



UNITED STATES
COAST GUARD
ACADEMY

2026 AIM Handbook

Rev. April 2026

Please check back periodically for updated versions of this handbook as the guidance is subject to change.



Foreword

Since 1790, in war and peace, the Coast Guard has protected the citizens of the United States and the nation's maritime interests. On 1 March 2003, the Coast Guard entered the Department of Homeland Security and embarked on a new era of public service. Our flexibility makes us a unique instrument of national security, allowing us to carry out economic, environmental, humanitarian, law enforcement, and national defense missions. Along our nation's coasts we stop drugs, illegal migration, and pollution. Around the world, we assist developing nations in establishing and training their Coast Guards and Navies. This is why we are regarded as the world's premier maritime service.

The Coast Guard Academy is one of the most selective schools in the country, usually admitting only about 15% of applicants. We combine one of the most highly regarded undergraduate educations with the training required to lead the world's finest professional maritime service members. All graduates of the Academy receive a Bachelor of Science Degree in their selected major and a commission as a Coast Guard Officer, forming a new generation of leaders in our unique maritime military force. As a commissioned officer in the Coast Guard, they lead men and women who are continually called on to serve their community, country, and humanity.

The Academy Introduction Mission (AIM) will likely be one of the most challenging yet rewarding experiences of your life. As an AIMSTER you will learn exactly what it takes to become a cadet at the United States Coast Guard Academy. Make no mistake, AIM is a very realistic program, designed to challenge and inspire you. It will test your self-discipline, physical and mental toughness, commitment to service, and your capacity for teamwork. Rest assured that the cadet cadre, Academy faculty and staff are focused on YOUR success and in helping you take full advantage of the opportunities that AIM offers.

I look forward to having you join us!



Captain Andrew J. Behnke
Director of Admissions
U.S. Coast Guard Academy '01

The AIM Experience

It is important that you make an informed decision about which colleges you apply to and the one you ultimately choose to attend. Our goal at AIM is to provide you with the opportunity to see if the Academy is right for you and if you have what it takes to succeed. You will experience the rigor, discipline, and rewards of the Coast Guard Academy personally, just like a cadet. This includes the military discipline, physical training, and team building experiences that are the cornerstone of our Swab Summer program. Expect to be pushed physically with extensive running, push-ups, planks, calisthenics, and other physical activities. You will intentionally be placed in safe, yet *high-stress* situations like our cadets; you will learn to respond effectively in times of difficulty or crisis, like you might experience during a Coast Guard mission. Learn more regarding what to expect here: <https://www.uscga.edu/what-to-expect/>

You will also meet faculty and staff, learning about our academic, military, and athletic programs, and talk with cadets who have sailed America's Tall Ship EAGLE, flown in Coast Guard aircraft, and began their leadership journey at USCGA. Most importantly, you will meet with Coast Guard professionals who are protecting our nation right now. In summary, this is not merely a college orientation program. AIM is intended to let you lead the life of a cadet and expose you to the Coast Guard and our various missions.

The Honor Concept

There exists a higher standard of conduct that can neither be delineated by laws nor defined by regulations. It is the Coast Guard's core values of Honor, Respect, and Devotion to Duty.

Since Coast Guard cadets are called to a life of public service, their words and signatures are regarded as verification of the truth. Cadets live by the hallowed words: "who lives here reveres honor; honors duty." They will neither lie, cheat, steal, nor attempt to deceive. The Honor concept is epitomized by an individual who places loyalty to duty above loyalty to personal friendship or selfish desire. In embodying the core value of Respect, we expect AIM participants to act in a respectful manner toward their platoon members and cadre throughout the program. Through the final core value, Devotion to Duty, we ask that you embrace the academic, athletic, and leadership building throughout the entirety of the program. Embrace each challenge that you face to help you grow and excel in each of these pillars. While attending AIM, we encourage you to embody the spirit of this concept and make it your own.

