths;
- taking notes effectively to avoid missing out on what’s being covered in class;
- knowing how to organize and prioritize homework and class projects;
- solving problems with creativity and critical thinking; and
- approaching tests with focus, thorough preparation, and confidence.

“Professor Michael Geisen, the 2008 National Teacher of the Year, has spent his teaching career showing thousands of students these and other skills. And with “How to Become a SuperStar Student” he can give you the same vital skills that will carry you through high school, college, and well into the challenges of adult life. This highly engaging 18-lecture course is a commonsense guide to learning, one that addresses the areas that students have the most difficulty with—and that parents show the most concern about. Packed with advice, tips, tricks, and resources, this masterfully updated version of our highly popular study guide course has the power to transform your student’s education into a world-class learning experience.”

To see if this course might be for you, check out

http://www.thegreatcourses.com/tgc/courses/course_detail.aspx?cid=1050. If you decide it is, individuals and groups are welcome to use it in the Education Center.

Don’t Postpone College Because You’re at an Operational Unit

Have you thought about taking a college course, but rejected the idea because you’re concerned ops may get in the way of completing it? If so, check out self-paced college courses

(<http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/schools.asp#self-paced>).

They have the benefit of being quicker to complete than semester- or quarter-based college courses (most schools allow you to complete them in as few as six weeks) while they’re structured so you learn the material in digestible chunks rather than being left completely on your own.

These courses have the added benefit of not being tied to a traditional term: you can start at any time. They also give you a huge amount of flexibility: you can take almost as long as you want to complete the course (up to 12 months in most cases) and there are no set dates for lessons or tests. And some schools offer whole degree programs this way.

Check out some of the many reputable schools which offer self-paced (or independent study) courses at <http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/schools.asp#self-paced>.

New Grad School Search Engine

PhDs.org (<http://graduate-school.phds.org/>) is a new web site which allows you to use specific criteria to search for graduate programs (master's and doctoral) in dozens of fields. It also provides information about individual programs (including costs), rankings, and resources related to getting into and succeeding in grad school, life as a graduate student, finding work after receiving your graduate degree, a Scientists' Career Guide, and dozens of other resources listed under the heading "The Big Picture". Check it out!

FY13 Officer Program Submission Deadlines

If you've applied for an officer program in the past, be aware that the application process has been radically changed: you'll find it a lot less onerous. That is, you will have to provide many *fewer* documents than in the past as part of your application folder. Go to CGRC's web site (<http://www.gocoastguard.com/find-your-career/officer-opportunities/programs/program-forms-and-deadlines>) to download the current check-off sheets.

FY 13 dates for submitting applications for officer programs have also been posted on the CGRC's web site (<http://www.gocoastguard.com/find-your-career/officer-opportunities/programs/program-forms-and-deadlines>).

Below is a tabular version of what you'll find there.

	Officer Program	Recruiting Office Deadline	CGRC Deadline	Selection Board Meeting Date
01-13	DCA, WIFI, DCL, MARGRAD	09 OCT 2012	05 NOV 2012	03 DEC 2012
02-13	OCS-T	14 NOV 2012	05 DEC 2012	14 JAN 2013
03-13	SRDC, PA	29 OCT 2012	10 DEC 2012	04 FEB 2013
04-13	CSPI	14 JAN 2013	19 FEB 2013	18 MAR 2013
05-13	DCE, DCIO, DCL, DCSS, MARGRAD, DCPA	25 FEB 2013	25 MAR 2013	15 APR 2013
06-13	OCS-R	04 MAR 2013	01 APR 2013	13 MAY 2013

I didn't list an "ESO Deadline" for each program because there's no need for applicants to be under additional time pressure. I don't care when you get your application to me as long as I can get it to the Recruiting Office by its deadline. Plan accordingly.

Thinking About Taking College Courses?

If you're interested in taking college courses, but are unsure where to start or what to do first, go to <http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/starting.asp>. The seven steps provided there will help you

- understand terminology and how you progress toward a degree,
- figure out whether you need a degree to enter the field you want to work in,
- if a degree will be helpful, determine what you want to major in,

- find colleges/universities which offer degrees in your desired major,
- request degree plans from your chosen school(s),
- submit a request to the Coast Guard Institute for an education assessment and to have official transcripts of your assessment sent to colleges you've identified, and
- pick your first course.

This is the hardest part of the process. Once you've done this, it's just a matter of deciding which type of funding to use (tuition assistance, GI Bill, scholarships, loans, or a combination of these) and applying for it. Tuition assistance (TA) and GI Bill funding is easy to use and readily available. You've got to plan ahead if you want to get scholarships because applications are usually due at specific times of the year that might not coincide with dates your courses begin. And loans, while they're readily available, should be your last recourse.

TraCen Cape May Testing Schedule

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

Mondays (0745): EOCTs, RATs, and AQEs

Tuesdays (0745): EOCTs, RATs, and AQEs

Wednesdays (0800): Defense Language Proficiency Tests

Thursdays (0745): EOCTs, RATs, and AQEs; college tests, DSSTs, SATs, ACTs

Fridays (0745): EOCTs, RATs, and AQEs

College placement, AFCT, and all other tests will be scheduled on a case-by-case basis.

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 I'm otherwise busy with someone in the office. E-mail is the best way to get in touch with me at andrew.g.webb@uscg.mil.

Education Center Library

The TraCen Education Center 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>.

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) and Rating Performance Qualifications (RPQs) for each rate.

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.