

ETO CoC FAQ Nov 2019

We have been asked many questions relating to obtaining an STCW ETO CoC from the MCA. Not surprisingly most of these questions relate to the experienced and alternative ETO transfer.

The main questions fall into broad categories:

How do I become an ETO?

I am already working as an ETO, do my current qualifications give me exemptions?

What additional training courses do I need?

We have tried to distil the enquiries into a list of Frequently Asked Questions or FAQ. Please read through this FAQ before contacting us as your question will probably have been asked before.

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This would be of great help as it would then be possible to gain study leave as the Second Engineers currently do.
- [Can I do any of the courses required for ETO CoC via distance or e-learning?](#)
- [How do I enrol for the Chief Engineer Electrotechnology distance learning?](#)
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What does the 1st Jan 2020 deadline relate to?

The deadline is for the issue of NOE following completion of the MSF4259 for experienced ETO's, only section 3A needs to be completed for issue of NOE so you should check if you are qualified for the experienced route. You should apply for the CoC at your earliest opportunity after completing section 3C of the form.

I am currently working as an ETO, where can I find information about getting an ETO Certificate of Competency?

The MCA have recently replaced the interim ETO transfer arrangements **with MSN 1860(M) UK Requirements For Electro-technical Officers.**

Full details are available on the MCA website at the address:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/msn-1860-m-uk-requirements-for-electro-technical-officers>

There is also additional information in the appendices of the ETO NoE application form **MSF4259** on:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/certificate-of-competency-electro-technical-officer-msf-4259>

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How do I apply for an ETO CoC on the experienced route?

The process usually follows this route:

- complete section 3A of the MCA application form **MSF4259** available from <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/certificate-of-competency-electro-technical-officer-msf-4259>
- send the completed application form with ALL of the required supporting documentation to the MCA
- the MCA will email you to acknowledge receipt of your application
- the application process takes 28 days + postage time, although there are currently delays in the application system
- the MCA will email you if they require any further evidence
- you will be emailed by the courier who will deliver your returned documents and Notice of Eligibility (NoE).
- Upon successful completion of an oral examination send the remaining supporting evidence from section 3C to apply for the CoC.

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How do I apply for an ETO CoC on the alternative route?

You will need to apply for a college Letter of Acceptance and Action Plan. You can do this by emailing mmeng@stc.ac.uk. An assessment of your current qualifications will take place and be mapped to the ETO competencies from Table A-III/6. If there are any gaps in learning then these will be the courses you need to complete. A full list of courses is available on the ETO CoC page of the website.

I am currently employed as an ETO, do I need to obtain a CoC?

That depends, your decision may be affected by company policy. For example if you are employed as an ETO you must have an STCW ETO Certificate of Competency. Your employer may insist that people carrying out electrical duties on board must have an ETO CoC. On the other hand your employer may decide that electrical duties are no longer the responsibility of an ETO and change the job title to Electrician or something similar. In fact, until the introduction of the ETO CoC the rank of Electro Technical Officer was unofficial.

Paragraph 5 of STCW Reg. III/6 states that you can carry out certain functions of an ETO, providing you are suitably qualified, even if you don't have an ETO CoC. You can be employed on a ship as an Electrician or a Systems Engineer. Full information relating to this is contained in section 1.5 of [MSN 1860 \(M\)](#).

There would be nothing to prevent a vessel owner from applying to the flag state representative (MCA in the UK) for a new Safe Manning Document with responsibilities for electrical duties - 14.1.15 of MSN 1767 (M) - revised from ETO to Electrician or Systems Engineer.

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How does South Shields Marine School fit into the ETO Certificate of Competency?

South Shields Marine School have been delivering an ETO Foundation Degree now since 2009 and our first graduates became the first ETOs to obtain Certificates of Competency in 2012.

Before the ETO Foundation Degree, South Tyneside College delivered a Hybrid ETOW/ETO Cadetship – if you completed this cadetship then you are eligible for an ETO Certificate of Competency provided that you meet the sea time requirements - which are 12 months in the last five years.

