

Examinations for RYA/MCA Certificates of Competence

RYA/MCA Yachtmaster Coastal, Yachtmaster Offshore & Yachtmaster Ocean Certificates of Competence are gained by examination, conducted by RYA Yachtmaster Examiners who are independent of sailing schools. There is no requirements to attend a sailing school course before taken an examination, although any candidates have found it helpful to brush up their skills at a school. Skippers should ensure that they are familiar with the handling and other characteristics for any vessel they take to sea.

Yachtmaster Coastal

The Yachtmaster Coastal has the knowledge needed to skipper a yacht on coastal cruises but does not necessarily have the experience needed to undertake longer passages.

<p>Exam Duration - The exam will take about 6 to 10 hours for one candidate and 8 to 14 hours for two. Candidates will be set tasks to demonstrate their ability as a Coastal Skipper and may also be asked questions on any part of the syllabus for all practical and shorebased courses up to Coastal Skipper.</p>
<p>Pre-exam Requirement - To take the practical examination, candidates must be aged 17 or over and require:</p>
<p>Radio Operator's Qualification - A Restricted (VHF only) Radio Operator's Certificate or a GMDSS Short Range Certificate or higher grade of marine radio certificate.</p>
<p>First Aid - A valid First Aid Certificate. First Aid qualifications held by Police, Fire and Armed Services are also acceptable.</p>
<p>Seatime - 800 miles logged within 10 years prior to examination, 30 days living on board, 2 days as skipper and 12 night hours. For holders of the Coastal Skipper Practical Course Completion Certificate, the seatime requirement is reduced to: 400 miles, 20 days living on board, 12 night hours, 2 days as skipper. Half the qualifying seatime must have been conducted in tidal waters.</p>

Yachtmaster Offshore

The Yachtmaster Offshore is competent to skipper a cruising yacht on any passage during which the yacht is no more than 150 miles from harbour.

<p>Exam Duration - The Yachtmaster exam will take about 8 to 12 hours for one candidate and 10 to 18 hours for two. Candidates will be set tasks to demonstrate their ability as skipper of an offshore cruising yacht and may also be asked questions on any part of the syllabus for all courses except Yachtmaster Ocean.</p>
<p>Pre-exam Requirement - To take the practical examination, candidates must be aged 18 or over and require:</p>
<p>Radio Operator's Qualification - A Restricted (VHF only) Radio Operator's Certificate or a GMDSS Short Range Certificate or higher grade of marine radio certificate.</p>
<p>First Aid - A valid First Aid Certificate. First Aid qualifications held by Police, Fire and Armed Services are also acceptable.</p>
<p>Seatime - 50 days, 2,500 miles, including at least 5 passages over 60 miles acting as skipper for at least two of these passages and including two which have involved overnight passages. 5 days experience as skipper. Half the qualifying seatime must have been conducted in tidal waters.</p>

Yachtmaster Coastal & Yachtmaster Offshore Exam Syllabus

Candidates may be given the opportunity to demonstrate knowledge or competence in the areas listed below. In each section the examiner will expect to see the candidate take full responsibility for the management of the yacht and crew.

In Yachtmaster Offshore exams the candidate will be expected to demonstrate competence based on broad experience.

In Yachtmaster Coastal exams the candidate will be expected to demonstrate understanding but may not have had the opportunity to practice all aspects of the syllabus under a range of different weather conditions.

1. International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea

Questions will be confined to the International Regulations and although candidates must be aware of the existence of Local Regulations, they will not be expected to memorise specific local regulations.

- General Rules (1 - 3)
- Steering and sailing rules (4 - 19)
- Lights and shapes (20 - 31)
- Sound and light signals (32 - 37)
- Signals for vessels fishing in close proximity (Annex II)
- Distress signals (Annex M)

2. Safety

Candidates will be expected to know what safety equipment should be carried on board a yacht, based either on the recommendations in the RYA Boat Safety Handbook (C8), the ISAF Special Regulations or the Codes of Practice for the Safety of Small Commercial Vessels. In particular, candidates must know the responsibilities of a skipper in relation to:

- Safety Harnesses
- Lifejackets
- Distress flares
- Fire prevention and fighting
- Liferrafts
- Knowledge of rescue procedures
- Helicopter rescue

3. Boat Handling

Candidates for Yachtmaster Coastal examinations will be expected to answer questions or demonstrate ability in simple situations only. Candidates for Yachtmaster Offshore will be expected to answer questions or demonstrate ability in more complex situations and will also be expected to show a higher level of expertise.

- Coming to and weighing anchor under power or sail in various conditions of wind and tide
- All berthing and unberthing situations in various conditions of wind and tide
- Recovery of man overboard
- Towing under open sea conditions and in confined areas
- Boat handling in confined areas under sail
- Boat handling in heavy weather
- Helmsmanship and sail trim to sail to best advantage
- Use of warps for securing in an alongside berth and for shifting berth or winding

4. General seamanship, including maintenance

- Properties, use and care of synthetic fibre ropes
- Knots
- General deck-work at sea and in harbour
- Engine operations and routine checks
- improvisation of jury rigs following gear failure

5. Responsibilities of Skipper

- Can skipper a yacht and manage the crew
- Communication with crew
- Delegation of responsibility and watch-keeping organisation
- Preparing yacht for sea and for adverse weather
- Tactics for heavy weather and restricted visibility
- Emergency and distress situations
- Victualling for a cruise and feeding at sea
- Customs procedures
- Standards of behaviour and courtesy

6. Navigation

- Charts, navigation publications and sources of navigational information
- Chartwork including position fixing and shaping course to allow for tidal stream and leeway
- Tide and tidal stream calculations
- Buoyage and visual aids to navigation
- Instruments including compasses, logs, echo sounders, radio nav aids and chartwork instruments
- Passage planning and navigational tactics
- Pilotage techniques
- Navigational records
- Limits of navigational accuracy and margins of safety
- Lee shore dangers
- Use of electronic navigation aids for passage planning and passage navigation
- Use of waypoints and electronic routing

7. Meteorology

- Definition of terms
- Sources of weather forecasts
- Weather systems and local weather effects
- Interpretation of weather forecasts, barometric trends and visible phenomena
- Ability to make passage planning decisions based on forecast information

8. Signals

- Candidates for Yachtmaster Offshore and Yachtmaster Coastal must hold the Restricted (VHF only) Certificate of Competence in radiotelephony or a higher grade of certificate in radiotelephony.