Programme Specification

NSC-BL -DIP-2025: Nautical Science- Blended Learning

B&FC Diploma of Higher Education awarded by Blackpool And The Fylde College (FHEQ Level 5)

Programme Status: Approved | Version: 1

Introduction

This programme specification provides a summary of the main features of the Nautical Science- Blended Learning programme and includes the learning outcomes that you as a student are expected to have achieved on successful completion of the programme.

Further detailed information related to this programme and the College can be found in the following resources:

- Programme Handbook
- B&FC Admissions Policy
- Work based and placement learning handbook (for foundation degrees)
- Student guide to assessment and feedback

When undertaken as part of a Degree Apprenticeship additional information is available in the following resources:

- The Programme Delivery Plan
- The End Point Assessment Guide
- B&FC Mentor Guide
- B&FC Apprenticeship Strategy

Key Programme Information	
Programme Code	NSC-BL -DIP-2025
Programme Title	Nautical Science- Blended Learning
Teaching Institution	Blackpool and The Fylde College
Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Body (PSRB) Accreditation	None
UCAS Code	
Language of Study	English
Version	1
Approval Status	Approved
Approval Date	07 Aug 2025
JACS Code	
Programme Leader	Lucy Summerville

Programme Awards			
Award	**Award Type**	**Level**	**Awarding Body**
B&FC Diploma of Higher Education	Diploma of HE - Named Award	Level 5	Blackpool And The Fylde College

Programme Overview

If you want to obtain an MCA issued Certificate of Competency as a Chief Mate, this course key to achieving your career goal. The Diploma in Higher Education (DipHE) Nautical Science programme develops the knowledge, skills and behaviours required for a career as a senior deck officer in the maritime industry. This qualification fully aligns to the MCA requirements regarding education and training of management level deck officers (Chief Mate and Master), when combined with the short courses set out in MSN 1856.

Depending on your career path or career goals, you may be eligible to study face-to-face onsite over a period of around 6 months, or you may be able to study by Blended Learning, which utilises a block-and-blend approach with a mix of distance learning and block attendance. There will be a requirement for Blended Learning students to attend on site up to 4 x 1 week blocks. This will be agreed with the team and yourself.

The programme welcomes you, especially if you are:

- an experienced officer of the watch, looking to upskill to Chief Mate

- a holder of a non-UK CoC and wish to convert to an MCA issued Chief Mate or Master Unlimited CoC

If you already possess an Education and Training letter confirming that you have successfully studied all the required subjects Chief Mate criteria, you do not need this course. This list is not exhaustive, so if you are unsure if this is the course for you, our team will be able to give you the initial advice and guidance you need to have confidence that you are on the right programme for you.

Transition Arrangements

Students who have previously studied the SQA Advanced Certificate or Advanced Diploma in Nautical Science (from September 2020 onwards) may be eligible to transfer into this programme. Eligibility will be assessed on a case-by-case basis by the curriculum team, based on completed modules and alignment with the current programme structure. This ensures academic parity and supports progression within the MCA framework.

Please note: your enrolment on the programme runs for a period of three calendar years from the point of enrolment, which is flexible allowing you to enrol any time in the year. This 3-year period could span four academic years (Aug-Jul), which is reflected in the 4-year course duration stated above. This does not mean you have four calendar years to study.

Admission Criteria

To study on this programme, you must meet at least one of the criteria below:

- Successful completion of CertHE Nautical Science

- Hold an MCA-approved level 4 or higher qualification that meets the criteria for STCW II/1 OOW Unlimited CoC

- Hold an appropriate STCW II/1 OOW Unlimited CoC

International students may require an overall band score of 5.5 and a minimum of 4 in each element of IELTS.

Note: Whilst the programme team will provide IAG for applicants to the qualifications, in all cases where sea service or an existing CoC are used as entry criteria for the course, it remains the applicant's responsibility to ensure that these will be accepted by the MCA as counting towards their CoC and if necessary, liaise with the MCA directly.

Transition Arrangements

Fleetwood Nautical Campus Blended Learning students currently enrolled on the SQA Advanced Diploma in Nautical Science, who began their studies from September 2020 onwards and who have completed some units that align with the MCA mapping document, may be eligible to transfer to the DipHE Nautical Science programme, subject to academic approval. This will be based on a case by case review by the curriculum team using the module mapping document. This arrangement is only available until July 2028 to allow eligible students to transfer.

Students currently enrolled at other UK MCA-approved maritime colleges or affiliated institutions offering similar SQA units may also be eligible to transfer, provided their completed units align with the current modernised programme and are approved by the academic team.

