

DEFINITIVE COURSE RECORD

Course Title	Advanced Certificate in Nautical Science [Officers in charge of a Navigational Watch (OOW) unlimited]
Awarding Bodies	SQA
Level of Award ¹	FHEQ Level 4
Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies Recognition	MCA (Maritime and Coastguard Agency)
Credit Structure ²	112 SCQF Credits
Mode of Attendance	Full-time
Standard Length of Course ³	1 year full-time
Intended Award	Advanced Certificate in Nautical Science
Named Exit Awards	None
Entry Requirements ⁴	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet the minimum age requirement; • Minimum IELTS score of 4.0 in all components of the test • Meet medical standards (including eyesight) as required by the Merchant Shipping (Maritime Labour Convention) (Medical Certification) Regulations 2010 (S.I.2010/737); • Complete the minimum period of seagoing service; “six months of the required period during your final year must be spent on duties associated with bridge watch keeping under the guidance of a certificated officer” <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 36 months’ seagoing service in any acceptable deck capacity, Or ○ 48 months if you have been working as a General Purpose (GP) rating.
Delivering Institution(s)	East Coast College (Lowestoft)
UCAS Code	J611

This definitive record sets out the essential features and characteristics of the Advanced Certificate in Nautical Science course. The information provided is accurate for students entering level 4 in the 2025-26 academic year⁵.

Course Summary

The Advanced Certificate in Nautical Science is specifically designed to develop the academic knowledge and skills required to study the complex interaction of the marine environment, the human element and technology. Such student development is enabled by the combination of academic and professional expertise that the staff team provide. The professional expertise

¹ For an explanation of the levels of higher education study, see the [QAA Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications of UK Degree-Awarding Bodies \(2024\)](#)

² All academic credit awarded as a result of study at the University adheres to the [Higher education credit framework for England](#).

³ Where the course is delivered both full-time and part-time, the standard length of course is provided for the full-time mode of attendance only. The length of the part-time course is variable and dependent upon the intensity of study.

⁴ Details of standard entry requirements can be found in the [Admissions Policy](#) and further details about Disclosure and Barring Checks (DBS) can be found on the [University's DBS webpage](#).

⁵ The University reserves the right to make changes to course content, structure, teaching and assessment as outlined in the [Admissions Policy](#).

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has often been developed in former careers including ship command, as deck and engineer officers in the Merchant Navy and in senior company management. The Advanced Certificate in Nautical Science is made up of 14 SQA credits (112 SCQF points), all of which are mandatory. The award provides you with all the underpinning knowledge for the officers in charge of a navigational watch on ships as listed in the International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers (STCW) (Section A-II/1). Once the mandatory ancillary courses are completed and additional Maritime and Coastal Agency (MCA) Written and Oral examination is passed then the student can obtain the relevant certificate of competency to serve as a Deck Officer on merchant ships. The Advanced Certificate in Nautical Science not only equips you to enter employment in the Merchant Navy as a Deck Officer. It also enables you to develop the skills required to gain employment within the wider UK and international maritime sector, including shore-based positions. It will develop your practical, interpersonal and social skills that is an important requirement for a career in the maritime sector. The award will also allow you to develop complex, vocationally-specific reading and report writing skills.

Course Aims

- To enable candidates to obtain a Certificate of Competency as an Officer of the Watch (OOW) CoC II/1.
- Prepares candidates for the responsibility of keeping a watch at sea and in port.
- Develops skills to enable candidates to effectively navigate a vessel by traditional and modern means.
- Develops skills to enable candidates to operate a vessel in a safe and effective manner.
- Develops skills to enable candidates to work with others in a safe and effective manner.
- Develops skills to deal with emergency situations.
- Develops awareness of current maritime legislation.
- Prepares candidates for the MCA written and Oral examinations at Officer of the Watch level.

Course Learning Outcomes

The following statements define what students graduating from the Officers in charge of a Navigational Watch (OOW) unlimited course will have been judged to have demonstrated in order to achieve the award. These statements, known as learning outcomes, have been formally approved as aligned with the generic qualification descriptor for level 4/5 awards as set out by the UK Quality Assurance Agency (QAA)⁶.

