

Training at Sea

Guidance for Companies, Training Management Companies and Company Training Officers

Merchant Navy Training Board
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www.mntb.org.uk

Introduction

The Merchant Navy Training Board aims for all trainees to receive an exemplary training programme and experience and seeks to maintain and develop the reputation for delivering quality seafarer training and education.

To facilitate this strategy, this guidance sets out good practice features for all training providers, which sets expected standards to ensure a fair and consistent approach for all UK Officer Cadet trainees.



Recruitment

- 1.1. A suitable recruitment process, with objective selection criteria, should identify why the prospective trainee feels the Merchant Navy is an appropriate career choice for them.
- 1.2. It is encouraged that companies actively engage in recruitment from under-represented groups, with the aim of increasing the number of quality applicants.
- 1.3. Each trainee will be issued with an MLC-compliant training agreement that must be fully explained to the trainee before it is signed, including information on the leave allocation for cadets. The terms of the agreement and/or any other documents provided shall be presented and explained to the cadet prior to signature.
- 1.4. An agreed training allowance/bursary should commence as of the first day of arrival at college/university. The level of bursary should be considered, depending on the expected living expenses for a cadet.
- 1.5. Each trainee is to be issued with appropriate uniform and PPE at designated times.
- 1.6. A sponsor should be assigned to a candidate at the recruitment stage, with them being fully involved in the process of selection.



The training placement – college/university phases

- 2.1. The most appropriate college/university and course programme for each trainee should be identified based on the prospective trainee's preferences, home location, place/programme availability, the sponsor and considering relevant educational, work and social achievements and interests in determining the relevant course.
- 2.2. It is recommended that a memorandum of understanding be in place between the training management company and each college/university, clearly identifying the responsibilities of each throughout the programme, and that this is updated with each establishment on a regular basis.
- 2.3. Company and programme induction is to be undertaken as soon as is practicable following commencement at college/university – i.e. ideally within the first week. This will include, as a minimum, details of the programme the trainee is on and the phasing arrangements covering the full period of training, details of the trainee's allocated Company Training Officer (CTO) and how to contact them, how often the trainee will be visited in college/university, and the company complaints procedure.
- 2.4. Meetings between the Company Training Officer and the cadet are encouraged regularly, with a suggested frequency of at least once each term to monitor trainee progress, including receiving a progress report about the trainee from the college/university named programme manager/liason person.
- 2.5. Issues that may affect the potential completion of the programme should be identified as soon as possible and appropriate solutions determined at the earliest opportunity and dealt with accordingly. Any specific issues and queries that cannot be dealt with as a matter of routine are to be reported and discussed with the sponsoring company at the earliest opportunity. This should include possible solutions and options such as providing additional academic or pastoral tutorial support, transferring the trainee to a less arduous programme, etc.
- 2.6. Drug and alcohol testing may be undertaken subject to the company policy. Trainees will be informed that failure of a drug or alcohol test may/will lead to instant termination of sponsorship.
- 2.7. The sponsor is expected to finance at least the following: Discharge book, required vaccinations, visas, ENG1 and travel at beginning and end of each college phase.
- 2.8. The sponsor shall provide information on the appropriate periods of leave at college and from sea time placements to cadets.
- 2.9. On occasion, cadets may be asked to sail in areas of high risk (HRA). In the unlikely event that this happens, the cadet should be informed that it is their choice and made aware of the risks and mitigations that are in place.
- 2.10. A copy of the grievance procedure and complaints procedure should be provided to each cadet and they should be encouraged to use these if required, and be reassured that raising a grievance or complaint will not affect their cadet training.



The training placement – sea phases

- 3.1. It is expected that sea phase placements will normally be provided within a maximum of two months following completion of the college phase. If there is a delay of more than two months, the time frame should be communicated to the trainee and must be reported to the MNTB.
- 3.2. It is also expected that the date of joining the ship will be provided to the trainee with a minimum of one week's notice, although it is recognised that this is not always possible, in which case, trainees will be kept informed on a weekly basis of the expected joining date.