Career Options and Progression Opportunities

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Depending on your career path or career goals, you may be eligible to study face-to-face onsite over a period of around 6 months, or you may be able to study by Blended Learning, which utilises a block-and-blend approach with a mix of distance learning and block attendance.

Programme Aims

This programme aims to:

- To provide rigorous specialist maritime knowledge and technical skills appropriate to the managerial level
- To prepare students to manage people by developing leadership, communication and interpersonal skills
- To provide students with knowledge and skills relating to shipboard operational management including planning, resourcing and enhancing procedures
- To integrate technical and academic skills that develop students' graduate attributes in support of lifelong learning and career progression
- To contribute to obtaining the knowledge, skills and behaviours required for a Certificate of Competency as Chief Officer, issued by MCA

Programme Learning Outcomes

Level 5

Upon successful completion of this level, students will be able to:

1. Analyse methods of managing navigation, watchkeeping, ship stability and vessel operations
2. Appraise the global context of maritime operations incorporating cultural, legal, ethical and environmental factors
3. Plan and appraise shipboard operations with due regard to industry legislation, regulatory frameworks and safety standards
4. Critically analyse processes, procedures and practices involved in shipboard management
5. Develop and evaluate logical arguments, justifications and conclusions associated with complex issues identifying underlying assumptions and critical factors
6. Research and embed information from a variety of traditional and digital sources to support personal and professional development, lifelong learning and achievement.

Programme Structure

Module	Level	Credits	%	Category	Description	Wrd Cout/Dur	Grading Method
Stage 1							
NSC507-BL: Management of Bridge Operations (Mandatory)	5	15	100%	Coursework: Report	Reflection on and analysis of applied bridge management	1600	Letter Grade
NSC508-BL: Management of Passage Planning and Meteorology (Mandatory)	5	20	100%	Coursework: Report	Report evaluating completed passage plan	1600	Letter Grade
NSC509-BL: Management of Vessel Operations (Mandatory)	5	20	50%	Coursework: Assignment	Dry Cargo and Passenger Operations Assignment	1200	Letter Grade
			50%	Coursework: Assignment	Liquid Cargo and Cargo Computer Assignment	1200	Letter Grade
NSC510-BL: Marine Engineering and Vessel Maintenance (Mandatory)	5	15	100%	Coursework: Report	Engineering and Maintenance Report	2400	Letter Grade
NSC511-BL: Ship Stability Theory and Practical Applications (Mandatory)	5	15	100%	Practical: Timed Assessment	Stability scenarios	150	Letter Grade
NSC512-BL: Shipboard Management (Mandatory)	5	15	100%	Coursework: Project	Management project	2400	Letter Grade
NSC513-BL: Shipmasters Law and Business (Mandatory)	5	20	100%	Coursework: Case Study	Case Study on a maritime disaster with follow up questions on legal implications surrounding the incident	2800	Letter Grade
NSC599-BL: Safety Critical (Nautical Science) (Mandatory)	5	0	100%	Coursework: Portfolio / e-Portfolio	n/a	0	Safety Critical

Study Workload

A unique selling point of this qualification is how it is paced to match your ability to study. You will study much of the qualification in your own time and at your pace over a period of up to 3 years. You will be expected to complete formative assessments to demonstrate your progress through the module and readiness to undertake summative assessment. You will primarily study using a mix of structured online learning and independent reading around the topics presented.

Whilst most of the delivery is flexible, there will be a number of points in delivery where you will be expected to attend the college for exams and practical work. These are typically run twice per year and you will need to find time to attend one of these block attendance periods for each relevant module. These block attendance periods are typically a week in duration and will align assessments for multiple modules to maximise the value you will get from travelling to Fleetwood.

Depending on your pace of study and your shipboard experience, this could be done in as few as 2 one-week periods of attendance at the college but this could be up to 4 periods of attendance to allow more time to focus on each module when you attend onsite.

We require attendance on these parts of delivery as the MCA recognise the increasing value of using simulators and software as part of your education and training and have made these a mandatory part of your programme. These periods will help prepare you for your external MCA examination. There are up to 4 x 1 week periods of attendance required on the DipHE.

During your studies, you have the opportunity to receive support from the college's Higher Education Learning Mentors (HELMs) at no additional cost. HELMs are able to provide guidance to help you manage your study workload as part of your overall workload as well advice on other skills essential to your studies such as academic reading and writing, note taking, referencing and time management.

If you wish to discuss the expectations for the programme, please enquire and a member of the programme team will be happy to discuss this with you and create a plan which works around your leave schedule.

Programme Delivery: Learning and Teaching

Throughout your studies you will learn and be assessed in a range of ways to support the overall aims and outcomes of the programme in order to equip you with the appropriate skills for roles within the maritime industry. Employers will be looking for a range of skills and competencies, including innovation and initiative. Employers want you to have strong communication and team-working skills. The programme promotes the development of these qualities alongside technical competencies and academic knowledge.

