

# Best Practices

University of Maryland University College

## Flexibility, Targeted Responses to Students' Specific Needs, and Strong Relationships Create a Culture of Success for Current Military and Veteran Students



### Policy Paves the Way

The University of Maryland University College (UMUC) provides all students with the opportunity to receive undergraduate credit for knowledge and achievements obtained through nontraditional experiences. Undergraduate students may earn a total of up to one-half the credits required for their degree through prior learning credit (usually no [more] than 60 credits.)

Additional information about UMUC's CLEP® exam credit policies is available at [www.umuc.edu/students/support/exams/clep.cfm](http://www.umuc.edu/students/support/exams/clep.cfm).

#### University of Maryland University College: A Profile

UMUC is a member of the University System of Maryland and specializes in providing career-relevant educational opportunities to students around the world. UMUC delivers career-relevant online programs to professionals through its 95+ degree and certificate programs. With a student body of more than 84,000, divisions in Asia and Europe, and a presence on military installations in more than 20 countries and territories, UMUC is a recognized leader in providing education services to the U.S. military.



The mission of UMUC is to offer the best customer service and to always put students first. It's good that students know we are there for them. We serve primarily active duty and former military students, and we work to create great working relationships with the Education Service Officers throughout the military community. That helps to keep CLEP information front and center so active duty members have access to opportunities."

**Elba Zarabia**

Coordinator, Dorsey Station/Curtis Bay and Fort Meade National Testing Centers  
Department of Military Partnerships

## Creating Opportunities for Student Success

UMUC accepts up to 30 credit hours from CLEP exams and those credits can be applied toward either an associate or a bachelor's degree. UMUC may award up to six credits each for CLEP exams in English, mathematics, the natural sciences, the social sciences, history, and the humanities. The students who score high enough in world language CLEP exams can earn up to 12 hours of credit.

Jose Mobley notes that active military students are pursuing higher educational opportunities in a variety of areas, including the humanities, mathematics, and business management. Elba Zarabia also notes that active and former military personnel alike are taking CLEP exams and courses related to computer and information technology, such as math, algebra, and information technology.

Mobley, who works from the Eglin Air Force Base, noted that active military members typically attend an education-focused informational session as part of their indoctrination. He stated, "It's particularly rewarding to see the junior ranks coming in to take their first CLEP exam. For many of them, this is their very first college-level exam, and we have the honor of witnessing their start at meeting their educational goals."

CLEP exams are featured prominently in orientation sessions so personnel become familiar with the opportunities available early in their military careers. For example, at the National Testing Centers, brochures are available that provide detailed information about CLEP exams that will help Air Force members earn credits toward an associate degree with the Community College of the Air Force. Mobley also pointed out that Eglin supervisors continually encourage Air Force members to take CLEP exams.

## Leveraging Available Channels to Keep Prospective Students Informed

UMUC works closely with military base Education Service Officers, so active duty members are aware of opportunities for higher education during and following their military tenure. UMUC places announcements and advertising in base bulletins distributed via email, and taps into base social media and websites as well. This continual flow of information reaches base senior leadership and the commanders, and through these channels, information reaches military troops. CLEP information from the College Board is available in all UMUC testing centers to keep military personnel informed about all the exams available to them.

UMUC representatives also note that there are new changes affecting the Army Tuition Assistance program, in which soldiers will be eligible for tuition assistance upon successfully completing one year of service following graduation from Advanced Individual Training (AIT). This change opens new opportunities for service members, and CLEP testing will help these active military personnel complete their basic general education and academic requirements.



We believe CLEP testing has grown in popularity because of the invaluable importance that it brings to the table by advancing someone's educational career and helping them capture the required college credits in the shortest amount of time possible. In addition, the support system that comes from the Education Center staff, supervisors, mentors, first sergeants, and the base senior leadership is vital for our military to reach their educational goals."

**Jose Mobley**

Test Site Administrator, Department of Military Partnerships — Eglin AFB National Testing Center

## A Marathon Produces Results...

In May 2014, the UMUC Eglin AFB National Testing Center conducted a testing marathon. The team opened their test centers for extended hours to accommodate students' school, work, and family schedules. Test volume more than doubled, going from the typical 42 tests a week to nearly 120 tests per week — and more than half of those were CLEP exams. Another CLEP marathon is planned for spring 2015.

## Outreach Matters

The UMUC team noted that they developed a frequently asked questions (FAQs) handout that includes information about days and times for testing, exam titles available, locations, fees, and other details for distribution to the entire UMUC registration and advising staff. Test center information is also easily accessible on the UMUC website.

UMUC enthusiastically suggests that other institutions spread the word via every possible opportunity, including military/college staff information sessions, marketing flyers, and communications with adviser teams to share updates in policies and procedures.

## A Virtual Learning Center Helps Students Prepare Effectively

UMUC test center leaders and advisers counsel students to prepare for CLEP exams. Although Eglin AFB does not have a traditional library, it offers students a virtual learning center from which students can access study guides and fact sheets about each CLEP exam. Students are advised to get the textbooks recommended in the study materials so they can prepare effectively for their exams.

## Executive Summary

University of Maryland University College serves more than 84,000 students in the U.S. and around the world and offers credits for CLEP exams in the natural sciences, the humanities, the social sciences, history, biology, chemistry, economics, English, finance, government, mathematics, and sociology. Many of the college's global locations are in military installations, so military personnel have immediate access to the college's programs.

## UMUC CLEP® by the Numbers

Location	Open Since	CLEP Exams Delivered Since Inception Until September 2014	Days of Operation
Andrews	March 2006	8,009	Monday–Thursday
Travis	June 2007	7,840	Monday–Thursday
Bolling*	February 2008	1,636	Tuesday–Friday
Dorsey	May 2011	147	Tuesday
Eglin	July 2012	1,819	Monday–Friday
Fort Meade	June 2010	2,352	Wednesday–Friday

\* Note: Bolling was closed from 9/19/2012–9/10/2013.

## CLEP in Action Supporting Student Success

UMUC officials tell the story of one of their many memorable students. This student came to UMUC with 66 credits earned at a community college. She talked with a UMUC adviser at Dorsey Station and shared her needs and expectations. The student needed to finish her degree as soon as possible because her current government job required a bachelor's degree for her next promotion. The adviser explained the advantage of taking CLEP exams and how these exams can accelerate the path to earning a degree. The student had never heard about CLEP exams before and she was genuinely pleased with the plan her UMUC adviser created for her. The student completed her Bachelor in Management Studies in only one year (from 06/16/2013 to 06/24/2014). Twenty four of the credits came from CLEP exams.

## UMUC Best Practices at a Glance

- Develop and grow relationships with Education Service Officers on military bases to provide information and support to active duty military personnel
- Make test-preparation materials available through online channels for optimum student access
- Offer flexible testing center hours to accommodate students' schedules

For more information, visit [clep.collegeboard.org](http://clep.collegeboard.org).