



I am often asked “What is so special about MCA certification?” so I thought I would set out some good reasons why Galileo Maritime Academy has invested heavily over the last three years to become the MCA seafarer training flagship in the Asia Pacific region.

The Maritime and Coastguard Agency of the UK Department for Transport (MCA) has many roles in national security, homeland defence, maritime compliance, safety and security at sea as well as seafarer training standards, examination, enforcement and invigilation. It works closely with the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) and the Merchant Navy Training Board (MNTB). All 139 maritime nations are members of and signatories to the IMO standards, rules and regulations that govern the world’s shipping safety and security.

The UK’s long history of maritime achievement and focus on safety and security at sea has led to the MCA becoming the pinnacle of excellence and reliability in maritime training and certification and sets the standard, with the IMO and MNTB, that is and should be met by all 139 maritime nations. The IMO delegates to many of those countries the authority to regulate maritime training and certification, to IMO standards, under what is commonly called “The White Book”, a list of those countries with delegated authority to issue and regulate maritime training and certification to the STCW (Standards of Training and Certification for Watch-keepers) requirements.

It has become evident to ship owners and their insurers that the most reliable way to ensure that their crew is trained properly and professionally and that the certificates which crew present to confirm that training standard are valid and reliable, and that the vessel’s flag state will accept them, is for the crew to be trained by an MCA accredited training facility and to hold MCA approved certification.

So Galileo set out to try to convince MCA to audit, examine and approve us as an MCA accredited academy with approval to issue Certificates of Competence to seafarers on behalf of MCA. It was not easy! (British understatement here..) to show that we really intended and were capable of meeting the MNTB criteria and MCA requirements and would maintain them reliably. To do so Galileo needed to invest heavily in facilities, equipment, instructor training and staff employment, quality and safety management systems as well as land and buildings to meet long term growth.

Eventually, after a year of preparation, we were able to submit to a desk audit by MCA for the basic STCW 2010 modules of training and show evidence of our compliance in terms of instructor qualification, equipment and facilities, lesson plans and content, QMS, etc. We met the requirements of the desk audit and so MCA then agreed to send inspectors out to Phuket to audit us during delivery of these courses and to examine us on every level of our business and management. Many improvements were required and equipment developments but eventually we met all the requirements and were



Tom Sebastian and Capt. David Wright supervising the Survival Craft and Rescue Boats exercises. (PSC&RB).

Why train to the



Anthony Gould (middle) with MCA Auditor and Examiner Majibur Rahman and members of the Galileo team.



Capt. David Wright, Galileo's Training Manager, teaching Efficient Deckhand Course (EDH).



Paul Fear and Tom Sebastian instructing at our School of Advanced Fire Fighting.



MCA standard?

By Anthony Gould, CEO of Galileo Maritime Academy



The assessment part of Proficiency in Fast Rescue Boats (PFRB) with instructors Capt. David Wright and Tom Sebastian.



Shemaine Sebastian, Galileo's Admissions and HR Manager, teaching Proficiency in Medical Care (PMC).



Command and Control at a live fire exercise for Advanced Fire Fighting course (AFF).

given full accreditation and approval by MCA for the five course elements of basic STCW training as well as Proficiency in Designated Security Duties (PDSD), Crowd Management Training (CMT) and Proficiency in Medical First Aid at sea (MFA). Later came approvals for the Updated Training courses for STCW 2010.

We demonstrated over the next 2 years that we would and could maintain these standards and during that time the word spread around the world that now there was an academy in Asia that could train and issue MCA certificates to crew. The crew we trained and the superyacht captains we worked with came to appreciate the quality and standards we were able to provide, as well as the superb accommodation, facilities and experiences in our training schools and boats at sea in Phang Nga Bay. So student numbers increased as did the demand for more advanced maritime training.

Galileo moved to Yacht Haven Marina, formed a partnership with the marina owners and started to build a new state of the art maritime academy headquarters and student residence as well as a School of Fire Fighting, a School of Marine Engineering and a Survival Craft and Rescue Boat training facility. A great deal of investment in the future.

Again we went through the MCA desk audit process for the six new advanced level courses:

- Proficiency in Advanced Fire Fighting (AFF)
- Proficiency in Medical Care (PMC)
- Proficiency in Survival Craft and Rescue Boats (PSC&RB)
- Proficiency in Fast Rescue Boats (PFRB)
- Efficient Deck-hand Course (EDH)
- Approved Engine Course (AEC)

In July 2017 we delivered the first of all six of these courses under the scrutiny of MCA's eagle-eyed examiner and auditor, and passed with flying colours!

My team and I are determined to set a new high standard of quality and reliability in maritime training and we believe that ship captains, owners and their insurance underwriters, as well as the crew themselves will value and appreciate this. It is not just a question of doing it right in terms of content but also making it fun and interactive and practical experience at sea.

Galileo is now in the big league of maritime training providers around the world and the only MCA academy of its kind in Asia Pacific. We are not resting any time soon! It's on to full service for cruise ships, merchant shipping, offshore oil and gas as well as superyachts. And one thing is clear to us – it's quality, reliability and practical experience as well as fun that counts. ⚓



MCA accredited course provider