Physical Training

Cadets are always on the go, and at AIM, you will be too. Expect to be running to every training, meeting, and lecture you attend throughout the week and participating in multiple group and individual exercises daily. To get in shape, we recommend a rigorous daily schedule of workouts that include warming-up, stretching, running, push-ups, planks in the weeks prior to AIM. New England summers are notorious for their unrelenting heat and humidity. Although we plan to air condition the barracks, **it is important to prepare in advance**. By following the steps discussed below, you can become acclimated to these conditions before you arrive, making your transition more comfortable. Start acclimating at least one month before reporting.

First, begin to exercise regularly to prepare yourself for the physical rigors of the week. You can utilize the Fitness Preparation Guidelines detailed for students entering SWAB summer as a reference available on our [Get Set](#) page. While this is an older document in that the Physical Fitness Exam has changed, these guidelines provide sample workouts that can help you prepare. For the most up-to-date guidelines for the Physical Fitness Exam, please view our [Admission Requirements - United States Coast Guard Academy](#) page.

Second, start to reach and maintain optimal hydration. Drink 8-16 ounces of water or non-carbonated fluids every 2-4 hours. Drink 2-3 glasses of fluid over the two hours before strenuous activity and maintain hydration during the activity by drinking 4-8 ounces every 30-60 minutes. Avoid caffeinated beverages, as these promote dehydration. Since you may experience warm conditions and delays en route to New London, please carry a water bottle with you and maintain your hydration as outlined above.

AIM Medical

AIM medical staff consists of licensed, contracted medical professionals, including EMT-certified personnel, to deliver first aid and immediate emergency response care. Students will not be treated on campus beyond first aid care and immediate emergency response. Students who require further medical assistance will receive care from the local emergency room or walk-in clinic. Care rendered to AIM attendees by civilian physicians and hospitals are at the expense of parent(s)/guardian(s) and insurance policies held by the same. AIM students **MUST** bring their insurance card with them. AIM students will not be treated on campus nor will they be treated by Coast Guard personnel, except as stated above. Students without medical insurance will not be eligible to attend AIM.

A medical release form and medical history form are part of your acceptance paperwork. You will not be considered registered for AIM until these forms are received. The U.S. Coast Guard Academy will immediately contact your parent(s)/guardian(s) if warranted by a medical emergency. Eligible military beneficiaries should bring their ID cards.

***Please Note:** Medical qualification for AIM does not indicate that you will be qualified for entry into the Coast Guard Academy. All direct entry applicants will be provided a full medical exam through the Department of Defense Medical Exam Review Board (DoDMERB), an independent military contractor, in order to determine medical eligibility. AIM medical clearance is solely to ensure the safety of all participants throughout the week, as a full medical evaluation is not feasible before completion of an application. Common medical disqualifiers for direct entry include color-blindness, certain types of medication use, asthma, and vision not correctable to 20/20. More information on medical standards can be found at <https://www.uscga.edu/common-disqualifying-medical-conditions/>.

Acceptance & Enrollment Paperwork

To execute the AIM Program safely and effectively, the Coast Guard Academy Admissions Team must receive a series of documents and acknowledgements signifying that the prospective AIMSTER is ready to attend the program. Students who are offered appointments to in-person AIM sessions are REQUIRED to submit the following requirements to their application portal in order to be enrolled in AIM:

1. **AIM Medical History and Clearance Form (due May 29th):** This form signifies that a student is physically and mentally fit to attend the program. This form requires the signature of a parent or legal guardian AND the signature/endorsement of a licensed Physician (MD or DO) or a Physician's Assistant or Registered Nurse Practitioner at said Physician's direction who will ultimately determine a student's physical readiness.
2. **Scanned Copy of Medical Insurance Card (due May 29th):** As stated in the medical section above, students requiring medical care beyond basic first aid or immediate emergency response will receive care from the local emergency room or walk-in clinic. All associated expenses will be billed through the medical insurance policies of parent(s)/guardian(s). As such, you will be required to submit a scanned copy (both front and back) of your medical insurance card to attend. Students **MUST** also bring physical copies of their medical insurance cards, which will be collected and securely stored by AIM program staff at check-in and returned to students prior to departing the program.
3. **Tuition Payment (due May 29th):** Please use the Hometown Ticketing link provided in your decision letter to pay the \$750 tuition fee. Once you have received payment confirmation, please upload a copy of your receipt to your application portal. If your plans change and you are no longer able to attend your designated AIM week, tuition refund requests are due no later than June 5th. We cannot guarantee a refund for requests received after this date.
4. **Travel Survey & Acknowledgements (due June 12th):** For planning purposes, the AIM team needs to have your travel plans in advance of the program. The image release acknowledgement signifies that the parent/legal guardian gives permission for photographic

