

TraCen Cape May Education Update #414

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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
SN David Chrzan*	CGC Vigorous	E-PME-4

* First attempt

Well done, SN Chrzan!!!

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 – Should I switch from the MGIB to the Post-9/11 GI Bill?

Q: Should I switch from the MGIB to the Post-9/11 GI Bill?

A: There's actually no "switching" involved. If \$1,200 was deducted from your pay after boot camp you're eligible for MGIB-AD benefits. And if you've served 90 or more days on active duty since 10 September 2001, you're eligible for the Post-9/11 (new) GI Bill. You just choose which program you want to use, rather than switch programs.

To use either program, you have to submit an application for benefits (also called "activating" your benefits). Whether you should activate MGIB-AD or new GI Bill benefits is a question only you can answer based on your unique situation, needs, and future plans. Here are the things you should consider before making your decision. **Everything below assumes you're on active duty.**

1. Be aware that if you decide on the Post-9/11 (new) GI Bill instead of the MGIB-AD benefit you paid for after boot camp, you'll have to give up the MGIB-AD forever. That is, once you've made relinquished the MGIB-AD, there's no going back.
2. Assuming that (a) \$1,200 was deducted from your pay after boot camp, (b) you'll be using the benefit while still in uniform (e.g., because TA is unavailable), and (c) you're not going to school full-time, both programs will only pay for the actual cost of your course.
 - Under the MGIB-AD you have to pay all school costs up-front and the MGIB-AD will reimburse you for those costs which you paid your school – i.e., tuition and fees. (If you can't pay all school costs up-front yourself, you can take out an interest-free CGMA education loan, up to \$2,000.)
 - The new GI Bill will pay your school directly (so you don't have to pay anything) for the actual costs. And, if you've served on active duty for an aggregate of 3 or more years and are attending school full-time, you'll also be entitled to a stipend paid at the beginning of each school term (\$41.67 times the number of credits you're taking).
3. Let's assume that your school is on a semester system and considers 12 credits to be full-time. If you take 7 credits (e.g., one 3-credit and one 4-credit course) under the MGIB-AD, 50% of a day will be deducted from (charged against) your 36-month entitlement for every day of your school term (not counting breaks for holidays and the like) because 7 credits is considered half-time attendance. If you're under the new GI Bill, 58% of a day will be charged because the actual rate of pursuit ($7/12 = 0.58333$), rounded to the nearest hundredth, is what's used to calculate the charge. This means you'll use up your new GI Bill benefits faster than you would use up your MGIB-AD benefits.
4. If you keep the MGIB-AD and use all 36 months of your entitlement, you then may be entitled to as much as 12 months of benefits under the new GI Bill (a total of 48 months of benefits). If you relinquish your MGIB-AD benefit so you can get the new GI Bill, you will only be entitled to a maximum of 36 months of benefits. If you used any of your MGIB-AD benefit (but less than 36 months of it) before giving it up for the new GI Bill, you'll only be able to use however many months you had left under the MGIB-AD before you gave it up for the new GI Bill.
5. If, after boot camp, you decided to stop the \$100/month deductions for the MGIB-AD before all \$1,200 was deducted, you most likely won't be eligible to use MGIB-AD benefits, but will be eligible for new GI Bill benefits (assuming you've met the active-duty time requirement).
6. As a practical matter there's no deadline by which you have to give up the MGIB-AD to get the new GI Bill. You have 10 years from the date you leave the service to use MGIB-AD benefits and 15 years after the same date to use new GI Bill benefits. As long as you make the decision in time to use up your whole entitlement, you're in good shape.
7. There is no penalty for applying for (activating) your GI Bill benefits (<http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/education/gibill-o.asp#activate>) as soon as you become eligible for them and waiting to do so could delay the date you start school. The analogy I use is a credit card. If you're planning to go on a vacation, and want to use a credit card for your expenses during the vacation, you don't wait until the day your trip begins to apply for the card. Instead, you apply for it probably months in advance, and put it away in a safe place when it arrives. Then you can use it whenever you like. The same is true for your GI Bill benefits. If you apply well before you plan to use your benefits, you can use them at any time after the application has been

approved – which could take six months. If you activate MGIB-AD benefits you can still change to the new GI Bill within 15 years of the date you left the military (assuming you're eligible for new GI Bill benefits).

You can apply for benefits under any GI Bill program and then begin school before your application has been approved without losing anything. Once your application has been approved (i.e., once you've been determined to be eligible for benefits), you will be able to get reimbursed for your school costs (tuition and fees) paid between the date you submitted your application and the date it was approved.

