

RYA Yachtmaster Offshore Exam Syllabus

Exam Duration

The exam will take about 8 to 12 hours for one candidate. Candidates will be set tasks to demonstrate their ability as a skipper of an offshore motor cruiser and may also be asked questions on any part of the syllabus for all courses except Yachtmaster Ocean.

Pre-exam requirements

To take the practical examination, candidates must be aged 18 or over and require:

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

First Aid – A valid First Aid Certificate. First Aid qualifications held by Police, Fire and Armed Services

are also acceptable

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 a skipper.

*Half the qualifying seatime must have been conducted in tidal waters.

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 vessel and crew.

The candidate will be expected to demonstrate competence based on broad experience.

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 IV)

Safety

Candidates will be expected to know what safety equipment should be carried on board a motor 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
- Liferafts
- Knowledge of rescue procedures
- Helicopter rescue

Boat Handling

Candidates will be expected to answer questions or demonstrate ability in more complex situations than required for Coastal Skipper and will also be expected to show a higher level of expertise:

Coming to and weighing anchor under power 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
- Boat handling in heavy weather
- Helmsmanship
- Use of warps for securing in an alongside berth and for shifting berth or winding

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

Responsibilities of skipper

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

Navigation

- Charts, navigational publications and sources of navigational information
- Chartwork including position fixing and shaping course to allow for tidal stream and leeway
- 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
- Use of radar for navigation, pilotage and collision avoidance

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

Signals

- Candidates must hold the restricted (VHF only) Certificate of Competence in radiotelephony or a higher grade of certificate in radiotelephony.