



MSN 1867 (M) Amendment 1

Training & Certification Guidance: UK Requirements for the recognition of non-UK Certification leading to the issue of a Flag State Endorsement (FSE)/Certificate of Equivalent Competency (CEC)

Notice to all Owners, Masters, Officers, Ratings and those concerned with maritime training.

This notice replaces MSN 1867 (M)

Summary

This Merchant Shipping Notice (MSN) explains how to apply for a United Kingdom (UK) Certificate of Equivalent Competency (CEC). A CEC is the UK's name for a 'flag state endorsement' (FSE) as set out in Regulation 1/10 of the Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping (STCW) Convention.

Any officer working on board a UK-registered vessel who does not have a UK Certificate of Competency (CoC) must have a FSE/CEC. You can apply for a FSE/CEC if you have a CoC from an administration recognised by the Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA). You may have to provide additional evidence of competency, knowledge of English language and UK Legal and Administrative processes (UKLAP).

This MSN Covers:

1. Introduction
2. Requirements
3. Medical Standards
4. Application Procedure
5. Company Applications.
6. Masters of Strategic Ships
7. Prevention of Fraud and Other Unlawful Practice
8. Right of Appeal in Relation to Applications for Certificates of Equivalent Competency

The Annexes of this MSN cover:

- A. Yacht Certificates
- B. Certificate of Equivalent Competency Examination in UK Legal and Administrative Processes (UKLAP) Grade 1 – Masters Information for Candidates and Oral and Written Syllabus



1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Merchant Shipping (Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping) Regulations 2015 (“the 2015 Regulations”), implement the requirements of the International Convention and Code on Standards of Training, Certification and Watch-keeping (STCW) 1978¹ (referred to in this MSN as the ‘STCW Convention’ and ‘STCW Code’ respectively), including the provisions prescribing the mandatory minimum requirements for flag state endorsement for seafaring officers with non-UK certification working on board UK-registered ships. In the UK, a flag state endorsement (FSE) is also known as a Certificate of Equivalent Competency (CEC). The Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) is responsible for issuing FSE/CECs, and a reference in this Notice to the 2015 Regulations is a reference to the Regulations as amended.
- 1.2 If you are an officer intending to work onboard a UK registered vessel and you do not hold a UK Certificate of Competency (CoC), you must apply for a UK FSE/CEC before you join the ship. The FSE/CEC is not a qualification and is only valid when used in conjunction with the STCW compliant CoC that it endorses.
- 1.3 A FSE/CEC is issued on a like-for-like basis against a CoC; any limitations on your CoC will be included on your FSE/CEC.²
- 1.4 If you are an employer, you can treat a valid FSE/CEC used in conjunction with a CoC as meeting your obligations under the 2015 Regulations and for Safe Manning Documents.

2. Requirements

- 2.1 To be eligible for a UK FSE/CEC you must hold a valid, non-UK STCW compliant CoC issued by a country whose seafarer training is recognised by the UK. A list of those countries can be found on www.gov.uk.³

Applicants may have to provide additional evidence of:

- Standards of competency;
- Use and knowledge of the English language;
- Knowledge of UK Legal and Administrative Processes (UKLAP).

2.2 Competency

The MCA issues FSE/CECs against CoCs from countries whose training and administration has been inspected and where the standards of technical competency are broadly equivalent to those of the UK (regulations 32 and 33 of the 2015 Regulations).

Applicants for FSE/CECs who hold US Coastguard 500 GT and 3000 GT CoCs need to take a UK oral exam. Further details can be found on the application form MSF 4203.⁴

If you have a CoC limited for service on yachts, please refer to **Annex A**.

¹ The STCW Regulations (SI 2015/782) were amended by S.I. 2018/68, S.I. 2019/630 and S.I. 2021/XXX.

² Near-Coastal Limitations: Where a CoC contains near-coastal water limitations, these are included on the FSE/CEC as near-coastal to the country that issued the CoC in line with the terms of the STCW Convention. For example, an Australian AMSA issued CoC with near-coastal limitation will not be valid for use in UK coastal waters.

