



the
mackinnon
partnership

**A Qualifications and Curriculum
Strategy for the Maritime Sector**

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Qualifications Frameworks: a note on language

There is scope for confusion for readers coming from different backgrounds about two sets of qualifications frameworks referred to in this document:

- *the maritime sector* throughout the UK is familiar with mandatory qualification requirements set by the Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA), which commonly reflect international requirements;
- *the skills and qualifications sector* is familiar with a number of different national qualifications frameworks which cover the whole economy:
 - England is currently in transition between two systems: the National Qualifications Framework is being phased out with no new activity from this year, and it is being replaced by the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF);
 - Northern Ireland: as for England;
 - Scotland has its well-established Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF), launched in 2001;
 - Wales participates in the QCF, where it is part of the (broader) Credit and Qualifications Framework for Wales (CQFW), established in 2003.

It is important to note that these are *not* essentially the same framework with different labels: they are conceptually different, with substantial differences between them.

Warwick University publishes a helpful chart showing how the national frameworks compare. The chart includes information about the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (which covers England, Northern Ireland and Wales) and the Irish Republic's National Framework of Qualifications:
www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/ier/glacier/qual/compare

To avoid cumbersome repetition and complexity, this document uses the term *national qualifications frameworks* to refer to the frameworks operating in each nation: NQF / QCF, SCQF and CQFW.

The term *national qualifications frameworks* therefore *does not* refer to the MCA's qualifications.

Some employers commented through the consultation process that they are keen to see the UK's qualifications aligned with those of the Republic of Ireland. The Alliance is aware of work under way to do this through the medium of the European Qualifications Framework, and does not intend to take any further action at this stage.

1. Executive summary

Scope of the Strategy

- 1.1 This Qualification Strategy for the maritime sector has been created as part of the UK-wide Vocational Qualifications Reform Programme and follows the format prescribed by the UKCES. The strategy provides the opportunity for both members of the Maritime Skills Alliance (MSA) and others to increase levels of coordination and coherence in the supply of learning provision. The UK-wide strategy builds on previous qualification strategies developed separately by the three original MSA members and on other collaborative work undertaken by the MSA.
- 1.2 The MSA is the Sector Body for maritime skills issues. MSA membership has grown from its inception in January 2004, now includes:
- Merchant Navy Training Board (MNTB);
 - Port Skills and Safety (PSS);
 - Seafish Industry Authority (Seafish);
 - Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA), in its capacity as an employer;
 - British Marine Federation (BMF), with the Royal Yachting Association (RYA);
 - Royal Navy;
 - British Tugowners Association (BTA);
 - International Association of Maritime Institutions (IAMI), for its members capacity as employers¹;
 - National Workboat Association (NWA)¹.
- 1.3 The Maritime Skills Alliance represents the interests of seven broad sectors:
- fishing;
 - leisure marine (excluding boat building);
 - marine search and rescue;
 - Merchant Navy;
 - ports;
 - Royal Navy;
 - tugs and workboats.

¹ IAMI and NWA joined on 1 April 2010.

- 1.4 There are approximately 170,800 people working in 6,436 organisations across the sector². This includes self-employed fishermen³ and volunteers in search and rescue. However, many workplaces are vessels (not included in the data), some of which are UK-owned, and some UK-managed. Others (particularly within the Merchant Navy) are owned by a UK parent, but could be operating anywhere in the world.
- 1.5 Employees are employed in an assortment of organisations ranging from micro organisations (over 90% of all enterprises within fishing employ between 1 and 5 people) to a single organisation . the Royal Navy . that employs 34,710. This qualification strategy is designed to support the learning requirements of:
- employers of all sizes;
 - new entrants to the sector;
 - those already working in it.
- 1.6 The importance of the sector to the UK economy and the international nature of much of its activities mean that skills and training in the sector are not only influenced by skills policy but also by transport, economic, environmental and health and safety policies. Many of these are linked to international (not just European, but worldwide) standards, as well as policies and standards which apply only within the UK, or part of it. As a result the policies of devolved nations have less impact on much of the maritime sector than they do on other sectors. Nevertheless, this qualifications strategy is consistent with the skills strategies of each of the four home nations.

Learning provision and uptake

- 1.7 Current accredited qualifications that are applicable to the qualifications strategy are:
- Scottish, and National, Vocational Qualifications (SVQs/NVQs);
 - Apprenticeships;
 - Higher National Certificates and Diplomas;
 - Degrees at foundation, honours and masters levels, and Professional Diplomas⁴.
- 1.8 A key issue for the sector is the imminent expiry of existing S/NVQs. In response it is seeking to develop further its suite of Maritime Studies Qualifications, and to transfer some NVQ units onto the QCF.

² The Labour Market Assessment on which this Strategy is based was compiled before the two most recent members joined MSA in March 2010. Including them would make little material difference to it.

³ Tiny numbers of women fish commercially at sea: everyone in the sector talks of %fishermen+.

⁴ Foundation Degrees are awarded in England, Northern Ireland and Wales, but not in Scotland, where Professional Diplomas are awarded.

- 1.9 As well as accredited provision, the maritime sector has well-developed non-accredited training programmes. Indeed, in volume terms, the vast majority of maritime qualifications are not accredited on national qualification frameworks.
- 1.10 For many roles, particularly those working at sea, there are mandatory licences to practice set within clear career paths. These are mainly based around international requirements and regulated in the UK by the Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA). Core requirements for those working at sea derive from the international Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping (STCW) convention⁵. Where appropriate the requirements of STCW have been incorporated into existing qualifications. The 1995 agreement (commonly known as 'STCW 95') is currently being reviewed, with agreement likely in summer 2010, and resulting changes will need to be incorporated into UK qualifications.
- 1.11 UK-specific certification (not covered by MCA) includes lift and crane licences in the ports sector, and other health and safety requirements.
- 1.12 There are three further major sources of recognition in the sector:
- the Royal Yachting Association (RYA) is a major international provider of industry-recognised qualifications which are, however, not recognised on any of the UK's national qualifications frameworks. RYA qualifications cover a wide range of competences associated with sail and motor-powered yachts and boats, particular in the leisure marine industry. A number also incorporate regulatory requirements;
 - the RNLI is a major provider of training in search and rescue and runs its own college in Poole. It uses both its own qualifications and other industry-recognised qualifications such as those approved by the RYA;
 - training and courses provided by a wide range of industry and professional bodies, some of which are internationally marketed such as Lloyds Maritime Academy and the International Marina Institute, some of which are UK-specific, such as short courses run by Seafish.

Employer concerns and priorities

- 1.13 The MSA's Skills Needs Assessment (updated in 2009) has identified four priorities for the sector relevant to the Qualification Strategy:

⁵ Unlike many other sectors of the UK economy, these international requirements are world-wide, not confined to the European Union.

- **Attracting new entrants and improving career progression.** Much of the sector faces a shortage of labour as its workforce ages and the competition for talent threatens the number of high calibre recruits entering the sector. Changes in technology and in operations are also raising entry requirements. In addition to raising awareness of the sector and its career opportunities amongst young people there is a need to ensure that there are attractive career paths offering not just progression, but also qualifications which are recognised outside the sector.
- **Providing flexible career paths.** The limited use of qualifications on national qualification frameworks, alongside extensive regulatory requirements from the MCA, results in a relatively rigid labour market. Industry recognised qualifications provide some indication of progression within specific roles, but the lack of a common qualifications structure limits career progression across the maritime sector, even where there are common skills requirements.

