

The ISSA Master of Yacht is the highest certification level within the ISSA training system and represents the pinnacle of competence in the field of yacht handling. This advanced programme is designed for experienced skippers who wish to skipper sailing yachts of up to 24 metres safely and confidently in the most varied weather conditions, as well as on unrestricted coastal and offshore passages.

PREREQUISITES & REQUIREMENTS

Minimum age – 18 years

Minimum 60 days at sea as skipper or watch leader,
on at least 5 passages in 3 different sea areas (including tidal waters)

At least 2 passages of 100 nautical miles each as skipper

Valid SRC/VHF radio licence

First Aid certificate

Sea Survival certificate

Training by an ISSA instructor holding a Master of Yacht licence

Recommended training duration – 40 hours (approx. 10–14 days)

THEORETICAL CONTENT



NAVIGATION (CLASSICAL & ELECTRONIC)

- Nautical charts, chart publications & chart symbols
- Dead reckoning & position fixing
- Electronic navigation (GPS, plotter, Navionics)
- Radar basics & ARPA
- Celestial navigation (basics)
- Position fixing, error circles & error analysis

TIDES & CURRENTS

- Tidal calculations for harbours & roadsteads
- Tidal currents & their influence on route planning
- Spring & neap tides in tidal waters

PASSAGE PLANNING & PILOTAGE

- Offshore passage planning at an advanced level
- Night navigation & entering harbour in restricted visibility
- Pilotage in tidal waters and confined channels

METEOROLOGY

- Synoptic meteorology & weather system analysis
- Fronts, pressure systems & storm warning signals
- Weather forecasts from various sources (incl. modern apps)
- Heavy-weather seamanship & decision-making

COLLISION REGULATIONS (IRPCS/COLREGs)

- Complete & confident application of the international rules
- Lights, shapes, sound and light signals
- Give-way situations & responsibility

MARITIME LAW & MARITIME BASICS

- Basics of international maritime law
- Port entry & clearance, customs & immigration
- Vessel registration & documentation

BOAT SYSTEMS & EQUIPMENT

- Yacht construction & stability
- Rigging & mast inspection
- Diesel engines, fuel systems, cooling water, gearbox
- Onboard electrics, navigation & communication systems
- Safety equipment & inspection

SAFETY & EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

- GMDSS & distress communication
- Life raft, EPIRB, SART
- Fire fighting & damage control
- Distress signals (pyrotechnics, MAYDAY)
- Environmental protection at sea

ECOLOGY & SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

- Environmental awareness while sailing
- Leadership responsibility

PRACTICAL CONTENT

BOAT HANDLING UNDER SAIL

- Sail trim in all conditions
- Heavy-weather manoeuvres (reefing, storm sailing, heaving-to)
- Tacking and gybing under pressure
- Sail stowing and setting storm sails

BOAT HANDLING UNDER MOTOR

- Berthing & departing in difficult situations (current, wind, confined marina)
- Towing and being towed
- Anchoring manoeuvres in tidal waters

NIGHT NAVIGATION

- Navigating and manoeuvring in darkness
- Identification of lights, lighthouses and other vessels

MAN OVERBOARD (MOB)

- MOB manoeuvres under sail and motor, including at night
- Recovery procedures and rescue security

LEADERSHIP & CREW MANAGEMENT

- Stress management and decision-making in difficult situations
- Communication and delegation to the crew
- Respectful, professional interaction with the team
- Watch planning on long passages

EXAMINATION

THEORETICAL EXAMINATION (WRITTEN)

All syllabus topics — Navigation, Tides, COLREGs, Meteorology, Maritime Law, Safety, Passage Planning and Seamanship. The standard is higher than for the Offshore Skipper — fluent and confident application is expected.

PRACTICAL EXAMINATION

- Duration: 6 hours (of which at least 2 hours in darkness)
- Maximum 3 candidates simultaneously per examination passage
- Assessment: berthing & departing, anchoring, boat handling, heavy-weather competence, MOB, night passage, crew leadership and situational awareness
- Concluding oral examination on board

Important – Completion of the course does not guarantee passing the examination. The certificate is issued only upon demonstrated competence.

ENTITLEMENT UPON PASSING

Unlimited command of sailing yachts up to 24 metres on all the world's oceans, as responsible skipper on offshore passages — the pinnacle of the ISSA sailing qualification.



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