



The organisation and conduct of Coastal Skipper and Yachtmaster® Offshore exams

The purpose of these notes is to set guidelines for the conduct of exams.

Authorisation of exams

All exams must be authorised by an examination centre or booked online at www.rya.org.uk.

Overseas exams must be organised through an RYA training centre recognised for practical cruising courses. The centre must notify the RYA of any overseas exams and the location must be approved by the RYA.

An individual candidate who applies to a centre may be put in touch with an examiner to make the detailed arrangements for the exam.

Examination centres may give standing authorisation to centres which have a programme of exams, to contact examiners direct. Centres must receive notification of every exam carried out and must ensure that a standing authorisation is not used as a means of examiner selection by any centre. A centre which has a standing authorisation must use a number of different examiners and should only use examiners on its own staff in exceptional circumstances if no other examiner is available.

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 cheque. Examiners may not accept any payment from candidates for expenses incurred in connection with an exam.

Candidate's eligibility to take an exam

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 seetime has been completed the examiner should point this out to the candidate and give them the opportunity to withdraw their application.

Candidates for Coastal Skipper and Yachtmaster® Offshore exams must hold a radio operator's 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.

Candidates for Yachtmaster® Offshore exams must hold a current first aid certificate. Most certificates issued by St John's, Red Cross, St Andrew's are acceptable. For foreign nationals, an equivalent certificate issued by a national body is acceptable.

General standards to be set by Examiners

It is important that examiners are above criticism in their general conduct in all their dealings with candidates. In particular, examiners must:

- Be punctual in keeping appointments for exams;
- Set a standard of dress and appearance which is at least as high as that of the candidate;
- Respect the candidate's or boat owner's wishes on smoking below decks while on board;
- Be courteous to candidates and crew throughout the exam;

CONTENT OF EXAMINATION

General

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

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

- 1 It is the examiner's 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, whatever the outcome, that they have had a full, fair and searching test.

CANDIDATE NUMBERS AND DURATION OF EXAM

Practical exams

For planning purposes, the following times should be used as guidelines:

Coastal Skipper:	1 candidate	6-10 hours
	More than 1 candidate	4-8 hours per candidate
Yachtmaster® Offshore	1 candidate	8-12 hours
	More than 1 candidate	5-9 hours per candidate

All exams should, whenever possible, include time underway in darkness. It is, however, accepted that this will not be possible in high latitudes in mid-summer.

Examiners should not plan to examine more than 2 candidates in any 24 hour period. If everything goes well, it may be possible to examine 3 candidates in 24 hours but this will not always be the case. If the weather conditions are unhelpful or candidates turn out to be borderline cases it will be impossible to do justice to more than 2 candidates in 24 hours. It is also important that examiners should take a realistic view of their own concentration span and should not attempt prolonged exam sessions. No more than 4 candidates should be examined during any one session, or the process becomes repetitive and predictable.

CONVERSION PRACTICAL EXAMINATIONS

Holders of the Yachtmaster® Offshore sail certificate may take a conversion examination to obtain the Yachtmaster® Offshore power certificate.

Experience

At least half the required experience for Yachtmasters must be in a power vessel such as a motor cruiser, ie: 1250 miles, 25 days, 3 days as skipper, 3 passage over 60 miles including 1 overnight and 1 as skipper.

The exam will take about 3 hours. The examiner may ask questions or set tasks on any part of the syllabus but will concentrate on those sections which are markedly different in a motor cruiser, eg: boat handling, passage planning, radar.

Yachtmaster® Offshore power candidates may convert to sail. The same rules apply but the exam may be slightly longer.

The exam fee set by the RYA is approximately half that of the full examination.