



“the world's mine oyster”

William Shakespeare, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*

Some companies want to train their own apprentices their own way, without getting involved with Government-approved apprenticeships. This Briefing is for you. We intend it to offer some reassurance about what scope you have, some pointers to possible approaches – and some encouragement to take on new recruits on a well-structured training programme.

Your options

Apprenticeships are a high priority for Government – but Government does not own them. In exchange for offering a subsidy towards the cost of training apprentices (in some cases, quite a substantial subsidy) the Government inevitably sets some conditions, and some companies would prefer to be free of those constraints in order to do their own thing.

Any employer (whether they pay the Apprenticeship Levy or not, whether they are large or small) which wants to get some Government subsidy towards the cost of training their apprentices must work with a *statutory apprenticeship*, ie one which is approved by the Government. (MSA Briefing Paper 6 lists all the existing maritime apprenticeships, and also what’s in the pipeline). Companies cannot get those subsidies for their own, in-house, programme unless they are based on a statutory apprenticeship.

If, however, you are willing to forego the subsidies available, the world’s your oyster:

- you are free to call anyone you like an “apprentice”. It’s not a protected term, reserved for those on Government-approved programmes. (Equally, if you don’t want to use the term ‘apprentice’, you don’t need to).
- apprentices are your employees: you recruit the people you want and you choose their terms and conditions. (You must obviously obey employment law, including the requirements for the [National Minimum Wage](#)).
- you are under no obligation to keep someone on at the end of their training period – though we’d obviously hope you would (and, again, you must obey employment law).
- you are free to design your own training programme to suit your own circumstances.

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Pick'n'mix from our MSQ Units

As an example, take a small harbour with a dozen or so employees, and a mix of business – fishing, leisure, and some windfarm support vessels. The existing statutory apprenticeships probably don't cover the range of skills you need, and in particular most are short on customer care, which is vital to the success of such a harbour.

You could design your own programme with a pick'n'mix approach from the 140 or so Units the MSA has created in our MSQ suite - Maritime Studies Qualifications. Units are the building blocks we use in designing qualifications, but you can use them outside qualifications to give some structure to your training programme – knowing that all have been written by industry experts. Most are also based on approved National Occupational Standards.

Most of the Units are written on one or two pages. All break down subject areas into their different elements, and say both what level the work is set at, and how long it's likely to take to learn. You'll find a complete list of our Units, and all our qualifications, on [our website](#).

You might start with some basic boat-handling skills, for example, like these:

- MSA Unit 3: Vessel ropework, anchoring and mooring operations
- MSA Unit 4: Securing a vessel for passage
- MSA Unit 7: Basic vessel engineering systems (covering the MCA's Approved Engine Course)

You could add some more specialist Units, like these:

- MSA Unit 104: Use of Radar for Safe Navigation and Collision Avoidance on Domestic and Code Vessels
- MSA Unit 96: Marine vessel hospitality

And perhaps something for the harbour itself:

- MSA Unit 116: Maintain health and safety in marina and boatyard environment
- MSA Unit 120: Prepare docks and slipways for the receiving of boats and yachts

You might also want to include Units for customer relations, or marketing, or basic business skills. The MSA doesn't offer those Units, but others do, and they are easy to find and include.

A small company which services and maintains customers' boats would make a different selection. A workboat, or pleasure boat, operator which does most of its own maintenance would be different again. Lots of permutations are possible.

Any competent training adviser ought to be able to design a tailored training programme with you, using MSQ Units and others as their building blocks.

The MSA is, unfortunately, unable to recommend training consultants.

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