and/or video images to be taken of the AIM participant during their participation in the AIM Program that may be posted on official U.S. Coast Guard Academy websites or used in future U.S. Coast Guard, U.S. Coast Guard Academy, or AIM Program recruiting materials. The rules and expectations acknowledgement signifies that both the student and parent(s)/guardian(s) have familiarized themselves with the program rules and expectations and understand grounds for removal from the program, administrative procedures, and student accountability policies for the AIM program.

Scholarship Instructions

A limited number of tuition and travel scholarships are available for students demonstrating financial need on a case-by-case basis. The scholarship request form is available at <https://www.uscga.edu/get-set/>. Scholarship request forms must be completed and submitted to the portal by **May 15th**. Students awarded a scholarship will be notified by **May 22nd** and will receive further registration instructions as needed.

Automobiles/Driving at CGA

Driving directions to the U.S. Coast Guard Academy are available on the Academy's website, at <https://www.uscga.edu/directions/>.

The USCGA is a military facility and complies with the REAL ID act. Please visit our [website](#) for additional information and note that all adults (18+) must present a REAL ID to access campus. Minors under the age of 18 are able to access the campus without a passport or license as long as their guardian has a valid ID. **Please ensure everyone over the age of 18 coming to campus has a REAL ID.**

Due to the number of cars on base for all Academy activities, parking is limited for pick-up and drop-off days, and some vehicles may be required to park in off-base overflow lots.

Student Accountability & Travel Logistics

Accountability for all AIM Participants is paramount. This section provides expectations of student accountability throughout the entirety of the AIM program.

Arrival & Check-In

AIMSTERS must report to Leamy Hall no later than 3:30 pm EST on reporting-in day (Coast Guard Academy Campus Map available online at <https://uscga.edu/cadet-life/campus-map/>). Please plan to arrive on Campus NO EARLIER THAN 12:00 pm EST. Please do not attempt to check-in at Leamy Hall before 12:30 pm EST. If you arrive on campus prior to 12:30 pm EST,

feel free to tour campus on your own until check-in begins. All vehicle traffic is directed to enter via the **Main Gate**.

Check-In normally begins at 12:30 pm, with registration taking approximately 40 minutes. Early arrivals will watch a video. Snacks will be provided; however, please eat lunch prior to reporting in. Once assembled, as early as 4:00 pm, AIMSTERS will leave for their rooms with the rest of their company. And remember: **HYDRATE, HYDRATE, HYDRATE!**

Arrival attire should include appropriate athletic gear, which is neat in appearance. This includes broken-in sneakers, t-shirts with limited, appropriate graphics, shorts that are of an appropriate length, and overall comfortable clothing items that you can run and exercise in.

If you are delayed and will arrive after 3:30 pm, call the AIM Operations Center (OPCEN) at (860) 701-6284. Indicate that you are an AIM student.

Students Accompanied by a Parent(s)/Guardian(s)

Students who are accompanied by a parent(s)/guardian(s) will remain under the supervision and care of the parent(s)/guardian(s) up until the designated check-in area in Leamy Hall.

Once students begin the check-in process and are separated from their parent(s)/guardian(s), the student is under the supervision and care of the AIM Program Staff and Cadre for the duration of the AIM Program.

Unaccompanied Students

We understand that coordinating travel for both students and parent(s)/guardian(s) is not always feasible or cost permissive. In the event a student is traveling unaccompanied to the program, they will remain under the supervision and care of the parent(s)/guardian(s) until they have formally checked in with an AIM Program Staff Member at the airport or on Campus at the Coast Guard Academy.

