

GCSE & A LEVEL LEARNERS' HANDBOOK 2016–2017

Aiming “to give seafarers the best possible lifelong learning opportunities tailored to their individual needs”

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Our contact details

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Email: education@ms-sc.org

WELCOME

We are delighted that you have chosen to study with us at Marine Society and we wish to welcome you on board! This handbook aims to provide some important information about your programme and your rights and responsibilities as a learner, and details of how to contact us.

Our courses are partly funded by the Skills Funding Agency (SFA) and supplemented by funding from Greenwich Hospital and the Royal Navy. It is designed to be delivered in a way that best fits your needs and those of your employer.

The Marine Society has enjoyed a long and illustrious history as a charity set up to supporting seafarers. For generations the education department has provided courses for seafarers and today we offer a wide range of GCSE and A Level courses and our role is to ensure that you receive the training, assessment and support that you need to successfully complete your course in a timely manner.

In this handbook we cover everything that you need to know about studying with us and how you might get the best out of your chosen course of study. We are open to any suggestions you may have regarding how we can improve our service so do not hesitate to get in touch.

Of course if your search for information proves fruitless or answers to your questions are not found here we encourage you to contact us at the college where we will be happy to help you. We look forward to a long and successful association with you and wish you every success on your chosen qualification route and career path.

MISSION STATEMENT

Marine Society was founded in 1756 to encourage men and boys to join the Royal Navy at the start of the Seven Years' War. It was incorporated by Act of Parliament in 1772 to apprentice poor boys to the Royal Navy and the Merchant Navy. In 2004 it merged with the Sea Cadet Association to form the UK's largest maritime charity – Marine Society & Sea Cadets, (MSSC). The Marine Society College operates within MSSC and provides guidance, lifelong learning opportunities and distance learning as well as support for seafarers from all the sea services.

The Marine Society's aim is...

“to give seafarers the best possible lifelong learning opportunities tailored to their individual needs.”

We work to promote learning and personal development for seafarers by supporting personal and professional development and providing opportunities for seafarers to gain accredited qualifications, learn work-related skills and prepare themselves for their future careers within the maritime sector and beyond.

As a charity organisation committed to the wellbeing of seafarers of the Royal Navy, Royal Auxiliary Fleet and Merchant Navy and recognising that our beneficiaries are vital to the defence of the realm we stand alongside them in promoting the...

“British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faith and beliefs.”

Marine Society believes that seafarers deserve access to life-enhancing education whether they are on land or at sea and so by providing access to careers advice, distant learning courses, educational scholarships, financial assistance and library services we help seafarers realise their full potential and develop their careers wherever they are in the world. Crucially we help seafarers to gain new skills and competencies and gain accredited qualifications whilst enabling their professional development. We are now able to offer some of our courses to the spouses of seafarers.

We offer tailored educational and professional learning programmes from functional skills in maritime Maths and English, GCSEs and A Levels to first degrees and post graduate qualifications with support provided throughout chosen programmes. Our experience and understanding of the challenges associated with a seafaring lifestyle mean that we are well placed to provide the most appropriate service. We are committed to improving the level of professionalism of our service men and women by increasing success levels in training and education and so contribute to the efficiency and effectiveness of shipboard working environments and improvements in safety at sea and in port.

STUDYING WITH MARINE SOCIETY

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

To be read alongside 'How to Study at Home the Oxford Open Learning Way' (Although this applies to all distant learners there is much that is directly relevant to seafarers). See also Futurelearn Study Tips booklet.

What is distance learning?

Distance learning is studying from home, overseas or whilst on board a vessel rather than attending a college or a learning centre at set times. It is a flexible way to learn, where you can fit your study around other commitments.

How are the courses delivered?

All of our course materials are paper based and are also available in an electronic format. We recognise that in many cases access to the internet for study is limited and always seek to provide alternative methods that do not rely on the internet.

When can I start the course and how long will it take?

There are no set enrolment dates, but if your course leads to an exam then you are advised to enrol giving yourself realistic time to study the course syllabus before you wish to sit the exam. As a guide, if you wish to achieve AS/A levels in the shortest possible time you should enrol no later than October preceding the following summer exams and for GCSEs November. You will, of course, be expected to put in significantly more study hours and this will not guarantee that you will be ready for the next exams series. Remember **one GCSE will take a minimum of 210 hours – 6 hours x 35 weeks and one A Level will take 700 hours – 10 hours x 70 weeks.**

You can study at your own pace guided by our recommended minimum number of study hours. You can fit these around your other commitments. We will support you all the way!

Will I need access to the internet?

As paper based materials are provided, access to the internet is not a requirement for our courses. You may wish to use the internet for additional supported learning.

Do I need to have any previous qualifications to enrol on a course?

For GCSEs you will need functional skills level 2, GCSE Grade D or equivalent qualifications. For A Level you will need to have a minimum of 5 GCSE at C or above. Maths A Level requires a Grade B – this is to ensure that you will be able to cope with the complexities of the subject. It is advisable to check this with us before you enrol.

Will I have to sit an examination? Where can I sit exams and will I receive a qualification?

As your course is partly subsidised by government and other public body funding the expectation is that students take the end of the course examination.

