

TraCen Cape May Education Update #376

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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
YNC Anthony Giaccone	TraCen (recruit training)	E-PME-8
YN2 Mary Hoy*	HSWL FO Cape May	E-PME-6

* First attempt

Well done, Chief Giaccone and PO Hoy!!!

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 – TA's doesn't cover my tuition, can I use scholarships and other financial aid with it?

Q: I'm taking college courses that cost more than the max TA will pay. If I can find scholarships and grants, can I use them along with TA so I don't have to pay the amount not covered by TA out of pocket?

A: The answer is a qualified "yes". That is, TA will only pay for amounts not covered by your scholarship(s), grant(s), or both. So, when applying for TA, deduct the amount of scholarship and/or grant money from the tuition cost to determine how much TA to request. This doesn't apply to Pell Grants. You can receive Pell Grant funds without

regard to tuition assistance and vice versa. If you have specific questions that fall outside this general rule, talk it over with your ESO.

One more thing: aside from Top-up you may not use TA to pay for courses you will receive GI Bill benefits for.

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 **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, **gambit** and **gamut**. (These definitions are from *Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary*.)

Gambit is a noun describing an opening move in chess in which a player risks one or more minor pieces to gain an advantage in position or a remark intended to start a conversation or make a telling point. ("Throughout the dinner, she talked about how little money she had, but I got the impression that was all a gambit to get me to pick up the check.")

Gamut is also a noun, most often used today to describe an entire range or series. ("The Roman general's speech to his troops ran the gamut from praise to contempt.")

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.

Two Seats Left for SAT Next Thursday (26APR) at TraCen Cape May

If you're trying to qualify for a Coast Guard program that requires you to have taken either the SAT or ACT, and want to take the SAT at TraCen Cape May rather than a national test site, please let me know ASAP. I'll be administering it on **Thursday, 26 April starting at 0730**. These tests are only available to uniformed personnel.

In general, military personnel are authorized to take one ACT **or** one SAT paid for by DANTES. So if you want to take both, one would be free and you'd have to pay for the other. The ACT costs \$34; the SAT costs \$49.

ESOs who have been designated by DANTES as Test Control Officers (TCOs) may administer the ACT at any time of the year, but cannot administer the SAT in July, August, or September. To find out more about the SAT Reasoning Test, go to <http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/sat.asp>. And for a comparison of the SAT and ACT, go to <http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/comparison.asp>. Pre-test information from the CollegeBoard is available on the SAT web site (<http://sat.collegeboard.org/home>).

Be aware that in almost all cases military personnel don't need to take either the ACT or SAT to take college courses.

Do **not** register on-line for the SAT if you want to take it through your DANTES TCO.

ACT at TraCen Cape May

I'll be administering the ACT (<http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/act.asp>) at TraCen Cape May on **Thursday, 07 June starting at 0730**. Seats will be reserved for you on a first come, first served basis so let me know ASAP if you want to take it.

ACT, through DANTEs, authorizes DANTEs Test Control Officers (ESOs who've been specifically designated) to administer these tests only for uniformed personnel. In general, military personnel are authorized to take one ACT **or** one SAT paid for by DANTEs. So if you want to take both, one would be free and you'd have to pay for the other. The ACT costs \$34; the SAT costs \$49.

ESOs may administer the ACT at any time of the year, and can administer the SAT during all months but July, August, and September. You can see a comparison of the SAT and ACT at <http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/comparison.asp>.

Be aware that in almost all cases military personnel don't need to take either the ACT or SAT to take college courses.

You can read/download *Preparing for the ACT* (<http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/doc/PreparingACT.pdf>) and *Taking the ACT* (<http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/doc/TakingACT.pdf>) for more information about the test.

Job Fair in Delaware Tomorrow

On **Saturday, 21 April 2012** from 0900 to 1300, Wilmington University will host Operation Success at its main campus in New Castle, Delaware. Operation Success is a free job fair and community outreach event for servicemembers, veterans, and their families.

Attendees will have the opportunity to attend several workshops on such topics as:

- on-line job search strategies,
- résumé writing,
- budgeting techniques,
- PTSD,
- transition assistance,
- military training to college credit,
- how to start a small business,
- Post-9/11 GI Bill education benefits.

