

## Information for Applying Foreign Service/Foreign Credentials Toward a U.S. Credential

### [46 CFR 11.201\(c\)\(4\):](#)

Service gained on foreign vessels under a foreign license IS creditable for an original officer endorsement/RIG or STCW as long as:

- It is a “reasonable equivalent” to service that would be gained on United States (U.S.) vessels “with respect to grade, tonnage, horsepower, waters and operating conditions”

AND

- The service is documented properly including necessary translation into English.

This means that information submitted with an application must have an official translation with it. If the official translation is not included, an Awaiting Information letter will be sent to the mariner, and the evaluation will stop until an official translation is received.

### [46 CFR 11.201 \(d\):](#)

No officer endorsement may be issued to any person who is not a citizen of the United States with the exception of operators of uninspected passenger vessels that are not documented under the laws of the United States.

### [46 CFR 11.201\(c\)\(5\):](#)

- When using foreign licensed service for an evaluation, the National Maritime Center (NMC) cannot issue an officer endorsement higher than the authority of the foreign credential the mariner was holding while gaining the service.
- This means that an applicant submitting foreign sea service may only obtain the same level of license, or lower, that he/she holds in a foreign country. If a mariner holds a credential through a foreign country (a country other than the U.S.), he/she must send in copies of those credentials with the application package. In order to credit the currently held credential toward a U.S. credential, the NMC must verify its validity through the issuing country. This verification may take several weeks.

Mariners on the Engine side may qualify for a license up to the Management level (i.e., Chief Engineer).

Mariners on the Deck side may only qualify to the highest Operational level (2nd Mate) regardless of the license level held by the mariner in a foreign country. This does not include Master 500/1600, since mariners do not have to qualify for Management level assessments, per [Policy Letter 04-02](#).

When evaluating for an equivalent to a foreign officer endorsement (i.e., 2nd Mate), the NMC must determine that the progression of sea service requirements is met. For example, if a mariner holds a 2nd Mate, the NMC would determine that the 3rd Mate requirements are met (including all requirements for an original credential). Then the 2nd Mate evaluation would begin.

An evaluation of sea service requires positions served in accordance with [46 CFR 11.205\(c\)\(4\)](#) for foreign service (i.e., Able Seaman, Qualified Member of the Engine Department, 3rd Mate, or Assistant Engineer). If the position(s) listed on the application do not have an easily identifiable U.S. equivalent, a job description will be requested.

As a general rule, courses that are not Coast Guard approved will not be accepted. If the request is for a corresponding international credential, the international requirements at each level must be met. This includes items such as: Proficiency in Survival Craft, Advanced Firefighting, Medical Care Provider, Bridge Resource Management, Flashing Light, Basic Safety Training, and any applicable Assessments and/or Training. See the following for approved courses and schools:

- [46 CFR 11.201](#)
- [46 CFR Subpart C](#)
- [Marine Safety Manual Chapter 7](#)
- [Approved Courses](#)

See the NMC [Exam Guide](#) for more information on required examinations for mariners whose service began after March 24, 2014.