An Unaccompanied Student Shuttle service will be available to transport students from **Bradley International Airport (Hartford, CT)** and from **T.F. Green International Airport (Providence, RI)** to the Coast Guard Academy on Check-In Day with a maximum capacity of **50 students per shuttle**. An AIM Program Staff Member will be present to check-in and escort all unaccompanied students onto the Shuttle at the airport.

- The Bradley International Airport (Hartford, CT) Unaccompanied Student Shuttle will DEPART from the airport at **11:00 am EST** and **2:00 pm EST** on Check-In Day each week.
- The T.F. Green International Airport (Providence, RI) Unaccompanied Student Shuttle will DEPART from the airport at **11:00 am EST** and **2:00 pm EST** on Check-In Day each week.

NOTE: To ride the unaccompanied student shuttle, students **MUST** sign up to take the shuttle on their **Travel Survey**, which is available on your application portal as an application requirement. Your Travel Survey is due no later than 4:00 pm EST on **June 12th, 2026**. It will be the responsibility of the **parent(s)/guardian(s)** to arrange any lodging / alternative transportation from the airport to the Academy if a student misses the shuttle for any reason. Unaccompanied students who miss the shuttle will remain under the care and supervision of the parent(s)/guardian(s) until they check in on campus with AIM Program Staff.

The New London Amtrak Train Station (Union Station – NLC) is located at **27 Water St, New London, CT 06320**, approximately 1.5 miles from the CGA Campus. It will be the responsibility of parent(s)/guardian(s) to arrange transportation for their students from the train station to the Coast Guard Academy Campus. Unaccompanied Students arriving via car, Uber, Lyft, Taxi, or other Ride Share program are directed to the Coast Guard Academy's **Main Gate**.

Lodging for students arriving prior to Sunday will **NOT** be provided by the Coast Guard Academy and will be at the expense and the responsibility of parent(s)/guardian(s). If it is necessary for an unaccompanied student to arrive in Connecticut prior to Sunday due to travel restrictions, parent(s)/guardian(s) are advised to contact hotels located nearby Bradley International and T.F. Green International Airports directly to arrange lodging and transportation for unaccompanied students.

Graduation & Departure Accountability

The AIM Program will conclude after the Graduation Ceremony on Friday each week. Students will collect their belongings and check out with their cadre/AIM Program Staff before leaving the program. Transit to local airports takes approximately 45 minutes to 1 hour. If departing by car, please plan to depart Campus no later than **1:30 pm**.

Students Accompanied by Parent(s)/Guardian(s)

Parent(s)/Guardian(s) will resume responsibility for their students after the graduation ceremony concludes. After students have collected their belongings and checked out with their Cadre, they

will no longer be under the supervision and care of the AIM Program Staff nor Cadre and will NOT be allowed to re-enter Chase Hall for any reason.

Unaccompanied Students

An Unaccompanied Student Shuttle service will be available to transport students from the Coast Guard Academy to **Bradley International Airport (Hartford, CT)** and to **T.F. Green International Airport (Providence, RI)** on Graduation Day.

- The Bradley International Airport (Hartford, CT) Unaccompanied Student Shuttle will DEPART from the Coast Guard Academy at **1:00 pm EST** on Graduation Day each week.
- The T.F. Green International Airport (Providence, RI) Unaccompanied Student Shuttle will DEPART from the Coast Guard Academy at **1:00 pm EST** on Graduation Day each week.

For students traveling via Amtrak Train, it will be the responsibility of parent(s)/guardian(s) to arrange transportation for their students from the Coast Guard Academy Campus to the Train Station. Unaccompanied Students departing via car, Uber, Lyft, Taxi, or other Ride Share program are directed to the Coast Guard Academy's **Main Gate**.

NOTE: To ride the unaccompanied student shuttle, students **MUST** sign up to take the shuttle on their **Travel Survey**, which is a required form on their application portal. If a travel survey is not submitted, the student's name will not be on the Unaccompanied Student Shuttle Roster. Your Travel Survey is due no later than 4:00 pm EST on **June 13th, 2025**. It will be the responsibility of the **parent(s)/guardian(s)** to arrange any lodging / alternative transportation from the Academy to the airport if a student misses the shuttle for any reason.