³ List of countries accepted towards issuing a UK FSE: www.gov.uk/guidance/list-of-countries-accepted-towards-issuing-a-uk-fse

⁴ MSF 4203: www.gov.uk/government/publications/flag-state-endorsement-msf-4203



2.3 English language

All officers working on board UK-registered ships are required to speak, read and comprehend English at a level allowing for the safe operation of the ship and to enable clear ship-to-ship and ship-to-shore communications. All owners and operators of UK registered ships are responsible for ensuring that officers on board can speak, read and comprehend English at a level that allows them to carry out their role.

If English is your first language, or, you were completely taught and examined in English for your CoC, you do not need further testing in the English language. All other applicants must complete one of our accepted English tests. You can find a list of these on our website: www.gov.uk/guidance/apply-for-a-FSE-for-deck-and-engineer-officers. You will not be issued with a FSE/CEC unless you have provided acceptable evidence of proficiency in the English language (regulation 32 of the 2015 Regulations).

2.4 UKLAP

All Masters, Chief Mates, Chief Engineers and Second Engineers need to have knowledge of UKLAP to enable safe and efficient ship operation in compliance with UK regulations. All owners and operators of UK ships are responsible for ensuring that their officers have this knowledge. Chief Mates, Chief Engineers and Second Engineers need to have knowledge of UKLAP equivalent to Grade 2 and must be assessed by their company and the details of the test kept on record in the company office for inspection by the MCA.

All Masters must take and pass the UKLAP 1 examination before they get a full FSE/CEC.⁵ If you need to take the UKLAP 1 examination we will issue you with a Notice of Assessment (NOA), instructions and a syllabus when you apply for a FSE/CEC.⁶ You can take the UKLAP 1 as an oral examination in an MCA Marine Office, or, as a formal examination administered by an MCA approved delegated body. The UKLAP 1 syllabus is in **Annex B**.

3. Medical Fitness and Eyesight Standards

3.1 All applicants for UK FSE/CEC must meet the medical fitness and eyesight standards as required by the Merchant Shipping (Maritime Labour Convention) (Medical Certification) Regulations 2010 (S.I. 2010/737)⁷. Details on the application of those Regulations are found in MSN 1886.⁸

3.2 To work onboard UK-registered ships you must hold a valid medical fitness certificate, either;

- a) The UK medical fitness certificate, currently known as an ENG 1, issued by an MCA-approved medical practitioner,⁹ **or**

⁵ Masters who are EEA Nationals may choose to serve a shipboard adaptation period on board a UK registered ship instead of taking the UKLAP1 examination. The adaptation period usually lasts between 2 and 6 months and can be requested when making an application for a FSE/CEC. You cannot work as Master during an adaptation period. You must work in a lower capacity serving under a Master with a UK CoC or FSE/CEC.

⁶ Masters who have applied through a shipping company may be issued with a temporary FSE/CEC for up to 6 months and must pass a UKLAP1 exam within this time. Additional FSE/CECs will not normally be issued until the master passes the UKLAP1 exam. The employing shipping company is responsible for ensuring that the master has knowledge of UKLAP to grade 1 level.

⁷ These Regulations are amended by the Merchant Shipping (Maritime Labour Convention) (Medical Certification) Regulations 2018 (S.I. 2018/242). Further details on the required Medical Fitness Standards and Certification are available from: www.legislation.gov.uk and search "Maritime Labour Convention".

⁸ Details of MCA Approved Medical Certificates are available from: www.gov.uk/seafarer-medical-certificates.

⁹ See section 12 for further details. Details of MCA Approved Medical Certificates are available from www.gov.uk/seafarer-medical-certificates.



- b) A certificate issued by the administration of any country whose medical fitness certificate is recognised as equivalent to the UK ENG1.

3.3 The medical fitness certificate must specify the date of examination, the period of validity and any restriction applied. You do not have to submit your medical certificate as part of your application for a FSE/CEC. More information about medical certificates can be found on our web site, go to www.gov.uk and search “seafarer medical”.

