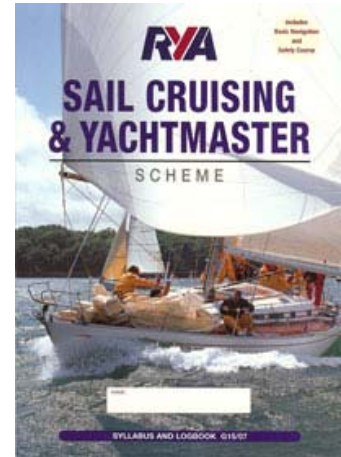


RYA Sail Cruising and Yachtmaster Scheme Practical Courses - Full Syllabus

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Copies of the RYA Logbook (G15) can be obtained from
[Marine Publications](#)



RYA Start Yachting

This course provides a short introduction to sail cruising for novices. By the end of the course, participants will have experienced steering a yacht, sail handling, ropework and be aware of safety on board.

Holders of a Start Yachting certificate can obtain a Competent Crew certificate by completing a further three days or two weekends of the Competent Crew course.

There is no minimum age.

The yacht

- Basic knowledge of sea terms, parts of a boat, her rigging and sails

Ropework

- Ability to tie the following knots: figure of eight, round turn and two half hitches, bowline
- Securing a rope to a cleat
- Use of winches and jamming cleats

Underway

- Has experienced sailing a yacht on all points of sail
- Can steer a yacht under sail or power

Rules of the road

- Can keep an efficient lookout at sea

Meteorology

- Knows where to obtain a weather forecast

Man overboard recovery

- Understands the action to be taken to recover a man overboard

Clothing and equipment

- Understands and complies with the rules for the wearing of safety harnesses, lifejackets and personal buoyancy aids

Emergency equipment and precautions

- Is aware of hazards on board a yacht
- Knows the action to be taken in the event of an emergency

RYA Competent Crew

The Competent Crew course introduces the complete beginner to cruising and teaches personal safety, seamanship and helmsmanship to the level required to be a useful member of the crew of a cruising yacht.

There is no minimum age.

Knowledge of sea terms and parts of the boat, her rigging and sails

- Sufficient knowledge to understand orders given concerning the sailing and day-to-day running of the boat.

Sail handling

- Bending on, setting, reefing and handling of sails
- Use of sheets and halyards and their associated winches

Ropework

- Handling ropes, including coiling, stowing, securing to cleats and single and double bollards
- Handling warps
- Ability to tie the following knots and know their correct use: figure-of-eight, clove hitch, rolling hitch, bowline, round turn and two half hitches, single and double sheet bend, reef knot

Fire precautions and fighting

- Awareness of the hazards of fire and the precautions necessary to prevent fire
- Knowledge of the action taken in the event of fire

Personal safety equipment

- Understands and complies with the rules for the wearing of safety harnesses, lifejackets and personal buoyancy aids

Man overboard

- Understands the action to be taken to recover a man overboard

Emergency equipment

- Can operate distress flares and knows when they should be used
- Understands how to launch and board a liferaft

Manners and customs

- Understands the accepted practice with regard to: use of burgees and ensigns, prevention of unnecessary noise or disturbance in harbour including courtesies to other craft berthed alongside
- Aware of the responsibility of yacht skippers to protect the environment

Rules of the road

- Is able to keep an efficient lookout at sea

Dinghies

- Understands and complies with the loading rules
- Is able to handle a dinghy under oars.

Meteorology

- Awareness of forecasting services and knowledge of the Beaufort scale

Helmsmanship and sailing

- Understands the basic principles of sailing and can steer and trim sails on all points of sailing

- Can steer a compass course, under sail and power

General duties

- Has carried out general duties satisfactorily on deck and below decks in connection with the daily routine of the vessel

RYA Day Skipper (Tidal)

The Day Skipper Course is conducted on board a cruising yacht (7 to 15m LOA), to teach pilotage, navigation, seamanship and boat handling up to the standard required to skipper a small cruising yacht safely by day in tidal waters with which the student is familiar.