Existing qualifications mirror the complex regulatory framework and as a result the MCA is central to ensuring that this framework recognises and articulates regulatory seafaring career paths better. The introduction of a sector-wide qualifications framework that builds on this where it can, should significantly increase flexibility.

- **Improving the relevance of accredited qualifications for employers.** The take-up of accredited qualifications in much of the sector is relatively low. Employers' training activity is mainly focused on either meeting regulatory requirements or specific skills courses which are often short-term, focused on small numbers of learners and outside national qualifications frameworks. The credit frameworks now in place across the UK provide an opportunity to increase external recognition of this training. That would complement a course which the industry has been following for some time, conscious both that it has to compete for high quality people, and that many people in the sector use qualifications taken at one stage to open doors to a further phase in their career (for example, when Merchant Navy officers come ashore).
- **Raising business leadership and management skills.** Many parts of the sector have identified a need to raise further the level of management skills in the workforce, particular in industries which have many small businesses or self-employed workers.

The MSA's response

1.14 The MSA's vision is for a qualifications framework which:

- provides clear career pathways which are both attractive to new entrants and enable the existing workforce to develop their skills;

- incorporates regulatory requirements within qualifications thereby encouraging take-up;
- links private and public training to national qualifications frameworks;
- brings together common needs from across the sector, thereby making qualifications and training provision more economically attractive and enabling greater transferability across the sector;
- allows employers to have confidence in the skills which recruits have (ie qualifications are a recognised currency).

1.15 Since the formation of the MSA members have undertaken a range of activities which have contributed towards achieving this vision. This strategy builds on this activity in order to ensure that both accredited and non-accredited qualifications meet the future needs of the sector. To achieve its vision the MSA will undertake work involving the following three strands.

Strand 1: Ensuring that existing and future NOS meet the needs of the sector.

1.16 Priorities include:

- Marine NOS, including changes as a result of amendments to the STCW likely to be agreed in summer 2010;
- Marine NOS and Non-pleasure craft operating in inland coastal waters NOS suites to encompass requirements related to workboats working in the offshore, civil engineering and renewable energy industries;
- Marine pilot NOS, Harbour masters NOS and VTS operations NOS suites, to address changes in regulations, technology and the working environment.

Strand 2: Ensure that existing and future qualification frameworks (including apprenticeships) meet the needs of the sector

1.17 Priorities include:

- developing the Maritime Studies Qualification suite beyond level 2, and ensuring that the Level 2 MSQ, or an equivalent, is available throughout the UK;
- reviewing existing qualifications frameworks to ensure that they continue to meet the needs of the sector, notably:
 - a review of the current Ports Apprenticeship Framework to ensure that it complies with new requirements in each part of the UK;
 - seeking an extension to the validation of the fishing specific N/SVQs in order to allow the existing apprenticeship frameworks to continue whilst a replacement is developed;

- ensuring the ports related NVQs due to expire in March 2010, and SVQs due to expire in 2011, are replaced with units on the relevant national qualifications framework, and linked, where appropriate, to the Maritime Studies Qualification.
- exploring the possibility of a cross-industry maritime apprenticeship;
- exploring how recently developed NOS can be further used as the basis for accredited qualifications and frameworks. Priorities will be:
 - Shore-based ship management;
 - Maritime hospitality;
 - Marine;
 - Non-pleasure craft operating in inland coastal waters.
- development of a ratings framework to enable ratings to transfer across disciplines as required, and through to officer status;
- ensuring the new Foundation Degree framework for ports is implemented to ensure that new Foundation Degrees are consistent;
- the development of Certificates of Competence for harbour masters and pilots;
- working with the MCA to ensure that qualification structures are in place to support the proposed introduction of the competence requirement for operators of fishing vessels of less than 16.5 metres length;
- ensuring that all frameworks take appropriate account of supervision and management.

Strand 3: Activities to improve the take-up of qualifications and to ensure the quality of available qualifications.

1.18 Priorities include:

- determining whether and how the Apprenticeship brand can be used when promoting traineeships to individuals. The industry is happy with the current SMarT structure and would not wish this to change, but there may be benefits for both the sector and the Government if they were marketed together;
- publishing a chart to show career paths for the whole maritime sector;
- working with RYA to consider using the flexibilities of the credit and qualifications frameworks to accredit existing RYA courses, particularly those for instructors and Certificates of Competence;

- supporting the MCA Convergence initiative, to remove barriers to cross-industry flexibility.

Strand 4: Using the Action Plan

1.19 In a fourth strand, the Alliance has agreed to consider how best to promote the Action Plan to engage others, especially employers, and to keep the Plan under review.

Future evolution of the Qualifications Strategy

1.20 The Maritime Qualifications Board (MQB) will oversee the development and implementation of the strategy and action plan, including the instigation of projects, and the creation of partnerships and agreements necessary to meet the strategy's objectives. The MQB includes representatives of each member and the SQA in its capacity as the relevant awarding organisation.

1.21 The MSA Board will review progress against the Qualifications Strategy Action Plan quarterly, and will undertake an annual review alongside the MSA's other strategy and business planning activities.

2. Scope of the qualifications strategy

Overall scope

Sector Qualifications Strategies

- 2.1 As part of the UK-wide Vocational Qualifications Reform Programme, the UK Commission for Employment and Skills (UKCES) requires Sector Skills Councils (SSCs) and Sector Skills Bodies to prepare qualifications strategies for their sectors. This strategy for the maritime sector therefore sits within a family of similar documents which cover much the largest part of the UK's workforce.
- 2.2 This document therefore follows the format prescribed by the UKCES, which seeks a common approach so that external partners can more easily use each sector's qualification strategy, and so that the Commission itself can more easily consider the national picture.
- 2.3 Within the maritime sector, this strategy provides the opportunity for both members of the Maritime Skills Alliance (MSA) and others such as training providers and employers to increase levels of coordination and coherence in the supply of learning provision, with the intention that this should ultimately work to the benefit of employers, the workforce and the nation.
- 2.4 The strategy builds on previous qualification strategies⁶ developed separately by the three original MSA members and on other collaborative work undertaken by the MSA including the 2006 Learning Pathways report and the 2009 Skills Needs Assessment.

Sector coverage

- 2.5 The Maritime Skills Alliance is the Sector Body for maritime skills issues. MSA membership has grown from its inception, and includes:
 - Merchant Navy Training Board (MNTB);
 - Port Skills and Safety (PSS);
 - Seafish Industry Authority (Seafish);
 - Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA);
 - British Marine Federation (BMF), with the Royal Yachting Association (RYA);
 - Royal Navy;
 - British Tugowners Association (BTA)

⁶ These strategies were high level documents prepared at UK level, with no supporting detail for each of the four nations.

- International Association of Maritime Institutions (IAMI), for its members capacity as employers⁷;
- National Workboat Association⁷.

2.6 The Maritime Skills Alliance represents the interests of seven broad sectors:

- fishing;
- leisure marine (excluding boat building);
- marine search and rescue;
- Merchant Navy;
- ports;
- Royal Navy;
- tugs and workboats.

