

# TraCen Cape May Education Update #363

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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:

<b>Name</b>	<b>Work Site</b>	<b>Test</b>
BMCS Christopher Lombard	CGC Mako	DWINTR
HS2 Cheryl Bryce	HSWL FO Cape May	HS1*
YN3 Felicia Dooly	TraCen (Recruit Trng, ISB)	YN2*
EMC Kevin Purifory	TraCen	E-PME-8*

\* First attempt

Congratulations, also, to DCC Joseph Johnson (TraCen recruit Company Commander) for completing the requirements for an associate of arts degree in supervision and management from Coastline Community College.

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've heard there's a way I could be eligible for 48 months of GI Bill benefits instead of 36, is that true?

**A:** If you're eligible for more than one GI Bill education program, you have 36 months of benefits under one program (your choice) and up to 48 months of benefits under any combination of programs.

**EXAMPLE 1:** FS2 Johnson is in the regular Coast Guard. During boot camp, he did not refuse the MGIB-AD and \$100/month was deducted from his pay after he graduated. After his four-year enlistment ends, he's planning to go into the Selected Reserve. Assuming he enlists in the Reserve for six years, he'll become eligible for MGIB-SR benefits. After leaving active duty, he'll have 10 years in which to use up her 36-month MGIB-AD entitlement.

Because he's eligible for benefits under both the MGIB-AD and the MGIB-SR, he could use 36 months of MGIB-AD benefits and then 12 months of MGIB-SR benefits, or vice versa, or any combination of months under the two programs which adds up to 48.

**EXAMPLE 2:** Same scenario as above, but because he served more than 90 days on active duty FS2 Johnson is also eligible for benefits under the new (Post-9/11) GI Bill. However, to enroll in the new GI Bill, he must give up either his MGIB-AD or MGIB-SR benefit. Because it pays less, he chooses to relinquish his MGIB-SR benefits. He can now use 36 months of new GI Bill benefits and then 12 months of MGIB-AD benefits or (as before) any combination of months under the two programs which adds up to 48.

**EXAMPLE 3:** MK1 Franz initially enlisted as a Reservist. As a result, she became eligible for the MGIB-SR. But PO Franz has also had multiple periods of active duty (both voluntary and involuntary). She served one long and many short periods on active duty (the longest, 2 years) for a total of 8 and a half years.

Because she served 2 continuous years on active duty, she's eligible for MGIB-AD benefits. Because she served on active duty for a number of other periods that add up to 3 more years (in support of a contingency operation), she's also eligible for the maximum REAP benefits.

And, because she served a number of other periods which added up to another 3 years on active duty, she's also eligible for the maximum new GI Bill benefits. To get these benefits, though, she'll have to relinquish one of her other benefits. (She chooses to relinquish her MGIB-SR benefits to get the new GI Bill.)

She can use 36 months of new GI Bill benefits and then 12 months of either MGIB-AD or REAP benefits, or (again) any combination of months under these three programs which adds up to 48.

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](mailto: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 **Teaching** (<http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/teaching.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](mailto:andrew.g.webb@uscg.mil).

## Unpredictable Schedule Keeping You from Earning a Degree?

A lot of people attached to operational units or who otherwise can't predict when they'll have free time to study are frustrated by traditional term-based colleges. (By "term-based" I mean schools that run on fixed terms such as semesters and quarters.) Often times, an assignment is due or a test must be taken on a certain date but you get called away by official duties.

There's an easy fix to this dilemma: take courses from a school that offers self-paced courses.

All the schools listed on my web site (<http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/schools.asp#self-paced>) offer such courses. Most have whole degree programs via self-paced courses, some only offer a few courses. You can start a course at any time – there are no fixed deadlines for registering, completing lessons, taking tests, or even finishing the course. You can register at any time of the year and work at your own pace.

Some schools require you to complete their courses in four months, but most give you nine months, and a few give you a year or even two years. Those with shorter time frames grant extensions. Most of these schools allow you to complete these courses in as little as six weeks and some have no minimum time requirement at all.

An added benefit of these programs is that in most cases tuition is lower than the maximum tuition assistance will cover. (The lower the tuition, the more courses per year you can take using tuition assistance.) And these are not just for military personnel.

## 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 which are hoping to tap into the military market. This information is available for browsing any time during working hours (including lunch time). ***The fact that this information is available does not constitute an endorsement of the corresponding schools or programs.***

The most recent offering I've received from regionally-accredited schools is from **Berkeley College**, a regionally-accredited school here in New Jersey.

The school offers many associate's and bachelor's degrees on-line in business-related fields ([http://berkeleycollege.edu/academics\\_bc/school\\_of\\_business/1764.htm](http://berkeleycollege.edu/academics_bc/school_of_business/1764.htm)) and in the health and criminal justice fields ([http://berkeleycollege.edu/academics\\_bc/school\\_of\\_professional\\_studies/1734.htm](http://berkeleycollege.edu/academics_bc/school_of_professional_studies/1734.htm)). For military personnel, the tuition is \$166.67/quarter credit, which means tuition assistance will cover it completely.

If you have questions, you can contact Mr. Frank Colavita, Coordinator of Military Affairs, at [fmc@Berkeleycollege.edu](mailto:fmc@Berkeleycollege.edu).

## Forensic Science Careers

Have crime procedurals on TV gotten you interested in possibly working in the field of criminal forensics? If so, check out these web sites to see if the reality matches your imagination.

