

TraCen Cape May Education Update #360

In this Update:

- Congratulations!!!
- ESO on leave, Education Center closed
- Question of the week
- Web page in the spotlight
- Grammar & usage corner
- Attention Reservists!!
- CGMA grant applications
- College credit for some SkillPort courses
- Get certified in software engineering
- Having difficulty with math?
- Students at for-profit colleges
- Tuition assistance Top-up
- American Home Inspectors Training Institute courses not covered by TA
- Tuition assistance update
- Get Ready for College
- Sea Service Women Scholarship
- How to ace a job (or officer program) interview
- Veterans technology certificate program
- CGES scholarships
- How to get a great letter of recommendation
- Parents of college-age children, this is for you!
- Thinking of starting your own business?
- Career & education planning tools
- TraCen Cape May testing calendar
- Leaving the Coast Guard?
- Miscellaneous

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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
DC2 Jamie Kosakowski	TraCen (Firehouse)	DC1
ITC Nathan Langton	ESD Cape May	E-PME-8*
HS3 Cherise Enloe	HSWL FO Cape May	HS2*
MECS Dallas Brannon	TraCen (Recruit Trng)	ME2*
ME3 Kevan Nanton	Station Cape May	ME2*
BM2 Francis Foley	TraCen (Seamanship)	BM1
HS3 Samantha Snead	HSWL FO Cape May	HS2*
HS3 Kaylee Madden	HSWL FO Cape May	HS2*

* 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.

TraCen Cape May ESO on Leave

For planning purposes, I'll be on leave from Monday, 19 December through Friday, 30 December. The Education Center will be closed during that period.

Question of the Week

Q: I've completed a number of "C" schools and commercial training in addition to "A" school. How do I find out how much college credit I've earned from all this training?

A: The first thing to keep in mind is that although you may well have earned a lot of college credit, it may not be applicable to major and degree program you're pursuing. This is why it's a good idea to get your credits assessed by the Coast Guard Institute and then provide the resulting transcript to schools that offer the major and degree you're interested in *before* you select a school to attend.

The fact that your Coast Guard transcript shows that you've earned 97 ACE credits doesn't mean you automatically have an associate's degree (typically a 60-credit degree). The American Council on Education periodically evaluates the curricula of all the armed forces' servicewide (not local) training programs. The goal is to determine how many college credits you would have earned had you taken college courses which covered the material you mastered in your military training.

But every college and university in the country decides for itself whether it'll accept what are called "non-traditional credits" toward its degree programs, whether to accept them at full value, and which courses they'll apply to. Also don't forget that all schools have what's called a *residency requirement*. This is the number of credits you have to earn from that school (by taking its courses) to earn a degree from that school.

If you're attending a SOC (Servicemembers Opportunity College) school, the residency requirement may not exceed 25% of the required number of credits. For a 60-credit associate's degree, that means you have to complete at least 15 credits through the school you want to get your degree from. If you're attending a school that's not a member of SOC, the residency requirement may be much higher.

In any case, to find out how many credits you've earned through Coast Guard service, download, complete, and submit to your ESO the "Application for Transcript" (form CGI-1561, http://uscg.mil/hq/cg1/cgi/forms/CG_Form_1561.pdf). If you already know which school you want to attend or have created a short list of them, you can request an assessment of your training and have official transcripts of the resulting credits sent to those schools at the same time using this one form. This will save you, your ESO, and the Institute time and effort.

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 **Articles & Web Sites of Interest to the College-Bound and ESOs** (<http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/articles.asp>).

Grammar & Usage Corner

This feature will touch on grammar and usage questions as well as confused/misused words. This week, we'll look at **bring** and **take**.

Which to use depends on the speaker's perspective. You use the word **bring** only in reference to movement from a farther place to a nearer one, from your point of view; use **take** for any other movement. Examples: "First, take these books to the library for renewal, then take them to Mr. Daniels. Bring them back to me when he's finished."