All of our IGCSE and A Level courses lead to nationally recognised qualifications. Marine Society will write to you approximately six months in advance of the exam period – December for June exams and August for January exams. You will be sent full information about how to enrol and how to deal with coursework, if you have it. You should inform your tutor of the exam arrangements you are making.

What support is available to me?

You will be allocated a personal tutor who will provide academic support, answer queries, mark your work and give feedback on your assignments. Marine Society will provide administrative support and are also available at all times to support and encourage you throughout your studies. Feel free to contact us if you have any questions or comments.

How often can I contact the Marine Society?

As often as you need – we can be contacted at any time and are available by phone and email. If you have a question or comment on our provision, want to update us with new contact details or just wish to let us know how your studies are going then we're happy to hear from you. You will be required to give us a monthly update on the progress you are making.

How often can I contact my tutor?

Again, as often as you need, although as a guide you should get a call every three weeks or so from your tutor. Additionally you are also required to respond monthly to a Marine Society learner update email. Don't forget you can call (or email) your tutor and/or the Marine Society if you have any queries or problems, don't wait for him/her to call you if you're stuck on something. If you think you need more help, please contact the Marine Society for advice.

How quickly will I receive my course materials?

After our initial advice and guidance on your chosen course, you will be given up to 2 weeks to complete a skills assessment. You will then be contacted by an academic adviser who will send you your course material within 3-4 working days. Once you receive your course materials you will follow a pre-course programme, which lasts for 4 weeks.

Do I need any additional study materials?

For some courses you may need additional text books on which you will receive guidance. You can order on-line via the Marine Society bookshop – www.marinesocietyshop.org/default.aspx or email us at books@ms-sc.org.

What are the costs and how do I pay for the course?

Course fees are heavily subsidised so the cost to you is kept to a minimum. The costs vary depending on which level and subject you choose to study. Check our course brochure or online www.marine-society.org/apply.aspx for the most up to date details. You can either pay in full at the start or you can pay by instalments. If you pay by instalments we will require an initial deposit before your course materials are despatched to you.

Are there any additional costs?

Additional costs may apply if you choose to re-sit an exam.

Can I reclaim Standard Learning Credits?

The Marine Society is recognised for both standard and enhanced learning credits. A receipt will be provided on request and we advise you to speak with your Education Officer in regards to the claim process.

How do I enrol?

You can enrol online at www.marinesocietyshop.org/category/4-courses.aspx, by post, fax or telephone. Details and an enrolment form are provided on the Marine Society website or in the GCSE/A Level brochure.

I'm leaving the RN – can I still study with you?

Yes, when you enrol with us we will support you right through to the end of your studies and beyond – even if you leave part way through.

I'm studying with another provider – can I still sit my exams through the Marine Society?

Yes, you will need to provide us with full information of the awarding body, specification and subject for a full assessment to be made, but we are registered with the main awarding bodies and can accommodate most GCSE and A Level subjects.

I have more questions, what now?

If you have any questions whatsoever, no matter what they are, please contact us – we're here to provide advice and guidance. Call us on [020 7654 7050/7029](tel:02076547050) or email us at education@ms-sc.org

COURSE PROVIDERS

Our main provider is Oxford Open Learning (OOL), which is one of the UK's leading distance learning providers.

Apart from providing comprehensive learning resources our provider has experienced and well qualified tutors who will give subject specific, proactive support and provide feedback and guidance throughout your course. You will be allocated to a subject specialist tutor who will support you throughout the course. Your tutor will negotiate submission dates for your assignments to be submitted, will mark your work, note your strengths and give you feedback indicating the steps you are to take to improve your grades.

It is crucially important that you develop effective study habits, allowing time for reading and completion of assignments. Your tutor can help you do this.

STAFFING AND RESPONSIBILITIES

MARINE SOCIETY

Mr. Mark Windsor – Director of Lifelong Learning
Mrs. Carla Rockson – Seafarer Education Manager
Mr. Nicholas Chubb – Business Development Manager
Mrs. Joan Pickering – Quality Improvement Manager
Miss. Rachel Gurnett – Seafarer Education and Data Co-ordinator
Mrs. Bindu Sharma – Education Administrator
Ms. Caroline Buckland - Book Services Manager
Mr. Fraser Lowe – Shipping and Facilities Manager
Mr. George Asare Djan – Library Assistant

Our contact details:

Phone: [020 7654 7029/7050](tel:020765470297050)

Fax: [020 7928 8914](tel:02079288914)

Email: education@ms-sc.org

OOL

Mr. Nick Smith – Director
Mr. Greg Smith – Head of Operations
([01865 304 011](tel:01865304011))
Ms. Amanda Blunden – Director
([01865 304 833](tel:01865304833))
Ms. Pia Hodgkins – Customer Services Manager
([01865 304 851](tel:01865304851))
Ms. Rebecca Rixon – Tutor Manager
([01865 304 854](tel:01865304854))
Ms. Jenny Booth – Exams Officer
([01865 304 848](tel:01865304848))

GCSE AND A LEVEL COURSES AND REQUIREMENTS

GCSE & IGCSE

Functional Skills Level 2 or GCSE Grade D including Maths and English

AS & A LEVEL

6 GCSEs C or above including Maths and English
A Level Maths requires a minimum Grade B GCSE Maths

If you are unsure about satisfying the requirements it is important for you to discuss this with a member of Marine Society team as your work experience may be taken into account.

