

TraCen Cape May Education Update #404

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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.

Education Center Holiday Closures

The TraCen Education Center will be closed from 19 through 31 December, inclusive (I'll be back in the office on Wednesday, 02 January 2013). **Please plan accordingly.**

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
ME1 Jamie Byrd*	TraCen (CC)	ME1
IT2 Michael Lacharite	TraCen (CC)	IT1
SN Amanda Hogsten*	TraCen (UDC)	E-PME-4
SN Lindsey Hernandez*	TraCen (Training)	E-PME-4
BM1 Benjamin Gaines	ANT Cape May	DWINTO
LT Kathryn Cyr	CGC Dependable	DWINTR

SN Quincy van Vleck*
LT Mary Brooks

CGC Finback
TraCen (Training)

E-PME-4
DWINTR

* First attempt

Well done, all of you!!

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

Question of the Week – If I passed the E-PME-6 test, do I have to re-take it when a new version is published?

Q: I passed my E-PME-6 test a long time ago, do I have to take it again when a new version comes out?

A: No. Unless you see an ALCOAST or ALCGENL message specifying that people in specific circumstances have to re-take an E-PME-6 test, once you've passed the test, you've met the requirement and never have to take the E-PME-6 test again. The same goes for the E-PME-4 and E-PME-8 tests as well.

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: **Grants** (<http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/grants.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, the difference between **complete** and **finish**. (These definitions are taken from *Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary*.)

The verb *complete* has a number of meanings. It can mean to bring to an end and especially into a perfected state ("Rembrandt completed "The Night Watch" in 1642"). It also can mean to make whole or perfect ("The bird's song completes its charm"), to mark the end of ("A rousing chorus completes Rossini's classic, 'The Barber of Seville'"), or to carry out successfully ("The quarterback completed four passes during the game").

It can also be used as an adjective, as in brought to an end, concluded ("She left the bridge when her watch was completed").

The verb *finish* can also mean to bring to an end, terminate ("The politician finished his speech and sat down"). It can also mean to use or dispose of entirely ("Her sandwich finished the loaf").

For a not-quite-correct, but very clever, example of the difference between *complete* and *finished*, check out the following unverified story (courtesy of full-time ESO at CGAS Cape Cod, Jim McLoughlin), different versions of which have been making the rounds of the Internet for a number of years.

Supposedly, at a linguistic conference in London, Samsundar Balgobin, a Guyanese man, was the clear winner.

His final challenge was this: Some say there is no difference between COMPLETE and FINISHED. Please explain the difference between COMPLETE and FINISHED in a way that is easy to understand.

Here is his astute answer: "When you marry the right person, you are COMPLETE. But, when you marry the wrong person, you are FINISHED. And when the right one catches you with the wrong one, you are COMPLETELY FINISHED!"

His answer was received with a standing ovation lasting over 5 minutes and it entitled him to receive an invitation to dine with the Queen, who decided to call him after the contest. He won a trip to travel around the world in style and a case of 25 year old Eldorado rum for his answer.

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.

Common Latin Phrases Everyone Should Know

Verbatim: word-for-word; exactly as originally spoken or written. "Court reporters make a verbatim transcript of everything said during a trial."

From: <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/verbatim>

Articles of Interest

You may find these articles interesting, useful, or both.

- "Got Student Debt?" (<http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/doc/finance005.doc>)
- "Building a Better Teacher" (<http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/doc/Teach002.pdf>)

Cape May County Evening/Continuing Education

Cape May County Technical School's evening and continuing education latest course guide is now available at <http://www.capemaytech.com/2013SpringEveningBrochure.pdf>. The Evening and Continuing Education Division offers courses to provide academic, vocational, technical, and avocational instruction in arts, crafts, welding, dance, computers, cooking, baking, language, health & fitness, special training, state license, vocational/technical programs, and GED, ABE, ESL instruction. **Registration will begin on Monday, 10 December 2012 and classes will begin during the week of 14 January 2013.**

Virtually Free SAT & ACT Preparation Software

eKnowledge Corporation has teamed up with the NFL, MLB, and over a hundred corporate sponsors to provide free SAT and ACT preparation software to servicemembers and their families. While the software is free (retail price \$200), there is a nominal charge for each standard SAT or ACT program to cover the cost of materials, processing, distribution, and customer service. (If you received the software last year, you'll need to get a free upgrade.)