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 **Transferring [new GI Bill] Benefits to Dependents** (<http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/gibill-33b.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, **caveat**. (These definitions are taken from *Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary*, *Black's Law Dictionary*, and Merriam-Webster on-line, <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/>.)

Caveat is a noun taken from the Latin word which means let him/her beware. A caveat is a warning, caution, or admonition enjoining one from certain acts or practices, an explanation to prevent misinterpretation ("He sold the car to his friend with the caveat that the brakes might need repairs"). In law, it can also mean a legal warning to a judicial officer to suspend a proceeding until the opposition has had a hearing.

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

Ante bellum means "before the war". In the U.S., it's used mainly to describe the period from the end of the War for Independence to the beginning of the Civil War. "Ante bellum plantations in the South have become tourist attractions over the last few decades."

From: <http://oedb.org/library/beginning-online-learning/50-common-latin-phrases-every-college-student-should-know>

Student Veterans of America-Google Scholarship

If you're a full-time student who's pursuing a bachelor's or graduate degree in computer science or a closely related field, you may be eligible to apply for one of eight \$10,000 scholarships. For details, go to <http://www.studentveterans.org/index.php/component/content/article/2-uncategorised/49-2013-google-sva-scholarship.html>. The deadline for applications is the end of this month: midnight on **31 March 2013**.

Tuition Assistance Update

As you may have heard, Congress recently enacted legislation that requires the armed forces to again provide tuition assistance, even though they suspended it because of sequestration cuts. However, because the legislation didn't provide any money for TA, the services are scrambling to find ways to pay for it without negatively affecting operations.

There has been nothing official published by the COMDT telling us when or under what conditions TA will again become available. Until you see an ALCOAST that includes a date TA is to be reinstated, it is unavailable and all TA applications will be rejected.

Please don't submit any TA applications until the Coast Guard Institute advises ESOs to again accept them.

Financial Counselor Fellowship for Military Spouses

If you're a spouse of a servicemember and are interested in becoming an Accredited Financial Counselor, check out the fellowship sponsored by the Association for Financial Counseling and Planning Education®, the National Military Family Association, and the FINRA Investor Education Foundation. <http://www.militaryfamily.org/get-info/spouse-employment/financial-counselor-fellowships.html> **The application deadline is midnight Eastern Time, 31 March 2013.**

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.**

Bellevue University, a regionally-accredited school in Nebraska, has long had an extensive distance learning program and catered to military personnel. A recent flyer lists three new degrees it's offering: a B.S. in Cybersecurity, a Registered Nursing to B.S. in Nursing, and a B.S. in Supply Chain and Logistics Management. For more information, go to <http://www.bellevue.edu/military>.

Before Choosing a Major or Career Field . . .

If you're considering a particular college major or career field, you should first check out the *Occupational Outlook Handbook*, from the Bureau of Labor Statistics (<http://www.bls.gov/ooh/home.htm>). Not only does it tell you what type of education and/or training you need to enter and advance in a specific career field, but it also tells you things like what the pay is likely to be and what the hiring prospects are in the future.

Preparing to Re-Take an ASVAB Test?

If you're preparing to re-take the AR, MK, PC, or WK ASVAB/AFCT tests, you'll do yourself a favor if you start the process by first going to <http://www.petersonsdodlibrary.com/> and accessing the free On-line Academic Skills Course (OASC). The course is geared to helping you improve your English (usage and vocabulary) and math skills. The lessons (approximately 20 minutes long) and tests are tailored to your current skills, so you don't have to sit through stuff you're already proficient in. As you progress through the course, periodic quizzes allow you to see whether and how much you've improved.

This is a great tool, it's free, and it's accessible from any computer that has Internet connectivity.

Continuing Education

(courtesy of IVCS Kevin Walsh)

Cape May County Technical School (<http://www.capemaytech.com/adult-education.html>) and the Atlantic County Institute of Technology (<http://www.acitech.org/adult-education.cfm>) have a wide variety of very inexpensive (in some cases free) adult academic, vocational, technical, and avocational programs in many areas. These include (but are not limited to) arts, crafts, welding, dance, computers, cooking, baking, language, health & fitness, state license, vocational/technical programs, and GED, ABE, and ESL instruction.

If you or a dependent isn't sure about a future career, these courses provide an excellent way to explore interests and get more information about many different fields.

