



January 22, 2009

Mariner Licensing and Documentation (MLD) Quarterly Credential Evaluation Report *“When should I submit my application?”*

This quarterly report provides information on credential processing time, which should help mariners determine when to submit their credential application. This report also highlights the current processing bottlenecks and explains what the Coast Guard is doing, and what mariners can do, to reduce the processing time.

“How long does it take to get my credential?”

Gross (Overall) Credential Processing Time: Gross Processing Time is the time it takes for the Coast Guard **and** mariners to process an application. Figure 1 illustrates the average overall processing time for *all* credentials issued between July 1, 2008, and January 16, 2009. This time is measured from the point at which mariners submit their application to a Regional Exam Center (REC) to the point at which the completed credentials are mailed to the mariner. Included in this time spent waiting for the mariner to submit information that may be missing from their application, and the time spent waiting for mariners to take any required exams at a REC. The average gross processing time since July 2008 has been 83 days, but the median gross processing time has been 52 days. This means 50% of the credentials issued during this period were processed in 52 days or less.

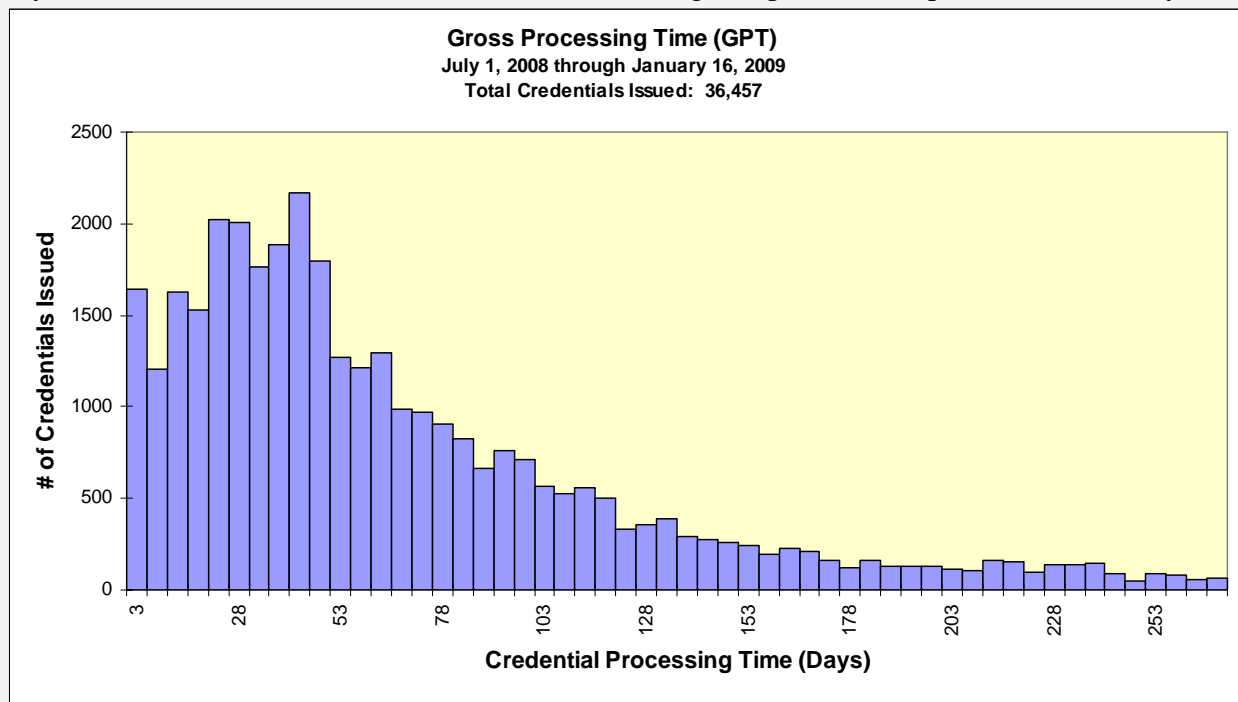


Figure 1

Overall Credential Processing Time for each System State: The National Maritime Center (NMC) manages the credential production process using a series of production “states”. This enables us to measure the time it takes for a credential application to move through the various states and to identify process bottlenecks. Figure 2 illustrates the overall average percentage of time a credential spends in each state. Awaiting additional information from mariner applicants and waiting for mariners to take required examinations constitutes 44% of the overall credentialing process time.

