

## TraCen Cape May Education Update #386

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### ESO on Leave; Education Center Closed

TraCen Cape May's ESO will be on leave and the Education Center will be closed **from Monday, 23 July through Monday, 30 July** (open again on Tuesday, 31 July). Please make your testing plans and submit your TA requests 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
HS3 Scott Hughes*	HSWL FO Cape May	HS2
SN Tyler Wilkins	TraCen (Gym)	E-PME-4

\* First attempt

Well done, PO Hughes and SN Wilkins!!!

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 – Re-Taking ASVAB Tests

**Q:** I want to re-take the VE part of the ASVAB, to qualify for MST “A” school. What do I have to do?

**A:** First of all, you need to be aware that there is no “VE part of the ASVAB”. Your ASVAB VE score is a scaled score which is derived from the scores on the PC (Paragraph Comprehension) and WK (Word Knowledge) tests. The raw scores on your PC and WK tests (i.e., the number of questions you got right on them) are added together and the test administrator uses a conversion table to determine what your VE score is. To improve your VE score, you must take both of these tests. You can’t take just the PC or the WK test; you have to take both at the same sitting.

*However*, you also need to know that raising your VE score may be very difficult, depending on what your current PC and WK scores. For example, say you got all but one or two questions right on the PC test. Unless you can be sure to get those questions you missed right, you may lower your VE score. Why? Because the version of the ASVAB you took as a civilian at a MEPS is different from the one you can take after entering the Coast Guard, and it’s scored differently. A raw VE score of 39 might be a scaled score of 53 on the MEPS-administered ASVAB but only 50 on the in-service version of the ASVAB (called the AFCT).

Also keep in mind that because the WK is a vocabulary test, unless you were ill or sleep-deprived when you took the MEPS ASVAB, it’s likely that the score you received is a pretty good representation of your vocabulary. Improving your score on the WK test will be extremely difficult unless you’ve become an avid reader or memorized a dictionary since you took the ASVAB. Seriously.

Remember, too, that these are extremely high-stakes tests. Whatever score you receive on a re-test becomes your new official score – even if it’s lower than your previous score. And you have to wait six months to take the same test again.

Finally, be aware that you almost certainly don’t *have* to improve your VE score to qualify for a given “A” school. That is, there are likely to be other options for raising your composite score to qualify for any “A” school since each composite score is made up of more than one test score. For example, to qualify for MST “A” School, your AR and VE scores are combined to determine eligibility. That means if you improve your AR score, you will also improve your MST “A” School composite score – without ever retaking either the PC or WK tests.

To re-take any ASVAB (AFCT) test, contact the nearest full-time ESO.

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](mailto: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: **Qualification Tests** (<http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/qualtests.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, **adverse** and **averse**. (These definitions are from *Webster’s Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary*.)

The word **adverse** is an adjective: “The ship was hindered by adverse winds” and “The defendant received an adverse verdict.” In spoken English, the stress is on the first syllable. Words derived from it include the nouns *adversary* and *adversity*.

The word **averse** is also an adjective, but has a totally different meaning: “She wasn’t averse to the idea”, meaning “She wasn’t against the idea”. In spoken English, the stress is on the second syllable. Words derived from averse include *aversion* (e.g., “His psychiatrist believed strongly in aversion therapy”) and *aversive*.

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](mailto:andrew.g.webb@uscg.mil).

## 01 August Deadline: Regular E-5 & E-6 Servicewide Exam

E-4s and E-5s in the regular Coast Guard have until 01 August to complete all advancement requirements if they want to take the November servicewide exam. Requirements include completing all EPQs/RPQs, passing an EOCT or RAT, required competencies (if any) and, for those seeking advancement to E-6 or E-8, an E-PME Advancement Qualification Exam (AQE).

Remember: to take an EOCT you have to have completed your EPQs, and to take an AQE you have to have completed the relevant E-PME Performance Requirements.

**OS3s and OS2s**, please make sure you understand **all** aspects of this process and get **everything** done ASAP. Some of them may require you to go to Sector Delaware Bay or the Sector Field Office in Mays Landing.

