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NAVIGATION AND VESSEL INSPECTION CIRCULAR NO. 6-97

Subj: POLICY ON QUALIFIED INSTRUCTORS AND DESIGNATED EXAMINERS WHO TRAIN OR ASSESS THE COMPETENCE OF MERCHANT MARINERS

Ref: (a) Interim Rule, Federal Register, Vol. 62, No. 123, pp. 34505, dated June 26, 1997
(b) Navigation and Vessel Inspection Circular 5-95 "Guidelines for Organizations offering Coast Guard Approved Courses"
(c) Navigation and Vessel Inspection Circular No. 7-97, "Guidance on STCW Quality Standards Systems (QSS) for Merchant Mariner Courses or Training Programs"
(d) Navigation and Vessel Inspection Circular No. 5-97 "Guidelines on STCW Training Record Books"

1. PURPOSE. This circular provides policy guidance on Qualified Instructors and Designated Examiners for training and assessment programs meeting requirements of the 1995 amendments to the International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers (STCW), 1978.

2. DIRECTIVES AFFECTED. None.

3. BACKGROUND.

a. Regulation I/6 of the STCW Convention requires that "those responsible for the training and assessment of competence of seafarers, as required under the Convention" must be "appropriately qualified...for the type and level of training or assessment involved." The requirements for Qualified Instructors and Designated Examiners have been introduced into U.S. regulations in reference (a), particularly Sections 10.302, 10.304, 10.309 of 46 CFR Part 10, and in Section 12.01 of 46 CFR Part 12.

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b. The regulations in reference (a) provide for the possibility that training or assessment of competence can take place either on board a ship or at a shore-side facility, and either as part of a Coast Guard-approved course (reference (b)), or as part of a Coast Guard-accepted training and assessment program (reference (c)). In some cases, the regulations require a Qualified Instructor and/or a Designated Examiner to make entries in a training record book (references (a) and (d)).

c. The regulations establish requirements for Qualified Instructors and Designated Examiners, and set general standards of qualification. This NVIC promotes consistency in criteria used for identifying such instructors and examiners when they perform functions relating to STCW requirements.

4. DISCUSSION.

a. The Coast Guard will use demonstrated competencies and formalized training, in addition to approved sea service and examinations, as criteria for issuing STCW certificates and endorsements. Only qualified individuals can conduct training or assessment of competence to meet STCW requirements. The following question-and-answer format is intended to provide guidance to:

- assist individuals in determining whether they are qualified to perform the training and assessment functions;
- enable those offering training to merchant mariners to ensure they are adequately staffing their programs with qualified individuals; and
- assist those conducting monitoring of training programs under a Quality Standards Systems (QSS) in evaluating whether the program is achieving its stated objectives and meeting regulatory requirements.

b. The following questions and answers provide information on Qualified Instructors.

(1) *What is a Qualified Instructor?*

The term "Qualified Instructor" is defined in regulations 46 CFR 10.103 and 46 CFR 12.01-6 as "a person who has been trained or instructed in instructional techniques and is otherwise qualified to provide required training to candidates for licenses, documents, and endorsements." All training conducted to meet requirements for STCW certificates or endorsements must be provided by a Qualified Instructor.

(2) *How can I become a Qualified Instructor?*

To become a Qualified Instructor, you must provide documentary evidence that you:

- have experience, training or been instructed in effective instructional techniques;
- are qualified in the task for which the training is being conducted and have relevant operational experience; and
- hold the level of license, endorsement, or other professional credential required for those who would apply on board a vessel the relevant level of knowledge, skills and abilities described in the training objectives.

Documentary evidence may be in the form of performance evaluations which include an evaluation of effectiveness in on-the-job organization and delivery of training and/or a certificate of successful completion from a "train-the-trainer" course. A train-the-trainer course must be based on International Maritime Organizations (IMO) model course 6.09 (Training Course for Instructors), or another Coast Guard accepted syllabus covering the following areas:

- identification of training needs;
- learning processes;
- course design;
- teaching methods;
- recognition of individual capacity;
- identification of performance standards;
- presentation techniques and use of media;
- measurement of progress toward training objectives and of adequate performance;
- favorable and unfavorable conditions for learning;
- the role of incentive and motivation in learning;
- use of feedback for performance improvement; and
- course evaluation.

A specialist in a particular field of non-maritime education (such as mathematics or first aid) or a person with at least three years of service as a member of the Armed Forces of the United States, specializing in the field in which the training is conducted, need not hold a maritime license or document to conduct training in that field.

A faculty member employed at a State maritime academy or the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy operated in accordance with 46 CFR Part 310 and instructing in a navigation or engineering course is qualified to serve as a Qualified Instructor in their area(s) of specialization without individual evaluation by the Coast Guard.

