

RYA Yachtmaster Coastal and RYA Yachtmaster Offshore

Exam Syllabus

Candidates will be given the opportunity to demonstrate knowledge and competence in many of the areas listed below. In each section the Examiner will expect to see the candidate take full responsibility for the management of the yacht and crew.

In RYA Yachtmaster Offshore exams the candidate will be expected to demonstrate competence based on broad experience.

In RYA Yachtmaster Coastal exams the candidate will be expected to demonstrate understanding but may not have had the opportunity to practise all aspects of the syllabus under a range of different weather conditions.

It is our experience at Marine Matters that students who attend a practical without having undertaken the theory course first, struggle through the practical phase. The rare exceptions to this are those that are converting from Yachtmaster sail or have many years of navigational experience.

1. 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 ones.

- 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)

2. Safety

Candidates will be expected to know what safety equipment should be carried on board a sailing yacht or motor vessel, based either on the recommendations in the *RYA Boat Safety Handbook* (G103), 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:

- The safety briefing
- Safety harnesses
- Life jackets
- Distress signalling (flares and electronic means)
- Stability
- Fire prevention and fighting
- Life rafts
- Knowledge of rescue procedures
- Helicopter rescue

3. Boat Handling

Candidates for RYA Yachtmaster Coastal examinations will be expected to answer questions or demonstrate ability in less-complex situations only. Candidates for RYA Yachtmaster Offshore will be expected to answer questions or demonstrate ability in more complex situations and will also be expected to show a higher level of expertise:

- Coming to and weighing anchor under power or sail in various conditions of wind and tide
- In all berthing and unberthing situations in various conditions of wind and tide
- In recovery of a man overboard and being able to describe the effects of cold-water shock and the aftercare requirements of a casualty who has been in the water
- When towing under open-sea conditions and in confined areas
- In boat handling in confined areas under sail
- In boat handling in heavy weather
- When using helmsmanship and sail trim to sail to best advantage
- Using warps for securing in an alongside berth and for shifting berth or winding

4. General seamanship, including maintenance

- Properties, use and care of synthetic fibre ropes
- Knots
- General deck work at sea and in harbour
- Engine operations, routine checks and troubleshooting
- Improvisation of jury rigs following gear failure

5. Responsibilities of Skipper

- Can skipper a yacht and manage the crew
- Communication with crew
- Delegation of responsibility and watchkeeping organisation
- Preparing the yacht for sea and for adverse weather
- Tactics for heavy weather and restricted visibility
- Emergency and distress situations
- Victualling for a cruise and feeding at sea
- Customs procedures
- Standards of behaviour and courtesy

6. Navigation

- Charts, navigational publications and sources of navigational information
- Chartwork, including position fixing and shaping course to allow for tidal stream and leeway
- Tidal height and stream calculations
- Buoyage and visual aids to navigation
- Instruments including compasses, logs, echo sounders, radio navigation aids, and chart work instruments
- Passage planning and navigational tactics
- Pilotage techniques
- Navigational records
- The 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
- General understanding of AIS
- Navigational techniques for reduced visibility

7. 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

8. Signals

- Candidates for RYA Yachtmaster Coastal and Offshore must hold the SRC Certificate of Competence in radiotelephony or a higher grade of certificate in radiotelephony.