

TraCen Cape May Education Update #358

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TraCen Cape May Education Center Closed

For planning purposes, I'll be on leave from next Monday, 21 November through Thursday, 01 December. The Education Center will be closed during that period. The same will be true of the period from Monday, 19 December through Friday, 30 December.

And this newsletter will take a hiatus during those periods as well.

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
BM2 F. X. Foley	TraCen (Seamanship)	DWINTO*

* First attempt

Well done, PO Foley!!

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 taken my end-of-course test three times and still haven't passed. My ESO says I'm in too much of a rush, that I should take more time. But I either know the material or I don't, so I don't see how taking more time will help. What am I doing wrong?

A: Well, I wouldn't say you're doing anything wrong. But think carefully about what you're telling yourself ("I either know the material or I don't"). There's a hidden assumption in that statement: I completely understand what the question is asking.

Keep in mind that the four choices offered with multiple-choice test questions contain one correct answer and three plausible answers designed to distract you from the correct one. Test writers count on people reading them too quickly, and then answering the question they thought they read rather than the actual question.

You have to read the question carefully to avoid falling into the trap of picking the obvious answer to a question that wasn't asked. Some people call these trick questions. Test writers call them questions that call for careful reading.

Most end-of-course tests are untimed. So there's no reason to rush. And even the timed tests give you an hour, which usually translates into multiple minutes per question. Use the time you're given.

Try this technique: cover up the answers available to each question before you read them or the question. Then read the question carefully and answer it in your mind before viewing the answer choices. Read *all* the answer choices carefully before selecting one; don't pick the first one that sounds plausible.

If you do this, assuming you really know the material you're being tested on, you may find tricky questions, but no trick questions.

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 **Small Business Resources** (<http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/smallbiz.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 **compliment** and **complement** (definitions are from *Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary*).

The word **compliment** can be a noun or a verb, depending on how it's used. As a noun, it's an expression of esteem, respect, affection, or admiration; a flattering remark. As a verb, it means to express esteem, respect, affection, or admiration. "Using the invention was the highest compliment someone could pay the inventor" and "The CO complimented the seaman on her uniform at the personnel inspection."

The word **complement** is a noun, in ordinary usage, meaning something that fills up, completes, or makes perfect OR two angles whose sum is 90 degrees. It can also mean the whole body or number of personnel assigned to a ship. Examples: "The husband thought of his wife as his complement"; "The corporation's last purchase was the Ajax Company, which it considered the complement to all its other acquisitions"; "Angles of 35 degrees and 65 degrees are complementary, in that they add up to 90 degrees"; "The aircraft carrier's complement was 5,285 sailors and officers, not counting its air wing."

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.

New GM EPQs

On 10 November ALCOAST 522/11 was published, announcing replacement Gunner's Mate EPQs (<http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/doc/ALCOAST522-11.pdf>). You can download them from the Learning Management System on the CG Portal (<https://elearning.uscg.mil/catalog/>). These and the corresponding PQG must be completed before you can take the EOCT, and are required for participation in the May and October 2012 servicewide exams. See ALCOAST 395/11 (<http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/doc/ALCOAST395-11.pdf>).

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>.

30 Fastest-Growing Civilian Jobs in Next Decade

From the U.S. Department of Labor here's a list of the 30 jobs expected to offer the greatest number of openings in the next ten years, along with the type of training/education you'll need to get them.

- | | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. Bio-medical engineers — bachelor's degree | 16. Medical Assistants — OJT |
| 2. Network Systems and data communications analysts — bachelor's degree | 17. Physical therapist assistants — associate's degree |
| 3. Home health aides — on-the-job training (OJT) | 18. Veterinarians — first professional degree |
| 4. Personal and home care aides — OJT | 19. Self-enrichment education teachers — work experience in a related field |
| 5. Financial examiners — bachelor's degree | 20. Compliance officers — OJT |
| 6. Medical scientists (except epidemiologists) — doctoral degree | 21. Occupational therapist aides — OJT |
| 7. Physician Assistants — master's degree | 22. Environmental engineers — bachelor's degree |
| 8. Skin Care Specialists — postsecondary vocational award | 23. Pharmacy technicians — OJT |
| 9. Biochemists and biophysicists — doctoral degree | 24. Computer software engineers, systems software — bachelor's degree |
| 10. Athletic Trainers — bachelor's degree | 25. Survey researchers — bachelor's degree |
| 11. Physical therapist aides — OJT | 26. Physical therapists — master's degree |
| 12. Dental hygienists — associate's degree | 27. Personal Financial Advisors — bachelor's degree |
| 13. Veterinary technologists and technicians — associate's degree | 28. Environmental engineering technicians — associate's degree |
| 14. Dental assistants — OJT | 29. Occupational therapist assistants — associate's degree |
| 15. Computer software engineers, applications — bachelor's degree | 30. Fitness trainer and aerobics instructors — postsecondary vocational award |

College Credit for Incident Command System Courses

If you're interested in working in the emergency management field – whether in the Coast Guard, in another government agency, or in the private sector – you might not know you may be able to get college credit for FEMA on-line ICS (incident command system) courses.