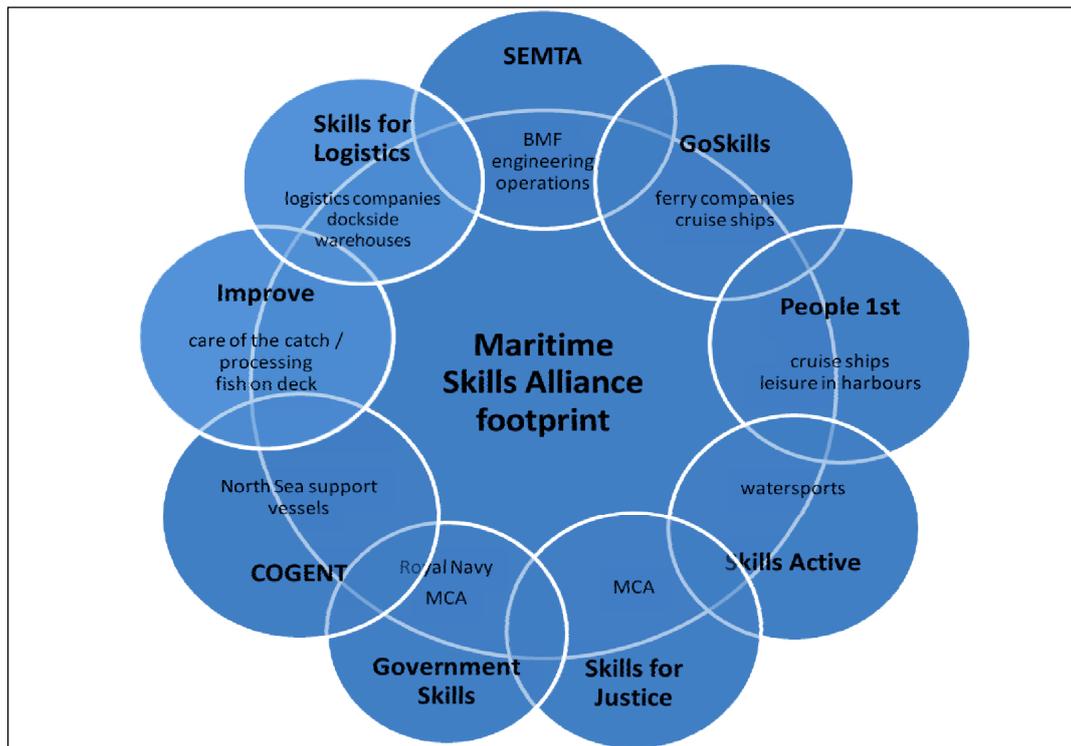
2.7 MSA activities are covered by a wide range of Standard Industrial Classifications (SICs) and in many cases represent a small part of the SIC coverage. Table 1.1 relates MSA coverage to relevant SICs.

⁷ IAMI and NWA joined on 1 April 2010.

Table 1.1: Sector definition by SIC 2003 codes			
SIC Code	Description	Unique to MSA?	
		Yes	No
05.01	Fishing	✓	
61.10	Sea and coastal water transport	✓	
61.20	Inland water transport	✓	
63.11	Cargo handling inc: – Stevedoring – Loading or unloading of goods or passengers luggage	✓	✓
63.22	Other supporting water transport activities	✓	
63.30/2	Activities of travel organisations inc – Flotilla and water-sport beach holiday operators	✓	✓
71.22	Renting of water transport equipment	✓	
71.40/1	Renting of sporting and recreational equipment inc: – Renting of pleasure boats and water-sport equipment	✓	✓
75.22	Defence activities inc: – Combat forces of army, navy and air force		✓ ✓
80.41	Driving school activities inc: – Sailing schools and water-sport training	✓	✓
92.62/9	Other sporting activities not elsewhere classified inc: – Activities of marinas	✓	✓

2.8 Most of the MSA footprint is unique, but there are overlaps with nine SSCs. The MSA is responsible for maritime sector skills issues and adopts a joint approach wherever appropriate to the development of education and training, occupational standards and qualifications frameworks for those involved with maritime activities. For example it has worked closely with People 1st to develop NOS for maritime hospitality occupations.

Figure 1.1: MSA Footprint and overlaps with other SSCs



Occupations covered

2.9 The MSA learning pathways⁸ report provides a detailed occupational map of the sector, summarised below.

Table 1.2: Maritime occupations covered	
Sector	Key occupations
Marine leisure	Watersports instructors; yacht brokers; marina managers and operators; superyacht officers, engineers, chefs and stewards; flotilla skippers, engineers, hosts.
Merchant Navy/Royal Navy	Captain, officers, engineers, ratings and other specialist crew; cook and steward; cruise director and hand; shore-based fleet managers and marine operations personnel.
Ports and Harbours	Port managers, harbour masters and port operations managers; marine pilots and vessel traffic services officers; port operatives, supervisors and engineers.
Sea fishing	Skippers, mates and engineers working on fishing vessels.
Search and rescue	Lifeboat crew and mechanics; hovercraft commander; coastal rescue teams, coastguards, marine surveyors.
Tug Operations	Tug masters, officers, engineers and ratings.

⁸ The Mackinnon Partnership for the MSA (2006) *Identification of Learning Pathways for the Maritime Sector*

Population covered⁹

2.10 There are approximately 170,800 people working in 6,436 organisations across the sector. This includes self-employed fishermen and volunteers in search and rescue. However, many workplaces are vessels (not included in the data), some of which are UK-owned, and some UK-managed. Others (particularly within the Merchant Navy) are owned by a UK parent, but could be operating anywhere in the world.

Table 1.3: Employment within the maritime sector	
Industry	Number working in the sector
Fishing	12,729
Leisure Marine	12,716
Merchant Navy	25,210
Marine Search and Rescue:	
MCA	4,632
RNLI	5,150
Ports	74,000
Royal Navy	34,710
Tugboats	1,600
Maritime Sector	170,776

Source: Skills Need Assessment for the Maritime Sector (2009)

2.11 Employees are employed in an assortment of organisations ranging from micro organisations (over 90% of all enterprises within fishing employ between 1 and 5 people) to a single organisation . the Royal Navy . that employs 34,710. This qualification strategy is designed to support the learning requirements of:

- employers of all sizes;
- new entrants to the sector;
- those already working in it.

Range of learning provision

2.12 This strategy is appropriate for all provision from the age of 16 across the UK. Current accredited qualifications that are applicable to the qualifications strategy are:

- Scottish and National Vocational Qualifications (SVQs/NVQs), although NVQs are being replaced with new qualifications based on the Qualification and Credit Framework;
- Apprenticeships;
- Higher National Certificates and Diplomas;

⁹ The Labour Market Assessment on which this Strategy is based was compiled before the two most recent members joined MSA in March 2010. Including them would make little material difference to it.

- Degrees at foundation, honours and masters levels, and Professional Diplomas.

2.13 As well as accredited provision, the maritime sector has well-developed training programmes that are not accredited on national qualifications frameworks. Indeed in terms of volume, the vast majority of qualifications within the industry are non-accredited and linked to regulatory requirements and licences to practice, many of which are international. The principles articulated within the qualifications strategy are relevant to both accredited and non-accredited training.

Priorities within the overall scope

2.14 The MSA's Skills Needs Assessment has identified four priorities for the sector relevant to the Qualification Strategy:

- **Attracting new entrants and improving career progression.** Much of the sector faces a shortage of labour as its workforce ages and the competition for talent threatens the number of high calibre recruits entering the sector. Changes in technology and in operations are also raising entry requirements. In addition to raising awareness of the sector and its career opportunities amongst young people there is a need to ensure that there are attractive career paths offering not just progression, but also qualifications which are recognised outside the sector.
- **Providing flexible career paths.** The limited use of qualifications on national qualification frameworks, alongside extensive regulatory requirements from the MCA, results in a relatively rigid labour market. Industry recognised qualifications provide some indication of progression within specific roles, but the lack of a common qualifications structure limits career progression across the maritime sector, even where there are common skills requirements.