6 GCSE courses

[English Literature GCSE](#)
[Law GCSE](#)
[Maths GCSE](#)
[Psychology GCSE](#)
[Religious Education GCSE](#)
[Sociology GCSE](#)

12 IGCSE courses

[Biology IGCSE](#)
[Business Studies IGCSE](#)
[Chemistry IGCSE](#)
[Economics IGCSE](#)
[English Language IGCSE](#)
[English Literature IGCSE](#)
[Geography IGCSE](#)
[History IGCSE](#)
[Human Biology IGCSE](#)
[Maths IGCSE](#)
[Physics IGCSE](#)
[Combined Science IGCSE](#)

12 A Level & AS Level courses

[Biology A level](#)
[Business Studies A level](#)
[Economics A level](#)
[English Language A level](#)
[English Literature A level](#)
[History A level](#)
[Law A level](#)
[Maths and Mechanics A level](#)
[Maths and Statistics A level](#)
[Pure Maths A level](#)
[Psychology A level](#)
[Sociology A level](#)

ACCA (ASSOCIATION OF CHARTERED CERTIFIED ACCOUNTANTS)

In partnership with ACCA we are able to offer free online learning programmes for those interested in accountancy and business:

- Introduction to Financial and Management Accounting
- Intermediate Financial and Management Accounting

These courses lead to globally recognised certification and provide the basis for further study in accountancy. The course duration is 10 weeks and are run each term. Although the courses are free there is an initial registration fee of £79 and examination fees, which are reduced by 50% for Marine Society learners.

SUPPLEMENTARY OPTIONAL COURSES

We have sourced a range of optional free online courses to help you through your studies. Some of these can lead to certification and can be added to your CV. Although the courses are free there is usually a small charge for certificates.

ALISON

- Achieving Personal Success
- Basic Study Skills
- Time Management
- Physical fitness
- Yoga

Contact www.alison.com

FutureLearn

- Getting Started with Online Learning

Contact www.futurelearn.com

OpenLearn

The Open University offer a range of free online courses on a wide range of subjects. These courses are optional. On completion a “Statement of Participation” is issued, which you may wish to add to your CV. You may find some of the following introductory courses useful to support your studies:

- Learning how to learn (6 hours) – Good preparation for anyone who has not engaged in study for some time. Plenty of tips and includes revision techniques
- Reading (8 hours) – Suitable for A Level and beyond

- Reading and note taking – Preparation for Study (12 hours) Suitable for those embarking on A level study
- Essay and report writing (15 hours) – Can dip in and out alongside your course. Planning section very good. Suitable for AS and A Levels
- What is good writing? (8 hours) – Suitable for English language and literature preparation. Ignore section 5
- Succeed with maths (24 hours) – Very basic course suitable as a refresher before starting GCSE Maths.

Contact www.openlearn.com

Kent University has produced an excellent guide on how to create a quality CV, which may be of interest to some learners.

Contact www.kent.ac.uk/careers/cv.htm

PLEASE NOTE – If you choose an optional course take care that you do not take on too much. The suggestions are to support you in your studies not to overburden you!

GUIDANCE NOTES FOR ENROLMENT

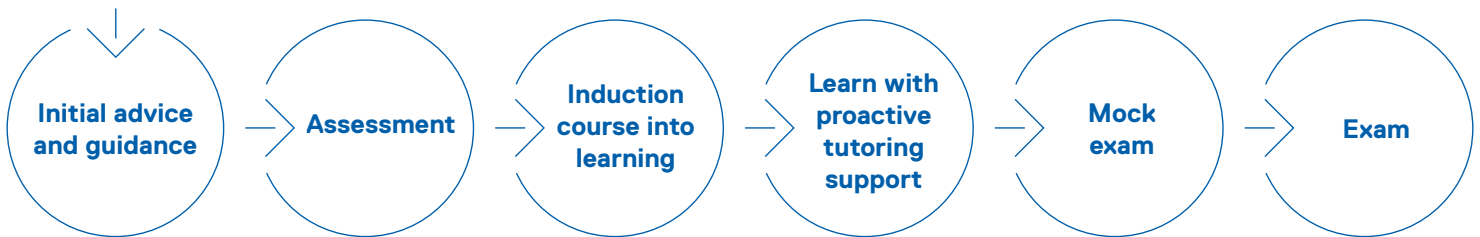
- We recommend that learners enrol for just one subject at a time. If you take on too much too soon you might find yourself overstretched
- If you have not studied a subject at GCSE level we recommend you enrol at that level before proceeding to A Level
- If you're not sure of the fees for your chosen course, contact Marine Society and we'll advise
- The cost includes the course resource pack, tuition fees and exam entry fees
- If you choose to pay by Instalment Plan you **MUST** include a deposit of 20% of the course fee plus the £20 instalment plan fee with your enrolment form. We'll not process your enrolment without receiving this deposit. Please make your cheque payable to **Marine Society**
- Whilst Marine Society is a registered examination centre, which means we can enter our learners for examinations at GCSE and A Level, it remains the learner's responsibility to make sure that he/she can comply with the demands of the syllabus in terms of submission of coursework, oral assessment and aural assessment
- A separate fee is payable for examination entry only:
- If we enter you for the examination the default location for sitting the examination is at our London headquarters. It may be possible to make alternative arrangements, such as sitting the examination on board ship, but this ought not to be taken for granted
- Course materials and tutor support will be provided by our partners Oxford Open Learning. Issues of an administrative nature or examination entry should be directed to us
- If you are unsure about any aspect of your enrolment or study plans please do not hesitate to contact us for free, confidential and expert advice
- You can contact us online at www.marine-society.org or by email education@ms-sc.org or telephone 020 7654 7050