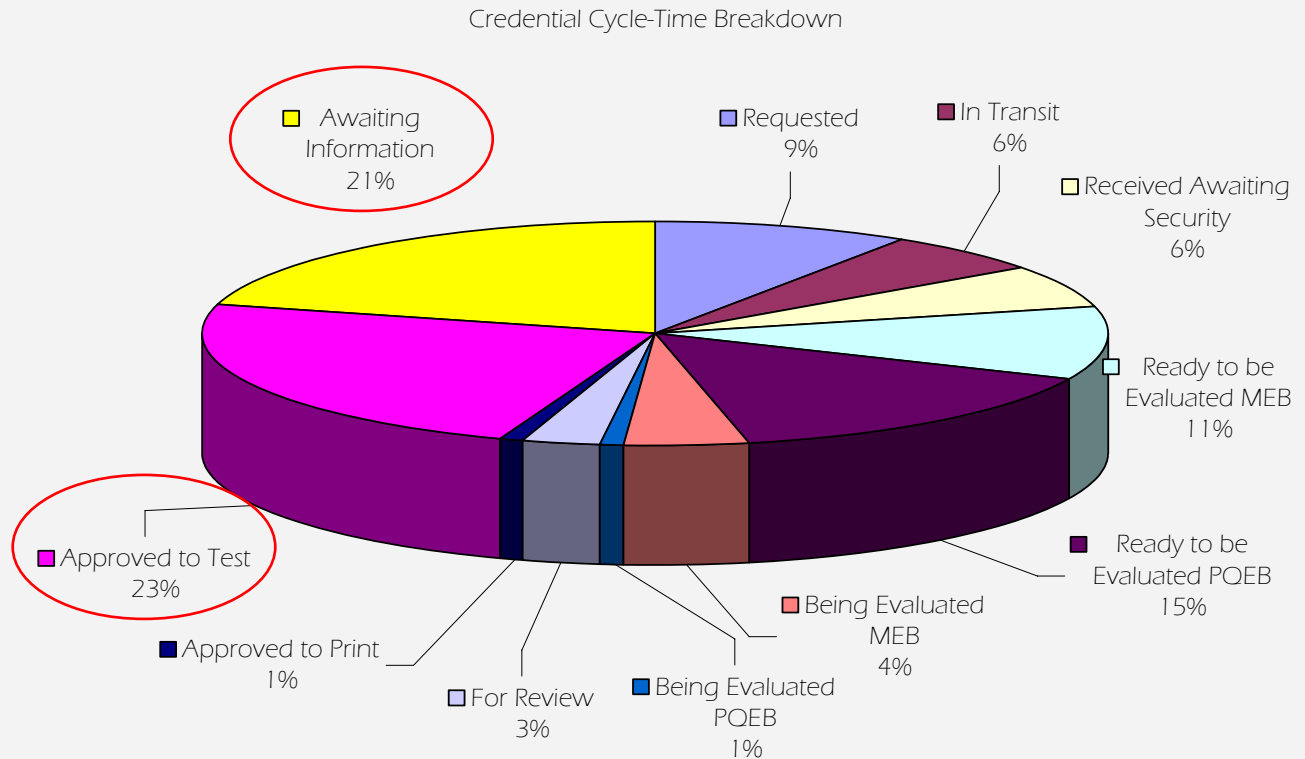


Figure 2

Net (Coast Guard) Credential Processing Time: Net Processing Time is the time it takes for the Coast Guard to process an application. Figure 3 illustrates the average net processing time for *all* credentials from July 1, 2008, through January 16, 2009. This time is measured from the point at which the application is submitted to a REC to the point at which credentials are mailed to the mariner and excludes time spent waiting for mariner to submit missing information or take exams. This measurement factors out any time attributed to the mariner and only calculates actual Coast Guard processing time.

“So, how long does it take the Coast Guard to process my application?”

As of January 16, 2009, the Coast Guard is processing merchant mariner credential applications, on average, in 41 days. 50% of those same credentials processed were completed in 31 days or less.