Existing qualifications mirror the complex regulatory framework and as a result the MCA is central to ensuring that this framework recognises and articulates regulatory seafaring career paths better. The introduction of a sector-wide qualifications framework that builds on this where it can, should significantly increase flexibility.

- **Improving the relevance of accredited qualifications for employers.** The take-up of accredited qualifications in much of the sector is relatively low. Employers' training activity is mainly focused on either meeting regulatory requirements or specific skills courses which are often short-term, focused on small numbers of learners and outside national qualifications frameworks. The credit frameworks now in place across the UK provide an opportunity to increase external recognition of this training. That would complement a course which the industry has been following for some time, conscious both that it has to compete for high quality people, and that many people in the sector use qualifications taken at one stage to open doors to a further phase in their career (for example, when Merchant Navy officers come ashore).
- **Raising business leadership and management skills.** Many parts of the sector have identified a need to raise further the level of management skills in the workforce, particular in industries which have many small businesses or self-employed workers.

Four nations

- 2.15 The importance of the sector to the UK economy and the international nature of much of its activities mean that skills and training in the sector are not only influenced by skills policy but also transport, economic, environmental and health and safety policies. Many of these are linked to international (not just European, but worldwide) standards, as well as policies and standards which apply only within the UK.
- 2.16 For example the UK Government's shipping strategy¹⁰ highlighted the importance of maintaining seafaring skills within the UK economy and as a result 21 out of the 33 action points were aimed at ensuring that the UK maintained a sufficiently large and highly skilled maritime workforce. This included changes to the tax regime to encourage the training of British officers.
- 2.17 In addition, regulation at the UK level has a significant impact on skills needs and training provision in the sector, particularly through Maritime and Coastguard Agency and the Health and Safety Executive (and its Northern Ireland equivalent, HSE NI). As a result the policies of the four nations' governments have less impact on the maritime sector than they do on other sectors. Nevertheless, this qualifications strategy is consistent with the skills strategies of each of the four home nations, and their qualifications frameworks.

¹⁰ DfT, British Shipping: Charting a new course (1998)
<http://www.dft.gov.uk/about/strategy/whitepapers/previous/britishshippingchartinganewc5696?page=2#a1001>

England

2.18 In terms of skills and qualifications the main strategies which link to our sector relate to:

- the *Skills for Growth* strategy published in November 2009 by the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS). The maritime sector has a high number of technician-related roles and is seeking to renew and expand its apprenticeship frameworks, both of which get high priority in Skills for Growth. In addition the sector is making increasing use of Foundation Degrees and developing clearer career paths from intermediate to higher level qualifications. The sector is strategically important in a number of regions and will continue to work with Regional Development Agencies (which get more prominent skills roles) to ensure that provision meets the needs of the sector ;
- Low Carbon Industrial Strategy (a UK-wide strategy, led by BIS). The sector has a key role in supporting the establishment and maintenance of off-shore renewable energy infrastructure;
- Vocational Qualifications Reform Programme (another UK-wide strategy led by BIS, though not all parts of the strategy apply to all parts of the UK). The introduction of qualifications and credit frameworks across the UK provides opportunities for the sector to create a more flexible qualification framework (through the Maritime Studies Qualification) which better meets employers' needs and integrates the MCA's extensive regulatory skills requirements. In addition the Employer Engagement Programme provides an opportunity for the sector to accredit more of its extensive non-accredited training.

Scotland

2.19 The strategic framework for skills in Scotland was set by the September 2007 Government publication *Skills for Scotland: A Lifelong Skills Strategy*. Introducing it, Fiona Hyslop, then Cabinet Secretary for Education and Lifelong Learning, wrote:

Investing in our people's skills, ensuring that skills contribute as much as possible to sustainable economic growth, is central to unlocking our potential.

2.20 The strategy re-emphasised the commitment of the Scottish Government to the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework.

2.21 The fishing sector and Merchant Navy have been identified by the Scottish Government as strategically important and the MSA has been working with it and its agencies to ensure that provision meets the needs of the sector. For example:

- the sector is working on the New Entrants Working Group which aims to encourage more new entrants into the sector to address skills shortages;

- Scottish Enterprise has identified the marine sector as a strategically important and co-ordinates the Marine Action Group which has promoted Merchant Navy officer traineeships.

Wales

- 2.22 The sector has not been identified as a key sector for support by the Welsh Assembly Government, although Milford Haven is a strategic port for the supply of energy and the sector contributes to the tourism industry, which is a strategic priority. The Welsh Assembly Government will take responsibility for managing Welsh Fisheries in 2010 and has announced a £13.5m fund to enhance marketing, skills and training.
- 2.23 The Credit and Qualifications Framework for Wales (CQFW) was introduced in 2003 and includes three pillars, one of which is the Qualifications and Credit Framework (as used in England and Northern Ireland). This provides opportunities for the sector to create a more flexible qualifications framework (through the Maritime Studies Qualifications) which better meets employers' needs, and integrates the extensive regulatory skills requirements.
- 2.24 To date the sector has not identified a separate demand for sector specific NOS or vocational qualifications in the Welsh language, but we will review this in light of forthcoming guidance from the Department for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills (DCELLS).

Northern Ireland

- 2.25 The total number employed in the sector in Northern Ireland is small, although the sector accounts for a slightly higher proportion of the Northern Ireland workforce than it does of the UK workforce as a whole. (Responsibility for shipping services, navigation and marine safety matters, however, is not devolved).
- 2.26 Nevertheless the introduction of the QCF provides opportunities for the sector to create a more flexible qualifications framework (through the Maritime Studies Qualifications) which better meets employers' needs and integrates the extensive regulatory skills requirements.
- 2.27 It is worth noting that in addition to using UK-based provision, the sector in Northern Ireland takes advantage of training in the Republic of Ireland, particularly courses operated by the Maritime College of Ireland, based in Cork, and the National Fisheries College located in Greencastle, Co. Donegal.

3. Sector working environment

Special features of the sector

- 3.1 There are many features unique to the sector which affect the take-up and delivery of qualifications.

An international focus

- 3.2 Much of the sector operates in an international market. Competition is worldwide and many companies are international.
- 3.3 The labour market for seafarers is also global. A high proportion of British seafarers work overseas, for both British and international companies, commonly working with a multi-national crew. And increasingly foreign nationals work on British-based vessels, including in the fishing fleet, in British ports and in other parts of the sector.
- 3.4 These factors mean that many qualifications have to be relevant in an international context and relate to international regulation.
- 3.5 They also mean that language skills are important on vessels, and in other workplaces, with multi-national crews. International regulations require a certain level of English language proficiency in order to ensure safety, however research by MNTB into the quality of onboard training of officer trainees suggests that in some cases Designated Shipboard Training Officers have insufficient English language skills to communicate effectively with British trainees for the more demanding purposes of training them.