4. Application Procedure

4.1 The application form (MSF 4203) sets out the application procedure, process and fee to apply for a FSE/CEC. The application form is available to download from www.gov.uk.¹⁰

To apply for a UK FSE/CEC you must submit the following:

- (a) A completed and signed application form (MSF 4203);
- (b) An attested copy of your CoC (all pages);
- (c) An attested copy of your passport or discharge book;
- (d) An attested copy of an English test result accepted by the MCA;
- (e) The appropriate fee for the FSE/CEC you are applying for;
- (f) The required photos for the FSE/CEC document.

There is no requirement to submit other short course certificates, or evidence of updating training for the purpose of a FSE/CEC application. However, to satisfy Port State Control requirements you will need to hold evidence onboard your vessel of completing or updating your training within the last 5 years for:

- Proficiency in Personal Survival Techniques (PST), (STCW Code – Table A-VI/1-1);
- Proficiency in Survival Craft and Rescue Boats other than Fast Rescue Boats (PSC & RB), (STCW Code – Table A-VI/2-1);
- **If held**, Proficiency in Fast Rescue Boats (PFRB), (STCW Code– Table A-VI/2-2);
- Proficiency in Fire Prevention and Fire Fighting (FP & FF), (STCW Code – Table A-VI/1-2);
- Proficiency in Advanced Fire Fighting (AFF), (STCW Code – Table A-VI/3).

Proficiency in Security Awareness: The MCA will recognise for service on UK-registered ships Certificates of Proficiency in Security Awareness which were issued under the STCW requirements by any Administration included in the International Maritime Organization (IMO) list of STCW Parties (“the White List”).

Proficiency in Designated Security Duties and Ship Security Officer (SSO): The MCA will recognise for service on UK registered ships Certificates of Proficiency in Designated Security Duties and Certificates of Proficiency as SSO which were issued under the STCW requirements by a Maritime Administration whose CoC the MCA accepts for the issue of a UK FSE/CEC.

For further information relating to STCW course certificates, including their validity, please refer to MSN 1865 (Amendment 1).¹¹

4.2 Deck Officers

An attested copy of your GMDSS certificate should be included with your application for a FSE/CEC so that we can issue you with an Authority to Operate (ATO), enabling you to use your

¹⁰ MSF 4203: www.gov.uk/government/publications/flag-state-endorsement-msf-4203

¹¹ For further information please refer MSN 1865 (Amendment 1).



GMDSS certificate onboard UK ships. A list of GMDSS certificates accepted for use on UK ships can be found on www.gov.uk.¹²

4.3 Revalidations or Upgrade

To revalidate or upgrade a FSE/CEC you must submit:

- (a) A completed and signed application form (MSF 4203);
- (b) An attested copy of your CoC (all pages);
- (c) The appropriate fee for revalidating or upgrading a FSE/CEC;
- (d) Your original FSE/CEC.

You do not have to take another English test.

4.4 Application Process

The application process is outlined on the following webpage:

www.gov.uk/guidance/apply-for-a-FSE-for-deck-and-engineer-officers

5. Company Applications

You can submit applications for FSE/CECs on behalf of your employees. The officer applying for a FSE/CEC must sign the completed application form.

5.1 Confirmation of Receipt of Applications (CRA)

You can also apply for a Confirmation Receipt of Application (CRA) which allows a seafarer to serve onboard a UK-registered vessel for a period of not more than 3 months from the time that they applied for a FSE/CEC. The seafarer must hold a valid and equivalent CoC for use onboard a UK vessel. Documentary proof that an application has been made to MCA must be in the form of a CRA.

You can download the CRA form “MSF 4359” from www.gov.uk.¹³ Insert your company’s address and email contact in the box provided and complete Section 1 of the CRA before submitting it with the application. Providing that all of the required documents are present and correct, the MCA will issue the completed CRA. The MCA verifies the authenticity of all CoCs with the issuing authority before issuing FSE/CECs.

