

Yachtmaster Offshore Exams in Antigua

Dear Candidate,

Please read these notes carefully before taking your exam - they are provided to help you prepare for the exam & to ensure that you have the necessary sea-time, qualifications & documentation.

Please note that you are not eligible to take the exam if you do not have a valid first aid certificate, a VHF radio certificate, & the necessary sea time & skippered passages.

It is a common (& mistaken) belief that if you have just done the theory course, followed by the prep week & are now doing the exam, then a satisfactory exam result is a foregone conclusion. This is not the case. The examiner is there to examine you on behalf of the RYA, not the sea school.

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.

Full details of the exam syllabus and requirements are shown the RYA's Sail Cruising Logbook (code G15) and Motor Cruising Logbook (code G18), both available from the webshop / RYA Centre.

Yachtmaster Offshore practical exams can be taken under sail or power and the certificate will be endorsed accordingly. The candidate or a training centre provides the boat and the RYA provides an examiner. There is no formal training course leading up to the exam, but those who have not previously taken RYA courses often find it useful to book themselves in for some informal training at an RYA centre prior to their exam. This training can be tailor-made to the candidate's specific needs and helps to fill any gaps in knowledge that may become apparent.

If the candidate needs a Yachtmaster Offshore Certificate of Competence in order to work on board a commercial craft subject to the MCA's codes of practice, it will need to be commercially endorsed. The candidate can then work as a Master of commercial vessels of up to 200gt in category 1 to 6 waters - that is up to 150 miles from a safe haven.

The RYA Yachtmaster Offshore Certificate of Competence can used commercially in its own right. It is also a pre-requisite for the MCA's Officer of the Watch qualification, which enables the candidate to work worldwide on vessels of up to 3000gt.

What do I need before I do the Yachtmaster Offshore practical exam?

Minimum seetime:

50 days, 2,500 miles including at least 5 passages over 60 miles measured along the rhumb line from the port of departure to the destination, acting as skipper for at least two

of these passages and including two which have involved overnight passages. Minimum 5 days experience as skipper.

At least half this mileage and passages must be in tidal waters.

All qualifying seetime must be within 10 years prior to the exam.

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Qualifying passages:

Qualifying passages for Yachtmaster Offshore should be non stop by the shortest navigable route with no change of skipper. Passages such as recognised races which may not comply exactly with these requirements may be submitted to the RYA for approval before the voyage.

Trainee skippers undertaking 60 mile passages are strongly advised to obtain a Coastal Skipper qualification first. Before the start of an exam the examiner must verify the candidate's claim to have the specified sea experience. All candidates must complete and sign the exam application form, which includes a statement of qualifying experience.

If there is any doubt as to whether or not the necessary sea time has been completed the examiner should point this out to the candidate and give them the opportunity to withdraw their application.

Certification required before the exam:

VHF Certificate

- A restricted (VHF only) Radio Operators Certificate or a GMDSS Short Range Certificate or higher grade of marine radio certificate. In most cases this will be the Restricted (VHF only) Certificate of Competence in Radiotelephony but any higher qualification, such as the Restricted or General Certificate of Competence or, for foreign nationals, an equivalent certificate issued by their own administration is acceptable.

- A valid first aid certificate, & one that is accepted by the RYA. Details of certificates accepted/ not accepted by the RYA can be found on their website. This should be checked before booking the exam.

Acceptable certificates include the RYA's First Aid Certificate, First Aid at Work, First Aid at Sea, or any other certificate issued on completion of a course which is a minimum of one day's duration, recognised by the Health and Safety Executive and includes the treatment of hypothermia, cold shock and drowning. Most first aid qualifications held by Police, Fire and Armed Services are acceptable.

Form of exam - Practical assessment.

The content of the exam is set by the syllabus in the RYA publication G15 and G18.

There are two general principles which should be taken as an overall guide:

1. It is the examiners task to give the candidate the opportunity to show that they are a competent skipper;

2. At the end of the exam the candidate should feel that whatever the outcome, that they have had a full, fair and searching test.

The exam will include a thorough practical assessment of the candidate's skippering skills, boat handling under sail & power, general seamanship, chartwork & navigation including tidal considerations, safety awareness and knowledge of the IRPCS, meteorology and signals.

Candidates will be set tasks to demonstrate their ability and may also be asked questions on any part of the syllabus for all practical and shorebased courses up to Yachtmaster Offshore level.

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Minimum exam duration 8-12 hours for 1 candidate, 10-18 hours for 2 candidates. No more than two candidates can be examined in 24 hours and no more than four candidates can be examined in one 2 day session.

The Boat

The boat used must be between 7m (23ft) and 18m (59ft) LOA and be in sound, seaworthy condition, equipped to the standard set out in the RYA Boat Safety Handbook 2nd Edition (code G103). The boat must be equipped with a full up to date set of charts and navigational publications and be efficiently crewed, as the examiner will not take part in the management of the boat during the exam.

Booking

Before you book your exam please check that you:

1. Have completed the required mileage and experience as skipper. Be honest with yourself!
2. Hold a VHF Radio Operators License or Short Range Certificate.
3. Hold a valid first aid certificate.
4. Have read the syllabus in RYA publications; G15 (sail) or G18 (power).
5. Have read and comply with the pre-requisites above.

Payment of exam fee

The exam fee is payable by the candidate to the RYA. Examiners must ensure that the exam report is accompanied by the appropriate fee. Examiners may not accept any payment from candidates for expenses incurred in connection with an exam.

A last word....

Be honest with yourself with regard to your experience on small yachts & the amount of skippering you have done. Read the exam requirements above.

The prep week is only meant to assist you to brush up your skills before the exam.

You may have thousands upon thousands of miles as a deckhand on a super yacht, but if you have only messed about on small yachts during your prep week prior to the exam & little else, then this will become immediately obvious to the examiner very soon after you take charge of the yacht. Common failures include a lack of pilotage skills especially at night, poor chart work, poor close quarters sailing skills & incompetent berthing/unberthing.

Please ensure that before the examiner arrives on board you have ready a fully completed application form with a photo attached, & your log books if you have them. This will save a lot of time. The exam will not start until this has been done.

Please feel free to contact Ondeck maritime Training if you have any questions about the requirements or require further information.