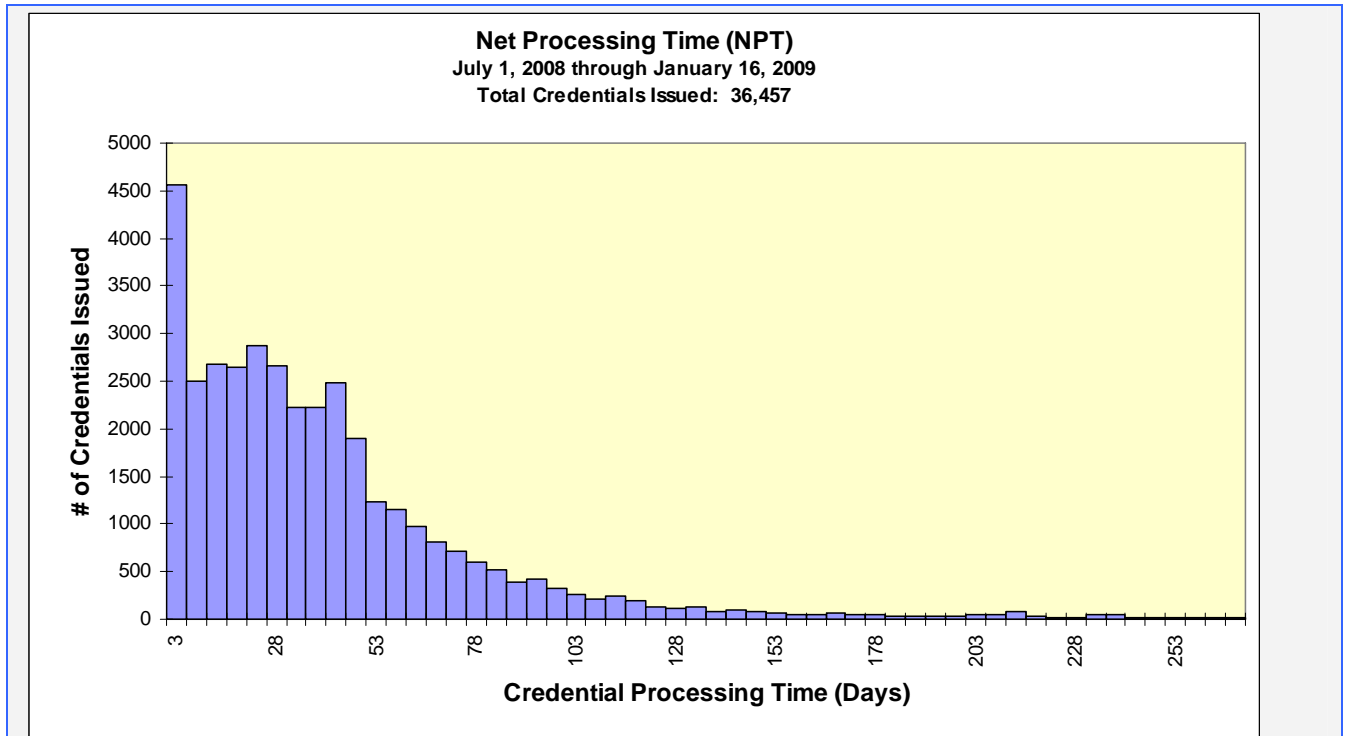


Figure 3

Where are the bottlenecks and what is being done to reduce processing time?

1. Approved to Test (23%):

Currently, 23% of the total processing time is associated with the time it takes for mariners to complete any required exams. Many credentials require the mariner applicant successfully pass examinations to ensure sufficient competency. Title 46, Code of Federal Regulations, allows the mariner one year from the date their application is approved to complete their exams.

To reduce the processing time, the mariner can:

- Take a Coast Guard approved course that will substitute for the Coast Guard exam at a REC. Lists of approved courses are available on the NMC website at http://www.uscg.mil/nmc/mmic_appcourses.asp.
- Prepare for an exam by reviewing examination questions and information at <http://www.uscg.mil/nmc> under the Merchant Mariner Info Center tab.
- Make preparations to take the necessary examinations with your local REC as soon as you receive the approval letter from NMC.

To reduce the processing time, the Coast Guard is:

- Ensuring our website has the most up-to-date information regarding examination requirements and REC contact information.
- Ensuring the RECs are receiving the most current examination policy and guidance in order to assist the mariners.
- Exploring alternate means of administering examinations through online applications and alternate sites, all in an effort to improve accessibility.

