
Training and certification guidance part 27

Experienced seafarer to Engineer Officer of the Watch

This notice is for all owners, masters, engineer officers and ratings of merchant vessels, and people who are involved with maritime training.

Summary

This training programme is open to experienced seafarers who work in the engine room. Candidates have a choice of following either a Vocational Qualification (VQ) or non-VQ route. Both routes include training on-board ship and at college. The VQ candidates undergo continuous assessment. The non-VQ route involves written examinations. Candidates must have worked at sea for a certain period of time before they can join the scheme. Candidates also need to work at sea during the training programme. Candidates will have to sit a Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) oral examination.

Latest 'Index to Parts'

The training and certification series of guidance is currently under review. Due to this the part numbers of some titles previously published may change. During this transitional period the Index to Parts will not be published in Marine Guidance Notes (MGNs) but will be made available via our website.

More information

You can get more information about this notice from:

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Department for
Transport

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1 Introduction

- 1.1 The Merchant Shipping (Training and Certification) Regulations 1997 (the regulations) set out the requirements of the International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping 1978, as amended (STCW) and its associated code (STCW Code). It also sets out the minimum requirements for certifying engineer officers and engine-room watch ratings.
- 1.2 Candidates for UK Certificates of Competency (**CoC**) have to:
- meet certain medical standards (including eyesight);
 - satisfactorily complete the minimum period of sea service;
 - reach the required vocational and academic standard;
 - receive ancillary technical training; and
 - in the case of officer candidates, pass an oral examination held by an MCA examiner after they have completed the programmes of education and training we have approved.
- 1.3 This notice describes the training scheme for experienced engine-room ratings and other non-certificated personnel to gain certification at Engineer Officer of the Watch (**EOOW**) level.
- 1.4 The training is a structured programme giving the candidate the option of following either a Vocational Qualification (**VQ**) or the non-VQ International Association of Maritime Institutions (**IAMI**) examination route. The main differences between the two routes are the nature of the on-board training that is part of the programme and that candidates choosing the non-VQ route have greater flexibility over the order in which the stages of training are completed but must have longer sea service.
- a Candidates following the VQ route will be continuously assessed throughout the course. Those who complete all of the units needed to achieve the VQ in Marine Engineering Operations at level 3 will be exempt from the written examination but will have to take the oral examination for the EOOW CoC.
- b Candidates following the non-VQ route will take the IAMI written examination for the EOOW CoC plus the oral examination.
- 1.5 When a candidate has completed the scheme and received a CoC, they will be able to progress according to their ability and ambition through the structure of higher grades of CoC to the highest professional levels.

2 Sea service

- 2.1 **To be eligible to start this training programme**, a candidate must have the following minimum sea service.
- a At least 12 months' (365 days) sea service in the engine-room department while holding an Engine Room Watch Rating Certificate.
- b **Royal Navy experience** in the engine room of a seagoing ship will count in full towards qualifying sea service. However, the candidate must have at least three months' experience as a Merchant Navy engine-room rating while holding an Engine Room Watch Rating Certificate.

- 2.2 **To be eligible to sit the MCA oral examination** for EOOW, a candidate must have the following minimum sea service.
- a
- **VQ route**
24 months' (730 days) sea service in the engine-room department while holding an Engine Room Watch Rating Certificate, at least six months of which must have been completed while on the training scheme.
 - **IAMI examination route**
30 months' (912 days) sea service in the engine-room department while holding an Engine Room Watch Rating Certificate, at least six months of which must have been completed while on the training scheme.
- b
- 2.2a above must include at least six months of the last 12 months' sea service being spent on duties associated with engine-room watchkeeping (or helping the duty engineer officer in a ship with unmanned machinery spaces), under the supervision of a certificated engineer officer.
- 2.3 The engine-room sea service must be on seagoing vessels that have a propulsion power of 350 kW or more. There are details of what makes up approved sea service in the MGN titled 'Certificates of competency - engine department'.
- 2.4 Service as a 'Wiper' or another rank that has cleaning duties only is not acceptable sea service for this training programme.
- 2.5 Service in a General Purpose (**GP** - a rating trained and employed in both deck and engine-room duties) capacity will be assessed individually based on the sea-service testimonials. GP service during the training period must be agreed beforehand and will normally extend the sea-service period needed.
- 2.6 Where the UPK (see stage 'A', section 3.1) is delivered by an open-learning programme at sea, the minimum sea service while on the training programme will be more than six months.
- 2.7 Sea-service testimonials signed by the Chief Engineer must be provided as evidence of satisfactory sea service and must list the duties carried out. A sample sea-service testimonial is provided at the end of this notice.