I/GCSE	Exam entry only	£89
AS Level	Exam entry only	£99
A2 Level	Exam entry only	£99
Full A Level (AS + A2)	Exam entry only	£149

All applications must be accompanied by a signed Learner Agreement

LEARNER JOURNEY

We offer a clear, unique and tailored pathway to help you get the most out of your learning experience. Supporting you every step of the way, our courses are structured as follows:



THE ADMISSIONS MANAGER

All applications start at OOL with the Admissions Manager who assess the learner's ability to do the course based on prior qualifications. The Admissions Manager will highlight any specific issues over and above the norm that the Student Adviser should discuss.

The Student Adviser will normally

- Introduce OOL
- Check contact details
- Issue study materials
- Agree and check proposed exam date
- Discuss the number of hours each week that we recommend the learner studies in order to meet the exam date and check that this is realistic
- Discuss who the learner should contact in any given circumstance for assistance.

Hand over to Academic Tutor

- Introduction email/telephone call. If at all possible we aim for telephone contact although with Marine Society learners this is often an introduction email
- Days and times for contact agreed
- Introduction to course material – dialogue
- Start of 1st Tutor Marked Assignment, (TMA) to be completed in agreed time frame.

Full enrolment to chosen course

- Once the first assignment has been submitted and marked confirming suitability for the course the learner is fully enrolled
- The learner and academic tutor then agree the submission date for the next assignment
- The learner and tutor establish regular communication via telephone or email

- Any issues concerning academic work/progress may be discussed with tutors
- The learner may also call upon staff at Marine Society regarding any work, personal or careers related issues relating to their course of study
- If a learner is worried or anxious about any aspect of their learner journey they are urged to contact Marine Society.

Progress of learners

- Academic tutors will mark submitted assignments and give written feedback indicating learner strengths, areas for improvement and steps to take to make further progress
- OOL will pass TMA grades to Marine Society
- Marine Society will track learner progress by collating scores/grades
- Tracking data will be reviewed on a weekly basis and learners will be contacted in cases where concerns are identified
- Support will be offered by both tutors and Marine Society staff as appropriate
- A mock examination will be given to each learner several months prior to the final examination date
- Marine Society will be responsible for final examination administration.

Journey's end

- Following successful completion learners will be sent certificates and given further advice, guidance and support where necessary.

LEARNER AGREEMENT

THIS DOCUMENT WILL:

- explain what you can expect when you enrol on a distance learning course through Marine Society
- provide you with a guide so that you will know what Marine Society and Oxford Open Learning (OOL), our learning partner, expect from you.

THROUGHOUT YOUR STUDIES YOU CAN EXPECT MARINE SOCIETY TO:

- provide you with details of services available to you
- provide you with on-going support and guidance
- contact you routinely and provide support if necessary
- manage any administrative issues and contact the OOL on your behalf, if necessary
- request routine updates from you on how your studies are progressing
- provide you with updates on changes to qualifications
- provide you information about examination/assessment arrangements
- register you for examinations and make all necessary arrangements
- If you are in the RN/RM or RFA provide course progress information to your education officer.

YOU CAN EXPECT THE OOL TO:

- send you course materials and information about coursework requirements
- ensure all course materials and documentation you receive are relevant, up-to-date and compliant with current specifications
- provide you with course materials and other support resources
- provide a 'mock' exam and associated tutorial support
- provide you with the email address and telephone number of your personal tutor.

YOUR PERSONAL TUTOR WILL:

- contact you by telephone/email within two weeks of your enrolment
- provide advice, information and support throughout your studies
- mark your course assignments and provide detailed feedback
- return your assignments within the specified time
- contact you by telephone or email as required throughout the course.

MARINE SOCIETY AND OOL EXPECT YOU TO:

- maintain regular contact with Marine Society with information on how your studies are progressing by completing an electronic monthly learner self-assessment
- advise Marine Society as soon as possible about any changes to your circumstances that may affect your studies
- maintain routine contact with your OOL personal tutor throughout your studies
- **complete course assignments regularly and at least once every two months**
- ensure your tutor knows of any change to your circumstances impacting on your ability to study e.g. being deployed or out of contact for a long period
- inform Marine Society if you need help or if you feel you are not receiving the agreed service
- inform Marine Society if you are thinking about withdrawing from the course
- familiarise yourself with Marine Society Safeguarding Policy.

I have received initial guidance on my chosen course. I have read this agreement and I am aware of my rights and responsibilities as a distance learning student enrolled with Marine Society.

I have read Marine Society Safeguarding Policy and confirm my understanding of it.

EXAMINATIONS – FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What exam boards can you accept entries for?

We can register you for written exams with the following exam boards: AQA, Pearson, CIE and OCR. We are unable to register you for oral exams, listening exams, coursework requiring supervision, science practical or Art & Design components. If you are unsure whether this applies to your exam, please call us.