Parents of high school students applying for college next year should get this software early, so their children can begin preparing ASAP.

To obtain a military discount when you order, go to www.eknowledge.com/DANTES, or call 951-256-4076.

Education Grant

Coast Guard Mutual Assistance has a Supplemental Education Grant (SEG) to help members of the Coast Guard family by reimbursing them for certain costs associated with seeking their first undergraduate (associate's or bachelor's) degree, a vocational and technical training (VoTech) certificate, or a General Equivalency Diploma (GED), otherwise not covered by Coast Guard Tuition Assistance or similar programs. (<http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/grants.asp#seg>)

This year, the cutoff for writing SEG checks will be Friday, December 28th. After that date, all SEG checks issued will count towards calendar year 2013.

If you're assigned to TraCen Cape May, your CGMA Reps are:

YNC Conley (Primary)
 YNC Ronchetti (Secondary)
 CWO3 Pilkington (Secondary)

Got Student Debt?

A recent issue of *The Washington Monthly* contained a short guide to different types of student loan repayment plans. You can find it at <http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/doc/finance005.doc>.

Also, check out the info at <http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/loans.asp#repayment> and http://files.consumerfinance.gov/f/201210_cfpb_servicemember-student-loan-guide.pdf.

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.***

Kaplan University has a new Associate of Science degree in Health Science. Its hook reads as follows: "If you received military training as an allied health professional, you may be within four courses of earning your associate's degree." This statement is true if you're "a full-time active-duty student who transfers in 70 quarter credit hours (the maximum amount of credit)." Check it out at <http://www.kaplanuniversity.edu/military/military-medical.aspx>. Before signing *anything* from Kaplan University, please talk with your ESO.

King College is a regionally-accredited college in eastern Tennessee offering 26 traditional (i.e., sit-down-in-class) majors and eight majors you can pursue on-line. One of these eight is for an associate's degree, one is a master of business administration degree, and the rest are bachelor's programs. For active duty military personnel, tuition is \$250/credit regardless of which on-line program you're pursuing. For complete information, go to <http://www.king.edu/>. And if you'd like to help the school better tailor its offerings to your needs, take a short survey at <http://online.king.edu/survey>.

Rating Advancement Tests for OSs and Aviation Rates

For the information of all OS3s, OS2s, and aviation rate personnel in pay grades E-4 and E-5, the Rating Advancement Tests (RATs) you will take for the next higher pay grade are open-book tests. Your ESO will provide you with a CD that includes all the material you are allowed to consult while taking the test. There's an hour and 40 minute time limit on each of these tests.

CollegeWeekLive

Are you or a dependent thinking about attending college full-time in the near future? If so, CollegeWeekLive hosts dozens virtual college open house events per month (<http://www.collegeweeklive.com/>). Here's a random sample of the many institutions of higher learning which regularly participate in these events:

- University of California at Davis
- US Military Academy at West Point
- DePaul University
- Santa Fe College
- University of California at Riverside
- University of Melbourne
- University of Florida
- University of California at Irvine
- Roger Williams University
- North Carolina A&T University
- University of California at Los Angeles

CollegeWeekLive's goal is to help prospective students in their college planning by connecting them with colleges in a live, interactive environment. You'll be able to find information from dozens of colleges and universities on things like admissions, financing, admission test preparation, college visits, and finding the college which best fits your son, daughter, or yourself. In addition to the open house events, it also has video interviews with experts on such topics as "Financial Aid 101", "Common SAT Mistakes", "ACT Overview", "Dealing with Test Anxiety" and with representatives from many colleges and universities.

And while it's aimed mainly at students, parents and counselors are also welcome. And you can register for free (as well as check out the speakers, their topics, the schedule, and many other things) at <http://www.collegeweeklive.com/>.

New ACCC Course Guides & Catalogs

Hard-copy versions of Atlantic Cape Community College's catalog and for-credit course guide are now available in the Exchange lobby and outside the Education Center (Room 113 in the Admin/Mission Support building).