6. Masters of Strategic Ships

6.1 Strategic ships as defined in the Merchant Shipping (Officer Nationality) Regulations 1995 (S.I. 1995/1427) include fishing vessels 24 metres and over in length, class 1 passenger ships of 500 GT or more which are certified to carry more than 200 passengers, ro-ro vessels and product tankers.¹⁴

6.2 In addition to the certification requirements, Masters of strategic vessels must be one of the following nationalities:

- UK citizen;
- Commonwealth citizen;
- NATO or EU national;

¹² List of countries accepted towards issuing a UK FSE: www.gov.uk/guidance/list-of-countries-accepted-towards-issuing-a-uk-fse

¹³ MSF 4359: www.gov.uk/government/publications/FSE-confirmation-of-receipt-of-application

¹⁴ S.I. 1995/1427: www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/1995/1427/made?wrap=true



- National of a state which is party to the European Economic Agreement [EEA].

6.3 Shipping Companies may request an Exemption of Officer Nationality where the intended Master does not meet the criteria listed above. You can send your exemption request to:

UK Seafarer Services Branch
Maritime and Coastguard Agency
Spring Place
105 Commercial Road
Southampton
SO15 1EG

Or via our email address: exams@mcga.gov.uk

7. Prevention of Fraud and Other Unlawful Practice

7.1 The UK is required by national law to take and enforce appropriate measures to prevent fraud and other unlawful practices involving the certification process and to provide penalties that are effective, proportionate and dissuasive.

7.2 In the UK, the authorities that are competent to detect and combat fraud and to exchange information concerning the certification of seafarers with other Member States are the MCA and the police. If a document is thought to be fraudulent the matter should, in the first instance, be reported to the MCA. The MCA can be contacted using the contact details at the end of this Notice. A list of addresses for local police stations can be found on the following websites: www.police-information.co.uk or www.scottish.police.uk.

7.3 A list of contact details for designated authorities in other Member States can be found on the International Maritime Organization (IMO) website at: www.imo.org.

8. Right of Appeal in Relation to Applications for Certificates of Equivalent Competency

8.1 The 2015 Regulations provide a right of appeal in relation to refusals of applications for Certificates of Equivalent Competency. An applicant for a FSE/CEC whose application is refused, or deemed to have been refused because no response has been given within 28 days of making the application, may have the application reviewed at an inquiry. An applicant who wishes to exercise this right should contact the MCA in writing within 28 days of the refusal or deemed refusal. Arrangements will be made for a panel to review the application and for the applicant to be advised of the outcome.



More Information

Seafarer Services
Maritime and Coastguard Agency
Bay 2/11
Spring Place
105 Commercial Road
Southampton
SO15 1EG

Tel: +44 (0) 203 8174319
e-mail: FSE@mcga.gov.uk

Website Address: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/maritime-and-coastguard-agency

General Enquiries: infoline@mcga.gov.uk

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Yacht Certificates

The MCA will issue yacht FSE/CECs for vessels up to 3000 GT.

The following yacht certificates are accepted for a UK FSE/CEC. In all cases the FSE/CEC will be limited for yacht service only.

Masters must pass the UKLAP 1 exam unless they have successfully completed an MCA approved 'Business and Law Master Yachts' training module and passed the written examination. All other conditions stated in this Notice or on the website apply. Yacht Certificates must be current and issued under the STCW Convention.

French Yacht Certificates

Deck

Master 3000 GT (yacht)
Master 500 GT (yacht)
Master 200 GT (yacht)
Chief Officer 500 GT (yacht)
Chief Officer 200 GT (Yacht)
Yacht 500 GT Watchkeeping Officer
Master 200 GT (Sailing yacht)

Engineering

French engineering Yacht CoCs are assessed by the MCA on a case by case basis.

New Zealand Yacht Certificates

Master (yacht) 3000 GT
Master (yacht) 500 GT
OOW (yacht) 3000 GT

The Netherlands Yacht Certificates:

All CoCs limited to yachts or sailing ships are accepted.

All limitations on the COC's will be transferred on a like for like basis to the FSE/CEC¹⁵.

Italian Yacht Certificates:

All CoCs limited to yachts or sailing ships are accepted.