Cape May & Atlantic County Training & Employment Services

If anyone in your family is looking for work or to get training for a job, check out the Atlantic Cape May One-Stop Center on-line (<http://www.learntrainwork.com/main/training.asp>). Free job training may be available for many different types of work, including:

- Automobile Mechanic
- Cardiovascular Technician
- Casino Card Dealer
- Certified Nurse's Aide
- Medical Assisting
- Massage Therapy
- Office Technology Specialist
- Phlebotomy
- Surgical Technician

Coast Guard Institute Transcripts

The American Council on Education (ACE) evaluates "A" and "C" school curricula to determine how many credits you would have earned in college if you had covered there the same material you covered in an "A" or "C" school.

You can get a transcript of these credits from the Coast Guard Institute by downloading and submitting a form (<http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/doc/CGI1561.pdf>) through your ESO. When filling out the form, you have a number of options as to what you want the Institute to do.

- If this is the first time you've submitted a transcript request, check the "Assessment" box.
- If you've submitted an assessment request before, and want to update it, check the "Update to Assessment" box.

From either of these, you'll receive an unofficial transcript by e-mail from the Institute.

- If you want an official transcript (which can be sent to a college, university, or your ESO), check the "Official Transcript" box.

Unofficial transcripts differ from official transcripts in that they're not printed on paper (you'll receive a PDF file). Official transcripts are printed on special, watermarked paper that makes tampering obvious and they have the Coast Guard Institute's seal on them. To see if credits earned through military service will count toward a degree, you have to have an official transcript sent to the school you want to get the degree from.

If you're just curious about how many credits you've accumulated in which subjects and don't feel you need an assessment, you can go to ACE's web site (<http://www.militaryguides.acenet.edu/>).

Bear in mind that every college and university in the U.S. has its own criteria for deciding whether to accept credits earned anywhere else. So credits that show up on your Coast Guard transcript may or may not be accepted toward majors and degrees at your preferred school.

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 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.

To find out more about certification opportunities, go to the U.S. Department of Labor's "Certification Finder" (http://www.careerinfonet.org/certifications_new/default.aspx). You just enter the name of the industry or occupation you want to work in and the search engine will take it from there.

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.

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>).

Free On-line Test Prep Tools

Looking for help in studying for a test? Peterson's DoD MWR Libraries has on-line study materials and practice tests for dozens of tests of all types: CLEP (all subjects), DSST (all subjects), ASVAB/AFCT, ASTB, PSAT, SAT, ACT, GRE, GMAT, LSAT.

From this site, you'll also have access to the Online Academic Skills Course (OASC) which you can use to improve your math and verbal skills, with pre-tests, lessons tailored to your needs, and more tests to see how you progressed.

These can all be used to help study for the tests listed above and for high school or college tests in the various subjects covered by the CLEP and DSST tests (<http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/tests.asp>). Check this all out at <http://www.petersonsdodlibrary.com>.

Alternatives to TA for Education Funding

Even though TA can't currently be used to pay for college courses, there are many options available other than TA (as there have always been). These are:

- scholarships and grants
- loans
- GI Bill benefits.

Scholarships (<http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/scholarships.asp>) and grants (<http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/grants.asp>) provide money you don't have to repay.

Loans (<http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/loans.asp>) must be repaid and should be used only as a last resort. Some loans (like the CGMA Education Loan) are interest-free.

There are currently six different GI Bill education benefits (<http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/gibill-o.asp>, VEAP, and one for survivors of deceased servicemembers). Many people are unaware that applying for GI Bill benefits (colloquially known as activating your benefit) has no negative effects. You can apply for benefits while on active duty or after you leave the service, but whenever you do so, you will have fixed amount of time in which to use up your benefit after your last day on active duty. Each of the programs has a different length of time to use them up. **The amount of time you have to use your benefit is completely unrelated to the number of months in your entitlement (normally 36).**

DANTES has also “produced a new Web page highlighting a number of TA Alternatives to help Service members weather this fiscal storm. While budget cuts and the impact swirl in the news, Service members want help finding alternative funding sources, alternate sources of college credit, who to talk to, and answers to the question ‘What can I do to keep my education goals on track?’ That help is available at the DANTES Web site at <http://www.dantes.doded.mil>.”

More Education Funding Resources

The US Department of Education’s web site has dozens of resources to help you find funding for higher education (yours or your dependents’) – <http://www.studentaid.ed.gov/resources>. There are downloadable one-page flyers, brochures, pamphlets, and booklets, as well as links to more resources.

Military Scholarships

(courtesy of Ms. Sueann Walter, full-time ESO at the Coast Guard Academy)

If you’re looking for scholarships aimed solely at military personnel (and, in some cases, their dependents), check out the spreadsheet Ms. Walter at the Coast Guard Academy prepared (<http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/doc/ScholarshipList.xls>).