Grammar Girl (<http://grammar.quickanddirtytips.com/bring-versus-take.aspx>) boils it down as follows: "The quick and dirty tip is that you ask people to bring things to the place where you are, and you take things to the place you are going to. As one listener named Simone put it, you bring things here and take things there."

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.

Attention Reservists!!

If you've graduated from one of the Coast Guard's direct petty officer programs in the recent past, keep in mind that you must complete all requirements for your rate within two years after you completed IADT.

That is no more than two years after finishing your initial active duty for training you must complete the EPQs and the EOCTs and all E-PME Performance Requirements and the corresponding AQE. For example, if you went through DEPOT to become an MK2 you must have completed all of the following before the second anniversary of your graduation from DEPOT:

- MK3 EPQs
- MK3 EOCT
- MK2 EPQs
- MK2 EOCT
- E-3 through E-5 E-PME Performance Requirements, and
- E-PME-4 AQE.

The consequences of not meeting these requirements are laid out in Chapter 4, Section B of the Reserve Policy Manual (COMDTINST M1001.28 (series)).

CGMA Grant Applications

If you've been meaning to submit an application for a CGMA Supplemental Education Grant (SEG), keep in mind that to get reimbursed for an education-related expense you have to submit your request no more than 12 months after the expense was incurred.

CGMA also wants you to know that "there are two weeks left for members to submit their school book/supply receipts to receive a CGMA SEG grant for 2011. **The official cutoff date is 12/29/2011**; the system will not allow Representatives to cut checks on 12/30 or 12/31. Checks cut after 12/29 will be applied to the 2012 calendar year."

College Credit for Some SkillPort Courses

In addition to being free to Coast Guard personnel and dependents, SkillPort courses may also earn you college credits. "It really depends upon which course the member took", says Sue Riley at the Coast Guard Institute, and whether it was evaluated by the American Council on Education (ACE). If it was, "the member has to take a test proctored by the ESO and receive a passing score."

Ms. Riley continues, "There is a form that must be completed and signed by both the member and the ESO" which the ESO sends, along with the passing score report, to the Institute. "We will notify ACE of the passing of the score. Those can be placed on the assessment and ultimately the transcript since the Coast Guard pays for SkillPort courses."

Get Certified in Software Engineering

(courtesy of Donna Duellberg, full-time ESO at PSSU Honolulu)

The Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE) offers two levels of software development certification – Certified Software Development Associate (CSDA) and Certified Software Development Professional (CSDP) – which you earn after taking an exam. GI Bill benefits will reimburse you for the cost of these exams.

What are the benefits of certification? For you, it . . .

- bridges the gap between your educational experience and real-world work requirements,
- verifies your understanding of fundamental software engineering principles,
- shortens your training cycle and quickly increases your contribution,
- demonstrates your commitment to expanding your knowledge and increasing responsibilities and level of professionalism,
- confirms your proficiency of established software development practices, and
- sets you apart from others via a credential developed by, and for, software engineering professionals.

For employers, it . . .

- reduces the new-hire training cycle,
- protects the organization's investment in a competent and proficient workforce,
- standardizes software development practices, and
- provides independent assurance that employees can perform on real-world projects.

For more information, go to <http://www.computer.org/portal/web/certification/GI-Bill>.

Having Difficulty with Math?

Are you brushing up on math basics before re-starting a delayed degree? Mystified by physics? Stymied by certain concepts in your college math course? If so, the on-line Khan Academy may be just what you're looking for to help get over academic hurdles. A recent article in *Wired* magazine (http://www.wired.com/magazine/2011/07/ff_khan?rXFb&mbid=su_ppc_mag_3&rQZb) will tell you all about it.

Or go to the Khan Academy web site (<http://www.khanacademy.org/>). It's a fantastic tool for learning a whole subject or just mastering a particular concept.

Students at For-Profit Colleges

An article in the October 2011 issue of *Harper's Magazine* is a must-read for any student attending or considering attending a for-profit college or university. If you're not sure whether a school is for-profit, ask your ESO.

The article, "Leveling the Field: What I learned from for-profit education" (<http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/doc/edmisc022.pdf>), mainly discusses the University of Phoenix. However, new rules from the Department of Education will likely make what the author describes (especially the required "general education" requirements) common to all for-profit schools.