## Do You Want to Take the ACT?

If you’d like to take the **ACT Assessment** (<http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/act.asp>), I’ll be administering it on **Wednesday, 11 July starting at 0730**.

Seats will be reserved for you on a first come, first served basis so let me know ASAP if you want to take one of these tests.

DANTES Test Control Officers (ESOs who’ve been specifically designated) may administer these tests only for uniformed personnel. In general, military personnel are authorized to take one ACT **or** one SAT paid for by DANTES. So if you want to take both, one would be free and you’d likely have to pay for the other. The ACT costs \$34; the SAT costs \$49.

TCOs may administer the ACT at any time of the year, and can administer the SAT during all months except July, August, and September. You can see a comparison of the SAT and ACT at <http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/comparison.asp>.

Be aware that in almost all cases military personnel don't need to take either the ACT or SAT to take college courses.

You can read/download *Preparing for the ACT* (<http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/doc/PreparingACT.pdf>) and *Taking the ACT* (<http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/doc/TakingACT.pdf>) for more information about the test. As for actual preparation materials, check out <http://www.actstudent.org/testprep/index.html> and <http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/act.asp#prep>.

## Enlisted Reserve Scholarship

The Coast Guard Foundation is now accepting applications for 2012-2013 academic year Enlisted Reserve Scholarships. The program is open to Reservists and dependents registered in DEERS. ***The application deadline is 18 July 2012.***

For complete information, see ALCOAST 301/12 (<http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/doc/ALCOAST301-12.pdf>).

## 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>.

## 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.

## Certifications & Academic Certificates

Two of the lesser-known products (for want of a better word) education accomplishments you can find out about from your ESO and/or CDA are certifications and certificates. Despite the similarity of their names, they're totally different. However, both can increase your employment opportunities and earnings in the civilian sector.

**Certification** – Certification is the process of taking a test (and sometimes demonstrating particular skills) in a specific subject through a trade group. To quote the now-defunct DANTES certification handbook:

Certification examinations allow you to demonstrate what you know and establish your professional credentials. By obtaining certification or licensure in your specific field, you will effectively show you have the initiative and self-reliance required to advance toward higher skills and levels of responsibility. This professional recognition may also enhance your military occupational standing within your rating. Certification or licensure translates military training into civilian terms. It promotes association with civilian counterparts and provides an

opportunity to document your skills while you are still on active duty. This documentation is readily understood and accepted in the professional occupational civilian community.

Examples: The International Association of Administrative Professionals certifies individuals as Certified Professional Secretaries. The National Institute for Automotive Service Excellence offers eight different vehicle maintenance certifications. Passing the Business Espionage and Countermeasures Association's test makes you a Certified Confidentiality Officer.

**Academic Certificates** – You can also earn an undergraduate or graduate certificate in a specific field (e.g., Homeland Security – Natural Disasters) by taking a set number and type of academic courses. A certificate program from an accredited college or university is less extensive than a degree program (9-18 credits rather than 60 or so credits for an associate's degree or about 120 credits for a bachelor's degree). Paraphrased from the University of Kentucky's web site, a certificate is "an integrated group of courses that is designed to have a very clear and focused academic topic or competency as its subject area." Certificates often "meet a clearly defined educational need of a constituency group (such as continuing education or accreditation for a particular profession), respond to a specific state mandate, or provide a basic competency in an emerging, usually interdisciplinary, area." A certificate provides "the student formal recognition of the mastery of a clearly defined academic topic."

Why earn a certificate rather than a degree? An academic certificate can add a new area of expertise to a degree you already hold or allow you to create a specialty in a field related to your undergraduate major or graduate specialty. Or you can use it to explore a whole new academic field to find out whether you want to get a degree in that field. The courses you'll take to get a certificate would count toward your major courses or electives if you're getting an undergrad degree or might count toward your graduate degree, depending on its requirements.

For example, say you're interested in possibly working toward a undergrad degree in homeland security. But you're not sure it's exactly right for you. So you decide to get an undergraduate certificate in Weapons of Mass Destruction Preparedness (18 credits). When you're done, you'll have the certificate (the courses for which you can apply toward an associate's or bachelor's degree) and quite a bit of knowledge about a specialized field. That should be enough to give you an idea whether you want to take all the rest of the courses necessary to get the homeland security degree or if you'd rather move in another direction. For more information about academic certificates, go to <http://cew.georgetown.edu/certificates/>.