I have written coursework with my exams – can I enter through you?

As a private candidate we can only accept coursework entry if it is not supervised and is authenticated by a tutor. If you are studying with a distance learning organisation then your tutor should be able to authenticate your coursework for you. Please check with them.

Can I register for practical examinations at your centre?

No, please read the first paragraph above for the exams we can register you for. We may be able to advise you of other centres that can accept you so please call us if you're stuck.

Can I register for Oral examinations at your centre?

No, please read the first paragraph above for the exams we can register you for. We may be able to advise you of other centres that can accept you so please call us if you're stuck.

I've taken some exams at a different centre – can I transfer part way through my qualification?

Yes, we can still register you so long as it is with the same awarding body and you provide your Unique Candidate Identifier (UCI) number. If you are transferring across exam boards then this will depend upon each board and we advise you to contact us before submitting a registration form.

What can I expect when I register for my exams through the Marine Society?

All exams take place at our location in Lambeth Road, London. For service personnel only who have been drafted overseas we may be able to offer an alternative. Please contact us to discuss.

How soon should I get my registration form in?

We would advise you to submit your registration forms as soon as possible. We work on a first come first served basis and once full will not be able to accept any more candidates.

Registration for the November and January sessions opens in July.

Where can I find the timetable for my exams?

We strongly advise you to look at the timetable before registering so you are clear on the dates and times of your exams. Timetables are available on the individual exam board websites. The websites are:

AQA	www.aqa.org.uk
Pearson Edexcel	qualifications.pearson.com
CIE	www.cie.org.uk
OCR	www.ocr.org.uk

I am serving in the armed forces and may be drafted at short notice – can I still sit my exams?

We may be able to make alternative arrangements for you depending on your location. Contact us to find out.

Can I change the date or time of my exam?

No, the exams are set by the exam board and are not negotiable.

Can I register after the exam entry deadline?

It may be possible to register you but there are additional fees. Please see the registration form for more information.

I'm studying through a distance learning college but wish to register for my exams with the Marine Society as a private candidate. Do I need to advise them of my intentions?

We advise you to ensure that your tutor is aware that you wish to sit your exams and with which organisation.

The distance learning college I'm enrolled with will authenticate my coursework. Do you accept this coursework as part of my registration?

Yes, so long as your coursework is to be submitted to us along with the required private candidate documents and within the time limits set by us.

What if my circumstances change?

If you have been registered for your exams then we advise you to contact us as soon as you are aware of any changes in circumstance that may affect your exams.

What if I'm not happy with my results?

If you're not happy with your results then we advise you to contact us as soon as possible to discuss the matter.

How will the Marine Society communicate with me throughout?

We will communicate by email. It's therefore very important you provide us with a valid email address when you complete the registration form.

I'll struggle to make it to London, can you arrange for me to sit at an alternative college?

Unless there are extenuating circumstances then we expect you to travel to our location here in London for your exams. The final decision for such a request lies with the exam board. Extenuating circumstances do not include being on holiday.

I've sent you my registration form what happens next?

We will contact you to acknowledge receipt of your form. Once you've been registered we will send you your candidate statement of entry and finalise the arrangements for your exams.

What are access arrangements?

Access arrangements are special arrangements put in place for an individual candidate to ensure that they are not disadvantaged when sitting an examination. This includes candidates with learning or physical disabilities or severe illness at the time of the exam.

Can I request access arrangements?

Only if you have the evidence to support your request. We advise you to contact us to discuss your requirements before submitting a registration form.

STAYING HEALTHY

For you to make the most of your studies and realise fully your potential it is important to keep an effective work/life balance.

What does this mean to you? Here are some time tested tips:

- Specify how much time you are going to allocate to your studies by producing a simple weekly plan
- Make sure you allow time for recreational pursuits
- Talk to your line manager letting him/her know that you are undertaking study and how many hours per week you are intending to spend on it – hopefully they will be supportive
- Get enough hours sleep per night taking care to get quality sleep if you are working shifts
- Eat well – balance is the key and include plenty of fruit and vegetables
- Drink plenty of water
- If possible get plenty of fresh air
- Exercise regularly
- Mental agility can be enhanced by, for example, taking part in: brain games, quizzes, chess, crosswords and memory games. Mixing socially with your colleagues is also recommended
- Seek out a work colleague who has studied your chosen subject – they may be of help if your studies cause you stress!

- If you are worried about anything it is likely that your studies will be adversely affected – seek help/talk to someone
- Your OOL Tutor is a source of support as is Marine Society team
- Consult 'How to Study the Oxford Open Learning Way'. It has some excellent advice and guidance in an easily accessible form and is available online via OOL's website
- If you feel that the extra work is just too much speak with Marine Society. We are here to assist.

THE BIG WHITE WALL (BWW)



We know that approximately one in four individuals experience some form of mental health problem at some stage in their lives so we have teamed up with the Big White Wall, an online mental health and well-being service, which can offer support should you need it.

BWW is available to the Merchant Navy (not spouses) via the BWW Seafarers contract and access is available via this link; <http://seahospital.org.uk/mental-health-and-wellbeing/>

All UK serving personnel, veterans and their close relatives are able to access BWW via a different contract with the Ministry of Defence and can gain access via a slightly different route, here; www.bigwhitewall.com select 'join now' and then 'UK Armed Forces'.

