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To whom it may concern

QAN 60028142 SQA Level 2 Diploma in Maritime Studies: Marine Vessel Maintenance (QCF)

The Merchant Navy Training Board (MNTB) is the shipping industry's central body for promoting and developing sector specific education, training and skills. We provide education and training frameworks that will develop high quality British seafarers who are respected worldwide for their professionalism and skills. The MNTB is part of the UK Chamber of Shipping, which is registered with UK Companies House, and our registration number is 2107383.

Whilst it is a part of the UK Chamber, the MNTB is a tri-partite body, and with its own Board, made up of equal representation from shipping companies and maritime trade unions (Nautilus International and RMT), along with maritime education and training interests. The government regulatory body, the Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) and the DfT have observer status on our board.

I am writing to confirm that the Level 2 Diploma in Maritime Studies: Marine Vessel Maintenance is a significant and important part of one of the two main entry routes (Foundation degree and Higher National Certificate/Diploma) into Merchant Navy officer cadet engineering and electro-technical training programmes that provides the Merchant Navy with skilled and certificates UK seafarers that work on merchant vessels around the world. The knowledge and skills covered by this qualification forms part of the seafarer 'licence to practise' and are critical to the engineering and electro-technical officer job roles on commercial board vessels of all sizes and types.

The qualification enables recruitment and support to entrants/adult learners into the Merchant Navy who do not meet the entry requirement for entry direct onto our Foundation degree route. This ensures we can be inclusive of entrants from a range of backgrounds and have the ability to ensure the rising recruitment targets for the UK Merchant Navy are met.

The qualification is valued by the sector because learners who successfully complete this qualification:

- achieve a wide range of practical skills which enables them to maintain and repair all technical equipment on-board our vessels

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- contribute to the safety and environmental impact of our vessels by ensuring all services are functioning correctly and efficiently

This qualification is relevant for our sector because whilst some of the elements (items 1 and 2 from the list below) are embedded within most engineering skills training, the remaining skills (items 3-6) are unique to the niche sector of maritime training, and the QCF units created for this qualification were written by the Maritime Skills Alliance (of which the MNTB is a founding member) specifically to provide the skills sets we, and the wider maritime sector, require:

1. Mechanical fitting and turning
2. Jointing technology (welding)
3. Marine plumbing
4. Marine electrical plant maintenance & safety
5. Marine mechanical plant maintenance & safety
6. Marine navigational equipment maintenance & safety

The qualification has two pathways:

- Electro-technical pathway
- Engineering pathway

Upon successful completion of the Electro-technical pathway, with further professional development, a learner can progress to the role of Chief Electro-Technical Officer. In this senior role the Officer would manage and supervise the operation and maintenance of the vessel electrical and electronic equipment.

Upon successful completion of the Engineering pathway, with further professional development the learner can progress to the roles of Second and Chief Engineering Officer. In these senior roles the Officer would manage and supervise the operation and maintenance of the vessel's machinery and technical equipment.

The numbers of new entrant officer trainees entering the industry each year are in the order of 850, and these are recruited for over 100 shipping companies that recruit and train UK officer trainees. Without the above qualification this entry route within which it sits would be unavailable for those young people in various parts of England, although it could continue to be offered by the Scottish colleges that also deliver the equivalent MNTB-approved seafarer training programmes.

Currently, MNTB officer trainee frameworks are outside formal government apprenticeships as both the Specification of Apprenticeship Standards England (SASE) frameworks and the new Trailblazer Apprenticeship Standards are unable to accommodate the complexities of seafarer training. Given the numbers of new entrants to these national MNTB-approved programmes and the importance of the UK shipping industry and those with seafaring expertise and certification to the UK economy, this qualification needs to be available to the industry and young people for the foreseeable future. NB - detail for the UK Chamber of Shipping website provides the following:

'Shipping has been a major source of growth for the UK economy over the last decade, following a dynamic revival of the UK fleet. Latest data shows that shipping, ports and the maritime business and services sectors:

- contribute £31.7bn to UK GDP
- support 537,500 UK jobs and
- provide £8.5bn in tax receipts to the UK exchequer.

Shipping is a high-productivity industry, and requires a stable and competitive environment in order to continue to thrive in the UK. The Government's continued commitment to tonnage tax is crucial to ensure that the UK remains an attractive location for maritime investment.'

I trust the above provides sufficient information and detail for the qualification in question to be retained for the value and benefit of English school leavers with GCSE qualifications who wish to enter the Merchant Navy, as well as recognising the growing importance of the sector to the UK economy.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Glenys Jackson', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Glenys Jackson
Head of Merchant Navy Training Board