The Canvas VLE is the primary digital platform the will be a hub for your learning, incorporating a mix of lecturer-authored summaries of key concepts for each module, with diagrams to help illustrate key concepts. There will also be videos to help students learn in a multimodal manner and there links to carefully curated resources, such as those provided through Ocean Leaning Platform, journal articles and technical industry sources of information. Canvas will be also utilised as a platform to allow for interactivity, as will MS Teams. This will include the use of forums to share ideas on a topic and to critique each other’s ideas in order to help you develop each others' critical thinking.

A key feature of how you will learn is your periods of attendance at college, where you will come in for a week at two-four points during your enrolment to apply your learning using the college's specialist facilities, such as the full mission bridge simulators, desktop bridge simulators and stability software. Using these tools for study equip you to undertake authentic assessments that address real world challenges. Typically you will attend college in 2-4 x 1 week blocks.

This will be discussed with you when creating your individual learning plan, taking into account your academic progress and leave rotations. Using these tools for study equips you to undertake authentic assessments that address real world challenges.

Further, the programme is set out to allow you to make connections between modules – both by what you study in parallel and by the order of what you study. You will refresh key concepts before you build on that and learn how to manage.

The resources to support you in your studies include books, eBooks and journals, as well as B&FC's Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) - Canvas, the Learning Resource Centre provides access to all relevant publications, as identified on the reading lists. You will receive access to maritime specific documents and eBooks with membership to Witherby publications and Regs4Ships, an online curated repository of conventions, codes and regulations relevant to the maritime industry.

Additionally, as a maritime student you are entitled to free student membership in the Nautical Institute and the Institute of Marine Engineering, Science and Technology (IMarEST) and this will allow you to access international journals and e-books relating to all areas of the programme. The campus has also invested in access to Ocean Learning Platform, which is used to supplement learning to provide access to a repository of bite-sized courses and videos designed for maritime industry.

Support also extends beyond the online materials available through the Canvas platform, with access to the programme team for personalised assistance, and dedicated progress tutors to guide academic development. The programme also benefits from the B&FC Educational Gains model, which places students at the centre of their learning journey, promoting self-reflection, independent study, and contextual learning. With additional support from the student support, Wellbeing and Inclusion team, students are provided with tailored assistance to help them succeed academically and professionally. Ultimately, the programme equips students with both the technical knowledge and personal skills necessary to thrive in the evolving workforce.

The college also invests heavily in providing extensive support for your wellbeing during your studies with a blend of self-serve materials for you to develop your resilience and a team that will support your application for any assessment access arrangements.

B&FC recognises the importance of understanding how to appropriately use artificial intelligence (AI) within your specific context, especially as you prepare for a future in the maritime sector.

We also acknowledge that, when used ethically and responsibly, AI can enhance your learning experience. B&FC is committed to supporting you in using these tools effectively, while upholding academic integrity and rigour. However, it remains essential that you are able to independently develop and demonstrate your own skills—such as idea generation, research, and the application of technical and practical processes—without relying solely on AI.

It's important to remember that AI-generated content, while often well-written and convincing, is not always accurate. You must clearly indicate when you have used generative AI, including the extent of its use. Submitting AI-generated work as your own is not permitted and requires proper acknowledgement and accurate referencing.

If there is any suspicion of academic malpractice or misconduct, B&FC's HE Academic Regulations will apply, specifically Part B3: Academic Malpractice and Misconduct.

Programme Delivery: Assessment

The assessment structure has been carefully developed to ensure that you successfully complete all aspects of the programme. As you progress through different units, you will undertake assessments designed to demonstrate your achievement of the specific learning outcomes outlined in each unit's specification. Both formative and summative assessments offer a comprehensive view of your academic development. These assessments will include traditional examinations, coursework submissions, and practical exercises.

You will be assessed by a variety of methods, including exams, practical assessments and coursework. These assessment types and their pass marks are informed by the MCA requirements for assessments on the programme for candidates seeking a Certificate of Competency (CoC).

MCA pass marks and safety critical criteria

The MCA require specific pass marks over and above the DipHE threshold pass mark of 40%, for students to meet the competency criteria before B&FC can issue a Letter of Education and Training, which is necessary to obtain the Certificate of Competency (CoC). All assessments require a pass mark of at least 50% (or C- for letter graded assessments) but for some of your assessments on some modules the pass mark is at least 60% (or B- for letter graded assessments). Details will be provided by the programme team and will also be detailed in individual module specifications.