HOW TO STAY SAFE AND BE RESPONSIBLE IN THE DIGITAL WORLD

We are more connected than ever before and we rely on the digital world in all aspects of life, accessing it ever more easily through computers and mobile devices such as phones, tablets, e-readers and personal digital assistants (PDAs). There is a wealth of technologies now available to enhance communication with one another and we encourage their use to enhance the learning experience.

These include:

- Social networking sites, blogs, websites including search engines and web browsers
- Email, instant messaging
- Webcams and video conferencing

However, the accessible and global nature of the internet and associated technologies bring new risks and challenges to protecting ourselves in the digital world.

This guidance note highlights some of these risks and provides tips to support learners and staff to manage and deal with these risks independently.

What are the dangers?

- Malicious content which infects your computer or device and corrupts your data
- Fraud, identity theft or use of your personal details for illegal activities
- Inappropriate contact with strangers, cyber-bullying, extortion or potential grooming
- Access to illegal or inappropriate materials
- Plagiarism.

What to do:

- Install anti-virus and anti-malware software, and regularly check that you have the latest updates on your devices
- Consider what content you post and share. Do not post anything illegal, offensive or likely to cause distress
- Do you know the people you contact? Can you trust them?
- Protect yourself from scams – is it a trusted site? Does an e-mail look suspicious?
- Never disclose your personal details online unless you are sure of the recipient.

Some tips for staying e-safe – be SMART

- Be **S**afe by not divulging personal details to an unknown or unsolicited request
- Don't **M**eeet someone you have never met before on your own
- Don't **A**cccept unsolicited online requests, e-mails or files
- Make sure the sites you use and information received is **R**eliable
- Do **T**ell if something is troubling you or you are experiencing online bullying.

Incidents and reporting

If you experience anything that makes you feel uncomfortable, fearful, anxious or worried report it to your supervising officer, your tutor or a member of Marine Society staff.

If you suspect that you have been subjected to fraud or a scam, you should also contact your bank and the police at the earliest opportunity.

Further information and guidance

www.getsafeonline.org

www.thinkuknow.co.uk

www.cybermentors.org.uk

STAYING SAFE

EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY

Marine Society aims for equality of opportunity in employment and service delivery. Our commitment to equality of opportunity covers all stages of the programme, from recruitment and initial assessment to studying, assessment, support and achievement. We aim to ensure that learners on our programmes do not receive less favourable treatment on the grounds of sex, marital status, disability, race, colour, nationality, ethnic origin, religion or belief, age, sexual orientation, or are placed at a disadvantage by imposed conditions or requirements which cannot be shown to be justified.

We also expect the providers and employers we work with to have an Equal Opportunities Policy which sets out their commitment to ensuring equality and valuing diversity. Please ensure that you are aware of your provider's and employer's policy and the steps that you should take to report any concerns about unfair discrimination.

Our Equality and Diversity Policy is contained in the separate document – Marine Society Policies.

HEALTH & SAFETY ISSUES

We will do everything that is reasonably practicable to ensure the health, safety and welfare of learners on our study programmes. We will work with your distant learning provider and your employer to ensure that you are aware of all matters relating to your health, safety and welfare, including the reporting of accidents, fire precautions and safety policies.

All learners must have due regard for Health & Safety regulations both for themselves and for other persons who may be affected by their actions. Details of employer and employee responsibilities for health and safety will be available in your workplace. You should also ensure that you are aware of your employer's Health and Safety Policy Statement and the arrangements that are in place for the organisation and management of health and safety.

Please note that if you are following a science based course you may be called upon to carry out simple experiments. If this is the case you must take every precaution to be aware of risks and take steps to ensure that you and others in the vicinity are safe. If in doubt please refer to your safety officer and/or risk assessor in your workplace.

ON BOARD STUDY TIME, REST PERIODS AND SAFETY

Whilst Marine Society wishes to encourage you to undertake studies whilst at sea it is also mindful of the fact that your study time is limited. This limitation will likely be as a result of operational duties, other work related situations or various other calls on your time. Your rest periods on board ship are limited and very important. Making the most of your off-duty time is essential for, not only your own well-being, but also for the contribution to the safe operation of the vessel, your own personal safety and that of your colleagues on board. We recommend that you plan time for your studies but if this is not possible or your plans are interrupted, please do not become overly concerned as we well understand your predicament and will make allowances for your situation.

SUMMARY OF MARINE SOCIETY POLICIES

(Please see Marine Society Policies for full details)

INFORMATION, ADVICE AND GUIDANCE

The purpose of the information, advice and guidance (IAG) service is to offer support to professional seafarers, support enquirers considering study with Marine Society and to support our clients in achieving their aspirations, including their personal, study and career goals.

Our objectives are to empower enquirers, learners and clients to achieve their personal, study and career goals and to develop independence in their decision making and to ensure that learners make good progress and complete their studies in a timely fashion.

We achieve these objectives by raising awareness of the service so that enquirers, learners and clients know what they can expect and how to access it and by providing timely and targeted IAG to learners at key points along their learner journey that recognises and is responsive to the diverse and distinct needs of seafarers. We also provide opportunities for learners to access advice and guidance in a variety of ways including online discussion forums, email and telephone. We encourage and act on student and staff feedback.

