

TraCen Cape May Education Update #294

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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
FN Conrad Norton	TraCen (Fire Department)	E-PME-4*

* First time taking this test

Also of note, the following have just completed college certificate or degree programs.

MK3 Jason Seiberlich, Reservist at Station Cape May, has completed an Associate of Applied Science degree in Automotive Technology from Burlington County College.

LT Paul LaRoche at CGAS Atlantic City has completed Excelsior College's certificate program in Homeland Security.

And HS1 Nicole Flores (TraCen Cape May recruit training instructor), has completed an Associate of Applied Science (Physical Therapist Assistant) at Pueblo Community College in Colorado.

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: My ESO deleted the courses I listed in section II of the “Application for Voluntary Education Services” form (CGI-1561) I sent to him to submit to the Institute. I want to make sure I get credit for all courses I took and what he did seems like it’ll prevent me from doing that. The ESO’s on leave right now; should I resubmit it when he gets back?

A: The short answer is “no”. While your ESO probably should have told you why he deleted those courses from your form, my guess is that the courses you listed on the form were already listed in DirectAccess.

The instructions for section II of the form state clearly: “List and provide documentation for courses **not** listed in DirectAccess (PeopleSoft)” That is, don’t list courses that are already listed in DirectAccess. The Coast Guard Institute’s staff will pull all info about courses you’ve completed from DirectAccess.

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.

Frequently-Confused/Misused Word Pairs

The English language includes hundreds of word pairs which leave people unsure as to which they should use in a given situation. Today, the pair in focus is **that** vs. **who**.

Generally, **that** is used when you’re referring to objects and **who** when you’re referring to people. “The neighborhood girl that went to see the tornado was killed” and “Bob’s the guy that sold me the car” should be “The neighborhood girl who went to see the tornado was killed” and “Bob’s the guy who sold me the car”.

If there are any words you often mix up, please e-mail them to me at andrew.g.webb@uscg.mil.

Reserve Servicewide Exam (16 October 2010)

The message announcing the Reserve Servicewide Exam (RSWE) was published this week. If you’re a Reservist, please read it through, paying particular attention to paragraph 4.A. (Member Responsibilities). To see a reader-friendly format, go to <http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/doc/ALCGRSV027-10.pdf>.

YN1 Course Cancellation Clarification

ALCOAST 233/10 (dated 07MAY2010) stated that the current version of the YN1 course (version 0176-1) will become obsolete on 01 June 2010, which will also be the last day to take the EOCT for this course.

This means that passing scores on the YN1 EOCT (version 0176-1) become void on 01 June 2010. If you aren’t advanced to YN1 by that date, you will have to complete the yet-to-be published YN1 course and pass the yet-to-be published YN1 EOCT, even if you previously passed the older version (version 0176-1) of the YN1 test.

Striker Programs Suspended

In accordance with ALCOAST 270/10 (dated 26 May 2010), striker programs for BM, DC, EM, MK, SK, and YN will be suspended and the striker advancement lists for those rates will be closed until further notice starting on 01 July 2010. (To see a reader-friendly formatted copy of this message, go to <http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/doc/ALCOAST270-10.pdf>.)

If you’re striking for one of these rates, you have until 01 July to complete all requirements (rating requirements *and* E-PME requirements) before your name will be added to the striker advancement list. If your name was added to the list before that date, it will remain there and you will be advanced under current policies.

Free Books

The following books are available in limited quantities in the Education Center:

- Financial Aid for Veterans, Military Personnel, and Their Dependents (2008-2010)
- Guide to Online Learning
- College Majors That Work

Also available, are the following:

- Need a Lift? (this is the American Legion's guide to educational opportunities, scholarships, grants, student loans, careers, and employment)
- DANES College Career Workbook
- College Success Tips for Adult Learners
- College.edu – Online resources for the cyber-savvy student
- Don't Miss Out – the ambitious student's guide to financial aid
- Best Career and Education Web sites: A Quick Guide to Online Job Search

If any or all of these interest you, drop by and pick one up – first come, first served.

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.***

Berklee College of Music is a regionally-accredited school, founded in 1945 “founded on the revolutionary principle that the best way to prepare students for careers in music is through the study and practice of contemporary music.” The school offers both resident and distance-learning courses. Through its distance-learning division you can pursue certificate programs or take individual courses in such areas as production, music business, arranging, songwriting, guitar, or voice. After using tuition assistance and taking advantage of the school's military discount, out-of-pocket tuition costs are \$206/course.

For more information, go to <http://www.berkleemusic.com/military/>

Free Tutoring

If you haven't yet discovered it and are trying to prepare for a CLEP test, DSST, SAT, ACT, or college course or want help with a civilian job search, preparing a civilian resume, or financial questions, check out tutor.com on Navy Knowledge Online (<https://wwwa.nko.navy.mil/portal/home/>). Once you've logged in, click on the “Reference” tab and you'll see a section for tutor.com.

There, you can find on-line tutorials for many subjects in the areas of math, science, English, and social studies as well as standardized test preparation (e.g., SAT, ACT, GRE), and adult services such as resume preparation, job search, helping children with homework, etc. You can also find live tutoring on the same site.