(3) *Does use of a simulator in training or assessment activities affect the requirements I must meet to become a Qualified Instructor ?*

Yes. If a simulator is used, you must gain practical operational experience on the particular type of simulator being used and receive guidance in instructional

techniques involving the use of simulators. Such guidance or instruction should include development of and sequencing of simulated scenarios which have specific learning objectives.

(4) *Is it necessary for the Coast Guard to certificate me as a Qualified Instructor?*

No, a Coast Guard Certificate or Letter is not required. You must be identified as a Qualified Instructor as part of a Coast Guard course approval or as part of a Coast Guard-accepted program of training. In these cases, the review of your qualifications takes place at the time the Coast Guard approves a course (see reference (b)), or during an audit conducted under a quality standards system (see reference (c)).

c. The following questions and answers provide information on Designated Examiners.

(1) *What is a Designated Examiner?*

The term "Designated Examiner" is defined in regulations 46 CFR 10.103 and 46 CFR 12.01-6 as meaning "a person who has been trained or instructed in techniques of training or assessment and is otherwise qualified to evaluate whether a candidate for a license, document, or endorsement has achieved the level of competence required to hold the license, document, or endorsement. This person may be designated by the Coast Guard or by a Coast Guard-approved or accepted program of training or assessment."

A Designated Examiner assesses the ability of an individual to perform a task, duty or responsibility properly, using established criteria and professional judgment in determining whether an acceptable level of proficiency and competence has been demonstrated. A Designated Examiner must always personally witness the performance of the task, duty or responsibility by the person whose competence is to be assessed. This performance is called a "practical demonstration" which is defined in regulations 46 CFR 10.103 and 46 CFR 12.01-6 as meaning "the performance of an activity under the direct observation of a Designated Examiner for the purpose of establishing that the performer is sufficiently proficient in a practical skill to meet a specified standard of competence or other objective criterion." For purposes of assessment of competence of a skill or ability required for an STCW endorsement, the assessment criteria are set out in the standards of competence contained in the tables in the STCW Code.

(2) *How can I become a Designated Examiner?*

To become a Designated Examiner you must have documentary evidence to establish that you:

- have experience, training or been instructed in assessment techniques;

- are qualified in the task for which the assessment is being conducted; and

- hold the level of license, endorsement, or other professional credential required for those who would apply on board a vessel the relevant level of knowledge, skills and abilities to be assessed.

Documentary evidence of training or instruction may be in the form of performance evaluations which include an evaluation of effectiveness in on-the-job conduct of assessment activities; and/or a certificate of successful completion from a "train-the-trainer" course. A train-the-trainee course must be based on IMO model course 6.09 (Training Course for Instructors) or another Coast Guard-accepted syllabus which covers the following areas:

- identification of training needs;
- learning processes;
- course design;
- teaching methods;
- recognition of individual capacity;
- identification of performance standards;
- presentation techniques and use of media;
- assessment of knowledge;
- assessment of skills and abilities;
- measurement of progress toward training objectives and of adequate performance;
- favorable and unfavorable conditions for learning and assessment;
- the role of incentive and motivation in learning;
- use of feedback for performance improvement;
- and course evaluation.

Special instruction or experience involving use of simulators in assessment is necessary if the Designated Examiner is to use simulators when conducting assessments.

A specialist in a particular field of non-maritime education (such as mathematics or first aid), is not required to hold a maritime license or document to conduct assessment in that field. A specialist is someone whose expertise, experience and current practice are concentrated within a particular subject matter.

A faculty member employed at a State maritime academy or the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy operated in accordance with 46 CFR Part 310 and instructing in a navigation or engineering course is qualified to serve as a Designated Examiner in their area(s) of specialization without individual evaluation by the Coast Guard. This reflects the fact that faculty members at these institutions undergo a rigorous evaluation process before being employed as instructors.

(3) *Does use of a simulator in training or assessment activities affect the requirements I must meet to become a Designated Examiner?*

Yes. If a simulator is used, you must gain practical assessment experience on the particular type of simulator being used under the supervision and to the satisfaction of an experienced assessor, and receive guidance in instructional techniques involving the use of simulators. Such guidance or instruction should include development of and sequencing of simulated scenarios which have specific assessment objectives and which ensure that a mariner's performance can be measured against the relevant assessment criteria.

(4) *Is it necessary for the Coast Guard to certificate me as a Designated Examiner?*

No, a Coast Guard Certificate or Letter is not required. You may be identified as a Designated Examiner as part of a Coast Guard course approval or as part of a Coast Guard-accepted program of training and assessment. In these cases, the review of your qualifications takes place at the time the Coast Guard approves a course (see reference(b)), or during an audit conducted under a quality standards system (see reference (c)).