Key Safety Critical Criteria are defined by the MCA as those elements which if not applied 'would cause unsafe conditions for the crew or damage to the ship or environment'. These criteria must also be met in order for students to be eligible for their letter of education and training which is necessary to obtain the Certificate of Competency (CoC). You will be required to compile a portfolio to show how you meet these criteria through your studies on the programme - this will be recognised through a non-credit-bearing module (NSC-599 Safety Critical Criteria).

Assessments with a 60% pass mark include:

- Management of Passage Planning and Meteorology

- Management of Bridge Operations

- Ship Stability Theory and Practical Applications

Modules with Safety Critical Criteria include:

- Management of Passage Planning and Meteorology (relating to Passage Planning)

- Management of Bridge Operations

- Ship Stability Theory and Practical Applications

Please see the Blended Learning Course Information Sheet for more detail on your onsite attendance requirements for assessment.

Programme Delivery: Work Based and Placement Learning

This programme is designed with experienced industry practitioners in mind, whether that length of experience is a few months or a few years. You will be expected to draw upon real world experiences as part of the delivery of the programme in order to help make sense of key concepts. Summative assessments (ones that contribute to your grade), however, will not require you to draw upon specific shipboard experiences as the maritime industry is so broad and seafarers' experiences can be so varied. You will work with real-life case studies, but will not have any work placements as part of this programme.

Programme Delivery: Graduate Skill Development

The programme helps you to develop:

Collaborative teamwork and leadership skills

During the qualification, you will study leadership and management, which are key transferable skills and essential in your role as a maritime professional and global citizen.

Personal and intellectual autonomy

We support your development of independence in academic and practical skills throughout the programme, most prominently in the assignments and projects where you will be responsible for managing your work.

Ethical, social and professional understanding

Mapping of the programme content to the requirements set by the MCA ensures that the module delivery and assessment considers legal, social and ethical issues to enhance your professional development. You will also need to ensure that the research and findings for your dissertation module meets ethical guidelines with appropriate safeguarding in place.

Communication, information and digital literacies

The programme provides the foundations for developing these skills which are then applied in assessments throughout the programme. This will assist you in researching; engaging critically with material; utilising digital technologies effectively to support discovery, analysis and dissemination of information; collaboration; and reflection. In modules throughout the programme, you will be required to communicate in a range of formats to meet assessment criteria.

Global citizenship

The programme was developed in consultation with international maritime companies for example, Carnival, Princess Cruises, BP, Conwy Merchant Navy Trust, Shell and V-Ships. As a global industry, by its very nature, the maritime industry inherently promotes the concept of global citizenship as you will work alongside seafarers from around the world who may hold very different cultural values and expectations from your own. Even within the UK, the pool of candidates is far more cross-sectional across the strata of class backgrounds than many other industries.

Research, scholarship and enquiry skills

This programme will help you in developing skills required for engagement with technical and academic literature as well as data gathering and analysis skills that will help you to become a part of the global scholarly community, should you wish to pursue scholarship at a higher level.

Study Costs: Equipment Requirements

B&FC provide access to key reading materials and other resources as a part of the course costs. You are expected to provide stationery, including parallel rulers and dividers as you may need to use these as part of Management of Passage Planning and Meteorology and Management of Bridge Operations; you will also need a scientific, non-programmable calculator that is not on your phone.

It will be essential for you to have a laptop or equivalent device that you use for your studies to access Canvas where you will access the vast majority of your learning resources. Without this, you will not be sufficiently equipped to consume the quantity of material required.

Study Costs: Additional Costs

For applicants studying this programme as part of obtaining a Certificate of Competency, the following costs are NOT included:

- MCA-required Mandatory Ancillary and Safety short courses (we can provide all these courses per the course fees listed on the website)

- MCA exam fees and any associated optional prep courses

Sponsorship: if you have a sponsor or bursary, these may fund some or all associated short courses that form part of the eligibility for a Certificate of Competency.

Related Courses

This is not an entry-level qualification. If you are looking to start a career as a deck officer, please see our information on sponsored cadetships or, if your are an experienced seafarer or converting from the Royal Navy, should should have a look at our CertHE Nautical Science, which contains OOW level content.

In order to obtain your Chief Mate CoC, you will also need to complete the following:

- Human Element Leadership and Management and the Managerial Level (HELM M)

- Navigational Aids and Equipment Simulator Training at the Managerial Level (NAEST M)

- Medical Care On Board (Medicare)

- MCA Chief Mate Safety Examinations

- MCA Chief Mate Oral Examination

All of these course (and prep courses for MCA exams) are available here at Fleetwood Nautical Campus. You could consider progressing after this course onto BSc Maritime Operations (Nautical Science) TopUp.