



30 Park Street
London
SE1 9EQ

Tel: 020 7417 2800
e-mail: enquiry@mntb.org.uk

Product Marketing
Scottish Qualifications Authority
The Optima Building
58 Robertson Street
Glasgow
G2 8DQ

Company house registration number 2107383
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To whom it may concern

QAN 60002554 SQA Level 3 Diploma in Shipping and Maritime Operations (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 3 Diploma in Shipping and Maritime Operations 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 navigation (deck) 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 navigation (deck) 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:

- are prepared to progress to the appropriate HE qualification, which subsequently leads to ensuring they are 'job ready' at the completion of their full training package

Glenys Jackson 020 7417 2876
Donna Stevens 020 7417 2840
Fena Boyle 020 7417 2825

- will have acquired the underpinning knowledge, fundamental principles and broader training aspects to enable them to safely undertake their first industrial placement as a trainee on-board a vessel.

The qualification has two pathways:

- Navigation (deck) pathway
- Engineering pathway

Upon successful completion of the Navigation (deck) pathway, a learner would become qualified to undertake roles as Third and Second Officers. With further professional development and assessment, they can progress to roles of Chief Officer and Ship's Master (Captain). In these senior roles they would manage and supervise the operation of the vessel including all cargo/passenger operations.

Upon successful completion of the Engineering pathway, a learner would become qualified to undertake roles as Fourth and Third Engineering Officers. With further professional development and assessment they can progress to the roles of Second and Chief Engineering Officer. In these senior roles they 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