In the blue box on the left side of each course's home page (e.g., <http://www.training.fema.gov/EMIWEB/IS/is100.asp>) you'll see a "College Credits" link. Click on that link and you'll be taken to another web site where you can get information on getting credit at Frederick County College (in Frederick, MD) which you can apply to its Associate of Applied Sciences degree in emergency management.

What Education Benefits are Available to My dependents?

While there are few monetary benefits available to spouses of military personnel through the Coast Guard, many other educational services are available. You can find info about services, programs, and benefits and links to more info at <http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/dependents.asp>.

Military Student Day – 01 December

On Thursday, 01 December CollegeWeekLive will be hosting its first Military Student Day, “an interactive video event where military personnel and veterans can meet with college representatives. Servicemembers and their families are invited to attend this free event, explore college options, and have their questions answered.”

Through CollegeWeekLive’s on-line college fairs, prospective students can get help with college planning by connecting 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 daughter, son, or yourself. And while it’s aimed mainly at students, parents and counselors are also welcome.

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/en_CA/br/Military_Day.

This is a really fantastic tool. You can do everything you can do at a physical college fair except physically pick up brochures and shake people’s hands. You can ask questions of speakers and school representatives, you can download information, you can even chat with current students at various colleges.

New ACCC Catalogs and Course Guides

The Spring 2012 Credit Course Guides and the 2011-2012 Catalogs from Atlantic Cape Community College are here!

You can pick up copies in the following locations:

- exchange lobby (near the Post Office window),
- outside the Education Center (Mission Support Building, Room 113)
- lab waiting area in the medical clinic.

Thomas Edison State College Tuition Increase

Thomas Edison State College has increased its tuition from \$239/credit to \$250/credit. When filling out your tuition assistance requests, please use \$250/semester credit.

How to Get a Great Letter of Recommendation

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

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

Tuition Assistance Update

Currently, the Coast Guard Institute is authorized to process tuition assistance (TA) requests for courses beginning in **November and December 2011, and in January 2012**. You can use eTA/WebTA (<https://eta.cnet.navy.mil/>) to apply for a course that begins before 01 February 2012.

Because requests submitted via eTA expire after two weeks if you want to apply for a course that begins later than January 2012 you'll need to use the PDF application form (http://www.uscg.mil/hq/cg1/cgi/forms/CG_Form_4147.pdf) rather than eTA to submit your TA request. The Coast Guard Institute will keep your PDF request on file and process it as soon as funds become available, in the order in which it was received.

Keep in mind that ESOs may not process TA requests for any course that begins more than three months from today.

Is Distance Learning for You?

Because of its convenience, distance learning appeals to working people – especially to military personnel. This fact means many Coast Guard personnel (who are often not near large population centers) have opportunities for higher education they might not have had in the past.

But before you plunk down the application fee for a distance learning course, check out take the time to read a short article published by the University of Illinois listing the characteristics of successful on-line students (<http://www.ion.illinois.edu/Resources/tutorials/pedagogy/StudentProfile.asp>).

And if you're considering distance learning in general (as opposed to sitting in class), please try out a couple of the many on-line assessments you can use to help you determine whether distance learning is the right choice for you. Links to a few of these are available at <http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/distance.asp#01>.

TraCen Cape May Testing Calendar

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

Mondays (0800): Defense Language Proficiency Tests

Tuesdays (0800): EOCTs and AQEs*

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

* If operations or your work schedule make it impossible for you to take an EOCT or AQE on a Tuesday morning, you can take it on a Thursday morning.

This schedule leaves most of the day on Tuesdays, as well as all day on Wednesdays, Fridays available for other occasional tests, counseling, and other face-to-face interactions with you. When no one is taking a language test, the doors to the Education Center are open on Mondays, as well.

If you call and I don't answer the phone, I'm usually administering a test (and, because of the noise, can't talk on the phone) or otherwise busy with someone in the office. E-mail is the best way to get in touch with me at andrew.g.webb@uscg.mil.

Leaving the Coast Guard?

If you're leaving the Coast Guard within the next twelve months (whether through retirement, resignation, or expiration of your enlistment), you should be making plans for what you'll be doing after you take off your uniform for the last time. Check out the information on my web site related to career transition (<http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/careertrans.asp>).

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

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

You should also request an education assessment from the Coast Guard Institute (<http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/collegefaq.asp>) to get a transcript of college credit you've acquired through your service in the Coast Guard. ***If you don't request an assessment before you leave active duty, you can't get one (or a transcript) later.***

If you're not planning to go to school right away, you'll probably need to find work. Here are two excellent resources for finding a job – or even a second career. Also, Military.com has a very good series of web pages devoted to veterans (<http://www.military.com/Careers/Home>).

And don't discount the idea of working in the public sector. Not only are there thousands of jobs in the federal government, identical to private-sector jobs in which you can put your skills, knowledge, and experience to use while maintaining job security unavailable in the private sector. There are a number of web sites at which you can find information useful to military personnel transitioning to civilian life and veterans.

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

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

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

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>.

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.