¹⁵ Candidates who submit diplomas at Grote Zeilvaart (GZV) level from Enkhuizer Zeevaart school as part of their application do not need to provide further proof of ability in English Language



**CERTIFICATE OF EQUIVALENT COMPETENCY
EXAMINATION IN UK LEGAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE PROCESSES (UKLAP)
GRADE 1 – MASTERS
INFORMATION FOR CANDIDATES
&
ORAL AND WRITTEN SYLLABUS**

Syllabus

The examination questions will be drawn from the following topics and will assess your knowledge and understanding.

1. Statutory survey and certification of UK ships:

- (a) Surveys required, survey scope (contents), validity periods and certifying authorities for SOLAS, MARPOL and LOADLINE certificates in the Harmonized System of Survey and Certification;
- (b) Knowledge of MLC and STCW 2010 Manila Amendments;
- (c) Knowledge of ISM requirements, Alternative Compliance Scheme and ISPS Code;
- (d) Recognised Organisations.

2. Role and function of the Maritime and Coastguard Agency, including:

- (a) Registry of Shipping and Seamen;
- (b) HM Coastguard;
- (c) Enforcement Unit;
- (d) Statutory surveys;
- (e) Port State Control;
- (f) Marine Notices (MSNs, MGNs and MINs);
- (g) Requirements for contacting MCA.

3. Certificate of British Registry:

- (a) Information contained within;
- (b) Period of validity;
- (c) Procedure in event of loss or destruction of Register.

4. Assistance Overseas:

- (a) Role of the British Consul to assist the Master.

5. Seafarer Documentation and Cadets on board:

- (a) Officers;
- (b) Ratings;
- (c) Procedure for verifying authenticity of UK seafarers' Certificates;
- (d) Master's/Officer's responsibility towards cadets following an structured programme.

6. Official Log Book:

- (a) Entries by Master in person;
- (b) Entries on front page;
- (c) Entries on dedicated pages;
- (d) Entries in narrative section;



- (e) Use of annexes;
- (f) Treatment of errors and omissions in entries;
- (g) Procedure for delivery of OLB.

7. Maritime Labour Convention (2006) and Crew Agreement

- (a) Recruitment and Placement;
- (b) Seafarer Employment Agreement;
- (c) Minimum age and young persons;
- (d) Wages;
- (e) Repatriation;
- (f) Crew accommodation;
- (g) Food and catering;
- (h) Medical care;
- (i) Shipowners' liability;
- (j) Inspection and detention of ships;
- (k) Offences and penalties;
- (l) Ships not subject to the MLC requirement Regulations;
- (m) Maintaining crew list;
- (n) Collective Bargaining Agreements.

8. Seaman left behind:

- (a) Failed to return from shore leave;
- (b) Hospitalised.

9. Death on board:

- (a) Crew member;
- (b) Passenger.

10. Reporting of accidents to MAIB:

- (a) Types of accident to be reported;
- (b) Procedure for reporting accidents;
- (c) Preservation of evidence.

11. Musters, drills and training onboard:

- (a) Requirements relating to Muster Lists;
- (b) Requirements relating to crew drills;
- (c) Requirements relating to passenger musters;
- (d) Requirements relating to on-board crew training.

12. Health and Safety at Work:

- (a) Duties and powers of Safety Officials;
- (b) Safety meetings;
- (c) Requirements for and elements of risk assessments;
- (d) Code of Safe Working Practices for Merchant Seamen;
- (e) Maintenance of Fresh Water provision;
- (f) Onboard accident investigation.

13. Penalties for breach of UK Merchant Shipping legislation:

- (a) Types of conviction;
- (b) £250,000 offences;



(c) £50,000 offences.