In both the civilian world and the military, certifications and academic certificates are proof of what you've accomplished and, by demonstrating your initiative, set you apart from your peers.

### New YN1 EOCT

ALCOAST 287/12 (<http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/doc/ALCOAST287-12.pdf>) announced that to be eligible for the May and October 2013 SWEs, YN2s must have passed the latest YN1 EOCT before 01 February 2013. This is true even if you passed the previous YN1 EOCT.

### New MK2 Course

ALCOAST 305/12 (<http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/doc/ALCOAST305-12.pdf>) announced that a new MK2 course (course number 0232, edition 6) is now available. You can order a hard copy from the Coast Guard Institute (via

your ESO) or download it from the CGPortal (<https://elearning.uscg.mil>), where you'll also find the current MK EPQs. You must complete the latest EPQs before you can take the MK2 EOCT.

The previous version of the course (0232/5) will become obsolete and the tests for that course will not be scored after 01AUG2012. Until then, passing either 0232/5 or 0232/6 EOCT will qualify you for the November 2012 SWE.

## MBA vs. MPA

Most people have heard of MBA (master of business administration) degrees, but few have heard of MPA (master of public administration) or MPP (master of public policy) degrees. The MPA and MPP are, essentially, the public (and not-for-profit) sector versions of the MBA.

The core courses in an MBA program are designed to introduce students to the various areas of private sector business such as accounting, marketing, human resources, operations management, economics, organizational behavior, marketing, finance, strategy, operations management, international business, information technology management, supply chain management, and project management.

The MPA and MPP prepare individuals to serve as managers in the executive arm of local, state, and federal government, and increasingly non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and the not-for-profit sector. Instruction includes the roles, development, and principles of public administration; public policy management and implementation; the relations between organizational management and legislators; the public and non-profit budget processes and financial management; administrative law; personnel management focusing on civil employees; professional ethics; and appropriate research methods.

## 10 Reasons to Get an MPA or MPP

1. So you can make a difference, change the world & help others by solving problems
2. Learn to better communicate and work in teams & groups
3. Understand the bigger picture (beyond just the bottom line) to get things done
4. Have a flexible degree that lets you transition seamlessly across sectors – public, private, and not-for-profit
5. Improve your professional knowledge, skills & abilities and thus open up new career opportunities
6. Meet passionate and committed individuals who share your interests
7. Prepare yourself for a rapidly changing economy and globalized world
8. Develop your decision-making, judgment & leadership skills
9. Have an impact on public policy on whatever level you're working on
10. Because an MPA or MPP will help you succeed at items 1 through 9 more than a JD or MBA

If you like the missions, goals, and security of government service, consider the MPA or MPP (and related undergraduate degrees).

## Marketing Yourself for a Second Career

Between 0900 and 1130 on **Wednesday, 08 August 2012**, a lecture/Q&A session on making the transition from the Coast Guard to the civilian work force will be held in the Constantine classroom of the MCPOCG building. If you plan to leave the Coast Guard in the next five years, you and your spouse are strongly encouraged to attend. Topics covered will include:

- Competition in the job hunt
- Civilian employers' perceptions about military personnel
- Planning your job search
- Résumés, cover letters, broadcast letters, etc.
- How employers read your résumé
- Networking & the hidden job market
- Preparing for and conducting a successful interview
- Salary negotiations and benefits

To sign up, contact Mr. Gary Adams at [ronald.g.adams@uscg.mil](mailto:ronald.g.adams@uscg.mil) or 202-372-4089.

### Aviation Ratings ERATS Implementation Update

According to ALCOAST 262/12 (<http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/doc/ALCOAST262-12.pdf>), transition of the aviation ratings from the current enlisted professional development system to ERATS (Enlisted Rating Advancement Training System) is ahead of schedule.

Originally, these ratings weren't scheduled to fall under ERATS until May 2013. But as of 02 August 2012 AET, AMT and AST Enlisted Performance Qualifications (EPQs), Performance Qualification Guides (PQGs), and end-of-course tests will be replaced by Rating Performance Qualifications (RPQs) and Rating Advancement Tests (RATs).