We aim to provide IAG which respects the needs of the individual enquirer, learner or client and is in their best interests.

Our enquirers, learners and clients are from a diverse range of backgrounds and educational experience. Consequently, we deliver a service that is targeted to the specific needs of seafarers and those associated with seafaring activities.

We guarantee that:

- All contacts will be treated with respect
- All contacts will be treated with impartiality
- All contacts will be treated with confidentiality
- Every effort will be made to supply up to date and relevant advice and guidance
- Signposting will be used as appropriate
- Complaints will be investigated and action taken if necessary.

SAFEGUARDING

Marine Society College has a statutory and moral duty to ensure that it functions with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all Marine Society staff and learners receiving education and training through the college and is committed to ensuring they are safeguarded and protected from harm. Furthermore, the college has a duty to implement the government's Prevent strategy to stop people becoming involved in violent extremism counter to British values or supporting terrorism in all its forms.

The responsibility for the safety and protection of vulnerable adults is shared by all college staff. The college will refer concerns that a vulnerable adult might be at risk of significant harm to the appointed officer, Director of Lifelong Learning, or if necessary the MSSC Chief Executive Officer.

It is the duty of all staff to ensure that everyone is treated with respect and value irrespective of their age, gender, disability, racial origin, religion, belief and sexual orientation, (the protected groups as set in the Equality Act 2010). In the case of vulnerable adults it is important to recognise that they be more open to discrimination on these grounds.

As almost all of the learners are employed within the RN or RFA the college has a responsibility to pass on any concerns they may have to the appropriate naval authorities who are in a position to intervene and support the learners directly.

PREVENT STRATEGY

Marine Society also has a duty to implement the government's Prevent strategy to stop people becoming involved in violent extremism or supporting terrorism in all its forms. In 2010 the Government published the Prevent Strategy, a national programme to stop people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism. This strategy has five key objectives:

- To promote and reinforce shared values; to create space for free and open debate; and to listen and support the learner voice

- To break down segregation among different communities including by supporting inter-faith and inter-cultural dialogue and understanding, and to engage everyone in playing a full and active role in wider engagement in society
- To ensure learner safety and that the Marine Society is free from bullying, harassment and discrimination
- To provide support and appropriate sources of advice and guidance for learners who may be at risk
- To ensure that learners and staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities in preventing violent extremism.

WHO IS RESPONSIBLE?

Everyone has a duty to uphold and promote British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs.

Action to be taken to ensure that British values are upheld:

- Staff and learners take issue where British values are opposed
- Any incidence of opposition to British values is challenged and reported to the safeguarding officer either at Marine Society or at place of work
- The Equality and Diversity Policy is followed meticulously
- Curriculum course content is kept under review
- Tutors guard against any bias in their teaching
- The provision of opportunities for learners to discuss challenging topics in a supportive environment
- Appropriate safeguards are in place for the use of IT including media sites and IT policy is kept under review.

Everyone has a duty to take action if they suspect that someone is at risk of becoming radicalised and if someone suspects that a learner is at risk of becoming radicalised they have a duty to report it:

- A member of the college would report to the safeguarding officer – the Director of Lifelong Learning – who will take responsibility for dealing with the issue and decide if any action is needed

- A tutor who has suspicions would report to the distance learning provider – OOL safeguarding officer who in turn would pass the information onto the college. The college would then pass the same to the RN, RFA
- A learner would report any suspicions about a fellow learner to the officer responsible for safeguarding in their unit.

If in doubt as a learner or a tutor?

Please contact the Director of Lifelong Learning at the MSSC on [020 7654 7000](tel:02076547000).

PROTECTION OF VULNERABLE ADULTS

Some adults are vulnerable to abuse, which could involve adults who have learning difficulties, physical or sensory impairment, mental health issues or substance abuse problems. Seafarers may be vulnerable as a result of their particular context.

Physical, psychological/emotional, sexual, financial, discriminatory and institutional abuse all fall into the definition of abuse.

All suspicions and allegations of abuse or inappropriate behaviour will be taken seriously and appropriate referrals will be made by the college.

It is important that any suspicion of abuse is reported to the appointed officer.

A senior member of the college, the Director of Lifelong Learning, has special responsibility for protection issues.

LEARNING SUPPORT POLICY

This policy is designed to explain the procedures followed to identify any learning difficulties a seafarer may experience. It is acknowledged that every seafarer is different and some require more support than others whilst on programme.

Seafarers are offered impartial and confidential advice and guidance on the most appropriate level, programme and provider. If a seafarer struggles with basic skills in literacy and numeracy advice and guidance is given as to the most appropriate course of action.

All learners are subject to initial assessment via our online diagnostics tests in English and Maths. Once received, the Initial Assessment is marked and the level of achievement noted and used to suggest most suitable courses.

For those studying Maths, diagnostic skills tests help to identify whether IGCSE or GCSE at foundation or higher level should be studied

Marine Society has developed online maritime-contextualised up-skilling courses, Maths@sea, Maths+@sea and Writing@sea which can be used as foundation to I/GCSE study.

Where it is felt that further investigation may be necessary, the seafarer is advised to take an initial screening online through the British Dyslexia Association. Marine Society may offer to fund this screening test. Guidance on this policy is offered in the Marine Society website under 'Learner Centre'. Following screening advice on next steps is given.