1. Contribute to the stability and watertight integrity of a vessel.
2. Ensure the stability and watertight integrity of a vessel.
3. Take personal emergency action on board a vessel.
4. Respond to emergencies on board a vessel.

⁶ As set out in the [QAA Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications of UK Degree-Awarding Bodies \(2024\)](#)
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5. Control the response to emergencies on board a vessel.
6. Direct the response to emergencies on board a vessel.
7. Take control of survival craft and rescue boats.
8. Provide medical services on board a vessel.
9. Maintain steelwork and deck equipment on board a vessel.
10. Organise the maintenance of the vessel's hull, fittings and equipment during operational activities.
11. Maintain personal health, safety and environmental standards on board a vessel.
12. Maintain safe, legal and effective working practices on board a vessel.
13. Ensure safe, legal and effective working practices on board a vessel.
14. Create, maintain and enhance productive working relationships on board a vessel.
15. Ensure compliance with the commercial obligations of a vessel.
16. Contribute to maintaining a navigational watch.
17. Maintain a navigational watch.
18. Plan a navigational voyage.
19. Control navigation and vessel-handling.
20. Initiate the response to navigation emergencies.
21. Direct the response to navigation emergencies.
22. Contribute to vessel operations.
23. Monitor and control vessel operations.
24. Plan and direct vessel operations.
25. Contribute to vessel mooring, anchoring and securing operations.
26. Control vessel mooring, anchoring and securing operations.

Course Design

Competency Frameworks:

- International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers (STCW), 1978 as amended

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Course Structure

The SQA Advanced Certificate in Nautical Science comprises modules at levels 4 and 5. Module Specifications for each of these modules is included within the course handbook, available to students on-line at the beginning of each academic year.

	Module	SCQF Credits	Unit Type ⁷
Level 4			
	Chartwork and Tides	16	C
	Navigational Mathematics and Science	8	C
	Marine Meteorology: An Introduction	8	C
	Bridge Watchkeeping	8	C
	Marine Cargo Operations	12	C
	Ship Stability: An Introduction	12	C
	Naval Architecture: Ship Construction	8	C
	Marine Emergency Response and Communication	8	C
	Marine Law and Management: An Introduction	8	C
	Nautical Science: Graded Unit 1	8	C
Level 5			
	Celestial Navigation	16	C

Awards

On successful completion of the course, students will be awarded an Advanced Certificate in Nautical Science.

In addition, once the mandatory ancillary courses are completed and the additional MCA Written and Oral examination is passed then the student can obtain the relevant certificate of competency, from the Maritime and Coastguard Agency, to serve as a Deck Officer on merchant ships.

Course Delivery

The course is delivered at East Coast College (Lowestoft). Students studying full-time on the Advanced Certificate in Nautical Science are likely to have approximately 780 contact hours for level 4. The contact hours will be a mix of lecture and practical activity. Students will normally be expected to undertake 10 hours of independent study in an average week, but should be prepared for this to vary based on assignment deadlines and class exercises.

Course Assessment

A variety of assessments will be used on the course to enable students to experience and adapt to different assessment styles. The assessment methods used will be appropriate to assess each module's intended learning outcomes. Assessment on the course overall will be 90% examinations and 10% practical assessments.

⁷ Units designated as mandatory core (MC) must be taken and passed in order to achieve the award. For further information, see the [Framework and Regulations for Higher National Awards](#)
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Course Team

The academic staff delivering this course are drawn from a team that includes teaching specialists and current practitioners. All staff are qualified in their subjects with their own specialist knowledge to contribute.

Course Costs

Students undertaking Advanced Certificate in Nautical Science will be charged tuition fees as detailed below.

Student Group	Tuition Fees
Full-time UK	Total £7750 for OOW STCW II/1 £3750 for L4 and £4000 for mandatory ancillary courses
Part-time UK	Not applicable
Full-time EU/International	Total £7750 for OOW STCW II/1 £3750 for L4 and £4000 for mandatory ancillary courses
Part-time EU/International	Not applicable

Payment of tuition fees is due at the time of enrolment and is managed in accordance with the Tuition Fee Policy.

Students are also likely to incur other costs e.g. £50 for equipment.

Academic Framework and Regulations

This course is delivered according to the Framework and Regulations for Higher National Awards and other academic policies and procedures of the University and published on the [website](#).