Prior to this South Shields Marine and Technical College carried out training courses leading to the issue of certification for Radio Officers. Most of whom would have also trained at South Tyneside College for Radar Maintenance and ENEM at some point. We have been actively involved in electrical certification and training in the maritime sector since the requirement of vessels to carry radio equipment on board.

If you did not complete either the ETO Foundation Degree or the Hybrid ETOW/ETO Cadetship then then you may have earlier qualifications which are acceptable to the MCA such as MRGC, MSA or DoT Certificates. If you have gaps in your training or certification then South Shields Marine School can provide all of the training for all course requirements identified in [MSN 1860 \(M\) UK Requirements For Electro-technical Officers](#).

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What courses do I need to complete before applying for a UK ETO CoC?

A full list of courses is contained in **MSN 1860 (M) UK Requirements For Electro-technical Officers**:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/msn-1860-m-uk-requirements-for-electro-technical-officers>

This document replaces the previous '**interim ETO transfer 1.7**' document issued by the MCA.

In essence to obtain a basic ETO Certificate of Competency following the experienced route outlined in section 3.3 of **MSN 1860 (M)**, a candidate would require:

- 12 months sea service in the last five years as an ETO
- A completed **MNTB** Electro-Technical Officer Competency Record Book (OCR)
- AMERC Electronic Principles and Applications examination pass
- SQA Chief Engineer Electrotechnology examination pass
- Human Element Leadership and Management (HELM) at Operational level
- Basic STCW safety training certificates: Proficiency in personal survival techniques, proficiency in fire prevention and fire-fighting, proficiency in elementary first aid and proficiency in personal safety and social responsibilities.
- Advanced STCW safety training certificates: Proficiency in survival craft and rescue boats, proficiency in advanced fire-fighting, proficiency in medical first aid

- Current Medical Certificate (ENG1 or equivalent).
- Pass an MCA oral examination

In addition to these basic requirements there are 'optional' courses which you may or may not require depending upon your role on board. These are:

- Management Level High Voltage training (which must be MCA approved if obtained after July 2013)
- AMERC Electronic Navigation Equipment Maintenance (ENEM) certificate
- AMERC GMDSS Radio Maintenance certificate

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I work in the offshore industry and my certificates are OPITO or similar will they be acceptable to the MCA?

No, only the qualifications and certification stated in section 3.3 of **MSN 1860 (M)** will be accepted. Alternative academic qualifications *may* be accepted so long as equivalency can be shown and authenticated. This must be carried out by the third-party organisation **IAMI**. There is no equivalence for STCW courses, only certification for MCA approved STCW courses will be accepted.

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Will you be able to give me advice regarding my application for an ETO CoC?

Several candidates for ETO CoC have contacted South Shields Marine School asking us to explain the application process to them and to ask for advice relating to their individual circumstances. Some become frustrated when we point them to the existing information and routes. Hopefully this FAQ will be helpful in clarifying some of the more common misconceptions relating to the application process.

The main advice that I give everyone is to read all of the existing documentation **BEFORE** contacting anyone for advice, as most of your questions will have been asked before and are probably answered in the available information. A good tip is to read all of the MCA documentation including the application form as there are guidance notes at the end of this form.

We cannot offer individual advice to every prospective candidate for ETO CoC.

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Is there any financial assistance available for study towards becoming an ETO?

Financial support is available for selected UK-residents towards the costs of any full-time or part-time education through the **JW Slater Fund**. Administered by **Nautilus International**, the scheme can provide assistance worth up to £17,500.00 to help Experienced ETOs to gain

STCW 2010 certification. You can fill in a form online at: www.nautilusint.org or you can email your name, address and request for Slater Fund details to: slater@ms-sc.org

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**Is there a program of study that I can follow to gain the ETO CoC?
Or do you run an ETO top-up course, where all the required courses would run concurrently?**

The only program of study which leads to an ETO CoC is the ETO Foundation Degree program. Details can be obtained at our website by following the link:

<http://www.stc.ac.uk/marine-school/course/foundation-degree-marine-electrical-engineering>

South Shields Marine School provide a selection of short courses which can be studied one after the other to meet all of the requirements for the ETO CoC. These courses can form a complete program of study to satisfy the requirements for ETO CoC. If you already have some of these courses then you can study the remainder in a modular form. Details can be found on our web site on the following page:

<http://www.stc.ac.uk/marine-school/course/short-courses-electro-technical-officer-certificate-competency-eto-coc>

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Can I do any of the courses required for ETO CoC via distance or e-learning?