And don’t limit yourself to these! The easier scholarships are to find and apply for (and the more money they hand out), the more people apply for them and the stiffer the competition is. In addition, look for the obscure and small-amount scholarships that few people find or bother to apply for. Remember: all money from scholarships is free money – not requiring pay-back. And it all adds up. If it takes you or your dependent an hour to complete the application for a \$100 scholarship, the return is \$100/hour. Not bad.

Check out <http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/scholarships.asp>, and (especially) <http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/scholarships.asp#strategy>.

Preparing for the SWE or Any Other Test?

Check out the tips on effective studying and test-taking skills at <http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/studying.asp>.

E-PME Study Resources

(courtesy of OSI Melissa Mathis, TraCen Cape May)

If you’re looking for more ways to study for an E-PME AQE or for the May servicewide exam (SWE), you might want to check out these current tech resources. According to PO Mathis, “There is an app called EPME Mobile which has quizzes for the E-PME Apprentice, Journeyman, and Master materials. With the app, you can search the E-PME manuals and itemize the knowledge and performance requirements. You can also communicate with the developer about edits and updates. It’s available for your tablet or smartphone.” PO Mathis also pointed to “PDF Notes, an app that allows you to highlight, bookmark and take notes in any manual published in PDF format. It’s for a tablet.”

Also, some enterprising petty officers have created sets of electronic E-PME flashcards available at Quizlet.com. You can use them (<http://quizlet.com/subject/uscg-epme/>) or create your own, and import them to your smartphone. Two others you can use to create flashcards are Flashcards++ and StudyBlue (the latter of which is also for your computer at <http://www.studyblue.com/switch/cpt.html>).

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.

To MOOC or Not to MOOC

MOOCs (Massive Open Online Courses) have lately become all the rage. These are courses taught by faculty members at top-flight universities that are offered on-line for free to anyone who wants to sign up. MOOCs can be great for certain people in certain circumstances. But don't sign up for a MOOC thinking you'll be able to get a degree by taking the right just the right ones. At the moment, these are not-for-credit courses – at least right now. That is, at the moment you can't take and pass one of these courses and then expect that fact to count toward a degree.

MOOCs can be fantastic tools, however, to use to prepare for a credit-by-exam test (<http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/tests.asp>), to supplement other resources you're using to study for a college course you've paid for, or to learn about a subject you've always been interested in but didn't want to pay for.

For a long list of sites where you can check out MOOCs, go to <http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/studymaterials.asp>.

Check Out a Career in the Health Information Technology Field

Estimates from government agencies and independent studies indicate a need for 50,000 to 80,000 more health IT workers so health care facilities can implement and maintain electronic health records (EHRs) and meet meaningful use requirements.

Included in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 were grants to community colleges to be used to train "health information technology professionals": people qualified to support information exchange among health care providers and public health authorities and to redesign of workflows within the health care settings to gain the quality and efficiency benefits of EHRs.

If you're interested in finding out more about opportunities these grants create, information on colleges providing this training, their admission criteria, their tuition structures, etc. check out the fact sheet from Region D at <http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/doc/HIT.pdf>. (The info on this fact sheet applies to all five regions.) And to find a community college in the region nearest you that's offering courses as part of the health IT program, go to http://healthit.hhs.gov/portal/server.pt/community/healthit_hhs_gov_community_college_program/1804.

New Tool for Finding Colleges

For years, ESOs have wished there were a way to find all colleges and universities in the country that offer degrees in a given major. A Google search yields lots of results, but most of them are web sites schools have to pay to get on – which eliminates schools that don't have big advertising budgets.

The answer to ESOs' wishes (at least the first version) is now here; it's Department of Education's new College Scorecard (<http://collegecost.ed.gov/scorecard/index.aspx>). It will help you find schools that offer the major you're looking for. Although it's a work in progress – the database is not yet complete – it's much better than existing alternatives.

After choosing your search criteria, click on "+ Add Criteria". You'll then see all your search criteria appear in the left margin. Click on the "Search Institution" button and you'll be given a list of all the schools that meet your criteria. To see the largest

number of schools, use the fewest possible search criteria (probably just your desired major or majors). If you can't figure out how to use it, drop by the Education Center and I'll walk you through it.

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

Practically everyone you talk with about your future tells you, "Get a degree!!" But while 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), that's not the case for everyone.

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>).

Limitations on CGMA Supplemental Education Grants

Coast Guard Mutual Assistance will reimburse their first associate's or bachelor's degree may request reimbursement of various college-related expenses. For more information, see <http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/grants.asp#seg>. However, to quote from the CGMA Manual, "Assistance is not authorized for costs associated with preparatory courses, licenses (maritime, real estate, AC&R, etc.), or certification courses (computer, maritime, law, medical, etc)."