You can also see them on-line at <http://www.atlantic.edu/program/documents/catalog12-13.pdf> (the catalog) and http://www.atlantic.edu/program/documents/spring_credit_2013.pdf (the for-credit course guides). A handful of the continuing education course guides are available in the Education Center while the supply lasts, but you can see it on-line at <http://www.atlantic.edu/conted/documents/programGuide.pdf>.

No More Paper & Pencil CLEP Tests

DANTES Test Control Officers (TCOs, who are ESOs with authorization from DANTES) can no longer administer CLEP tests 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.

Parents: Associate's Degree Before Bachelor's Saves Money

A report released yesterday by the National Student Clearinghouse Research Center (<http://www.studentclearinghouse.info/snapshot/docs/SnapshotReport8-GradRates2-4Transfers.pdf>) found that 71% of the students who earned an associate's degree "and then moved to a four-year college graduated with a bachelor's degree within four years of transferring," according to Katherine Mangan in the *Chronicle of Higher Education* on 08 November. For those who didn't have an associate's degree before transferring, the number was 55%.

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.

Become a Teacher Without Majoring in Education

Are you interested in teaching after you leave the Coast Guard? Are you aware you don't necessarily have to have a degree in education to teach? That is, in many states you can have a bachelor's degree in some other major and still teach. And some states are actively looking for people who have degrees in a subject for which there's a shortage of teachers. For example, math are sought to teach math. Check out the information throughout the Teachers Count web site (start at <http://www.teacherscount.org/wannateach/faq.shtml#5>).

Also, Troops to Teachers provides counseling and referral services to military personnel interested in beginning a second career in public education as a teacher. And the DANTES Troops to Teachers office will help you identify teacher certification requirements, programs leading to certification, and employment opportunities. The main web site (http://www.dantes.doded.mil/dantes_web/troopstoteachers/index.asp) has all kinds of information about the program. Including a new on-line way to determine if you're eligible to participate in Troops to Teachers: http://www.dantes.doded.mil/dantes_web/troopstoteachers/eligibility.asp.

USMAP

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

You can complete apprenticeships in 125 trades through USMAP by documenting work experience you acquire on the job, while performing your regular military duties. No after-hours work is required. The only thing you have to do is keep track of hours spent in each category of work, fill out your record sheets, and once a quarter send a report of your accumulated hours to USMAP to receive credit for them.

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

For more information about USMAP, go to <https://usmap.cnet.navy.mil/usmapss/static/usmap.jsp>.

Certification & Licensing

If you plan to continue working in the field represented by your rating, after you leave the Coast Guard, and don’t plan to get a college degree right away, you should seriously consider getting a certification or license in your chosen field beforehand.

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 civilian 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.

With advancements being slow, those who get advanced in the Coast Guard have almost certainly done something (or a number of things) to distinguish themselves from the competition. Licensing, certification, and college degrees are ways to do that.

You can take tests for certificates and licenses in hundreds of career fields, a sampling of which you can see at <http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/cert.asp#tests>. The cost of most of these tests is reasonable, but you can get reimbursed (up to \$2,000 per test) from your GI Bill benefits if you don’t want to absorb the cost yourself (<http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/cert.asp#gibill>).

Another way to demonstrate to future employers your ability to do well in a given job is via ACT’s National Career Readiness Certificates (<http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/cert.asp#ACT>). More and more employers are using these certificates to determine which applicants are the best qualified for their jobs.

Helmets to Hardhats

If you’re leaving the Coast Guard and are interested in working in construction and construction-related career fields, you should check out Helmets to Hardhats (<http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/h2h.asp>). To quote the Helmets to Hardhats web site,

Making a successful transition from the military into the civilian workforce can be difficult. Transitioning military veterans face the same challenges as any other job hunter – getting their résumé to the right people, learning how to sell themselves, tracking down promising leads, following-up with employers, headhunters, job placement agencies... etc. Not many people are comfortable with this process and veterans have the added stress of trying to

translate the skills they learned in the military into language that civilian employers can understand. The process can feel overwhelming, especially if it seems like meaningful help is unavailable.