Reference books

Shipmaster's Business Companion by Malcolm MacLachlan from:

The Nautical Institute
202 Lambeth Road
London
SE1 7LQ

E-mail: pubs@nautinst.org

Shipmaster's Business Self-Examiner by Malcolm MacLachlan from:

KH Charts
Unit 5
St Luke's Business Estate
GLASGOW
G5 0TS

Tel: +44 (0) 141 429 6462

Guidance and information

Merchant Shipping Notices:

- MGN 71 – Musters, Drills and Training
- MGN 88 – Employment of Young Persons
- MGN 111 – Maintenance of Lists of Crew Ashore
- MGN 123 (M+F) – Certificates of Discharge
- MGN 134 – Issue of Discharge Books to UK Seafarers
- MGN 137 (M+F) – Look-out During Periods of Darkness and Restricted Visibility
- MGN 148 – Approval of Crew Agreements
- MGN 153 (M+F) – Compliance with Mandatory Ship Reporting Systems
- MGN 175 – Health and Safety Regulations for Ships: Merchant Shipping and Fishing Vessel (Health and Safety at Work) (Amendment) Regulations
- MGN 332 (M+F) – The Merchant Shipping and Fishing Vessels (Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment) Regulations 2006
- MGN 345 – Alternative Compliance Scheme
- MGN 395 (M+F) – Radio Log Book: Merchant Shipping & Fishing Vessels
- MGN 397 (M+F) – Guidelines for the Provision of Food and Fresh Water on Merchant Ships and Fishing Vessels
- MGN 447 (M) – Maritime Labour Convention 2006, Seafarers' Employment Agreements
- MGN 448 (M) – Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping Convention, 1978 as Amended Manila Amendments: Medical Certification, Hours of Work and Alcohol Limits
- MGN 458 – Accident Reporting and Investigation
- MGN 471 – Crew Agreement for non MLC ships
- MGN 477 – Maritime Labour Convention 2006, Seafarers' Employment Agreements
- MSN 1704 (M+F) – Carriage of Firearms on board Ships - Changes resulting from the Firearms (Amendment) Act 1997 and the Firearms (Amendment) (No. 2) Act 1997
- MSN 1751 – Harmonised System of Survey and Certification



- MSN 1826 – ISM Code Amendments
- MSN 1831 – Vessel Traffic Monitoring Notification and Reporting Requirements for Ships and Ports
- MSN 1832 – Port State Control Regulations 2011
- MSN 1842 (M) – Maritime Labour Convention 2006: Hours of Work and Entitlement to Leave
- MSN 1848 (M) – Maritime Labour Convention, 2006: Survey and Certification of UK Ships
- MSN 1849 (M) – Maritime Labour Convention, 2006: On-Board Complaints Procedure.
- MSN 1868 (Amendment 1) – Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping Convention: UK Requirements for Safe Manning and Watchkeeping.

MSNs and MGNs are subject to change from time to time. Candidates are advised to refer to the latest updates or amendments.

Legislation:

Primary

- Merchant Shipping Act 1995

Statutory Instruments

- Repatriation Regulations – SI 1979/97
- Returns of Births and Deaths Regulations – SI 1979/1577
- Official Log Book Regulations – SI 1981/569
- Seaman’s Document Regulations – SI 1987/408
- Provisions and Water Regulations – SI 1989/0102
- Crew Agreement, List of Crew and Discharge of Seamen Regulations – SI 1991/2144
- Survey and Certification Regulations – SI 1995/1210
- Reporting Requirements for Ships Carrying Dangerous or Polluting Goods Regulations – SI 1995/2498
- The Merchant Shipping (Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping) Regulations 2015
- Crew Accommodation Regulations – SI 1997/1508
- Health & Safety at Work Regulations – SI 1997/2962
- Entry into Dangerous Spaces Regulations – SI 1998/1638
- Code of Safe Working Practices for Merchant Seamen Regulations – SI 1998/1838
- H&S Employment of Young Persons Regulations – SI 1998/2411
- Musters, Training and Decision Support Systems Regulations – SI 1999/2722
- Hours of Work Regulations – SI 2002/2125
- Accident Reporting & Investigation Regulations – SI 2012/1743
- International Safety Management (ISM) Code Regulations – SI 2014/1512
- MS Maritime Labour Convention and Minimum Requirement for Seafarers Regulations – SI 2014/1613

Candidates are advised to refer to the latest amendments to these instruments.