Importance to the UK economy

- 3.6 The UK maritime sector is of strategic importance to the UK economy because more than 95% of our trade is by sea, as a source of tax revenue, and also because seafaring skills and knowledge are in great demand for on-shore roles. These include senior and specialist roles in the maritime sector, but also high value roles in the City of London, such as maritime lawyers, brokers and insurers.
- 3.7 Seafarers leaving both the Merchant Navy and the Royal Navy are a valuable source of seafaring skills for these roles and both are committed to providing training that leads to externally recognised and accredited qualifications.
- 3.8 It is therefore important that any qualifications strategy takes into account the long-term usefulness of qualifications, not only within the maritime sector, but also more widely.

An ageing and declining pool of British seafarers

- 3.9 Across the world, the seafaring workforce is ageing - ie it is not being replaced by enough new entrants - and has led to concern in many countries about the global shortage of officers. There is also some concern about whether new entrants are of sufficient quality to operate and manage the new technology that is being integrated into the fleets of the future. British officers are generally considered to be of high quality and are in demand, but their declining numbers has resulted in employers needing to look elsewhere in order to address a general global shortage. The world-wide economic downturn has limited the impact of this shortage, although it is likely to re-emerge when the economy recovers. This has implications not only for the shipping industry but also for other maritime and non-maritime industries in the UK that rely on a steady flow of ex-seafarers taking up UK shore-based jobs.
- 3.10 The action taken by the UK Government to encourage the growth of the UK registered fleet and the training of British officer trainees linked to the Tonnage Tax has resulted in a substantial increase in numbers of officer trainees in training, but there will be a lag before the impact is seen and these skills filter through to other sectors. Shore-based employers are therefore reassessing how far they *need* seafaring experience in particular roles. The MSA will monitor this trend and help create new entry routes into the sector if necessary, for example building on the ship management NOS.

A dangerous and regulated environment

- 3.11 Many roles in the sector involve working in hazardous environments. Examples include:
- operating large cranes in ports;
 - hauling nets onboard a fishing vessel in the North Sea;
 - controlling ships at sea;
 - rescuing people in dangerous seas;
 - towing large vessels in relatively small spaces using high powered vessels;
 - leading a flotilla at sea.
- 3.12 Safety is therefore of paramount importance and there are national and international regulations to ensure that workers are both competent and safe. These regulations have two relevant effects: they drive training needs, and the culture of safety affects how learning is done and assessed. The particularly close relationship between skills and safety is reflected in the name *Ports Skills and Safety* and in the fact that PSS embeds health and safety requirements in all its NOS units, rather than following the common path of making them separate, but mandatory, units.

Unpredictable nature of work

3.13 For some roles in the sector work is particularly unpredictable. For example fishermen are dependent on the weather conditions and tugboat crews and stevedores rely on the arrival of ships in ports. Those on board ships also have to deal with unpredictable events. Training therefore needs to be flexible and a unitised qualification structure such as that provided by the MSQ will make it easier to offer training linked to qualifications.

Geographic distribution of the sector

3.14 With a few exceptions, the maritime workforce is not geographically clustered as workers in other sectors are, which greatly limits the scope for economies of scale in providing training. Workers in the sector are widely distributed all over the country - and, more particularly, round its coast - or well beyond, all over the world. This creates two problems:

- learners often have to travel long distances to train, which not only adds to costs but also takes them away from their work for longer. This is a contributing factor to the greater use by some larger employers, particularly in the ports industry, of internal training;
- assessment is much harder to arrange for people who may be at sea for months, and in some instances with no guarantee of immediate communication.

3.15 There are some geographical clusters - for example fishing in Scotland and leisure marine in south west England - which allow collective training to take place.

The voluntary workforce

3.16 Search and rescue relies heavily on volunteers. Both the RNLI and MCA provide comprehensive high quality training for their volunteers, although it is not linked to national qualification frameworks. There are challenges associated with availability of volunteers for learning and both RNLI and MCA take advantage of distance learning. There are also challenges associated with the management of volunteers.

The short-term workforce

3.17 There is no clear career framework in some parts of the leisure marine industry, so many workers do not see it offering them a career. As a result many young people work in the sector for a short period of time, for example as watersports instructors after leaving college or university, and then move on to other careers. This loss of experience is costly to the sector.

Future trends

3.18 Future change in the maritime industry is most likely to come through changes in markets, technology, legislation and the environment, though they are likely to affect different sectors within the industry in different ways.

Changes in markets

3.19 There are a number of changes in the market which may have an impact on the quantity and nature of demand for qualifications. These include:

- the current economic slowdown, which is likely to reduce the demand for qualifications and training, particularly for new entrants, at least in the short-term, and which may provoke long-term changes in workforce use;
- the strategic defence review currently underway is very likely to impact on the requirements of the Royal Navy whatever the result of the 2010 General Election;
- increased use of Liquefied Natural Gas ships and the additional skills required to operate and tow these ships;
- an increase in the number and size of superyachts, which require a different mix of skills to more conventional ships;
- the continued decline of the fishing industry, making it difficult to attract new people into the sector and resulting in low demand for qualifications.

Legislation and regulation

3.20 The implications of the conservation-focused UK Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009 on the skill needs of the sector are still unclear, but it is likely to increase the knowledge required by those working in the sector, particularly in the fishing industry.

3.21 Future changes to certification and regulatory requirements, including updating, are likely to include:

- a revised Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping (STCW) convention, currently under review through international discussion, with changes likely to be agreed in summer 2010;
- a new requirement from 2011 that people operating fishing vessels below 16.5m will need a skippers licence;
- a new requirement to have a Boatmasters Licence to take people out on the water. The requirement is currently limited;

- implications for port authorities from the recent review of the Port Marine Safety Code;
- the Maritime Labour Convention may influence qualifications requirements in due course.

3.22 As regulation is the key driver in the sector, the structure and nature of qualifications will need to reflect any changes made.

3.23 Due to the unpredictable nature of the work patterns, referred to above, delivery of training needs to be flexible and the new MSQ unit structure lends itself to such a flexible approach.

Technology change

3.24 As a result of the recent boom in world shipping (with a temporary lull because of the recession), many new ships have been built which employ the latest technology: officers and crew need to understand how to use it, and training and assessment needs to be updated to include it.

3.25 Likely future technological changes include:

- increased use of crane simulators to train stevedores. Simulators allow stevedores to practice their skills in various conditions, which would not normally be possible given the dangerous nature of the work;
- the rapidly changing nature of tugs and workboat roles has resulted in vastly increased power outputs and dynamic winch systems to enable active escorting of high risk vessels such as gas carriers. These techniques require a higher level of tugmaster skill and understanding of the huge dynamic forces involved.

The environment

3.26 The shipping sector is very conscious of the need to reduce carbon emissions and of the scrutiny which it is under from those who focus on good miles+

3.27 The sector has a good story to tell: shipping is the most carbon-efficient means of transporting freight. Modern ships can emit as little as five grams of CO₂ per tonne-kilometre . compared to about 50 grams per tonne-kilometre for a heavy truck or 540 grams per tonne-kilometre for a modern cargo plane. Any shift of freight from other modes of transport to shipping will therefore reduce overall emissions.

3.28 However, the overall magnitude of CO₂ emissions from the industry means that further industry initiatives and international policy action are, in the view of the UK's Chamber of Shipping, which has taken a lead internationally on CO₂, both inevitable and desirable+

- 3.29 All this affects the training of Merchant Navy officers, and perhaps recruitment strategies too. The skills and qualifications issue is around the industry being in a position to ensure that appropriate management systems are in place, both shore-based and onboard, supported by qualifications and skills development and appropriate recognition for them. Many companies already have an environmental officer and are working towards, or have already achieved, the international environmental standard ISO 14000. Others will require support for skills development to embrace the need, and opportunity, more fully.
- 3.30 The sector also has an important role in the expansion of off-shore renewable energy, creating jobs in both turbine erection and maintenance. Qualification and skills development will need to reflect any new requirements arising from these changes.