South Shields Marine School offer the AMERC electrical and electronic principles and Chief Engineer Electrotechnology course as a distance learning package.

The electrotech is designed to take approximately 120 hours of study. The study can be carried out at your own pace and while you are working. You will submit assessments for marking periodically and on successful completion of the Distance Learning Package you will be eligible to enter for the SQA Chief Engineer Electrotechnology examination which is held four times per year, usually in October, December, April and July at any MCA approved Marine Colleges. Please note you are only expected to do the Chief Engineer Electrotechnology course.

The AMERC principles is designed to take approximately 60 hours of study. The distance learning course consists of self-study materials and in-course self-assessment and a formal assessment of the 17 topics. Final assessment is by a 2 hour, formal end exam consisting of 12 questions which must be sat at the college. A range of exam date options will be provided upon enrolment.

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How do I enrol for the Chief Engineer Electrotechnology or AMERC principles distance learning?

Please contact mlc@stc.ac.uk clearly stating that you are an ETO and you wish to enrol onto the program of distance learning. Our staff will guide you through the process.

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Can I study for the Chief Engineer Electrotechnology course at the college?

It is possible to attend the college to study the Chief Engineer Electrotechnology, however this is spread over 11 weeks with 8.5 hours of study per week. So although possible it may not be practical. If you would like to pursue this option please contact mmeng@stc.ac.uk.

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Can I study the AMERC Electronic Principles and Applications course at college?

We run a three week crash course periodically throughout the year. Please check our website for details at the following link.

<http://www.stc.ac.uk/marine-school/course/amerc-electronic-principles-and-applications>

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Do I need to study for the ETO Chief Engineer Electrotechnology and AMERC Electronic Principles and Applications Exams – or can I just take the exams?

To be eligible to sit the SQA Examination for Chief Engineer Electrotechnology the MCA rules state that each candidate must have successfully completed a course of study. Once you have done this you will be issued with a course completion certificate which will allow you to sit the Chief Engineer Electrotechnology Exam at any MCA approved Marine College. Your course completion certificate must be produced for the exam or you will be turned away by the examination centre.

There is no AMERC requirement for you to have passed a course prior to sitting the AMERC Electronic Principles and Application Exam. However, this is an advanced academic exam and entry to the examination would be allowed only in exceptional circumstances and only at the discretion of the AMERC approved examination centre.

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I have been working as an ETO for many years and have a degree/HND/HNC in Electrical Engineering do I really have to do these courses?

If you have suitable qualifications you can apply to IAMI to gain exemptions for the experienced route. For the alternative route you can submit them as evidence for the mapping exercise that will take place upon application of an action plan.

I have electrical and electronic engineering qualifications can the college give me points or accept these instead of the SQA/AMERC qualifications required by the MCA?

The college does not represent the MCA or the awarding body AMERC and so it cannot give accreditation for prior learning. However, your qualifications may exempt you from all or part of these exams.

Under section 3.3 of **MSN 1860 (M)** "If you are an existing ETO or are working in a similar capacity, with 12 months seagoing service as an ETO or 12 months sea going service carrying out similar duties, you must:'

- a) Pass the SQA Chief Engineer Electro-technology written exam;
- b) Pass the AMERC Electronic Principles written exam;

Section 3C of **MSF 4259** (the Application form for ETO Oral exam for CoC), states:

"If you already hold an appropriate qualification (e.g. HNC/D in Electrical / Electronic Engineering) issued under the authority of an EU Member State, you may be able to demonstrate equivalence to these examinations. *It will be your responsibility to contact the authority that issued your academic qualification in order for them to produce a statement demonstrating this* (i.e. the content of the educational programme you undertook must be mapped to the syllabi of these examinations). It would be acceptable for "top up" educational programmes under the authority of an EU Member State to be undertaken to fill any gaps found in the mapping process."