You can also meet with representatives from local colleges, universities, and support agencies.

For more information and to register, go to <http://www.OpSuccess.com>.

Summer & Fall ACCC Course Guides Available

Atlantic Cape Community College's summer and fall course guides are available in the atrium of the exchange, outside the Education Center (Admin/Mission Support Building, Room 113), and in the waiting area across from the lab in the clinic.

Give-Aways

In the hallway just outside the TraCen Education Center are sample copies of publications I got from DANTEs. Please stop by and take one or more of the following if they interest you:

- *The A's & B's of Academic Scholarships: 100,000 Scholarships for Top Students*
- *Do-It Write: How to Prepare a Great College Application*
- *Campus Pursuit: Making the Most of Your Visit and Interview*
- *Behind the Scenes: An Inside Look at the Selective College Admission Process*

In addition to these one-of-a-kind pubs, there are also many copies of others, both outside and inside the Ed Center – free for the taking.

DSSTs May Be Your Ticket to College Credit

In addition to CLEP (the College Level Examination Program) tests, which most people have heard about, there are also DSSTs. Like CLEP tests, DSSTs are essentially final exams for college courses. They earn you 3 credits, which means that unlike the five most popular CLEP tests (which earn you 6 credits each), there's less material covered in each of DSST.

And, unlike CLEP tests, you can take DSSTs through many ESOs since they're still available in a paper-and-pencil format.

For a complete list of DSSTs that are available, go to <http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/dsst.asp>. A number of these cover subjects you've mastered during your Coast Guard service, either on-the-job or in training you've received. These are tests you may be able to pass with very little preparation, depending on your rate. These include:

- Introduction to Computing
- Principles of Finance
- Principles of Financial Accounting
- Management Information Systems
- Organizational Behavior
- Personal Finance
- Human Resource Management
- Principles of Supervision
- Ethics in America
- Fundamentals of Counseling
- Drug & Alcohol Abuse
- Here's to Your Health
- Principles of Public Speaking
- Technical Writing
- Criminal Justice
- Introduction to Law Enforcement

Keep in mind, though, that these are tests – not courses. The links to each exam you'll find at <http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/dsst.asp> take you to that exam's very short fact sheet which outlines the topics covered on the test, provides suggested references to study to prepare for the test, and a number of sample questions. But, on the whole, you have to find study materials that will work for you and study without a curriculum or instructor.

CLEP Test & DSST Prep Resource

(courtesy of full-time ESO Joe Bloomquist, St. Louis)

If you're looking for a way to prepare for a DSST or CLEP test, check out <http://www.passyourclass.com/index.html>. Although the company seems not to know that DANTEs has had nothing to do with DSSTs for about 20 years, its study guides may be just what you need to pass one of these tests and save the time and expense of taking specific college

courses. And, the company has a money-back guarantee: if you use one of its study guides and don't pass the corresponding test, you'll get a 100% refund.

You can also find links to many other prep resources at <http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/studymaterials.asp>.

Expand Your Vocabulary & Mind

If you're preparing for a college or professional school entrance exam (ACT, SAT, GRE, GMAT, LSAT) or to re-take the WK part of the AFCT (ASVAB), or if you just want to improve your vocabulary, check out Knoword (<http://www.knoword.org/home.php>).

The site describes it as "a game of quick thinking, smart decisions and great words. It focuses on teaching and advocating proper spelling habits, as well as good observational, analytical and typing skills. What makes Knoword different from all the other fun word games out there is that it's actually fun! With its fast-paced, addictive gameplay and a competitive and comprehensive player ranking system, Knoword pushes the limits on contemporary puzzle games and provides its players with a truly rewarding experience."

Spouse Education Grant

From **01 April until 01 June 2012**, the Coast Guard Foundation will accept applications for a needs-based education grant for spouses of Coast Guard enlisted personnel in pay grades E-3 through E-6. The grant (\$500) is intended to help the spouses of personnel on active duty in the regular Coast Guard and the Coast Guard Reserve.