To avoid travel complications, **do not schedule airline departures for unaccompanied students before 5:00 pm EST.** Overnight lodging in Chase Hall or anywhere on CGA Campus after Graduation will **NOT** be permitted or available. If there are no flights departing from either Bradley International Airport or T.F. Green International Airport that fit your unaccompanied student's travel needs, students are advised to take the Unaccompanied Student Shuttle to the airport and parent(s)/guardian(s) will be responsible for arranging lodging for the student until the departure flight.

Rooms and Meals

During AIM, you will be housed in Chase Hall, the largest building on the U.S. Coast Guard Academy campus. All rooms for AIM are designed for three people and include beds, desks, closets, and storage space. Your meals will be served on campus throughout your stay. On reporting-in day, your first meal is dinner on Sunday at 5:30 pm. Prior to that, you will have to

make your own arrangements off campus or bring a meal with you. Your last meal provided by the Academy will be breakfast on Graduation Day.

Rules and Regulations While Residing in Chase Hall

Compliance with these basic rules is **MANDATORY** for all students attending the AIM program. Non-compliance and/or disregard for these rules may result in dismissal from the program. Students dismissed for disciplinary infractions will not be refunded the cost of attendance and will be required to arrange their own travel home; they will not be allowed to remain on base.

1. Departing Chase Hall unescorted is not permitted. Departing Academy grounds is not permitted except for authorized medical reasons and requires Academy staff escort.
2. Use of smokeless tobacco, nicotine, or alcohol is not permitted.
3. Rooms:
 - No food is to be stored or prepared in Chase Hall rooms (this includes jam, butter, cheese, opening canned foods, bottles, and brewing coffee).
 - Occupants may not hang objects out of or in windows.
 - Rooms that are not your own are off limits unless invited and escorted by the residents of that room. Doors will remain open when you are visiting a room that is not your own.
 - Occupants shall maintain a neat and orderly room. The cadet cadre will teach you how to keep your rooms in good order. Whenever your room is unoccupied, beds must be made, the floor must be clean and swept, and the room must present an orderly appearance.
 - Valuables should be secured/stowed before you leave your room.
 - You must be in your own room and quiet by 10:00 pm.
4. Disruptive, dangerous, or disrespectful behavior is prohibited.

Program Separation Policy

All Coast Guard Academy staff and cadets aim to retain all AIM participants for the entire program and provide a rewarding, positive experience. *However, if a student needs or elects to be disenrolled from the program for ANY reason before the program concludes, it is the*

responsibility of the parent(s)/guardian(s) to arrange and pay for transportation home as soon as possible (within 48 hours). **Students not fully able or willing to participate in the program cannot be housed on campus and will be separated from the program immediately.**

Students requesting disenrollment will not be permitted to return to the program. AIM will operate under 80/20 graduation criteria, meaning that if a student is away from the company for a total of 24 or more cumulative hours throughout the six-day session, that student is not eligible to graduate from AIM.

What to Bring

You will have physical training every day, so please bring enough clothing for the entire week. There **may** be an opportunity for ONE laundry evolution mid-week. The temperatures may be in the 80s and 90s with possible rain and humidity. Dress in athletic gear, but neat in appearance. Sneakers are mandatory. The Academy will issue 4 AIM T-shirts and 4 pairs of AIM shorts, and will be distributed using sizing students provided in their application. Shorts are acceptable attire for the classrooms and Chase Hall.

Do not bring excessive amounts of money or other valuables. The Academy is not responsible for lost or stolen articles. The use of tablets, phones, iPads, smart watches, laptops, and other personal electronic devices will not be allowed during the program.