Helmets to Hardhats (H2H) was formed for this reason and is dedicated to helping National Guard, Reserve, retired and transitioning active-duty military members connect to quality career and training opportunities in the construction industry.

Five Surprising \$100K Jobs That Don't Require a Degree

Practically everyone you talk with about your future tells you, "Get a degree!!" Data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics indicates that people with degrees generally face a reduced prospect of unemployment and have a higher earning potential (http://www.bls.gov/emp/ep_chart_001.htm and <http://www.focus.com/images/view/8740/>). But that doesn't mean that to avoid unemployment or earn a better-than-average income you have to have a degree. A recent article on Monster.com highlights this fact and lists five high-paying careers available to people who don't have college degrees (<http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/doc/jobmisc029.doc>).

Some Scholarship Sources

The scholarships described here are just a few of thousands 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>.

CGES Dependents' Scholarships

Every year (assuming funds are available), the CG Exchange System offers scholarships to dependents of Coast Guard personnel (regular and Reserve military, retired military, current civilian NAF and appropriated-funds employees, uniformed PHS personnel, and Auxiliarists.) This year, the application **deadline is 28 February 2013**. For complete information, see ALCGPSC 147/12.

ScholarshipAmerica

Among other things, the web site ScholarshipAmerica (http://scholarshipamerica.org/open_scholarships.php) has descriptions of and links to not-so-widely-known scholarships. (The less well-known they are, the more likely you are to be successful in getting them.) The descriptions include opening and closing dates.

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 and/or practicing foreign languages at <http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/languages.asp>.

Laying Out Your Life Path

A lot of people drop into the Education Center to tell me "I want to take on-line classes" without any idea what courses they want to take or what they want to do with the courses they do take. While I could respond with "Pick a course and we'll set you up with TA", any ESO would be doing you a disservice if that was her/his response.

Why? First, every college and university in the country decides for itself whether to accept credits from any other source. So if you just blindly start taking courses without knowing where you want to get your degree or what you want to major in, you may find that the school you start with doesn't offer your desired degree or major. Worse, you may also find that when you try to transfer the credits you earned the school that you want to get your degree from won't accept them.

Also, you may not need a degree to accomplish what you want in life. Do you want to open your own car repair shop, picture framing business, or beauty shop? You probably don't need a degree to do so. That's not to say you don't need specific education (and training), but you can often get that for free or without taking all the courses needed to get a degree.

So before jumping into college courses, work backward from your ultimate goal. Start by asking yourself this question "Do I need a degree to _____?"

To answer the question, call the HR department of companies (or government agencies) which hire people who do what you want to do. (Make sure you make it clear you're not looking for a job, but just information.) Or, if you want to work for yourself, drop by some businesses which do what you want to do and ask the owners.

In either case, ask them: do I need a degree to _____? If they say "Yes", ask what you should major in, whether you need an associate's, bachelor's, or master's degree, and what schools you should look at to get the required degree in the required major. If the answer is "No", ask what kind of training, education, and/or experience you need.

A really good source of ideas and information is the Department of Labor's *Occupational Outlook Handbook* (<http://www.bls.gov/oco/home.htm>). It's a gold mine of information about every career field imaginable including what prospects for finding work are for each field, what training/education you need to get into it, etc. Another is "G.I. Jobs" magazine (<http://gijobs.com>) which – every month – highlights career fields that do and don't require degrees.

The bottom line is that you shouldn't just start taking courses – even general education courses – unless you know whether you'll be able to use them to complete your chosen degree and whether you even need to get a degree.

Giveaways in the Education Center

In addition to for-the-taking booklets on college majors and financing college, the Education Center (Admin/Mission Support Building, Room 113) also many copies of

- *College.edu – Online Resources for the Cyber-Savvy Student*
- *College Success Guide: Top 12 Secrets for Student Success*
- *Best Career and Education Web Sites*
- *Online Learning*
- *DANTES College Career Workbook*
- *College Success Tips for Adult Learners*

Drop by and see what's available.

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 (0745): EOCTs, RATs, and AQEs* **or** Defense Language Proficiency Tests (DLPT)

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

Fridays (0745): EOCTs, RATs, and AQEs

* If someone has made an appointment to take a DLPT (a 6-hour test), there will be no 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.