Applicants need only show enrollment in an education program or proof of a course completion (i.e., they can apply for the grant even before a course begins). Types of courses for which reimbursement is available include those offered by vocational and certification programs, as well as those offered at colleges and universities. Download the application form: http://www.uscg.mil/hq/cg1/cgi/forms/CG_Form_1570.pdf.

Applicants will not need to provide receipts for expenses, but they will need to itemize expenses. They will also need to list some basic financial information. Transportation and child care expenses can be listed as legitimate expenses for the grant. Also part of the application process is an essay (no longer than 500 words) which addresses what it means to the applicant to be a Coast Guard spouse and describing the difference education has made to the applicant's life and the lives of the applicant's family members.

In June, a selection committee will convene to select grantees. The Coast Guard Institute expects as many as 40 spouses will receive assistance. This grant will be a somewhat different from the other grants administered by the Coast Guard Institute in that the Institute will handle the paperwork and selection processes while the Coast Guard Foundation will actually write the checks.

College Success Tips for Adult Learners

If you're taking college courses or thinking about doing so, please stop by the Education Center (Mission Support/Admin Building, Room 113) to get a copy of *College Success Tips for Adult Learners*. Here are a few chapter titles:

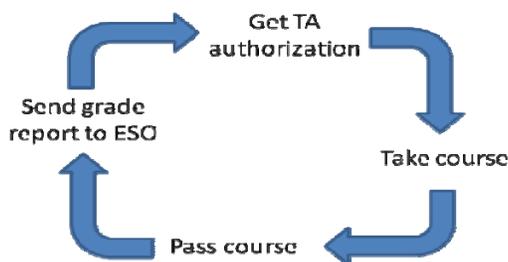
- Top 10 Reasons to Continue Your Education
- Selecting the Right Distance Learning Program
- Credit by Examination
- Choosing Classes
- Study Tactics
- How to Manage Time Well
- Writing a Research Paper

Even if you've been taking college courses for awhile, I think you'll find something useful in it.

eTA Tips

If you've use the Navy's on-line tuition assistance application program in the past or are going to be applying for TA for the first time, there are a few things to keep in mind as you fill out the application.

- **If you've never completely read and digested the "Application Agreement Acceptance" page, please do so before automatically clicking the "I Accept" button at the bottom.** If you don't understand what's written there, you may be in for a rude shock when one of the conditions for using TA comes back to haunt you. For example, you could be required to pay for a course you didn't even take.
- **If you enter your personal (non-Coast Guard) e-mail address in your application, you may not get the e-mail from the Navy telling you your authorization is ready to download.**
- **The fact that you don't get an e-mail from the Navy doesn't mean your authorization hasn't been approved or isn't ready to download.** Before contacting your ESO, go to the "Existing Applications" page of eTA, scroll down and find the listing for the TA application you're waiting to hear about. If it says "Authorized" in the right-hand column, your authorization's ready and you can download it. Go to the left-hand column and click on "View", then right click on "Print Document" and select "Save As" and save it to your computer so you can print out a copy for your school and any copies in the future you might need. (If you left click on it, you'll be able to print it out, but you won't be able to get another copy in the future if you need it.)
- **Don't forget to send your grade report to your ESO when you finish a course.** A lot of people assume that all they have to do is request TA and take the course. These are usually people who never read the "Application Agreement Acceptance" page of eTA (see first bullet above). There's a closed-loop system in place for using TA:



- If you receive an authorization for a course but end up not taking it and forget to let your ESO know, you'll be required to pay for the course (until you get the authorization cancelled)
- If you don't pass a course TA paid for, you'll be required to repay the TA.
- If you don't send a grade report to your ESO, the Navy won't know you passed the course and you'll be required to repay the TA.
- If you don't provide your grade report within 42 days after your school term ends, you'll be locked out of eTA and won't be able to use TA until you provide the grade report.

Need a Quiet, Distraction-Free Place to Study for the Servicewide Exam?

The Director of Academic and Student Services at Atlantic Cape Community College in Cape May Court House has extended an offer to Coast Guard personnel (even if you're not a student there) to use its library to study (or for research or pleasure reading). It's very quiet, well-lit, and has very comfortable furniture.

