

Military OneSource Podcast — DANTES Kuder Journey

Episode transcript

Intro voiceover:

Welcome to the Military OneSource podcast. Military OneSource is an official program of the Defense Department, with tools, information and resources to help families navigate all aspects of military life. For more information, visit militaryonesource.mil.

[Bruce Moody]:

Welcome to the podcast. I'm Bruce Moody. On the podcast today, we have the Defense Activity for Non-Traditional Education Support, but everyone calls it DANTES. DANTES provides no-cost education and career-planning programs for service members, and joining us today is Mareba Mack. She is a DANTES program manager and we're going to talk about their college and career-planning program. It's called Kuder Journey. Mareba, welcome to the podcast.

[Mareba Mack]:

Thank you so much for that warm welcome. I am happy to be here, and I look forward to our conversation today.

[Bruce Moody]:

Excellent. Well, let's get right into it. First of all, what is Kuder Journey?

[Mareba Mack]:

Yeah, so Kuder Journey is an educational tool that is offered to our service members that will help them create an education and career path focused on their personal goals. And in doing so, they will be asked to complete three assessments based on their personal interests, their goals and their needs, and the results of those assessments are folded into a tailored program to assist them through their educative and career path.

[Bruce Moody]:

Who can use this program, Kuder Journey?

[Mareba Mack]:

One of the best parts about Kuder Journey is that all of our active duty service members are Coastguardsmen, Reserve service members. They are all welcome to use the

program, and it comes at no cost to them. And they're also given lifelong access to Kuder Journey and all the resources that that particular tool provides.

[Bruce Moody]:

What are some of the ways that this program can help its users?

[Mareba Mack]:

I can say this from a personal standpoint. I'm a beneficiary of this program from way back when I was on active duty, and the ways that it can help are pretty limitless and pretty timeless. As mentioned earlier, the tool will allow service members to complete three assessments. One assessment covers just their personal interests, and then the second one is their values, and the third one is their needs.

And it's really cool to talk about what everybody wants to do with their lives and with their careers, but ultimately, we have needs that we need to fulfill while in pursuit of those things, and so that's one way they can get a good grasp on their placement and their opportunities just based on those basic things: interests, values and needs.

And then the members are also provided with a tailored college and career plan based on those assessments. So therefore, our service members aren't walking around in the dark just trying to figure out a good place for them. Kuder will actually give them assessment results to target those interest areas. And so once our service members have those plans in hand, then they're free to make informed decisions regarding their future careers based on the findings of such a well-researched program.

[Bruce Moody]:

For people who are using this program, what do you find that is some of the more often-used parts of the program?

[Mareba Mack]:

It would definitely be the Holland Codes. For those of us who have been around for a little bit longer, we may remember the Myers-Briggs approach. The Holland Codes is similar to the Myers-Briggs, but the codes, they're a system to classify jobs in the categories, interest clusters or what they call work-personality environments. And so in the Holland model, these categories cover the full grasp of the whole person concept.

And the reason I say the Holland Codes is because it's very familiar to a lot of our service members already. It's used in many secondary education environments, and also, in a lot of professional environments, people will refer to the Holland Codes. So I think that's the thing that stands out in the minds of service members, and it's often the part that they access the most.

[Bruce Moody]:

Now, Kuder Journey offers a lot of options. What are some of the options of the program that people tend to miss, that they may find helpful if they were using it?

[Mareba Mack]:

I think primarily our service members aren't well aware of the fact that they have a lifelong access to the Kuder Journey system, which means that if they create a Kuder Journey profile very early in their career, that profile can be accessed multiple times. In the world of education, we tell service members to come early and come often. So we don't want them to establish this profile and never revisit it. We want them to establish it and go back down throughout the course of their careers. That way, they have a repository of all of their employment documents there.

The e-portfolio in the Kuder Journey assessment tool is a place where they can store their resumes, their cover letters, their transcripts, even things like letters of recommendations and things that our service members will get down throughout their career. So when it's time to make that transition, they have one centralized place that they can go to and put their hands on all of those documents.

[Bruce Moody]:

Yeah. So the question of, "What do I want to be when I grow up?" is a question that stays with us for our life, and it's good that we have lifelong access to something like Kuder Journey. Is there anything else that you want to share with us that would be beneficial for people to know?

[Mareba Mack]:

Yes. So one thing that is really crucial... So we have service members that'll go out and create these Kuder Journey profiles, and that's really good information for them to have on hand, but a way to plus up that experience is for them to take their assessment results in with them to their educational counselings, to give the counselor at hand the benefit of knowing where they land within the assessments.

And so it's a way of just ensuring that they maximize the most they get out of the counseling experience. We understand that a lot of these service members will only get to have face-to-face contact or voice-to-voice contact with a counselor a few limited times throughout their career, but as a way for service members to ensure they're getting the most out of their Kuder Journey assessments, it's definitely something that I would encourage them to take along with them when they're entering a counseling environment.

In addition to that, I want to make sure that our service members know Kuder Journey is a program that serves in many capacities. There are states that have Kuder Journey agreements, colleges, universities, secondary, primary schools and such. But specifically for our service members, we want to make sure that they are accessing Journey through

our website, so they are getting the version of the program that is designed specifically for them, and they can access our website at DANTES.mil.

[Bruce Moody]:

DANTES.mil, your new website. Congratulations, by the way, on that.

[Mareba Mack]:

Yes, Thank you. Thank you. We love it. We're proud of our team.

[Bruce Moody]:

I know. I know. We're definitely going to put that link in the program notes, and also to your social-media channels. You guys are really easy to reach. I should mention that. So as we just wrap up, I just would like to invite you to maybe give a word of encouragement as we wrap up regarding people who are planning their college career, their professional career, the next step, what it is that DANTES can do for them.

[Mareba Mack]:

Yes. So I like to say to service members... I've had the benefit of working with countless service members across the branches for a number of years, and the thing that I always convey is you want to prepare. You want to work and strive in your career as though you're going to be here for 30 years, but you also want to be prepared in case your career is reduced or if you're going to leave in a shorter amount of time. And so you want to work incredibly hard from day one throughout your career and get all of the perks that you can along the way so that you're prepared to separate from active duty when that time does come.

That preparation can be approached through a number of the programs we have there at DANTES. We offer the credit for prior learning exams. We have Kuder Journey, which is an amazing tool to help service members seek out what it is that they want to do. We have academic skills training, which will help them increase their test scores and their academic rigor through a program that even offers live tutoring. We have the military-transition team that deals with the joint service transcripts and things of that nature, so you can get credit for the training you're receiving there on active duty. And so at DANTES, we have a comprehensive set of tools to support the service member, and we are here waiting for them.

[Bruce Moody]:

Great. All right. We would love to have you back to talk more about what you do for service members. Thank you so much for joining us today.

[Mareba Mack]:

Oh, with pleasure. Thank you, sir, for having us. It is our honor.

[Bruce Moody]:

Absolutely. Mareba Mack is a program manager with DANTES, the Defense Activity for Non-Traditional Education Support, and I want to remind you that Military OneSource is an official resource of the Defense Department. We hope to hear from you. Click on the link in the program notes. Send us a question, a comment or an idea for a future episode, and be sure to subscribe to this podcast wherever you listen to your podcasts, because we cover a wide range of topics to help military families as they navigate military life. I'm Bruce Moody. Thank you so much for joining us today. Take care. Bye-bye.