This is an EXCELLENT resource!!

25JUN Scholarship Deadline!

The National Association for Uniformed Services (NAUS) is offering four \$2,000 scholarships for the 2010-2011 school year to NAUS members or spouses, children, or grandchildren of NAUS members. For more information, go to <http://www.naus.org/scholarship/>. ***The deadline is 25 June 2010.***

Use Credit-by-Exam Tests to Raise Your GPA

Many Guardians are unaware that while CLEP tests and DSST exams may be accepted by your college as credit toward your major, the scores you get will not be used to compute your GPA. (Every college/university decides for itself whether to accept these tests as credit toward their degrees.)

EXAMPLE: Your college requires you to complete 6 credits in humanities courses, 6 in math courses, 6 in science courses, 6 in social sciences and history courses, and 6 in science courses. You don't think you'll do all that well in the math and science courses, but you know you'll pass.

If you pass the CLEP Natural Sciences and College Math tests (and your school accepts those as credit toward your major) your CLEP test scores will not be included when your GPA is calculated; it'll be based only on actual courses you took. Assuming you do well in your courses, this means your GPA will be higher than it would have been if you'd taken science and math courses and got relatively low grades in them.

You can use this technique with any of the 72 CLEP tests and DSSTs: pass a test rather than take a course you don't think you'll do well in. Just make sure your school will accept the score from the test you take toward your chosen major.

Still No Word on Money for Coast Guard Foundation Grants – But Apply Anyway

The Coast Guard Institute is accepting applications for the Coast Guard Foundation Education Grants and Vander Putten Education Grants programs. However, keep in mind that **funding for these grants is uncertain**. The benefactors who make these grants possible contribute to the Foundation when they can, but not at regular intervals. That being the case, there is no way to predict when funds will be available. Once they are, applications will be processed in the order in which they were received until funds have been exhausted.

Receipts must not be dated more than a year before the date the Institute receives the application. That is, if your application reaches the Institute on 10 July 2010, receipts can't be dated before 10 July 2009. Also, receipts must include a description of the item purchased and must show proof of payment. Copies of receipts must be legible and if you send original receipts, be aware they will not be returned.

If you want to take an exam to be licensed in a particular field (such as physical therapy), you can receive a CG Foundation grant for the books you use to prepare for the exam. For more information, go to <http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/grants.asp#cgf>.

Studying for the ASVAB AR Test?

If you're trying to raise your ASVAB AR test score and are finding the traditional study resources aren't that helpful, check out the word problem resources at Salman Khan's on-line Khan Academy:

- Word Problem Solving Strategies (<http://khanexercises.appspot.com/video?v=SpDIXJ2I2D4>)
- Word Problem Solving 1 (<http://khanexercises.appspot.com/video?v=Xz6rT9k8ftg>)
- Word Problem Solving 2 (<http://khanexercises.appspot.com/video?v=s1QN7sSfBM8>)
- Word Problem Solving 3 (<http://khanexercises.appspot.com/video?v=LRKMoqrMbGw>)
- Word Problem Solving 4 (<http://khanexercises.appspot.com/video?v=5EdbPz1ZVn0>)

While watching these videos, don't forget to pause them occasionally and practice the skill/knowledge you just learned.

Vocational Training vs. College Education

Many Coast Guard personnel are more interested in working with their hands (for example, carpentry, gunsmithing, plumbing, locksmithing, electrical work) than they are in getting a degree. Still, everyone tells them they need to get a degree to succeed in the civilian labor market so they feel they have to do so.

But before you jump into a degree program, think about your ultimate employment goal and work backwards from it. When planning a car trip, you don't just start driving and hope to end up somewhere you wanted to go. You have a destination in mind and figure out the best route to get there. This should be the way you also plan your career, both in the Coast Guard and in the civilian world.

Let's say you want to work as a video game designer. Assuming you want to work for a company that does nothing but design and market video games, call a half dozen of them and talk with someone who makes hiring decisions in the HR department or the like. Ask what kind of training and/or education they're looking for in new hires. Ask specifically if the people they hire need a degree or if demonstrated ability (e.g., via a portfolio or other samples of your work) is good enough.

Remember: a college degree requires you to take many courses totally unrelated to your field of interest. Roughly half the courses you take to earn a degree fall into this category. If you're more interested in acquiring the knowledge necessary to start working in the field that interests you, a degree may not be for you.

There are a number of paths you can take once you know whether most likely employers require a degree. You can

- work with someone who has the knowledge you want to acquire (a mentor-protégé or apprenticeship relationship, formal or informal);
- learn it on your own via resources available for free (often on the Internet, see "Sources of Free In-Depth Knowledge" above);
- take college courses just in your area of interest and, perhaps, earn an academic certificate in the process (see "Academic Certificates" at <http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/degreedesc.asp#certs>); or
- take non-credit courses that you have to pay for, for example Excelsior College's Professional Development courses (https://www.excelsior.edu/portal/page/portal/Center_for_Professional_Development) or the Graduate School's courses (<http://graduateschool.edu/>), which GI Bill education benefits will likely cover.