Learning Another Language & Foreign Language Testing

There are a number of software applications that help you learn a foreign language. “Tell Me More” (http://us.tellmemore.com/free_demo) and “Rosetta Stone” (<http://www.rosettastone.com/>), which everyone’s seen on TV) are but two of these.

But don’t go out and buy one just because everyone’s talking about it. Before you order the software, do some research, including <http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/doc/LanguageLearning.pdf>.

- **Check the price.** The only direct Coast Guard-related funding available to reimburse you language software you buy on your own is the Coast Guard Foundation grant – which is only available to regular Coast Guard enlisted personnel and Reserve enlistees on active duty (i.e., not drilling Reservists or officers).
- **Ask around; see if you can find others who have it.** Find out if it helped them learn what they need to know to talk about Coast Guard-related matters (e.g., law enforcement) in the target language. Unless you just want to learn another language for fun, if the software doesn’t help you learn what you need to learn it’s probably not worth buying.
- **Foreign Language Proficiency Pay (FLPP).** If you want to earn FLPP as one of your unit’s designated interpreters, it’s highly unlikely a commercially-available language course will give you the proficiency needed to get the necessary rating on the Defense Language Proficiency Test (DLPT, see <http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/dlpt.asp>). And keep in mind that even if it does, your unit has to have designated interpreter billets *and* you have to be formally assigned to one of those billets. (Most operational units have only two or three interpreter billets.)

If you really need to know a second language for work, the Coast Guard will probably pay for you to learn it. But a method other than software may be more effective. That is, if all you can do after months of using a computer program is make small talk that helps you locate a good restaurant, it’s probably not worthwhile for Coast Guard purposes.

Check around to see if there are any intensive language training courses available in your area through a college/university, a commercial language school, or a government agency. For example, now that the Coast Guard and the Customs and Border Protection agency work for the same cabinet secretary, you may find that you can get into a CBP language training program that either the Department or Coast Guard will pay for.

And, of course, you can always take college courses in the target language. Tuition assistance will pay for them and you’ll also earn college credit from them.

You can also find loads of (mostly) free resources for learning foreign languages at <http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/languages.asp>.

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>.

Coast Guard Chief Warrant and Warrant Officers Association

Applications are now being accepted for the Art and Eleanor Colona Scholarship Grant, sponsored by the Coast Guard Chief Warrant and Warrant Officers Associations (CWOA). Children of regular Coast Guard personnel, Reservists on active duty, and retirees may apply for the \$4,000 scholarship (to be paid in four installments of \$1,000

per year). The application deadline is **01 June 2012**. For more information, go to see ALCOAST 136/12 at <http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/doc/ALCOAST136-12.pdf>.

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 JAN 2012 – 30 APR 2012
 01 FEB 2012 – 31 MAR 2012
 01 APR 2012 – 03 MAY 2012
 01 JUN 2012 – 31 JUL 2012
 01 AUG 2012 – 30 SEP 2012
 01 OCT 2012 – 30 NOV 2012

Scholarship Award Dates

May 2012 (residential)
 April 2012 (on-line)
 June 2012 (on-line)
 August 2012 (on-line)
 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.

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.

Career & Education Planning Tools

Many people in the Coast Guard – military and civilians alike – are unsure of what career fields best match their personal interests and abilities. While you might be extremely competent at what you're doing in the Coast Guard, you might have skills you'd rather put to use in some other field. ESOs throughout the Coast Guard (including TraCen Cape May's) have

access to many different tools you can use to assess your interests and possible ways to earn a living while pursuing those interests.

For more information, go to <http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/discover.asp> and <http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/sitestest.asp>.

TraCen Cape May Testing Calendar

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

Tuesdays (0730): EOCTs, RATs, and AQEs*

Wednesdays (0800): Defense Language Proficiency Tests

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

* If operations or your work schedule make it impossible for you to take an EOCT, RAT, 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 Mondays and 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 Wednesdays, 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 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 Enlisted Performance Qualifications (EPQs) 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.