
Frequently Asked Questions: Examinations

1. How do I know what examination I will need to take?

The credential being requested as well as each applicant's situation and qualifications vary. Therefore, a full evaluation must be completed before a determination of what examination will be required is made. To get an understanding of the examination modules that may be required, you can view our Examination Guides published for specific regulations as follows:

1. A mariner seeking an original national endorsement or raise of grade based on training or service started before March 24, 2014, will be examined under the regulations and policy in effect before that date unless they have specifically requested to examine for their endorsement under current regulations and policy. The specific examination required can be accessed in the [Guide for Administration of Merchant Marine Examinations \(Deck & Engineering Guide\)](#) dated June 2011.
- A mariner seeking an original national endorsement or raise of grade based on training or service started on or after March 24, 2014, will be examined under the current regulations and policy. The specific examination required can be accessed in the [Deck and Engineering Guide for the Administration of Merchant Marine Examinations](#) dated August 2014.

For some endorsements, courses can be taken in lieu of an examination. A complete list of approved courses can be accessed by clicking [here](#).

2. What do I need to study for my upcoming examination and where can I locate study material?

For those testing under the policy and regulations in effect before 24 March 2014, information on the examination modules administered for each endorsement can be found in the [Guide for Administration of Merchant Marine Examinations \(Deck & Engineering Guide\)](#) dated June 2011.

For those testing under the policy and regulations in effect on or after 24 March 2014, information on the examination modules administered for each endorsement can be found in the [Deck and Engineering Guide for the Administration of Merchant Marine Examinations](#) dated August 2014.

The Coast Guard has published a sample examination and topic structure for each credential requiring examination under 46 CFR Subpart B. This material can be accessed on the [Examinations](#) home page by clicking on the Sample Exams tab.

Reference material utilized in the development of questions for deck endorsement exams can be accessed by clicking [here](#).

Reference material utilized in the development of questions for engine endorsement exams can be accessed by clicking [here](#).

3. How do I sign up to take an examination?

Before taking a Coast Guard Examination, you must be evaluated and sent an approval to test letter. After you receive your letter, examinations can be scheduled using our [online appointment scheduler](#). Select the Regional Exam Center where you want to examine and the examination you are approved for. Follow the instructions located on the website in order to complete the scheduling process.

4. While taking my examination I failed a module(s). When can I retake the module(s) I failed?

The retest policy is based on the requirements of 46 CFR 11.217 and 46 CFR 12.205, and can be found in the [Deck and Engineering Guide for the Administration of Merchant Marine Examinations](#) dated August 2014, or by clicking [here](#).

5. Why are the examination questions and illustrations no longer available on the Website?

The [Coast Guard Authorization Act of 2015](#) requires several actions regarding Merchant Mariner Credentialing. In accordance with Section 315: Examinations for Merchant Mariner Credentials, the Coast Guard has ceased public disclosure of examination questions and illustrations. In place of this information, the Coast Guard now provides an outline of merchant mariner examination topics as well as sample examinations. This information can be accessed on the [Examinations](#) home page by clicking on the Sample Exams tab.

6. What is the Challenge – Comment process?

If an examination module is failed by a single question, an applicant will be given the opportunity to review the module. Prior to leaving the examination room, the applicant may submit a challenge on up to two questions that were scored as incorrect. The applicant must explain why they believe there is something wrong with the question that prevents it from being answered correctly. For example: No correct answer, multiple correct answers, or the question is poorly worded. All calculations for mathematical problems must be included. No references, other than those allowed in the examination room, may be utilized for the purpose of substantiating the challenge.

If an applicant would like to comment on any aspect of the examination process, please submit them to the examiner. Comments will not affect the applicant's score, but will be reviewed in the continuing effort to improve the quality of both the examination questions and the examination process itself.

All challenges and/or comments are to be submitted in writing utilizing the [Examination Challenge/Comment Sheet](#) provided by the examiner.