3 **Training programme structure**

- 3.1 The scheme is divided into three stages.
- Stage A: Tuition and assessment
 - o Assessment for Accreditation of Prior Learning (**APL**)
 - o Agree a training plan
 - o College-based course or an MCA or Merchant Navy Training Board (**MNTB**) approved open-learning programme including Underpinning Knowledge (**UPK** - 'the fundamental things a candidate must know and be able to explain to perform the tasks expected of an EOOW') for VQ Level 3 Marine Engineering Operations or IAMI examinations
 - o Engineering workshop skills training

- o Advanced STCW ancillary courses
 - Training in advanced firefighting
 - Proficiency in survival craft and rescue boats
 - Medical first aid
 - Stage B: Sea service, which must include the following.
 - o On-board training recorded in an approved record book
 - VQ route: usually the MNTB Training Portfolio
 - IAMI exam route: usually the ISF Record Book and
 - A progress report must be presented to the training provider regularly.
 - o Service and watchkeeping duties as set out in paragraph 2.2.
 - Stage C: College-based tuition and assessment or approved open learning (or both).
 - o VQ route: Portfolios are formally assessed together with evidence of the UPK needed.
 - o The record books completed by those not following the VQ route are reviewed, and candidates are prepared for and sit the IAMI/MCA EOOW written examination.
 - o All candidates are prepared for and sit the MCA oral examination.
 - o Any outstanding advanced STCW ancillary courses must be completed.
- 3.2 **VQ route** candidates must follow the programme in the order shown above. This will help them maintain a training portfolio while following a structured programme of shipboard training during the second stage that builds on and develops the knowledge and skills learned during the first stage. The portfolio provides evidence of their ability to apply knowledge and skills in the machinery spaces aboard ship and forms an essential part of the assessment for awarding the VQ at level 3.
- VQ-route candidates receiving the stage A UPK by distance learning:**
- may have the advanced STCW ancillary courses and the workshop training delivered at stage C; and
 - must have completed the relevant UPK before carrying out a portfolio task.
- 3.3 **IAMI examination route** candidates may go through stage B before or after stage A, depending on personal circumstances. However, the preferred method is to deliver the college-based UPK before starting the sea service-based training.
- 4 **Credit for previous training and education**
- 4.1 Credit will be given, where proof of training can be shown, towards the workshop skills training requirement.
- o Holders of Senior Marine Operator Licence (**SMEOL**), Marine Engine Operator Licence (**MEOL**), or an appropriate City and Guilds Level 1 Marine Engineering Certificate (**CGL1** Certificates 2016, 2019 or 2540) will gain exemption from the fitting and complex assembly aspects of the MNTB Workshop Skills Specification.
 - o Other training will be assessed and credited individually.

- 4.2 Holders of a SMEOL or a MEOL will be given credit for on-board training and watchkeeping duties where this has been done as part of the requirements for those licences.
- 4.3 Accreditation of Prior Learning (**APL**) is the assessment and accreditation of existing learning, knowledge, skills and achievements.
- **VQ route** - the assessment is carried out by the training provider and can be used to exempt candidates from some of the requirements of their VQ standards.
 - **IAMI examination route** - the assessment is carried out by IAMI, relates to academic achievement only and may gain exemptions from examinations other than Engineering Knowledge.

5 Starting a training programme

- 5.1 Candidates should apply to us for a '**Letter of initial assessment for experienced seafarers**'. This will confirm or deny their eligibility to take part in this training programme.
- 5.2 It is very **important** that candidates **contact a training establishment before starting a study programme**. This will avoid any unnecessary repetition of work.
- 5.3 **VQ route:** this is available at a college approved by Edexcel or the Scottish Qualifications Authority to deliver the N/SVQ at level 3 in Marine Engineering Operations and holds approval that the course is acceptable to lead towards an MCA EOOW CoC.
- 5.4 **IAMI exam route:** the non-VQ programme is run by training establishments approved by the MNTB and MCA.

6 Applying for an MCA oral examination

- 6.1 A candidate must hold a '**Notice of Eligibility**' (**NOE**) before applying to sit the MCA oral examination.
- 6.2 You can get application forms from our website, our Marine Offices (contact details on our website) or ourselves. Contact details are shown at the beginning of this document.
- 6.3 The processing time for us to issue an NOE is 20 working days from receiving a **fully completed** application. Candidates should take this and postage time into account when sending in an application.
- 6.4 Once a candidate has an NOE, they may apply to an MCA Marine Office of their choice to arrange the oral examination.
- 6.5 The syllabus for the oral examination is set out in the Training and Certification Guidance series of MGNs, which you can get from our website, our Marine Offices or ourselves.

Sea service testimonial - Engine-room rating

Company name:

Address:

.....

.....

Phone:

Fax:

E-mail:

Part 1 – Watchkeeping service

This is to certify that:

Full name of rating:

Date of birth:

Discharge book number:

has served on:

Name of vessel:

Official number:

Type or make of the main propelling machinery:

.....

Power (kW):..... Shaft power (kW):

Type or make of the auxiliary machinery:

Type of boilers:

from: / / **to:** / /

During this period, the rating named above carried out the following engine-room watchkeeping or Unattended Machinery Spaces (UMS) vessel duty service (under the supervision of a certificated engineer officer) for at least eight hours out of every 24 hours while the vessel was on **seagoing voyages**.

..... weeks days

The named rating carried out the following duties and tasks. _____

Leave of absence was granted as follows. _____

Part 2 – Testimonial

My report on the service of the rating is as follows.

Conduct: _____

Experience and ability: _____

Part 3 – Official endorsement

Name (in BLOCK LETTERS) of the Chief Engineer Officer:

Signature of the Chief Engineer Officer:

Ship's or company's stamp and date:

In exceptional circumstances, this testimonial may be signed by a responsible engineer superintendent.