4. Current qualifications and learning provision

Main types of qualifications

4.1 We summarise the key qualifications in the sector below. There is a detailed list in Appendices A-C.

Masters, honours and foundation degrees

4.2 There is a small number of masters and honours degrees relevant to the sector. For example Liverpool John Moores University offers a Maritime Studies Degree providing the basic underpinning knowledge to enter shore-based shipping careers at management trainee level, whilst Glasgow College of Nautical Studies offers Nautical Science.

4.3 In response to the need to attract more officer trainees into the Merchant Navy a foundation degree¹¹ has recently been established as the preferred route of entry. Successful completion allows officers to top up their foundation degree to get an honours degree. In addition:

- a foundation degree for electro-technical officers is being piloted by South Tyneside College;
- a foundation degree in Operational Yacht Science has recently been established in response to the increasing demand for crew of superyachts;
- a Ports and Logistics Foundation Degree has been established.

HNDs/HNCs

4.4 HNDs and HNCs provide a route into the Merchant Navy for those without the necessary academic qualifications to join a degree course. These HND/HNCs and the degrees mentioned above are delivered in around 14 Nautical Colleges and Universities across the British Isles (including the Nautical College of Ireland in Cork).

S/NVQs

4.5 N/SVQs are available at levels 2, 3 and 4 and cover:

- Marine vessel support (level 2);
- Marine vessel operations (level 3 and 4);
- Marine engineering operations (level 3 and 4¹²);

¹¹ Professional Diploma in Scotland

¹² Not available as an SVQ level 4

- Supervision of port operations (level 3);
- Port operations (level 2).

4.6 With the exception of the port operations and supervision SVQs the remaining S/NVQs are due to expire in 2010. The ports industry intends to revalidate the port operations and supervision NVQs but for the rest, though they remain technically ~~live~~ there will be no more new starts.

Maritime Studies Qualifications

4.7 The MSA was one of seven organisations initially selected to take part in the ~~test~~ and trial+ of the new Qualifications and Credit Framework for England, Wales and Northern Ireland. As a result, a Maritime Studies Award at Level 2 was created to provide a broad-based introduction to the maritime sector that could also be used in schools or as part of an apprenticeship.

4.8 The Maritime Studies Award is due to expire in September 2010, however a draft framework has been created for a Level 2 Maritime Studies Award, Certificate and Diploma which is expected to be placed on the QCF in 2010. It will provide an entry route into the sector through college provision. MSA intends to develop the suite further to cover levels 3 and 4 and will both provide progression within the suite, and enable transferability across the sector. Where possible the suite will link to relevant MCA and other certification. The MSQ will supplement the N/SVQs being used in the ports industry.

4.9 The Scottish Qualifications Authority is in the process of introducing a Skills for Work Course in Maritime Skills, which covers some of the ground covered by the Maritime Studies suite. The MSA will clarify how it relates to the MSQ. Its intention is to ensure that the MSQ at Level 2, or an appropriate equivalent, is available throughout the UK and recognised on the relevant national qualifications framework.

Apprenticeships/Modern Apprenticeships

4.10 Apprenticeship frameworks currently exist for fishing and ports, however:

- the Ports Apprenticeship Framework does not meet the current Apprenticeship blueprint in England;
- the Fishing Modern Apprenticeship is not currently being delivered in Scotland, but the Apprenticeship is being delivered in England;
- a Watersport Coaching Apprenticeship framework exists within Skills Active's Coaching Apprenticeship Framework. These incorporate the recently created BTEC Certificate and Diploma in Sailing and Watersports.

- 4.11 A report on Maritime Apprenticeship Frameworks produced in 2008 identified the feasibility of establishing a maritime-wide Apprenticeship Framework for the four nations. The consultation on this strategy identified considerable interest in the possibility and the Alliance will be pursuing it. The ports and fishing industries have since been working to bring their existing apprenticeship frameworks in line with current Government requirements. The revisions are currently awaiting approval by the regulators.
- 4.12 The Merchant Navy does not have an apprenticeship framework, but its qualifications frameworks (which incorporate access courses, Higher Nationals and degrees), supported by Department for Transport Support for Maritime Training (SMarT) funding are based on the apprenticeship model. They also include industry specific safety related courses and practical work on board vessels, along with relevant key/core skills. Take-up and satisfaction are high, although this scheme means the sector is not able to take advantage of Apprenticeship branding when marketing to young people.

Regulated learning recognition

- 4.13 Much of the recognition in the sector is around competencies to meet regulatory safety requirements. For many roles, particularly those working at sea, there are mandatory licences to practice which also set out career paths. These are mainly based around international requirements and regulated in the UK by the Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA). A core requirement for those working at sea is the Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping (STCW) Certificate, which is defined and governed by international convention¹³. Where appropriate the requirements of the certificate have been incorporated into existing qualifications. The 1995 agreement (commonly known as STCW 95) is currently being reviewed (with agreement likely in summer 2010) and resulting changes will need to be incorporated into UK qualifications.
- 4.14 The MCA also issues Certificates of Equivalent Competency (CEC) to recognise the qualifications of foreign Merchant Navy officers, thus enabling them to work for British companies. However, although this shows they are competent in regulatory terms it does not necessarily mean they have the same range and level of skills as those completing a British qualification.
- 4.15 UK specific certification (not covered by MCA, though sometimes by the Health and Safety Executive) includes lift and crane licences in the ports sector.

Other learning recognition

- 4.16 There are three further major sources of recognition in the sector:

¹³ Unlike many other sectors of the UK economy, these international requirements are world-wide, not confined to the European Union.

- the Royal Yachting Association (RYA) is a major international provider of industry-recognised qualifications which are, however, not recognised on national qualifications frameworks. RYA qualifications cover a wide range of competences associated with sail and motor-powered yachts and boats, particular in the leisure marine industry. A number also incorporate regulatory requirements;
- the RNLI is a major provider of training in search and rescue and runs its own college in Poole. It uses both its own qualifications and other industry-recognised qualifications such as those produced by RYA. As a body which relies on public donations, the RNLI has traditionally sought to keep a distance from Government lest too close a relationship damages its voluntary donations. RNLI qualifications are not recognised on national qualifications frameworks;
- training and courses provided by a wide range of industry and professional bodies, some of which are internationally available such as those of Lloyds Maritime Academy and the International Marina Institute, and some of which are UK-specific, such as short courses run by Seafish.

Current volumes

4.17 The diversity of provision and fragmented availability of data make it difficult to present an accurate and complete picture of current qualification volumes (much less provide robust analysis by country within the UK). However it is clear that the number of non-accredited qualifications¹⁴ awarded significantly outnumbers the number of accredited qualifications. This reflects the importance of regulation and the diverse nature of roles in the sector. There are however differences across the sector for example:

- all officer trainees in the Merchant Navy obtain accredited qualifications irrespective of their entry level. This reflects the clear career structure, the integration of certificates to practice into the qualifications and the larger size of the industry and its training infrastructure;
- search and rescue and leisure marine industries rely almost exclusively on non-accredited qualifications. This reflects the nature of regulation and the high regard for the RYA and RNLI non-accredited qualifications.