However, if you have a certificate of completion from a "train-the-trainer" course approved by the Coast Guard or based on IMO Model Courses or other Coast Guard-accepted training program, and have evidence that you have at least 36 weeks of experience as an instructor in the maritime field, you may obtain a letter from the Coast Guard stating your special qualification as a Designated Examiner. The letter may be limited to your field of experience. The letter will include a special reference to allow for assessments with certain classes of simulator when there is evidence to support this qualification. Procedures for receiving such a letter are discussed below.

(5) *How can I obtain a Coast Guard letter of qualification as a Designated Examiner?*

You must send a request, along with supporting documentation, to:

Director, National Maritime Center
NMC-4B
4200 Wilson Boulevard, Suite 510
Arlington, VA 22203-1804
Telephone Number: (703) 235-1864/74

Documentation should include:

(a) a certificate of completion from a "train-the-trainer" course which is approved by the Coast Guard or based on IMO Model Courses or other Coast Guard-accepted training program;

(b) evidence that you have at least 36 weeks of experience as an instructor in a maritime field; and

(c) evidence of operational experience relevant to the field of maritime training in which you wish to act as a Designated Examiner. The letter will be limited to your documented field of experience and will include a special reference to allow for assessments with certain classes of simulator when there is documentation to establish this qualification. Enclosure (1) is a sample Letter of Recognition.

(6) *Is there a fee for processing this letter?*

No, there is no application or processing fee for a letter of recognition as a Designated Examiner.

(7) How long will my Coast Guard letter of qualification as a Designated Examiner be valid?

Your letter of recognition is valid for five years. It will be revoked, however, if you sign or initials a statement attesting to an individual's competence without having personally witnessed a practical demonstration of the individual's skill or ability, which in your professional judgment, meets an acceptable level of performance.

(8) *What must I do to renew my letter of recognition?*

To renew your letter of recognition, you must submit evidence of your most recent experience as a Designated Examiner, and of your continued ability to assess the competence of merchant mariners in the appropriate fields of maritime training.

(9) *Can I serve as both a Qualified Instructor and Designated Examiner?*

Instruction and assessment are separate activities. The regulations in 46 CFR Parts 10 and 12 do not prohibit you from conducting both activities. It is essential, however, for you to :

(a) be qualified as both a Qualified Instructor and a Designated Examiner, and

(b) for you to maintain clear separation between activities conducted to meet learning objectives, and activities conducted for the purpose of assessing competence in a skill or ability.

Routine tests, quizzes, examinations, problems, and practical exercises conducted to assess student progress during an on-going training program are not considered assessments of competence for the purposes of meeting a regulatory qualification and may be given by a Qualified Instructor.

5. ACTION. OCMI's should use this circular as guidance for oversight of training and assessment programs offered in their zone.

R. C. NORTH
Rear Admiral, U.S. Coast Guard
Assistant Commandant for Marine
Safety and Environmental Protection

Encl: (1) Sample of Letter of Recogniation

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United States Coast Guard

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LETTER OF RECOGNITION
DESIGNATED EXAMINER

Individual's name
Address
Address
City, State ZIP

Dear :

Your credentials have been evaluated and the Coast Guard has determined that you are qualified for recognition as a ``designated examiner'' in accordance with Navigation and Vessel Inspection Circular XX-97. Your qualifications are subject to the conditions set out below.

You are entitled to conduct assessments of individual competence in the following areas of maritime training:

[Enter name of course or training and assessment program and code used for identifying the course or program in the Coast Guard records system.] [Add any special qualification for using a type of simulator for assessment, if applicable.]

As merchant mariners must now demonstrate their competency in a host of areas to obtain a STCW certificate or endorsement, and, eventually, a Coast Guard license or document, the U.S. Coast Guard is placing a good deal of trust in your professional competence, judgment and behavior.

In performing your function as a designated examiner, you may only use your signature or initials to indicate you have personally witnessed the demonstration of a skill or ability by the person being assessed and have found that individual, in your professional judgment, to be competent under the relevant criteria and using good professional judgment. This letter will be revoked if you sign or initial a statement attesting to an individual's competence without having personally witnessed a practical demonstration of the individual's skill or ability,

which in your professional judgment, meets an acceptable level of performance.

When acting as a designated examiner to meet a regulatory requirement, you should include in the record of assessment your full name as well as an identification number using the first three digits of your last name and the date of issue of this letter (i.e., [insert first three digits of addressee's last name and the date of the letter as: XXXmmddyy]).

This letter is valid for five years. At the time of renewal you should be prepared to submit evidence of your continued ability to assess the competence of merchant mariners in the above identified fields of maritime training in accordance with NVIC X-97.

We greatly appreciate your willingness to serve as a designated examiner. This role is critical to maintaining high professional standards among U.S. merchant mariners.

Sincerely,

Director, National Maritime Center
By direction