The minimum age for award of certificate is 16.

Preparation for sea

- Is able to prepare a yacht for sea, including engine checks, selection of sails, securing and stowage of all gear on deck and below

Deck work

- Can reef, shake out reefs and change sails to suit prevailing conditions
- Can prepare an anchor, mooring warps and take charge on deck when mooring alongside, coming to a buoy, anchoring, weighing anchor and slipping from a buoy or an alongside berth

Navigation

Is proficient in chartwork and routine navigational duties on passage including:

- Taking and plotting visual fixes
- Use of electronic navigation equipment for position fixing
- Use of waypoints
- Working up DR and EP
- Estimating tidal heights and tidal streams
- Working out course to steer to allow for tidal stream, leeway and drift
- Knowledge of IALA buoyage
- Maintenance of navigational records
- Use of echo sounder and lead line

Pilotage

- Can prepare and execute a pilotage plan for entry into, or departure from, harbour
- Understands the use of leading and clearing lines
- Use of transits and soundings as aids to pilotage

Meteorology

- Knows sources of forecast information
- Can interpret shipping forecasts and use a barometer as a forecasting aid

Rule of the road

- Has a working knowledge of the International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea

Maintenance and repair work

- Understands and is able to carry out maintenance tasks
- Knows the properties and uses of common synthetic fibre ropes

Engines

- Knows how to change fuel and water filters, pump impeller and to bleed the fuel system

Victualling

- Understands how to victual a yacht

Emergency situations

- Is able to take correct action as skipper for recovery of man overboard
- Understands distress flares and how to use a liferaft
- Can operate a radiotelephone in an emergency and send a distress message

- Understands how to secure a tow
- Understands rescue procedures including helicopter rescue

Yacht handling under power

- Can bring a boat safely to and from and alongside berth, mooring buoy and anchor under various conditions of wind and tide

Yacht handling under sail

- Can bring a yacht safely to and from a mooring buoy and anchor under various conditions of wind and tide
- Can steer and trim sails effectively on all points of sailing

Passage making

- Can plan and make a coastal passage, taking account of relevant navigational hazards and limitations imposed by the type of boat and the strength of the crew

RYA Coastal Skipper (Tidal)

The aim of the course is to teach the skills and techniques required to skipper a cruising yacht (7-15m LOA) safely on coastal and offshore passages by day and night.

The minimum age for award of certificate is 17.

Passage Planning

- Can plan a coastal passage including a consideration of the capability of the yacht, navigation, victualling, weather, ports of refuge, tidal heights and tidal streams, publications required and strategy
- Knows Customs procedures

Preparation for sea

- Is aware of safety equipment required for offshore passages
- Can prepare a yacht for sea including stowage, safety briefing, watch keeping, delegating responsibilities and equipment and engine checks

Pilotage

- Can prepare a pilotage plan, with consideration of soundings, transits, clearing bearings, buoyage, port or harbour regulations and tidal considerations
- Can pilot a yacht by day and night

Passage making and ability as skipper

- Can take charge of a yacht and direct the crew
- Can organise the navigation, deckwork and domestic duties of a yacht on passage
- Is aware of the significance of meteorological trends
- Is aware of crew welfare on passage
- Can use electronic navigational equipment for planning and undertaking a passage, including the use of waypoints and routes

Yacht handling under power

- Can control the yacht effectively in a confined space under power
- All berthing and unberthing situations in various conditions of wind and tide

Yacht handling under sail

- Can use the sails to control the yacht in a confined space
- Anchoring and mooring in various conditions of wind and tide
- Can sail efficiently on all points of sailing

Adverse weather conditions

- Preparation for heavy weather and yacht handling in strong winds
- Navigation and general in restricted visibility

Emergency situations

- Recovery of man overboard under power and sail
- Understands actions to be taken when abandoning to the liferaft and during helicopter and lifeboat rescues

Yachtmaster Coastal and Yachtmaster Offshore Exam

Candidates may be given the opportunity to demonstrate knowledge or competence in the areas listed below. In each section the examiner will expect to see the candidate take full responsibility for the management of the yacht and crew.