¹⁴ Shorthand to mean not accredited to national qualifications frameworks+(NQF, QCF, SCQF, etc)

Table 3.1 Use of accredited qualifications	
Type	Take-up (period)
Foundation Degree/Scottish Professional Diploma	
Merchant Navy	256 (enrolment 2008-09)
Other Degrees	
Merchant Navy	67 (enrolment 2008-09)
HNC/HNDs and Vocational Qualifications	
Merchant Navy	561 (enrolment 2008-09)
N/SVQs	1,530 (registrations in 2008)
Apprenticeships	
Fishing Apprenticeships	30 (capacity recently doubled to 60 to meet demand)
Ports Apprenticeships	Approximately 80

Table 3.2: Use of non-accredited qualifications	
Type	Take-up (period)
RNLI	3,466 trained (2008)
RYA Certificates of Competence ¹⁵	
Power Boat Advanced	211 (2008)
Coastal Skipper	571 (2008)
Yachtmaster	2,053 (2008)
Yachtmaster Ocean	313 (2008)
Other RYA ⁷	
Other motor cruising certificates	1,570 (2008)
Other power boat certificates	28,215 (2008)
Other sail cruising certificates	27,380 (2008)
Other shore-based certificates	63,999 (2008)
Seafish Group Training Association Short Courses ¹⁶	2,397 trained (April-July 2009)
BMF Marina Operatives/Manager Courses	73 trained (2008-09 financial year)

Match to employers' needs

4.18 In most of the maritime sectors there are stringent and wide-ranging statutory certification requirements for a significant number of occupational roles and this provides the focus of much training in the sector. These requirements are sometimes, but not always, linked to nationally accredited qualifications. In some sectors, such as the Merchant Navy, there are clearly-defined progression routes, but in others progression routes are unclear.

¹⁵ Many take RYA qualifications for leisure purposes, but no distinction is made in the data recorded.

¹⁶ The figure relates to numbers of course participants: some fishermen take more than one course.

- 4.19 Roles in the sector can be divided into five areas:
- 4.20 **Manage, control and operate shipping, fishing and leisure vessels.** There are strict regulatory requirements for many of these roles and the qualifications that exist are based around them. Within the Merchant Navy there is a clear range of entrant points based around HNCs/HNDs, Foundation Degrees/Professional Diplomas and honours degrees. For other parts of the sector such as fishing, inland water and leisure marine greater use is made of either N/SVQs or RYA qualifications. Apprenticeships have been developed in the fishing sector to encourage more young people to enter the industry, but take-up is low. Where appropriate transferability between parts of the sector is made possible through MCA's identification of acceptable equivalent certificates and qualifications, but it is often the case that people perceive this process to be difficult. There is a particular issue in the Merchant Navy associated with the transfer of ratings between different departments. Ratings either work as deck, engineer or catering ratings, each with their own regulatory requirements. It is currently difficult to transfer between these three groups. The replacement of N/SVQs with the credit-based Maritime Studies Qualification and subsequent linkage to MCA regulatory requirements may help to address some of these transferability issues, as may the work of the MNTB's ratings working group.
- 4.21 **Manage and support the operation of shipping, fishing and leisure fleets.** These are primarily shore-based roles. There are few specific qualifications for these roles as employers have traditionally relied on recruiting ex-seafarers with the required sea-faring experience and knowledge. Some officers undertake generic management qualifications before taking shore-based roles. The declining number of seafarers along with competition from other parts of the sector that rely on these roles means that alternative career paths need to be considered. Despite the degree in Maritime Studies offered in Liverpool and the existence of NOS for shore-based ship management, alternative routes are yet to be created and accepted by employers.
- 4.22 **Manage, control and operate ports, harbours and marinas.** The wide geographic spread of these roles, and the historic lack of an alternative training infrastructure (such as use of colleges) which dates back to the National Dock Labour Scheme, have resulted in employers relying on internal training (including buying-in training on site by training consultants). Amongst operators the main use of qualifications is to gain licences to operate heavy machinery such as cranes. Where appropriate these have been included within the N/SVQ. An ageing workforce is a severe problem with this part of the sector and apprenticeships have been developed to help encourage the recruitment of young people. The framework is in the process of being revised in England to meet the new blueprint.

- 4.23 At management level there is a small number of higher level qualifications offered by industry and professional bodies along with degrees in marina management. The former tend to be internationally-recognised qualifications. The sector is currently considering establishing certificates of competence for harbourmasters and pilots.
- 4.24 **Manage, organise and deliver watersports instruction.** RYA qualifications are the worldwide standard for this sector, but are not recognised on national qualifications frameworks. The industry makes great use of young people who gain these qualifications, but who commonly work in the industry for only a short-time, as they see no career structure. Future qualifications development needs to support long-term career paths in the industry.
- 4.25 **Mobilise, organise and operate civilian maritime search and rescue.** The RNLI and MCA are both major providers and users of training in this part of the sector. For example, the RNLI runs its own college and accredits its own courses to complement and supplement those of the RYA and others. Both organisations make significant use of volunteers and many of their courses rely on distance learning. Whilst their training is highly valued it does not sit on national qualifications frameworks.
- 4.26 Since the establishment of the MSA, members have been working to create clearer progression routes and where appropriate develop qualifications structures that build on common sector needs. This has included reviewing gaps in National Occupational Standards and investigating how qualifications need to change in order for the sector to make greater use of them. As a result a number of new qualifications such as Foundation Degrees / Professional Diplomas and the Maritime Studies Award have been recently developed. Where appropriate the MSA intends to replace the current N/SVQs with new Maritime Studies Qualifications so that there are clearer career routes within the sector and greater opportunity for employers to get short courses accredited.

5. Other sector uses of qualifications

The use of qualifications and recognition for regulation

- 5.1 The maritime sector is subject to considerable regulatory requirements which affect skills and qualifications, primarily to cover the safety and health of passengers and crew, and to protect vessels, increasingly to manage the environment, and also to regulate markets.
- 5.2 Most of the sector is covered by international regulation from the International Maritime Organisation (which convenes the Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping convention, enforced through international treaty), and by legislation and regulation enforced by the Maritime and Coastguard Agency and the Health and Safety Executive (some of it with European Union underpinning). In qualifications terms, the combined effect of these three bodies far outweighs the influence of national qualifications frameworks, and associated regulations, within the UK.
- 5.3 Markets are also regulated, for example as quota to manage the extent and nature of fishing, and environmental controls are strict, to protect against pollution and to support marine conservation.
- 5.4 There are also national licensing systems such as the Boatmasters Licence. Some of these systems accept certain RYA certifications, but at present they are outside national qualifications frameworks. This is because these statutory obligations are managed in a different way to occupational qualifications.
- 5.5 Where possible licensing requirements are integrated into qualifications in the sector, however, there are many legal issues that need to be addressed. The rules for the transferability of licences across the sector are complex and these can act as a barrier to individuals identifying clear career paths and transferring across the sector.
- 5.6 The MSA's strategy is to work with the MCA and other parties to examine how to simplify the licensing structure and integrate it with other industry requirements so that there is appropriate recognition within the respective national qualifications frameworks. The development of the Maritime Studies Qualifications provides an ideal basis for this.

Consumer protection

- 5.7 Consumer protection interests in the maritime sector are covered by licensing and regulation.

