



Voluntary Education

Academic Explorer (AeX) – Search Engine for Academic Degree Programs

The **Academic Explorer** (www.MCAeX.net) or **AeX** is an open platform that provides military education counselors, as well as military service and family members with a powerful web-based tool for identifying and exploring post-secondary education options in an un-biased, standardized, and comprehensive manner. AeX does not require users to register with the system, or provide any personal information whatsoever. While the platform is available to all services, the Marine Corps' Lifelong Learning Program was the first to formally use AeX.

AeX currently contains comprehensive information on over 10,000 certificate and degree program offerings of 170 regionally and nationally accredited academic institutions that are participating on the platform, and provides students and counselors with one-stop access to fully accredited certificate and degree programs. This universe will grow by orders of magnitude in the months and years to come. Users can quickly and efficiently locate the academic institutions and educational programs that best meet their needs, thereby avoiding the overwhelming amount of information provided by generic web-based search engines. AeX also eliminates the need for users to learn and navigate through the individualized structure of each institution's website to find relevant information. Finally, it eliminates the need to draw from possible outdated information in print catalogs that may be available, or tap the personal knowledge and experience of counselors who may lack comprehensive information at their fingertips. The online search capability of AeX is robust. It allows users to search and evaluate post-secondary education programs at all levels – from Certificate Programs to Associates Degrees, Bachelors Degrees and beyond – using a variety of search criteria including: Keywords; Degree Level; Degree/Discipline; Location; Institution; and other criteria. The website is easy to use and presents information in a clear and helpful manner. Once users zero in on the degree programs, course offerings, or institutions that meet their criteria, they can then explore the details for each option right down to course descriptions, number of credits, prerequisites, and a host of other relevant information.

AeX has been formally adopted for use throughout the United States Marine Corps community. Discussions are also underway with the Navy and the Coast Guard to adopt and use AeX. Notwithstanding this, AeX is CURRENTLY open for use by all the services, and for that matter, the general public. AeX has also been acknowledged by the Council of College and Military Educators (CCME) as a valuable resource for the military education community. AeX also provides detailed profiles on all of the Marine Corps' Education Centers worldwide, as well as user-friendly and informational Roadmaps for Students and Counselors to use. As and when other services formally start using AeX, profiles for those services' Education Centers and service-specific Roadmaps for Students and Counselors can also be presented in AeX.

A monthly average of almost 2,000 visitors are accessing AeX and viewing an average of 12,500 pages of information on the website, and this usage is growing substantially from month to month.