In Yachtmaster Offshore exams the candidate will be expected to demonstrate competence based on broad experience.

In Yachtmaster Coastal exams the candidate will be expected to demonstrate understanding but may not have had the opportunity to practice all aspects of the syllabus under a range of different weather conditions.

International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea

Questions will be confined to the International Regulations and although candidates must be aware of the existence of Local Regulations, they will not be expected to memorise specific local regulations.

- General rules (1-3)
- Steering and sailing rules (4-19)
- Lights and shapes (20-31)
- Sound and Light signals (32-37)
- Signals for vessels fishing in close proximity (Annex II)
- Distress signals (Annex IV)

Safety

Candidates will be expected to know what safety equipment should be carried on board a yacht, based either on the recommendations of the RYA Boat Safety Handbook (C8), the ISAF Special Regulations or the Codes of Practice for the Safety of Small Commercial Vessels. In particular, candidates must know the responsibilities of a skipper in relation to:

- Safety harnesses
- Lifejackets
- Distress flares
- Fire prevention and fighting
- Liferafts
- Knowledge of rescue procedures
- Helicopter rescue

Boat Handling

Candidates for Coast Skipper examinations will be expected to answer questions or demonstrate ability in simple situation only. Candidates for Yachtmaster Offshore will be expected to answer questions or demonstrate ability in more complex situations and will also be expected to show a higher level of expertise:

- Coming to an weighing anchor under power or sail in various conditions of wind or tide
- All berthing and unberthing situations in various conditions of wind and tide
- Recover of man overboard
- Towing under open sea conditions and in confined areas
- Boat handling in confined areas under sail
- Boat handling in heavy weather
- Helmsmanship and sail trim to sail to best advantage
- Use of warps for securing in an alongside berth and for shifting berth or winding

General seamanship, including maintenance

- Properties, use and care of synthetic fibre ropes

- Knots
- General deck-work at sea and in harbour
- Engine operations and routine checks
- Improvisation of jury rigs following gear failure

Responsibilities of skipper

- Can skipper a yacht and manage the crew
- Communication with crew
- Delegation of responsibility and watch-keeping organisation
- Preparing yacht for sea and for adverse weather
- Tactics for heavy weather and restricted visibility
- Emergency and distress situations
- Victualling for a cruise and feeding at sea
- Customs procedures
- Standards of behaviour and courtesy

Navigation

- Charts, navigational publications and sources of navigational information
- Chartwork including position fixing and shaping course to allow for tidal stream and leeway
- Tide and tidal stream calculations
- Buoyage and visual aids to navigation
- Instruments including compasses, logs, echo sounders, radio nav aids and chartwork instruments
- Passage planning and navigational tactics
- Pilotage techniques
- Navigational records
- Limits of navigational accuracy and margins of safety
- Lee shore dangers
- Use of electronic navigation aids for passage planning and passage navigation
- Use of waypoints and electronic routing

Meteorology

- Definition of terms
- Sources of weather forecasts
- Weather systems and local weather effects
- Interpretation of weather forecasts, barometric trends and visible phenomena
- Ability to make passage planning decisions based on forecast information

Signals

- Candidates for Yachtmaster Offshore and Coastal Skipper must hold the Restricted (VHF only) Certificate of Competence in radiotelephony or a higher grade certificate in radiotelephony.

RYA Yachtmaster Coastal and Yachtmaster Offshore exam pre-requirements

Yachtmaster Coastal exam pre-requirements

- 800 logged miles
- 12 night hours
- 30 days at sea including 2 as skipper
- First Aid & VHF/SRC certificates

If Coastal Skipper practical course completion certificate already held, this is reduced to:

- 400 logged miles
- 12 night hours
- 20 days at sea including 2 as skipper

Yachtmaster Offshore exam pre-requirements

- 2500 logged miles
- 5 passages over 60 miles including 2 as skipper and 2 overnight
- 50 days at sea
- First Aid & VHF/SRC certificates

Note: At least 50 per cent of mileage must have been gained in tidal waters.