

Frequently Asked Questions: Examinations

1. How do I know what examination I 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. View our [Deck and Engineering Examination Guide](#) for a better understanding of the examination modules that may be required.

2. What courses can be taken in lieu of examination?

For some endorsements, courses can be taken in lieu of examination. Refer to our [Approved Courses List](#).

3. Do I need an appointment to take an examination?

Yes, an examination appointment must be scheduled at least 2 business days in advance.

Examination modules must be taken in consecutive examination periods.

First Class Pilot examinations must be coordinated with a Regional Examination Center (REC).

4. How can I pay for my examination?

[Pay.gov](#) is the preferred method of payment. Please keep a receipt of payment for your records as it will be required to take an examination.

5. How early should I arrive at the REC for an examination?

For registration purposes, arrive 30 minutes prior to your appointment. Allow ample time for travel. If you arrive late for the start of an examination period, you will not have a full 3 1/2-hour examination period to complete a module.

6. When taking an examination, what can I take into the examination room with me?

See the list of [Examination Room Materials](#) on the NMC Website.

7. How do I receive my Open Book Renewal Examination?

As of May 1, 2020, open book renewal examinations are no longer sent from the REC or Monitoring Unit (MU). Now, open book renewal examinations are issued from the NMC.

First, you must receive an Approval to Test (ATT) letter detailing the renewal modules required. ATT letters will: (1) direct you to pay your exam fee at [pay.gov](https://www.pay.gov), and then (2) send an e-mail directly to NMCRenewalExams@uscg.mil or contact the NMC CSC by using the [NMC online chat system](#), by e-mailing IASKNMC@uscg.mil, or by calling 1-888-IASKNMC (427-5662).

See the Renewal Examinations webpage here for more details.

8. What if I have questions regarding an open book renewal examination?

Send an e-mail directly to NMCRenewalExams@uscg.mil or contact the NMC CSC by using the [NMC online chat system](#), by e-mailing IASKNMC@uscg.mil, or by calling 1-888-IASKNMC (427-5662).

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

To get an understanding of the examination modules that may be required, you can view our [Examination Guide](#) and the examination topic tables listed in 46 CFR Parts 11 and 12.

The Coast Guard published a sample examination and topic structure for each credential requiring examination under 46 CFR Subpart B. You can access this material on the Examinations webpage by clicking on the [Sample Examinations](#) tab.

A list of reference material used in creating examination questions can be found on the Examinations webpage by clicking on the [Deck or Engine Reference Library](#).

Reference publications and text books used in the development of examination questions and illustrations can be accessed on the Examinations webpage by clicking on the [Taking Examinations](#) tab.

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

Before taking a Coast Guard Examination, you must be evaluated and sent an ATT letter. After you receive your letter, examinations can be scheduled using our online appointment scheduler on the [Schedule Exam/REC Appointment](#) tab of the Examinations webpage. Select the REC where you want to take your examination and the examination you are approved for. Follow the instructions located on the website in order to complete the scheduling process.

You may also contact the NMC Customer Service Center by using the [NMC online chat system](#), by e-mailing IASKNMC@uscg.mil, or by calling 1-888-IASKNMC (427-5662).

11. 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 Examination Guide](#).

12. 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 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 Examinations](#) tab.

13. 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 of 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 used for the purpose of substantiating the challenge.

If an applicant would like to comment on any aspect of the examination process, the examiner will provide a Challenge/Comment form to submit comments. 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. However, open book renewal examinations only allow for Comments to be submitted and an Open Book Renewal Examination Comment sheet will be provided with the open book renewal examination.