For complete information on what ERATS is and how it works, ALCOAST 577/11 (<http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/doc/ALCOAST577-11.pdf>).

### 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.

## What Happens After I Submit a TA Request?

Many first-time users of tuition assistance (TA) don't know what to do after they've submitted a request for TA. First, after receiving notification that your request has been approved, download it and review it carefully to make sure there are no errors.

If there aren't you provide the authorization to your school (the cashier, bursar, or whomever the official is who takes your money) after putting your SSN on it and signing it.

After you finish the course, you have to provide a grade report to your ESO for every course listed on the authorization. Do this as soon as your grade report becomes available.

For more detailed information about what to expect after submitting your TA request and about your responsibilities while taking a TA-funded course and afterward, go to <http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/ta-b.asp>.

## Alternatives to Fixed-Term College Courses

Have you thought about taking CLEP tests as a way to earn college credit, but then rejected the idea because studying on your own doesn't work for you? Or have you thought about taking college courses, but rejected that idea because they take too much time or because you're concerned ops may get in the way of completing a course? If so, check out self-paced college courses (<http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/schools.asp#self-paced>).

They have the benefit of being quicker to complete than semester- or quarter-based college courses (most schools allow you to complete them in as few as six weeks) while they're structured so you learn the material in digestible chunks rather than being left completely on your own.

These courses have the added benefit of not being tied to a traditional term: you can start at any time. They also give you a huge amount of flexibility: you can take almost as long as you want to complete the course (up to 12 months in most cases) and there are no set dates for lessons or tests. And some schools offer whole degree programs this way.

Check out some of the many reputable schools which offer self-paced (or independent study) courses at <http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/schools.asp#self-paced>.

## Occupational Certification & Apprenticeship Programs

A number of occupational certification programs are available through your ESO. The United Services Military Apprenticeship Program (USMAP - <https://usmap.cnet.navy.mil/usmapss/static/usmap.jsp>) is a program that allows regular Coast Guard members to earn apprenticeship certification in any of 125 skills learned through work experience and related technical instruction. All you have to do is document the experience you gain while performing your regular military duties; no after-hours work is required.

You can also get a credential (certification or license) in dozens of different occupational fields (<http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/cert.asp>) through a large number of nationally-recognized certification organizations. Here's a small sampling of the fields in which you can get certified:

- automotive service professional

- dental assistant
- contract manager
- medical technologist
- personal trainer
- human resources specialist
- computer networking professional
- project management
- facilities management.

And if you're eligible for GI Bill benefits, you can likely get reimbursed up to \$2,000 for the cost of each certification or licensing exam.

## Scholarships

Below are descriptions of a number of scholarships open to military personnel, their dependents, or both. ***Be aware, however, that these are just a few of thousands of scholarships 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>.

### Waldorf College

(courtesy of Mr. Marc Fagenbaum, full-time ESO at Base Miami)

To recognize the sacrifices made by the family members of military servicemembers and public safety personnel (firefighters, law enforcement officers, EMTs & dispatchers) Waldorf College in Iowa will award eight scholarships for on-line students and two for residential students in 2012 through the Hero Behind the Hero Scholarship Program.

Two scholarships (one for the military spouse or dependent and one for the firefighters/law enforcement officer spouse or dependent) will be presented on the award dates listed. Applicants not selected may continue to apply for a maximum of five scholarship award dates.

#### **Scholarship Application Periods**

01 JUN 2012 – 31 JUL 2012  
01 AUG 2012 – 30 SEP 2012  
01 OCT 2012 – 30 NOV 2012

#### **Scholarship Award Dates**

August 2012 (on-line)  
October 2012 (on-line)  
December 2012 (on-line)

Go to <http://www.waldorf.edu/Online/Tuition---Financing/Scholarships/Hero-Behind-the-Hero> for more information and a link to an on-line application. Or you can e-mail [hero@waldorf.edu](mailto:hero@waldorf.edu) or call 877-267-2157.

## 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/sitest.asp>.

## 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 (0800): Defense Language Proficiency Tests

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

Fridays (0745): 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](mailto: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 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.