You should bring your cell phone to contact your parent(s)/guardian(s) or to alert the Academy of travel changes/delays. **Upon arrival, cell phones will be collected and stored in a secure location; they will not be returned until the program ends.**

Parent(s)/guardian(s) requiring urgent communication with their students should contact the Academy and direct their call to the **AIM OPCEN - (860) 701-6284.**

These items are required and should be brought to AIM:

- Medical insurance card, a copy of your medical history and clearance form, and your travel documents
- One set of twin sheets with pillowcase (standard size)
- Blanket/Comforter or Sleeping Bag
- Plain, Dark Navy Blue Crew Neck T-shirts (5)
Shirts must fit loosely, have sleeves, and not be altered in any way
- Athletic Shorts (5 pairs)
Shorts must fit loosely, not be altered in any way, and be large enough so undergarments will not be visible

- Underwear (at least 10 pairs)
- White Athletic Socks (at least 10 pairs)
- Athletic Compression Shorts (2 - optional)
- Appropriate Pajamas/Sleepwear
- Broken-in running shoes with excellent support (do not bring new shoes)
- Shower Shoes (flip flops that can be worn in the shower)
- Sweatshirt (optional, but recommended)
- Sweatpants (optional, but recommended)
- Towels (2)
- Washcloths (optional)
- Prescription medication (if needed)
- ***If you are taking prescription medication, please bring a letter from your physician indicating the medication being taken and dosage.**
- Toiletry articles and Toiletry Bag
- Sunscreen, SPF 30+
- Money (for souvenirs - optional)
- Wristwatch (optional) - Note: Smart Watches are NOT permitted
- Personal journal, Bible, or other book (optional, limit of three total)
- Lock for luggage (optional)

We also recommend that you hand carry these items if you are flying in the event your luggage is delayed:

- Military ID Card (for military dependents only) / Photo ID
- Copy of Medical Insurance Card
- Coast Guard Academy AIM Handbook
- Copies of all forms and required submission items in this packet
- Two pairs of glasses, or contact lenses, if you wear them. Contact lens wearers: bring the current written prescription (usually on the box) and your lens case with solution.

You will be provided:

- 4 AIM t-shirts
- 4 pairs of AIM shorts
- Water bottle
- Backpack
- Laundry Bag
- Reflective Belt
- Baseball Cap

- Pillow
- Bowsprit (workbook)

What NOT to Bring

- Electronics including laptops, tablets, iPads, iPods, MP3 players, smart watches.

Refund Policy

All tuition payments for AIM must be paid in full by **May 29th, 2026**. The ordering of supplies necessary to run the AIM program relies on the anticipated number of participants and tuition payments made. Therefore, there will be no tuition refunds for students who need or elect to disenroll from the program for any reason before the program concludes or for students who voluntarily rescind their acceptance to attend AIM after June 5th, 2026. All refund requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis and are not guaranteed.

Height and Weight Standards

Height and Weight standards for entry into the Coast Guard Academy are below. All students must be compliant in order to receive a full appointment at the Coast Guard Academy. Standards are gender neutral. These standards are based on a body mass index (BMI) of 27.5.

Height (INCHES)	Max Allowable Weight (LBS)
58	131
59	136
60	141
61	145
62	150
63	155
64	160
65	165
66	170
67	175
68	180
69	186
70	191
71	197
72	202
73	206
74	214
75	220
76	225
77	321
78	237
79	244

Communications

In case of a family emergency during the AIM program, a message can be left by calling the **AIM Operations Center at (860) 701-6284**.

For general questions related to AIM prior to the start of the program, please email or call your Admissions Officer, email AIM@uscga.edu, or call the Admissions Front Desk at (860) 444-8503.

Note to Parents

If you are planning to attend the Graduation Ceremony on Friday, we encourage you to participate in AIM activities from 8:30 am until about 12:00 pm. Attendance is voluntary.

A complementary coffee and light breakfast service will be provided for up to TWO guests per AIM Graduate. The campus will open for guest arrival starting at 8:30 am. Scheduled activities will be followed by a short graduation ceremony at 11:00 am.

The USCGA is a military facility and complies with the REAL ID act. Please visit our [website](#) for additional information and note that all adults (18+) must present a REAL ID to access campus. Minors under the age of 18 are able to access the campus without a passport or license as long as their guardian has a valid ID. **Please ensure everyone over the age of 18 coming to campus has a REAL ID.**

On behalf of the USCGA Cadets, Admissions Staff, Faculty, and Partners we look forward to the opportunity to have your daughters & sons as part of AIM 2026!