This means that you must contact the college where you completed your studies and have them provide a letter stating the equivalence. If this is not possible because, for example, the college where you completed your studies is now closed or no longer operates, then you must submit your qualifications to **IAMI**.

If you are seeking exemption from SQA Chief Engineer Electro-technology, AMERC Electrical and Electronic Principles, AMERC ENEM or AMERC GMDSS Radio Maintenance and the college you attended is not able to provide the statement of equivalence for exemption then you will need to apply to **IAMI** (iamiexemption@hotmail.co.uk). If an exemption exists then **IAMI** will provide you with a letter which will be accepted by the MCA instead of the stated academic qualification.

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What is IAMI?

IAMI is the International Association of Maritime Institutions. It is primarily an association of colleges and other organisations involved in providing education and training for personnel involved in the Merchant Navy, Towing and Fishing Industries. Their website is <http://www.iami.info/>

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How will IAMI be able to help my application for the ETO CoC?

When you submit your non-standard qualifications to iamiexemption@hotmail.co.uk , if they are comparable to the MCA requirements for AMERC and SQA, then **IAMI** will issue you with a letter confirming this fact which will be accepted by the MCA when you submit it with the other documentation during your application for an ETO CoC.

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Where can I find a copy of the SQA Chief Engineer Electro-Technology syllabus?

Full syllabus and list of topics can be found by following the 'Chief engineer written examination syllabus' on the MCA website at:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/uk-seafarer-careers-training-provision-and-information>

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Where can I find a copy of the AMERC Electronic Principles syllabus?

Full syllabus and list of topics can be obtained from our website at:

<http://www.stc.ac.uk/sites/default/files/files/AMERC%20Principles%20Syllabus.pdf>

or from the AMERC website at:

<http://www.amerc.ac.uk>

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I have certificates issued by the Department of Transport for Radar Maintenance and ENEM are these equivalent to AMERC GMDSS Radio Maintenance and AMERC ENEM?

Section 3.4 of **MSN 1860 (M)** offers advice relating directly to this issue.

The Association of Marine Electronic and Radio Colleges (AMERC) no longer offer advice about equivalency for AMERC GMDSS Radio Maintenance and AMERC Electronic Navigation

Equipment Maintenance (ENEM). For advice on equivalency for these courses you should contact the college where you studied the DoT courses.

Additional information relating to GMDSS Radio Maintenance and Electronic Navigation Equipment Maintenance (ENEM) can be found in MCA publication **MGN 348 (M+F)**.

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What is AMERC?

AMERC is the Association of Marine Electronic and Radio Colleges. It is a network of colleges, universities and private organisations providing courses and consultancies in marine radio and electronics. Their website address is <http://www.amerc.ac.uk/>

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I have a High Voltage Certificate already, will it be recognised by the MCA?

High Voltage certificates which were issued before **1st July 2013** do not need to be MCA approved but they must meet the criteria outlined on the ETO CoC application form, **MSF 4259**.

Documentary evidence such as course syllabus etc. must be submitted confirming that the course covered:

- The hazards associated with High Voltage systems;
- The functional, operational and safety requirements for a marine high-voltage system;
- Arrangement of High Voltage systems and their protective devices;
- Safety procedures related to High Voltage systems;
- Remedial action necessary during faults in a high-voltage system;
- Assignment of suitably qualified personnel to carry out maintenance and repair of high-voltage switchgear of various types;
- Producing a switching strategy for isolating components of a high-voltage system;
- Selecting suitable apparatus for isolation and testing of high-voltage equipment;
- Carrying out a switching and isolation procedure on a marine high-voltage system, complete with safety documentation; and
- Performing tests of insulation resistance and polarization index on high-voltage equipment.
- Acceptable courses are unlikely to have less than 24 hours contact time.

If you attended the MCA Approved, **MNTB** course - Shipboard High Voltage Training – at South Shields between July 2010 and July 2013 then, as this course was approved by the MCA, it meets the requirements for the ETO CoC. A copy of the 5 Day **MNTB** Shipboard High Voltage Training timetable - syllabus can be obtained by requesting a copy from mmeng@stc.ac.uk.

If you have a three day High Voltage Familiarisation certificate issued by South Tyneside College then it is not valid for the ETO CoC.