- [American Academy of Forensic Sciences](#)
- [International Association for Identification](#)
- [National Association of Medical Examiners](#)
- [Society of Forensic Toxicologists](#)
- [American Board of Forensic Toxicology](#)

## For-Profit Schools Again in Spotlight

A series of articles in recent issues of the *Chronicle of Higher Education* discusses lax academic standards at for-profit schools and a study's finding that "students who attend for-profit colleges are less likely to be employed than comparable students from nonprofit institutions, and tend to have lower earnings six years after enrolling". You can read these and other articles at <http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/articles.asp#for-profits>.

## More on 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.

## 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 what you want a degree for,
- 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 for a 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.

## Taking & Administering RATs

(courtesy of Mr. Terray Wood, full-time ESO at Sector Delaware Bay)

According to Mr. Wood, there are a few things would-be examinees and ESOs need to be aware of when administering one of the new Rating Advancement Tests (RATs) – the replacement for end-of-course tests (EOCTs).

Because these are open-book tests and timed (100 minutes), he says that the test is "something of a time-management exercise." That being the case, he advises examinees to spend time with the on-line references before the test date to make sure that they can move around in them efficiently. They're on the CGPortal at <https://collab.uscg.mil/lotus/myquickr/mst-rating-advancement-test-references/welcome>, but "not all of the questions/answers are in the references."

Mr. Wood continues, "Many examinees use the hard copy references when they are getting the sign offs done, and so the on-line versions can be intimidating unless they have practiced some." He advises examinees

to answer all the questions that they think they know first. Then look up the ones they don't know. Then if there is time, check the ones that they think they know. Their natural tendency is to look up each question. If they try that they will likely run out of time, especially if they want to challenge a question since that has to be done during this time.

Also, sometimes an examinee can't get the references to open just by hitting the hyperlink. In that case, she needs to click the box to the right of the link.

For ESOs, it's not that much different from administer EOCTs using TACCTS. After the examinee has opened the correct test (using the Learning Management System in the CGPortal), ESOs enter a user name and password provided by the Course Support & Testing branch at the Coast Guard Institute. (ESO's need to request the user name and password well before the test date.)

After the ESO has entered the password, an instruction screen appears. Examinees should be strongly urged to carefully read them because they describe how to access the references and mark questions that they want to go back to. The 100-minute count-down clock doesn't start until the examinee has finished reading the instructions.

When the examinee clicks "Submit", the computer provides her total score and a list of percentage scores for each section of the test. The ESO can print out this screen, but does not receive a complete list of test sections and how the examinee did on each. Mr. Wood cautions that the ESO "should review the complete list before exiting."

## MST Eligibility for May SWE

ALCOAST 578/11 (<http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/doc/alcoast578-11.pdf>, published 22DEC2011) laid out servicewide exam (SWE) eligibility requirements for MSTs. Even so, there seems to be confusion among MSTs about whether they have to take the RAT to be eligible to take the May 2012 SWE. Here's the bottom line.

Paragraph 5 of ALCOAST 033/11 (<http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/doc/alcoast033-11.pdf>) stated that MST2s who had passed the MST1 end-of-course test (course code 0134, edition 6) would *not* have to take the MST1 RAT. This had to be done on or before 19 October 2011. However, they *must* complete the MST1 RPQs before 01 February 2012 to be eligible for the May 2012 SWE.

An MST2 who didn't take and pass this EOCT on or before 19 October must take the MST1 RAT (after completing the MST1 RPQs) to be eligible for the May 2012 SWE.

## 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>.

## 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>

## CG Foundation Scholarships

The Coast Guard Foundation recently announced its scholarship programs for 2012 (see ALCOAST 584/11, <http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/doc/alcoast584-11.pdf>). Check out the ALCOAST for details on these eight scholarships. **The application deadline is 15 March 2012.**

## On-line Engineering Certificates and Degrees

If you're interested in engineering and certain technology-related degrees, you've probably been frustrated not to be able to find many available through distance learning. Bismarck State University in North Dakota has engineering certificate and degree programs, particularly in the electrical, petroleum, and nuclear energy fields, which you can pursue on-line.

It also offers many other non-engineering certificates and degrees.

The total for tuition and fees is \$138.54 per semester credit. This applies to active duty military personnel, veterans, and their dependents. For more information, go to <http://bscmilitaryonline.com/default.asp>.

## Summer Career Academy

The National Energy Center of Excellence at Bismarck State College (North Dakota) is offering the first annual Summer Career Academy to youth ages 14-16 on 19 to 21 June 2012. The academy will provide participants with an exciting opportunity to engage in energy-related lab experiments, tour energy facilities, and learn from faculty teaching at a world-class center known for training the industry's workforce.

The cost of attending? Nothing. Participants will attend free of charge thanks to support from Basin Electric Power Cooperative, Montana Dakota Utilities, Otter Tail Power Cooperative, and Bismarck State College. Students will stay in the college's dorms and food will be provided.

Space is limited to 20 students. Interested students need to apply by 01 March 2012. Applications are at <http://energy.bismarckstate.edu/nece/academy/>. Students who are selected will be notified by 23 March 2012. For more information on the academy, contact Joan Trygg at 701-224-2445 or at [Joan.Trygg@bismarckstate.edu](mailto:Joan.Trygg@bismarckstate.edu).

## 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](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.

## 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/>.

## 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, 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 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](mailto: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.