



Update on Online Oral Exams and the Future Issue of Notice of Eligibilities During the COVID-19 Lockdown Period

Notice to all Shipowners, Owners, Masters, Officers, Cadets and those concerned with maritime training.

This notice should be read with MGN 69, MSN 1856, MSN 1857, MSN 1858, MSN 1859 and MSN1860.

This Min expires on 04 December 2020.

Summary

This MIN provides further information on the process relating to the online oral examination and the order in which they will be prioritised. The MIN also provides information on the process for applying for a Notice of Eligibility (NOE) and the order in which they will be issued once those who have had their oral exam cancelled have had a chance to rebook.

Summary

1. Introduction

Following the outbreak of COVID-19 and the associated guidance issued by Public Health England (PHE), the MCA announced it was cancelling all face to face oral exams. As the oral exam is an integral part in ensuring the competency of those who will ultimately be responsible for their safety, the safety of others at sea and the protection of marine environment, the MCA has moved this process online. The MCA is currently rebooking the oral exams that were cancelled and then prioritising those who need their Certificate of Competency (CoC) to start working. This MIN provides an overview of the process and the priorities that will support this approach. **Candidates must not contact Marine Offices to book oral exams until they are advised to do so as per this MIN.**



2. Dates and Timelines

The new process and prioritisation requirements detailed in this MIN will be continuously monitored so that we can provide the latest information to candidates. The expected dates and timelines for oral examination booking and the issue of NOEs will be made available through the document: “**Latest Update on Oral Examination and NOE Issue**”. This will be published in around two weeks from the date of issue of this MIN and updated as required. The document will be made available on the following webpage: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/uk-seafarer-careers-training-provision-and-information#coronavirus-covid-19-contingency-plan-and-guidelines-for-seafarers>.

This document will provide an expected date window of when candidates can start to contact the MCA based on the priorities listed in section 3.

3. Online Oral Exams

3.1 The MCA has now moved to conduct oral examinations online through Microsoft’s Teams platform. Engineering exams are currently underway and Deck exams are expected to commence later in June 2020.

3.2 Oral Exam Priorities

The first candidates to be offered an exam will be those candidates who had their oral exams cancelled. Marine Offices will contact candidates individually to arrange a date for their online oral exam, **Candidates must not contact Marine Offices**. Priority will be given to Officer of the Watch (OOW) and Engineering Officer of the Watch (EOOW) applicants to allow them to obtain their first CoC and enable them to start working. **However, every effort will also be made to expedite applications for those who have been offered employment and are only required to pass an oral exam to be issued with a CoC – please see section 5.**

The following priority list will be established once the MCA has allowed the candidates who had their oral exam cancelled a chance to rebook:

Candidates who had an NOE issued prior to the postponement of the oral examinations and only require to pass an oral exam to be issued with a CoC¹.

- I. Candidates who fall into this category should email a scanned copy of their NOE to either:
 - Deck: deck@mcga.gov.uk,
 - Engineer/ Electro-technical Officers (ETO): engineering@mcga.gov.uk.

Their details will then be passed onto a Marine Office who will contact the candidate to arrange an online oral examination date.

- II. Following on from ‘I’, priority will then be given to those who had an NOE issued after the postponement of the oral examinations and only require an oral exam to be issued with a CoC¹. Please note, at the time of publishing this MIN, these candidates will not

¹ Priority may also be given to those who only require an Oral Exam and a Written Exam. Providing you have their written exam booked. Evidence of the written exam booking must be provided with the scan of your NOE.



yet hold an NOE. Once they have an NOE, candidates who fall into this category should email a scanned copy of their NOE to either:

- Deck: deck@mcga.gov.uk,
- Engineer/ Electro-technical Officers (ETO): engineering@mcga.gov.uk.

A Marine Office will then contact the candidate to arrange an online oral examination date.

- III. Once the above priorities have been completed the oral examination process will return to normal. See process in **3.4**.

3.3 What candidates need to know prior to an Oral Exam

We will use Microsoft Teams for the examination. Microsoft Teams will need to be downloaded prior to the start of the examination and you must log onto the meeting at least 10 minutes prior to the designated start time. If you are unable to attend without a valid reason this shall be considered as a fail.

You will need to ensure you have a suitable room available with the necessary amenities i.e. clear desk, comfortable chair; water, low ambient noise and adequately lit with no glare. The IT equipment provided must have a camera and access to a reliable high-speed internet connection (recommended minimum 10mbps), enough for Microsoft Teams to be successfully supported.

If during the exam there are connectivity and/or reliability issues resulting in repeated interruption to IT equipment or connections, this will result in postponement or referral to a face to face exam.

If you want to postpone this appointment, we need at least 14 days email notice. More than 2 cancellations may result in forfeit of the examination fee. If you cancel within 14 days of your appointment, or fail to attend without a valid reason, you will fail the examination by default.

You will need to email the following documents to the Marine Office prior to your examination:

- Scanned Government ID
- Scanned Copy of Discharge Book
- Scanned NOE (both side) or Electronic NOE
- Email confirming date and time are acceptable
- Confirmation you have access to 'Microsoft Teams'
- Scanned copies of the overview signature pages from the MNTB TRB*

*To clarify these are the 1st Ship, 2nd Ship, 3rd Ship and so on for

- Designated Shipboard Training Officer's Reviews of Progress
- Masters' Monthly Reviews of Progress, Company Training Officer's Inspection of Progress.

3.4 Booking New Oral Exams

Once we have allowed candidates from priorities 'I' and 'II' of section **3.2** of this MIN the opportunity to book an oral exam, we will then publish a date in the '**Latest Update on Oral Examination and NOE Issue**' document, allowing the standard NOE booking process to



resume (section 4 of this MIN). Further information on the planned centralised booking system will also be provided in this document.

4. New Applications for Notice of Eligibilities

4.1 Applying for an NOE

Candidates can currently apply for an NOE using the appropriate application form and scanning and sending the required documentation to the email address listed on the form. If you are required to submit the Training Record Book (TRB), the full physical book should be sent to the Seafarer Training and Certification Branch (address in the 'more information' section of this MIN), but you must retain scanned copies of the overview signature pages from the TRB. These will be required for your oral exam as per section 3.3 of this MIN.

4.2 Issuing new NOEs

The MCA will not issue any new NOEs until we have allowed those with cancelled oral exams and those who have met the criteria in priority '1' in section 3.2 of this MIN a chance to rebook.

Once we have allowed a reasonable time for candidates holding NOEs issued prior to lockdown to book an oral examination, we will then start issuing new NOEs. We will prioritise those who only require an oral exam to be issued with a CoC. When applying for an NOE, you should include all the supporting evidence required for the issue of your CoC.

You must refer to the online guidance dates prior to contacting the MCA (section 2 of this MIN) to book an oral exam.

Priority will be given to those who have been offered employment and are only required to pass an oral exam to be issued a CoC – please see section 5.

5. Expediting an NOE or an Oral Exam or the Issue of a CoC

Please note: If you have a job opportunity and you have completed all other requirements for the issue of your CoC, then we may be able to expedite your application – you should ask your employer to email a request to us (deck@mcga.gov.uk or engineering@mcga.gov.uk or revalidation@mcga.gov.uk) confirming the job offer and the date you are required onboard.

At the time of publishing, the Deck oral exams have not gone live. However, if you are a Deck candidate and have employment waiting please contact the MCA and we will aim to prioritise your oral exam as soon as we can.



More Information

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