

Professional Qualification Evaluation Frequently Asked Questions

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Frequently Asked Questions: Awaiting Information Letters

1. I received an Awaiting Information letter about my sea time. Why is what I submitted not being accepted?

There are several reasons why submitted sea service may not be acceptable for an evaluation of professional qualifications. In order to get specific information on why your time is not being accepted, please contact the National Maritime Center (NMC) Customer Service Center (CSC) at 1-888-IASKNMC (427-5662).

2. Why does my evaluator need the Navy History of Assignments (HOA) or the US Coast Guard Transcript of Sea Service (TOSS) when I sent my military records, which contain all the information about my sea time?

Per [46 Code of Federal Regulations \(CFR\) 11.213](#), military members must provide an official record of sea service. The HOA or TOSS is considered the official record. If you are not able to obtain these, please contact the CSC at 1-888-IASKNMC (427-5662).

3. I am in the Coast Guard and my small boat service is not on my HOA TOSS. How may I show this time?

Only service on cutters (65 feet or larger) will be listed on a TOSS. This information should be listed on your AOPS reports.

4. My Abstract of Operations (AOPS) is not available to me. How can I prove this sea service?

If the AOPS report is not available to you, please contact the CSC at 1-888-427-5662.

5. The information listed in the Marine Information for Safety and Law Enforcement (MISLE) database is incorrect; how can I get it updated?

Per [46 CFR 2.01-5 \(c\)](#): Amending certificates. When, because of a change in the character of the vessel or vessel's route, equipment, etc., the vessel does not comply with the requirements of the Certificate of Inspection previously issued, an amended certificate may be issued at the discretion of the Officer in Charge, Marine Inspection, to whom a request is made.

6. Why do I have to complete a flashing light course?

Per [46 CFR 11.401\(h\)](#), flashing light is required for all officer endorsements above 1600 GRT. In addition to the domestic requirement, flashing light may also be required for an STCW endorsement.

7. How do I provide proof of ownership when I own the company which owns the vessel? May I send a letter on letterhead and sign it myself?

You would provide proof that you own the company. It is acceptable to send a letter signed by you as long as the proof that you own the company is included.

8. What if I don't have all the required vessel information (vessel tonnage, official numbers, etc.)?

If this is a small boat without official numbers and you have it listed as under 5 GRT that will be sufficient. Otherwise, all information must be supplied.

9. How do I decide which course to take when I see that there are several similar courses to choose from on your website?

If the course is listed on the NMC approved courses list, it should cover the requirement of the title of the course. Always verify with the course provider that the course covers the endorsement for which you are applying. The NMC may not recommend one school over another.

10. How do I get confirmation that the information I faxed to the NMC was received?

You may call the CSC to verify that a fax has been received. Please allow 48-72 hours after faxing the document to check on its receipt.

Frequently Asked Questions: Testing

General

1. May I get an extension on my Approval to Test (ATT) time period?

No, the National Maritime Center (NMC) does not extend approval to test periods.

2. Where do I find study material? Are you able to mail me the study material?

The NMC does not provide study materials. You may visit our Exams webpage to review the exam reference library and exam questions, which are listed by topic. You may also contact local marine supply businesses as some may provide study guides for sale.

3. How do I know what will be on the exam?

There are maritime schools and training facilities that can help mariners prepare for Coast Guard exams. The NMC does not provide specific exam content, only general subjects included on exams with sample questions. You may visit www.uscg.mil/nmc for more information concerning general exam subjects and the examination guide. If you have a specific question on an exam you may contact the NMC Customer Service Center (CSC) at 1-888-IASKNMC (427-5662), or the examiner at the Regional Exam Center (REC).

4. Are these the correct test modules? I don't think I need to take 'X' module, what should I do?

Refer to the [Deck and Engineering Exam Guide](#). If you believe there is an error on your ATT letter please call the CSC at 1-888-IASKNMC (427-5662).

5. What materials will be available to me at the REC when I go to test?

The [Deck and Engineering Exam Guide](#) has a list of materials that will be available in the exam room.

6. May I get a new answer sheet for my open book exam?

If you require a replacement answer sheet please send a request in writing to the REC that mailed your exams. You may also request it via e-mail to IASKNMC@uscg.mil. Your request will be forwarded to the REC.

7. May I test at a school rather than an REC?

This depends upon what you are applying for. There are not approved courses for all endorsements. If you find an approved course, verify that it will cover your Coast Guard exam requirements.

8. May I take a Celestial course in order to get an Oceans endorsement?

Yes, but be sure to verify that the course covers the Celestial exam module(s) for the specific officer endorsement for which you are applying. A course for a higher officer endorsement may not be acceptable for an endorsement of lesser authority.

9. Is chart plotting a part of the Navigation module?

Any exam titled Navigation may or may not contain questions involving chart plotting as chart plotting is part of navigation.

10. With whom may I speak about what I consider inappropriate exam questions?

The examiner is not allowed to discuss the validity of exam questions with a mariner. There are two paths available: You may submit a Comment or a Challenge via a Comment-Challenge sheet available at the REC.

If an applicant believes there is something wrong with a question that prevents it from being answered correctly, he/she must state in writing all the details regarding the discrepancies on a Comment-Challenge sheet.

The applicant must provide the reasons for the challenge, all calculations for math problems, and what is believed to be the correct answer. All comments, even if they will not affect the candidate's grade, are valuable and will be used to improve the quality of the questions used on future tests.

If the applicant fails the examination module by no more than one question, they will be given the opportunity to review each question for which credit was not given. Immediately after the review and prior to leaving the exam room, the candidate may submit a challenge sheet for no more than two questions as indicated above. Once the applicant has reviewed his or her answer sheet and leaves the exam room for ANY REASON before submitting their challenges, the challenges will not be accepted.

Examiners will submit to NMC-22 via fax or e-mail the applicant's Comment-Challenge sheet and answer sheet for the exam in question.

11. What if I disagree with the result of a challenge?

With regard to the exam challenge procedure, the challenge is the re-consideration. If a mariner is unsatisfied with the result of their challenge they have the right to appeal the decision.

Any person directly affected by a decision or action of an officer or employee of the NMC involving any of the marine safety functions listed in [46 Code of Federal Regulations \(CFR\) 1.01–15\(c\)](#) may, after requesting reconsideration of the decision or action by the NMC, make a formal appeal of that decision or action, via the NMC, to the Director of Prevention Policy, Commandant (CG–54), in accordance with the procedures contained in [46 CFR 1.03–15](#).

Retesting

1. How long do I have to retest? May I have an extension on this time?

The time frame depends upon which exam is being retaken. The retest policy is outlined in [46 CFR 11.217](#) and the [Deck and Engineering Exam Guide](#).

Extensions on the retest period may be granted by the Officer in Charge Marine Inspection if the applicant presents discharges or other proof of being underway during the retest period. The retest period will not be extended beyond 7 months from the date of initial examination. The retest period can only be extended day-for-day for actual days underway.

2. How many tests do I need to retake?

You will have to retake any failed modules. If you fail to successfully pass any failed modules within the retest period you will be required to do a full retest of all modules. The retest policy is outlined in [46 CFR 11.217](#) and the [Deck and Engineering Exam Guide](#).