GI Bill Transfer & Service Obligation

Despite ESOs' best efforts since August 2009 to ensure everyone knows about the additional service requirement you incur when you transfer new (Post-9/11) GI Bill education benefit, some people are telling us they're about to retire and weren't aware of it.

The general rule is that you must serve for four years after the date you transfer any or all of your benefit. For those who became eligible for retirement between 01 August 2009 and 01 August 2012, different service obligation periods apply (see <http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/gibill-33b.asp#obligation>).

If you've transferred any or all of your benefit and leave the Coast Guard voluntarily during the service obligation period, you "must go back into the Portal and revoke [your] transfer (return transfer months to zero)," according to Mr. Reidus Stokes, the GI Bill person at PSC. You'll also need to "visit the PSD (FS) website (<http://www.uscg.mil/psc/psd/fs/GI%20Bill.asp>), print the "Revocation of Post 9/11 Transfer Benefits", sign it, date it, and e-mail or fax" it to him. "If any benefits were used, [you] will be placed in an overpayment status by the Department of Veteran Affairs" and the DVA will follow its procedures to recover the money it paid out for your dependent's education, housing allowance, etc.

If you believe you were not properly notified of the opportunity to transfer your new GI Bill benefit to dependents while you were in uniform, you can request a correction of military records to allow for transferability. To do this, submit an "Application for Correction of Military Record Under the Provisions of Title 10, U.S. Code, Section 1552" (<http://www.dtic.mil/whs/directives/infomgt/forms/eforms/dd0149.pdf>) to the Coast Guard Board for Correction of Military Records.

Be aware, however, that (to quote the instructions on the form) you must "show to the satisfaction of the Board by the evidence that you supply, or it must otherwise satisfactorily appear in the record, that the alleged entry or omission in the record was in error or unjust. Evidence, in addition to documents, may include affidavits or signed testimony of witnesses, executed under oath, and a brief of arguments supporting the application. All evidence not already included in your record must be submitted by you. The responsibility of securing evidence rests with you."

One more thing, Mr. Stokes also advises that the obligated service period begins on the date of your first transfer of benefits (TEB) to any dependent(s). If you transfer all benefits to your spouse today, you would have to serve four years from today or face the consequences described above. If you and your spouse have a baby next year and decide to re-allocate your transferred benefits (18 months to your spouse, 18 months to the baby), you incur no additional service obligation. ***It pays to transfer your benefits as soon as you make the decision to do so, and definitely before you begin the 16th year of your career.***

Thinking of Teaching?

If you're interested in becoming a teacher after leaving the Coast Guard, check out the resources at <http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/teaching.asp>. Also, consider the Troops to Teachers (TTT) program (<http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/t2t.asp>). The program

- provides mature, motivated, experienced, and dedicated personnel for the nation's classrooms;
- assists military personnel in making successful transitions to second careers in teaching; and
- helps relieve teacher shortages, especially in math, science, special education, career and technical subjects, and foreign languages.

The FY2013 defense authorization act made the following changes to the program (as described in *MilitaryTimesEDGE* magazine):

- reduces the minimum required time in service from six to four years;
- adds foreign language skills as one of the sought-after specialties;
- restores the program to the DoD's control;
- shortens the time to apply for the program from four years to three after leaving the military.

And even if you're not interested in the Troops to Teachers program, Ms. Melissa Fantozzi (Regional Director of the NJ, DE, MD, and DC Troops to Teachers office at 800-680-0884 or tttnj@doe.state.nj.us) is happy to help you navigate the maze of teacher certification requirements not only her assigned region but throughout the country. You can also find links to web pages describing requirements for the states in her region at <http://www.nj.gov/education/tttnj/>.

New College & Career Planning Tool

Military personnel now have access to another tool to help them plan for college or a career after the Coast Guard. Kuder, a "provider of Internet-based tools and resources that help students and adults achieve their educational and career planning goals", has an Internet-based program designed specifically for military personnel. It's called Journey, and you can find out more about it and how to access it from a flyer you'll find at <http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/doc/Journey.pdf>.

Journey and other similar tools (<http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/sitest.asp>) are powerful tools in helping you decide your future career path and what to major in, if you decide to pursue a college degree.

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.

Is On-Line 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.

TraCen Cape May Testing Schedule

As of next Monday (28 January 2013), tests at TraCen Cape May will be 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

Alternating 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 probably administering a test (and, because I don't want to disturb examinees I 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 which you're welcome to check out. 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.