Tuition Assistance Top-up

If you're in the regular Coast Guard on active duty, are under the new (Post-9/11) GI Bill, and are using tuition assistance (TA) for courses that cost more than TA covers, this is for you.

In that specific situation you can save yourself the hassles associated with using TA (and at the same time save the Coast Guard some money) if you use your GI Bill benefit by itself to pay for your college courses rather than use TA and Top-up. Huh?

No matter which of those paths you choose (GI Bill alone or TA and Top-up), the deduction from your 36-month entitlement is the same. Either way, one day times your rate of pursuit will be deducted from your entitlement for every day of your school term. (The *rate of pursuit* is the number of credits you're taking divided by the number of days your school considers to be full-time attendance.)

For example, if you're taking one 3-credit course, and 12 credits per term is considered full-time, the number of days deducted from your entitlement will be the number of days in your school term multiplied by 0.25 (i.e., 3/12).

The bottom line is that Top-up (for under the new GI Bill) is an illusory benefit, given the way that the Department of Veterans' Affairs currently calculates deductions from your entitlement.

American Home Inspectors Training Institute Courses Not Covered by TA

You may have seen an e-mail from the American Home Inspectors Training Institute advertising "Home Inspection Training at NO Cost to Service Members". The organization apparently doesn't know that uniformed Coast Guard personnel are servicemembers, since this is not true for Coast Guard personnel – at least not if you want to use tuition assistance (TA). You have to read the organization's web site (<http://www.ahit.com/news/approved-military-tuition.htm>) completely to get this information.

In any case, don't submit a TA request to pay for this course. It will not only be a waste of your and your ESO's time, but it will be rejected.

Tuition Assistance Update

Tuition assistance (TA) processing is back on track. That is, you can submit a TA request for any course that begins within the next 90 days and in FY12.

Get Ready for College

(courtesy of Brion Newman, full-time ESO at Base Seattle)

If someone you know is a high school student in the New York City or Boston metropolitan areas who feels overwhelmed by the process of getting ready for college, check out Let's Get Ready (<http://www.letsgetready.org/>). The program helps high school students through the entire college application process by "enlisting college student volunteers who serve as Coaches in the program providing not only SAT instruction, but the inspiration, enthusiasm and confidence to go to college as well."

Sea Service Women Scholarship

(courtesy of SueAnn Walter, full-time ESO at the Coast Guard Academy)

Applications are being accepted for a \$1,500 scholarship for a relative (male or female) of a sea service woman. The application deadline is **09 March 2012**.

"Eligibility is open to any female or male relative of a sea service woman who has served or is currently serving in the Navy, Coast Guard, or Marine Corps or their Reserve components." Applicants may be related to the sea service woman by birth, legal adoption, or marriage.

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

How to Ace a Job (or Officer Program) Interview

<http://www.cbsnews.com/video/watch/?id=10349736n?tag=bnetdomain>

Veterans Technology Certificate Program

Syracuse University, in conjunction with JPMorgan Chase, has created a new Veterans Technology Certificate Program around the university's Global Enterprise Technology (GET) curriculum. GET integrates "coursework with real-world, on-the-job experience. The purpose of the program is to help veterans interested in technology careers in global companies to move toward that goal.

The program is self-paced and computer-based (completely on-line). Program administrators estimate it will take approximately 240 hours (six weeks of full-time work) to complete. The only application requirements are that you:

- have served on active duty since 10 September 2001,
- are preparing to separate (e.g., checking out or attending a TAP seminar before separating) or are a veteran,
- have demonstrated a genuine interest in and aptitude for technology,
- are able to commit a minimum of four hours per day to the program, and
- submit a complete application (consisting of an application form, a résumé, and two references).

For more information, go to <http://get-vet.syr.edu/>.

CGES Scholarships

The Coast Guard Exchange System is accepting application for three scholarships (\$1,500, \$750, and \$500) based on academic achievements, accomplishments, interests, and participation and leadership in school-oriented and volunteer activities. The deadline for applications is 28 February 2012.