2. Awaiting Information (21%):

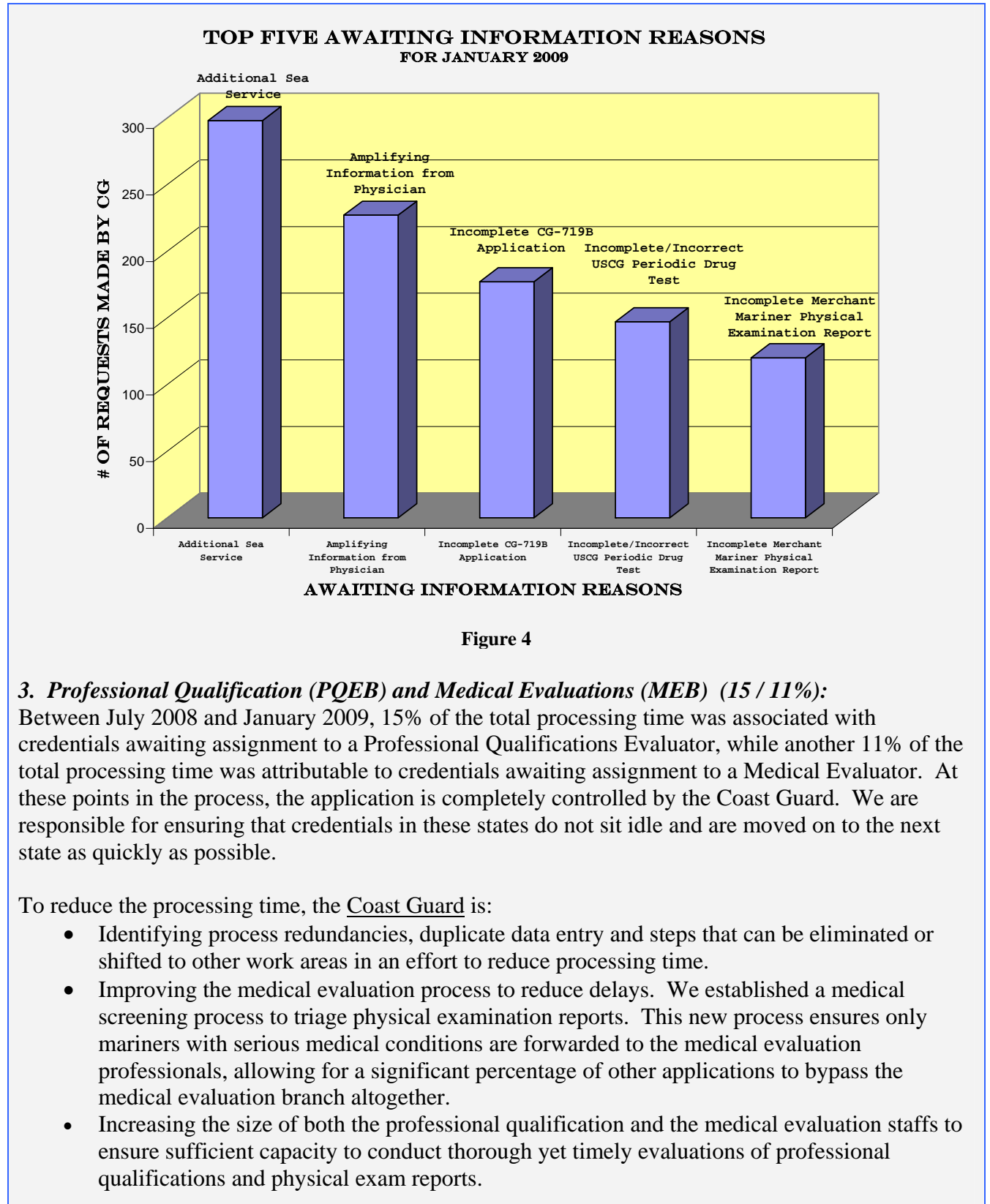
Currently, 21% of the total processing time is associated with the time it takes for mariners to submit information that was missing in their application. During the processing of an application, the RECs and the NMC staff often identify the need for additional information which was not included with the application. Figure 4 illustrates the top five awaiting information reasons recorded thus far in January 2009. The most common types of information missing from an application includes insufficient sea service, missing medical information on the physical exam report and missing training certificates.

To reduce the processing time, the mariner can:

- Ensure they have sufficient sea service for the credential for which they are applying. Applications with insufficient sea service represent the largest source of processing delays.
- Consult with their medical providers and refer to the new guidance contained in the Medical and Physical Evaluation Guidelines for Merchant Mariner Credentials (NVIC 04-08, with particular attention to enclosures 3a and 3b) to ensure information submitted with their physical is complete and accurate. This is particularly important for mariners that have specific medical conditions, or are taking certain medications. Mariners are encouraged to copy relevant pages from NVIC 04-08 and take them to their doctor for assistance in obtaining the needed medical information. This will avoid delays with the medical evaluation. This NVIC can be found on our website at the following link: http://www.uscg.mil/nmc/Whats_new_to_NMC/Medical_NVIC_Info_Bulletin_091508.pdf
- Ensure their application package is complete prior to initial submission by carefully reviewing the application requirements, which are available on our website at the following link: http://www.uscg.mil/nmc/Whats_new_to_NMC/MLD-FM-NMC1-08_App_Acceptance_Checklist.pdf.
- Ask Questions – Contact their local REC or the NMC’s Call Center at 1-888-I ASK NMC (1-888-427-5662), or by e-mail IASKNMC@uscg.mil, with specific questions regarding credentialing requirements.

To reduce the processing time, the Coast Guard is:

- Screening applications at the RECs to ensure they are complete and ready to evaluate before sending them to the NMC for processing.
- Simplifying the application process by revising the application forms, developing electronic applications and providing assistance to the mariners at the RECs.
- Developing user-friendly on-line tools to assist mariners with determining the sea service requirements.
- Making courtesy reminder contacts with mariners via correspondence, telephone and e-mail regarding outstanding information requests.
- Constantly tracking and communicating the top reasons credential requests are delayed due to missing and/or incomplete information.
- Exploring alternate means of communicating with mariners such as system generated alert e-mails and text messages.



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