6. The way forward

Vision

- 6.1 The MSA's vision is for a qualifications framework which:
- provides clear career pathways which are both attractive to new entrants and enable the existing workforce to develop their skills;
 - incorporates regulatory requirements within qualifications thereby encouraging take-up;
 - links private and public training to national qualifications frameworks;
 - brings together common needs from across the sector, thereby making qualifications and training provision more economically attractive and enabling greater transferability across the sector;
 - gives employers confidence in the skills which recruits have (ie qualifications are a recognised currency).
- 6.2 Since the formation of the MSA members have undertaken a range of activities which have contributed towards achieving this vision. This strategy builds on this activity to ensure that both accredited and non-accredited qualifications meet the future needs of the sector.

Past and future dialogues

- 6.3 The MSA is a strategic alliance of organisations representing employers and stakeholders across the maritime sector. Since its formation in January 2004 the members of the MSA have worked together to address skills needs and improve the relevance of qualifications across the sector. The MSA has a board made up primarily from members, with stakeholder support, supported by a secretariat. It works through project groups, such as the Maritime Sector Qualification Reform Project Group (now the Maritime Qualifications Board) which has led the creation of this strategy and action plan, and the associated consultation.
- 6.4 Each member has strong links with employers and stakeholders in its industry including employers, providers and regulators and act as a conduit for dialogue between the MSA and the industry. Each member has its own structures for dialogue which are appropriate to the industry. Where appropriate the MSA secretariat represents the sector, particularly in dialogue with Government and regulators.

- 6.5 This strategy builds on previous qualification strategies developed separately by the three original MSA members (MNTB, PSS and Seafish) and on other collaborative work undertaken by the MSA including the 2006 Learning Pathways report, the 2009 Skills Needs Assessment and other specific projects aimed at meeting the skill needs of the sector. All these projects have involved dialogue with stakeholders, particularly employers, providers and regulators. This strategy builds on existing MSA work which already has strong industry support.
- 6.6 The strategy development process has involved consultation with employers and other stakeholders: almost 100 attended the four consultation events in the four capitals, the great majority of which were employers. The timescale for development of the strategy has meant that the action plan was developed alongside the strategy: the consultation covered both. As a result:
- drafts of the strategy have been formally reviewed by MSA members in consultation with their industry. Typically this has included consultation with stakeholders individually and collectively through discussions at MSA members' board or sub-group meetings;
 - representatives of the devolved governments and the MCA have had opportunities to comment on drafts.
- 6.7 In addition:
- consultation events took place in January and early March 2010;
 - drafts were placed on the MSA website, and feedback invited.
- 6.8 At its March 2010 meeting, the MSA considered a paper reporting comments made through the consultation process, and made a number of amendments to its Action Plan as a result (plus detailed changes to this Strategy).
- 6.9 The structure of the MSA means that it will continue to have strong dialogue with employers and stakeholders during the implementation and review of the strategy and action plan. The Maritime Qualifications Board has representatives from all MSA members as well as SQA as the relevant awarding organisation and will manage the implementation of the strategy including dialogue with stakeholders. For many of the MSA's Action Plan activities close dialogue with the MCA will be needed.

Action Plan

- 6.10 In order to achieve its vision the MSA has agreed an Action Plan (see separate document) which involves four strands.

Strand 1: Ensuring that existing and future NOS meet the needs of the sector.

6.11 Priorities include:

- Marine NOS, including changes as a result of amendments to the STCW likely to be agreed in summer 2010;
- Marine NOS and Non-pleasure craft operating in inland coastal waters NOS suites to encompass requirements related to workboats working in the offshore, civil engineering and renewable energy industries;
- Marine pilot NOS, Harbour masters NOS and VTS operations NOS suites, to address changes in regulations, technology and the working environment.

Strand 2: Ensure that existing and future qualification frameworks (including apprenticeships) meet the needs of the sector

6.12 Priorities include:

- developing the Maritime Studies Qualification suite beyond level 2, and ensuring that the Level 2 MSQ, or an equivalent, is available throughout the UK;
- reviewing existing qualifications frameworks to ensure that they continue to meet the needs of the sector, notably:
 - a review of the current Ports Apprenticeship Framework to ensure that it complies with new requirements in each part of the UK;
 - seeking an extension to the validation of the fishing specific N/SVQs in order to allow the existing apprenticeship frameworks to continue whilst a replacement is developed;
 - ensuring the ports related NVQs due to expire in March 2010, and SVQs due to expire in 2011, are replaced with units on the relevant national qualifications framework, and linked, where appropriate, to the Maritime Studies Qualification.
- exploring the possibility of a cross-industry maritime apprenticeship;
- exploring how recently developed NOS can be further used as the basis for accredited qualifications and frameworks. Priorities will be:
 - Shore-based ship management;
 - Maritime hospitality;
 - Marine;
 - Non-pleasure craft operating in inland coastal waters.

- development of a ratings framework to enable ratings to transfer across disciplines as required, and through to officer status;
- ensuring the new Foundation Degree framework for ports is implemented to ensure that new Foundation Degrees are consistent;
- the development of Certificates of Competence for harbour masters and pilots;
- working with the MCA to ensure that qualification structures are in place to support the proposed introduction of the competence requirement for operators of fishing vessels of less than 16.5 metres length;
- ensuring that all frameworks take appropriate account of supervision and management.

Strand 3: Activities to improve the take-up of qualifications and to ensure the quality of available qualifications.

6.13 Priorities include:

- determining whether and how the Apprenticeship brand can be used when promoting traineeships to individuals. The industry is happy with the current SMarT structure and would not wish this to change, but there may be benefits for both the sector and the Government if they were marketed together;
- publishing a chart to show career paths for the whole maritime sector;
- working with RYA to consider using the flexibilities of the credit and qualifications frameworks to accredit existing RYA courses, particularly those for instructors and Certificates of Competence;
- supporting the MCA Convergence initiative, to remove barriers to cross-industry flexibility.

Strand 4: Using the Action Plan

6.14 In a fourth strand, the Alliance has agreed to consider how best to promote the Action Plan to engage others, especially employers, and to keep the Plan under review.

Future evolution of the Qualifications Strategy

6.15 The Maritime Qualifications Board (MQB) will oversee the development and implementation of the strategy and action plan, including the instigation of projects, and the creation of partnerships and agreements necessary to meet the strategy's objectives. The MQB includes representatives of each member and the SQA in its capacity as the relevant awarding organisation.

- 6.16 The MSA Board will review progress against the Qualifications Strategy Action Plan quarterly, and will undertake an annual review alongside the MSA's other strategy and business planning activities.

Glossary

accredited qualifications	Qualifications accredited to national qualifications frameworks (<i>see next entry</i>)
national qualifications frameworks	<p><i>[in this document only: see 'note on language' at the front of the document]</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the (soon to end) National Qualifications Framework • the Qualifications and Credit Framework • Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework • the Credit and Qualifications Framework for Wales
CQFW	Credit and Qualifications Framework for Wales
MCA	Maritime and Coastguard Agency
NQF	National Qualifications Framework: the current framework for England, Northern Ireland and Wales. It will not be recognised after August 2010
QCF	Qualifications and Credit Framework: already in use, and replacing the NQF for England and Northern Ireland from August 2010.
SCQF	Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework
STCW	Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping . which are agreed though international (worldwide) treaty.
VTS	Vessel Traffic Services