You can find complete details at <http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/doc/ALCGPSC145-11.pdf>.

How to Get a Great Letter of Recommendation

Check out this web site if you need to get letters of recommendation for college or an officer program: <http://matt.might.net/articles/how-to-recommendation-letter/>. Here are some of the points covered:

- Pick your letter-writers well
- How to get a good letter
- How to get a great letter
- How to ask for a letter
- How to follow up
- Should I draft my own letter?

Parents of College-Age Children, This is For You!

The September/October issue of *The Washington Monthly* is its annual college rankings issue (http://www.washingtonmonthly.com/college_guide/toc_2011.php).

In addition to those rankings are some articles you may find interesting:

- “The End of College Admissions as We Know It”
(http://www.washingtonmonthly.com/magazine/septemberoctober_2011/features/the_end_of_college_admissions031636.php)
- “How the Other Half Tests”
(http://www.washingtonmonthly.com/magazine/septemberoctober_2011/features/how_the_other_half_tests031638.php)
- “The College For-Profits Should Fear”
(http://www.washingtonmonthly.com/magazine/septemberoctober_2011/features/the_college_forprofits_should031640.php)
- “Administrators Ate My Tuition”
(http://www.washingtonmonthly.com/magazine/septemberoctober_2011/features/administrators_ate_my_tuition031641.php)
- “Is Our Students Earning?”
(http://www.washingtonmonthly.com/magazine/septemberoctober_2011/special_report/is_our_students_earning031647.php).

Thinking of Starting Your Own Business?

If you're thinking about starting your own business, either while you're still in uniform or after you leave the Coast Guard, check out a sampling of resources for entrepreneurs at <http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/smallbiz.asp>. There you'll find general resources applicable to all types of small businesses on many different subjects (e.g., drafting a business plan, finding funding, etc.).

There are also sections aimed at those interested in starting not-for-profit businesses and those interested in social entrepreneurship. Contrary to the popular notion, not-for-profit doesn't mean “no profit” or that you can't earn a substantial salary. It just means most of the profit has to be put toward specific things, usually plowed back into the business. There's also a section with links to labor market information.

Finally, drop by the Education Center to pick up a copy of the book *Best Career and Education Web Sites*. Chapters 7 (“Self-Employment and Small Business”) and 8 (“Temporary Work, Contract Employment, Freelancing, Teleworking, and Volunteering”) have many great leads.

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 (0800): EOCTs 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 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 at andrew.g.webb@uscg.mil.

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>).

Also, stop by the Education Center to check out the (small) supply of booklets related to rejoining the civilian work force. Here are the topics of the booklets:

- Jobs With a Future
- How to Develop Job Resources
- The Resume
- The Cover Letter: A Resume Should Never Stand Alone
- The Mature Resume: The Resume with Experience
- The Follow-up Letter
- The Interview
- How to Choose a Career: A Guide to Self-Assessment
- Civilian Again
- Leaving the Service ... and Beginning Your Next Career
- Military to Civilian: Your Resume and Job Hunt
- Effective Goal Setting: How to Reach the Goals You Set for Yourself

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 (or a transcript) 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>).

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. There are a number of web sites at which you can find information useful to military personnel transitioning to civilian life and veterans.

The U.S. Office of Personnel Management has a veterans' employment web site called "Feds Hire Vets" (<http://www.fedshirevets.gov/>). Its purpose is to implement the federal government's strategy for recruiting and employing military veterans. It's intended to be the preeminent source for federal employment information for veterans, transitioning service members, and their families. And the main federal government jobs web site is at <http://www.fedjobs.gov/>.

And (courtesy of Brion Newman, full-time ESO at Base Seattle) the state of Maryland also has a similar site called the Military to Federal Jobs Crosswalk (Mil2FedJobs, <http://www.mil2fedjobs.com/>) to help you "translate military occupations to federal jobs".

Finally, don't overlook government jobs entities at other levels – state, county, municipality, school district, port district, etc. – which provide benefits similar to those available through the federal government.

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.

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.