First find out if a degree is something you need or want. If you don't need a degree, but you want one and/or what you learn will be useful, by all means work toward one. The point is, don't jump into a degree program just because everyone else is doing so.

Is Distance Learning for You?

The University of Georgia has come up with an on-line assessment tool you can use to determine if computer-based distance learning is for you. It's called SORT (Student Online Readiness Tool, <http://www.alt.usg.edu/sort/html/sortlau1.html>) and is based on research that says there are "six main topics closely related to a student's success in the online learning environment". These are, Experience with Technology, Access to Technology, Study Habits, Lifestyle, Goals and Purposes, and Learning Preferences. "Each section of SORT has a brief description followed by a questionnaire. Based on your responses to questions, feedback is provided on your personal readiness profile, along with suggested strategies for success and links to more information."

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.

Free In-Depth Knowledge Resources

Do you want to brush up on a subject you've studied before but have become rusty in? Are you interested in learning about something in greater depth than _____ *for Dummies* will provide? Or are you interested in taking a college course, but don't really care if you earn credit for it?

If you answered "yes" to any of these questions, check out the amazing array of resources you can find on-line. Professors at many reputable colleges and universities have put lectures from their courses on-line. And some very smart people outside academia have posted on-line video courses they've created.

Links to many of these is available at <http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/distance.asp#knowledge>.

You can **not** earn college credit through these courses and lectures. But you can definitely learn more about areas of interest or brush up on subjects you've forgotten. And you can use these videos to prepare for CLEP tests, DSST exams, ECEs, and other exams, through which you can earn college credit. Or you can use them to get another perspective on the subject matter of a college course you're taking.

Wondering What to Major In?

Are you interested in getting a college degree, but unsure about what to major in? Drop by the Education Center and pick up a copy of *College Majors that Work*. This book has an excellent, easy-to-follow system for determining what major best matches your interests.

You should also check out chapters 3 ("Career Exploration Information") and 5 ("Researching Employer and Labor Market Information") of the book *Best Career and Education Web Sites*. Before you dive into a major, with the intention of going into a particular career field, read these chapters. They can help you figure out if there's actually a future in your chosen field. The last thing you want is to invest a lot of time and money in getting a particular degree only to find when you're done that there aren't many jobs available in the field you prepared for or that advancement in that field is slow or frozen.

How Do I Select a College without CG Institute Degree Plans?

Since the Institute stopped producing degree plans last December, many Guardians have been stymied about how to pick a school to get a certificate or degree from. "How do I know if any of my Coast Guard experience credits will count?" is the question I hear most often.

A new booklet entitled *How Do I Select a College without CG Institute Degree Plans?* will walk you through the process. You can drop by TraCen Cape May's Education Center to pick up a copy or download and print it from <http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/doc/Booklet04.pdf>.

Be aware that it's formatted as a booklet. If you print it out as it is and try to make sense of it as if it weren't a booklet, you'll fail. Just download it, print it out, feed it into a copier that does double-side copying, and select single-side to double-side. **Don't re-arrange the pages or turn them all in one direction.** Or you can download the file and print it directly from your computer to a double-side copier or printer, that'll give you the same result. Either way, just fold the output in half and you'll have the booklet.

Scholarship and Financial Aid Explorer

The Scholarship and Financial Aid Explorer (SFEX) was developed by the Marine Corps to make it easier for military personnel to find scholarships directly relevant to them and their dependents. SFEX provides a listing of over 600 scholarships and is open to all servicemembers at no cost. You can check it out at <http://www.mcsfex.net/Default.aspx>.

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): colleges 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.

Thinking of Teaching?

Are you interested in teaching after you leave the Coast Guard? Troops to Teachers also 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.

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>).

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 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/0,13373,,00.htm>).

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 (<http://www.fedjobs.gov/>), governmental entities at all levels – state, county, municipality, school district, port district, etc. – provide similar benefits.

Microsoft Software Home Use Program

If you're on the Coast Guard's payroll (i.e., not a contractor), you're eligible to participate in Microsoft's Software Assurance Home Use Program. The program enables you to get a licensed copy of most Microsoft® Office desktop PC applications to install and use on your home computer. You're also eligible for discounts on other Microsoft software via the Employee Purchase Program.

For more information, go to <https://cgportal.uscg.mil/lotus/my poc/?uri=wcm%3a5b18ff004d89b9a6ae7fbe259abd3cf4>.

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.

Quick Reference Study Guides

The TraCen Education Center also 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>.

Education Library

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) 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.

Get It in Writing!

A recent article on [military.com](http://military-education.military.com/2009/06/new-gi-bill-advice-get-it-in-writing.html) by retired Coast Guard Chief Terry Howell (<http://military-education.military.com/2009/06/new-gi-bill-advice-get-it-in-writing.html>) provides extremely good advice about how to avoid making costly mistakes when dealing with the VA about your education benefits.

The advice is equally applicable to dealing with *any* government or corporate bureaucracy, for that matter.