- 3.3. Sponsors will fully utilise the sea phase to make sure cadets keep up to date with their training programme. Sea service is an important part of the cadet training programme and without it the cadet will not be able to achieve a Certificate of Competency. It is expected cadets obtain their sea time within the designated sea time phases of the programme.
- 3.4. If a cadet experiences any issue regarding their experience at sea, eg, mental health, bullying and harassment, the sponsor should provide support as soon as possible.
- 3.5. Should a cadet raise a complaint or a grievance procedure, this should be responded to within a reasonable timescale.
- 3.6. Trainee welfare as well as training needs must be considered when allocating the length of an individual trip. It is not expected that any officer trainee trip length exceed 4–5 months.
- 3.7. It is expected that the first trip trainees are placed on board with at least one other UK officer trainee. There should be additional consideration for female seafarers to be placed together.
- 3.8. It is required that trainees be provided with a sea phase briefing, including ship joining information, sea phase expectations and full TRB briefing prior to commencement of the first sea phase (ideally during the preceding week). This will include a copy of the programme being undertaken and phase/content details, for inclusion within the TRB, plus details of the TRB tasks to be completed during the phase.
- 3.9. It is expected that trainees be provided with details of the Designated Shipboard Training Officer prior to the trainee joining the ship. This will include the DSTO's name, rank/job title, how to make contact once on board and the name of the ship's Captain and Chief Engineer.
- 3.10. The CTO will provide information regarding DSTO liaison and organisation of the sea phase, i.e. weekly discussion regarding general onboard support and completion of TRB tasks, and monthly reviews of progress by the DSTO and Master/Chief Engineer.
- 3.11. It is required that the CTO and DSTO will endeavour to provide a suitable onboard mentor for trainees, who will support, encourage and provide a 'listening ear' and appropriate guidance/counsel with regard to issues and problems that may be encountered at any time during the sea phase.
- 3.12. It is required that trainees be provided with details of the complaints procedure to be adopted whilst on board. This will include contact details for the CTO and information regarding CTO and trainee contact during the sea phase should this be required.
- 3.13. With regard to all trainees on programmes that have a work-based element (FD/SPD and some HND programmes) it is required that CTOs liaise with relevant personnel in the college/university to discuss and agree the type and nature of the work-based activity – which should be relevant to the ship type on which the trainee will be placed – and inform the DSTO accordingly prior to the trainee arriving on board.
- 3.14. Communication between the CTO and DSTO, or via named sponsoring company representative, is expected so any issues that may affect the trainee's potential completion of the programme can be identified at the earliest opportunity and dealt with according to usual procedures. Any specific issues and queries that cannot be dealt with as a matter of routine are to be reported and discussed with the sponsoring company at the earliest opportunity. This should include possible solutions and options such as an onboard mentor, pairing with another trainee, transferring the trainee to a different vessel, additional sea-time etc.
- 3.15. Following sea voyages, it is required that trainees receive an appropriate de-brief within two weeks of the voyage ending and check of the TRB where possible, to ensure everything is on track. Concerns or issues arising from the voyage will be dealt with at this stage.



General

- 4.1. Trainees shall be appropriately insured by their sponsor during all stages of their training.
- 4.2. Where issues are identified with any trainees, at any stage of their training that may affect their potential completion of the programme appropriate solutions should be identified at the earliest opportunity and discussed with all parties.
- 4.3. It is the aim that trainee attrition rates are kept to a minimum.
- 4.4. Termination of a trainee contract must be discussed with all relevant parties prior to any such action being taken.
- 4.5. It is expected that Training management companies comply with all Merchant Navy Training Board (MNTB) and industry recommendations with regard to officer training and with particular regard to equality of opportunity and diversity guidance and elimination of workplace harassment and bullying. (See ECSA/ETF Guidelines to Shipping Companies and support materials at https://www.ecsa.eu/sites/default/files/publications/053_0.pdf).
- 4.6. All companies/Training management companies are expected to encourage and support trainees in becoming members of relevant industry organisations that provide individual and professional representation and development – i.e. Nautilus International, Nautical Institute, Honourable Company of Master Mariners, IMarEST.

Departure from these guidelines may, occasionally, be necessary due to specific or unforeseeable circumstances. In such cases, all reasonable efforts should be made to implement alternatives that are as consistent with the guidelines and as fair to the individual trainee(s) as practicable. In any case, an explanatory rationale must be given to the MNTB.

The implementation of these guidelines will be monitored by the MNTB.



Roles and Responsibilities

COMPANY TRAINING OFFICER	MASTER/CHIEF ENGINEER OFFICER	DESIGNATED SHIPBOARD TRAINING OFFICER	OFFICER CADET	COLLEGE/ UNIVERSITY
Manage the overall training programme, including liaison between ships, colleges, the company, MNTB and MCA	Provide the link between the company training officer and the shipboard training officer to ensure the effectiveness of onboard training	Responsible for arranging practical training at sea with the appropriate Officer/ crew on board	Responsible for completing all tasks required in the Training Record Book	Provide approved courses to develop skills, knowledge and understanding
Monitor and review overall progress of the officer cadet, including inspection of college reports and records of shipboard training	Monitor and review the progress of shipboard training	Record and monitor progress and be responsible for liaising with Company Training Officer	Take advantage of the opportunity for learning and developing skills	Develop and assess Work Based Learning modules, in collaboration with sponsoring companies
Provide guidance, progress reports and action plans as required to officer cadets and shipboard staff	Ensure continuity of the cadet's shipboard training and support throughout their sea service	Provide all required ship information, signatures and testimonials	Must keep on track with learning and escalate training needs to DSTO, when required	Review and provide reports on officer cadet progress in a timely manner