Further information is contained in section 3C of **MSF 4259** and 3B/3C of the Guidance Notes on **MSF 4259** (the Application form for ETO Oral exam for CoC).

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Is there any financial assistance or grants available to help with the cost of meeting the requirements for an ETO CoC?

Financial assistance in studying for a first Certificate of Competency may be available in the form of scholarships from the **Slater Fund** which is administered by the **Marine Society** in association with **Nautilus International**. Further details can be obtained from the Marine Society at the web address <http://www.marine-society.org/slater-scholarships>

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I have been refused a letter of initial assessment by the MCA as I am not a UK or EU citizen.

When the interim arrangements for ETO CoC were first published I believe that there was some initial confusion, the MCA no longer issue Letters of Initial Assessment. I have not been able to find any ruling which would prevent a non UK or EU ETO from obtaining a UK Certificate of Competency if they meet the requirements of **MSN 1860 (M)**.

Realistically, this means that the academic and most of the vocational qualifications must have been obtained in the UK to meet the requirement for MCA and AMERC approval.

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The MCA have instructed me to apply to a UK Nautical College to be assessed for an ETO CoC is this correct?

There are only two documents relating to obtaining an ETO Certificate of Competency and these are **MSN 1860 (M)** UK Requirements For Electro-technical Officers:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/msn-1860-m-uk-requirements-for-electro-technical-officers>

And the ETO CoC Application form **MSF4259** from:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/certificate-of-competency-electro-technical-officer-msf-4259>

There is nothing within either of these documents which says that a UK Nautical College carries out the assessment for an ETO CoC for the experienced route. The ETO Certificate of Competency will be issued by the MCA after a candidate meets all of the requirements and passes an Oral Examination at an MCA office.

Alternative route candidates must apply to South Shields Marine School for and ETO letter of acceptance and action plan which must be submitted when applying for NOE.

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Where can I get a copy of the MNTB Training Record Book?

The MNTB have published an **Electro-Technical Officer Competency Record (ETO CR)** which is very similar in appearance to the Cadet ETO Training Record Book. If your 12 months recorded sea time was prior to 2018 then you will need to obtain this book and complete it. You can buy a copy of the MNTB Electro-Technical Officer Competency Record or ETO CR from Witherby Seamanship International at <http://www.witherbyseamanship.com/electro-technical-officer-competency-record.html>

If you are following the alternative route and/or your recorded sea time was post 2018 then you must purchase a copy of the Cadet ETO TRB on application for the action plan. The cost for the action plan and TRB is £150.

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How much does the Electro-Technical Officer Competency Record cost?

ETO CR costs £70.00 plus VAT

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Can you e-mail me a copy of the ETO CR as I am on board ship?

Unfortunately we cannot e-mail a copy of the ETO CR as this would breach MNTB copyright.

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Are there any text books which could help me with my studies?

There is a book in the Reeds Marine Engineering Technology series – Electronics, Navigational Aids and Radio Theory for Electro-Technical Officers by Steve Richards (12/09/2013), it is a good introduction to the three AMERC topics of electronics, navigation aids and radio communications. ISBN 978-1-4081-7609-2

Electronic Navigation Systems by Laurie Tetley and David Calcutt (20/03/2001)
3rd Edition. Routledge. ISBN-10: 0750651385 ISBN-13: 978-0750651387

Practical Marine Electrical Knowledge by Dennis Hall is a very good aid to study and well recommended for both academic and oral examinations. **ISBN-10:** 1856096238

ISBN-13: 978-1856096232

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Has anyone received an ETO CoC from the MCA following the experienced route?

All of the ETO Cadets who have graduated with a Foundation Degree from South Shields Marine School have obtained an ETO CoC issued by the MCA. There have also been several ETO CoCs issued to officers who followed the 'hybrid' ETO/EOOW route. The MCA also carry out oral exams for Experienced ETO CoCs and many experienced ETOs have now gained certification both UK and overseas.

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Has anyone received an ETO CoC following the alternative route?

This route is very new, South Shields Marine School have now started to issue letters of acceptance and action plans since September 2019, with successful applications of NOE and CoC occurring as a result.