

The Delivery of Long Courses, Assessment and Examination Leading to the Issue of a UK, Unlimited, Certificate of Competency (CoC)

All universities/colleges wishing to deliver an online learning package while the UK is on lockdown due to the COVID 19 outbreak should submit a formal request to the MCA who will aim to approve it within 2 working days. Proposals should be high level (no more than 3 sides of A4) and should be sent to exams@mcga.gov.uk. The MNTB support the move to an online training and assessment during the COVID 19 period. If the proposal relates to UK cadet training, once agreed, the MCA will forward the plan to the MNTB so they can update their records in accordance with the programme approval requirements (Annex G of MSN 1856).

1. Course Delivery: All elements of a course that can be delivered online should move to this format. This would preclude practical elements/assessments (such as workshop skills), technical reports (where the practical element has not been completed) and work-based (onboard a ship) assignments. For assessment the college should indicate what they plan to assess through assignment and what they plan to assess through examination. Universities/colleges should indicate where assignment are intended to replace final examinations. Colleges should develop a system to measure and verify attendance such as an online attendance log.

2. Assignment: This should be done in accordance with universities/colleges procedures to ensure a robust approach is maintained and to ensure any potential plagiarism is eliminated. A statement confirming this on your proposal will meet this requirement (we do not need your full policy).

3. Examinations (for unlimited programmes): Where required universities/colleges should propose a robust approach to online examinations. This could include video moderation and/or Oral examination by online telecommunications application by an appropriately qualified lecturer. Another solution could be timed exams with a sample check of answers through discussions with the cadet via video link or telecon (sometimes referred to as Vivas).

4. Safety Critical Exams: These cannot be completed online. However, where possible colleges should provide online learning packages to prepare cadets for these exams. The use of videoconferencing or online telecommunications applications is also recommended. We may need to return to this approach once further information is available on the lockdown period (especially length).

What are Safety Critical Exams?

Deck: MCA Written Papers in Stability and Navigation or Foundation Degree Equivalents.

Engineering: These are Engineering Professional Knowledge Exams or Foundation Degree Equivalents.

ETO: These are ETO Professional Knowledge Exams built into the HND or Foundation Degree course.

4.1 MCA Written Exams (Administered by SQA or IAMI)

Once lockdown is relaxed enough for them to take place, we will look at how we can ensure there are enough places for cadets to take/retake these. We will work with SQA and IAMI to be as pragmatic as possible and expedite results where we can.

4.2 Exams completed on the Foundation Degree in lieu of MCA Written Exams

Universities/colleges will already have a set of exams papers or exam question banks to produce exam papers once the lockdown rules are relaxed enough for exams to take place. Universities/colleges should develop a process to ensure that they can deal with future demand and re-sit requirements.

5. Award of Qualification: If colleges can demonstrate a robust assessment procedure, this should allow for the completion of the underpinning knowledge courses, subject to a cadet meeting the full MCA requirements. Therefore, it may be possible to issue course completion letters¹ to the MCA standards. However, for those on the Foundation Degree route (where MCA written exams are not required), the universities/colleges should withhold issuing the letter until they have passed the equivalent safety critical exams.

6. Summary: The ability to issue an academic award is ultimately decided by the university/college. Our intention is to give universities/colleges the flexibility to move around modules, assessment and examinations to allow the cadets to continue to work towards meeting the MCA standards required for the college completion letter to be issued.

Where the required practical elements/assessments technical reports and work-based assignments cannot be completed the college letter should be withheld. We would expect the submission to include a proposal outlining how they will be completed once the lockdown rules are relaxed.

¹ This is the letter referred to in MSN 1856 - section 11 (for Deck), MSN 1857 – section 7 (for Engineers) or MSN 1860 - section 8 (for ETOs).