If a learner has a diagnosed learning need such as dyslexia and has a psychologist's report this will be forwarded to OOL so that the learner's special requirements can be considered before the dispatch of learning materials.

It is acknowledged that Marine Society staff are not literacy/numeracy specialists and this is highlighted to all enquirers.

If a learner has evidence of a special educational need the college will make application to the examination board for special consideration so that learners are not disadvantaged when sitting examinations.

Marine Society respects every person's right to privacy and will treat all enquiries with the utmost confidentiality.

EXAMINATION POLICY

As an exam centre registered with the main awarding bodies, the Marine Society can arrange and facilitate exams for GCSE and A Level learners. Please see the section: Examinations FAQs.

EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION POLICY

The college is an inclusive organisation that aims to help its seafarers to achieve their potential through a range of educational opportunities. In doing so, it is committed to equality of opportunity for its employed staff, volunteers and seafarers. The college recognises and values diversity within its organisation and views it as essential to providing a range of services and activities which are relevant to and representative of the diverse communities in which it operates.

Through the implementation of this policy, the college aims to ensure that no one should receive less favourable treatment, nor suffer disadvantage by reason of: class, ethnic origin, culture, nationality or race, gender, age, marital status, sexuality, ability, political or religious belief or unrelated criminal conviction.

The overall aims of the policy are to provide an inclusive organisation by attracting individuals from the widest range of backgrounds, to provide a safe environment in which individuals may contribute and develop according to their particular strengths and to treat all individuals within the organisation fairly and equally.

All individuals within college have a responsibility for and a role to play in the implementation of the policy. This includes preventing bullying, harassment and promoting fair and equal treatment.

The college makes every effort to ensure that each person is treated with dignity and respect and seeks to encourage the personal development of positive values and attitudes concerning equality and diversity.

QUALITY ASSURANCE AND IMPROVEMENT POLICY

This policy sets out the MSC and Sea Cadets, (MSSC) quality processes and systems to ensure that all of our learners receive a positive learning experience, maximising their progress and learning outcomes with the MSSC and their progression thereafter as a result.

The Director of Lifelong Learning has overall responsibility for the development and implementation of this policy.

The college aims to further develop robust self assessment to act as a vehicle leading to quality improvement within a developing self critical culture, to reach, "Outstanding", across all of its provision, to respond to the views of learners, young people and partners to create ongoing improvement and to provide a clear and transparent policy with accountability at all levels.

To achieve these aims the college will, among other things, raise standards and meet its targets for learner outcomes by monitoring learners' progress and intervene proactively where required, promote high standards of teaching, learning and assessment so that learners are satisfied and achieve, reaching

their goals in a timely manner and provide support throughout the learners' journey in relation to their likely destinations.

COMPLAINTS POLICY

The Marine Society & Sea Cadets recognises the right of all students to make a complaint about the service that s/he has received. Learner satisfaction is very important to the Marine Society. Its good reputation is dependent upon the delivery of a first class learner- focused service, which comes with expert, impartial and confidential advice and guidance. Regular feedback is encouraged and proactively sought. Every complaint received will be taken seriously, investigated and the person or persons concerned will be kept informed about the complaints progress and about the final outcome.

Stage one

- Initially a complaint will be directed to the Education Manager. S/he will assess the complaint and where appropriate will take necessary action to resolve any issues arising. This may involve a third party especially where the student's initial complaint is via a partner provider
- The Education Manager will ensure the Director is aware of all complaints received and that action has been taken
- Where the complaint is of a serious nature or in the absence of the Education Manager, the complaint will pass directly to the Director for Lifelong Learning (DLL) who will assess the situation and determine the most appropriate course of action. A thorough investigation will be initiated and all persons involved informed. The complainant will be kept informed throughout the process and of the final outcome.

Stage two

- If the student is not satisfied with the outcome of the investigation s/he can apply for a second stage. Here the complaint will be completely investigated by the Director for Lifelong Learning (DLL) and a decision made about the out come of the original investigation
- If the student is still unhappy with the outcome the complaint will be passed to the Chief Executive who until now will not have been involved with the previous investigations. Therefore the CEO will complete a fresh investigation and his/her decision will be final and binding
- Where a complaint is upheld, action will be taken to remedy any shortcomings and, where necessary procedures re-assessed and changes implemented.

CONTACT

Complaints should in the first instance be addressed to the Marine Society Education Manager. They may be communicated by any means.

Address:

[The Marine Society](#)
[202 Lambeth Road](#)
[London SE1 7JW](#)

Telephone: [020 7654 7050](tel:02076547050)
email: education@ms-sc.org
www.marine-society.org

PLAGIARISM POLICY 2016

Plagiarism is presenting someone else's work, ideas, words, thoughts, designs, tables or figures as if they are your own. If you use someone else's words or text from their documents you must acknowledge this by using quotation marks together with a note of the source of the quotation or by making reference to the author. **You must identify sources as accurately as possible.** Even if you summarise someone else's work a reference to that person must be made.

Why is plagiarism so serious?

Expression of original ideas is considered intellectual property and as such is protected by copyright laws.

Examples of plagiarism:

- Copying someone else's work without acknowledging the source
- Submitting work that is not your own
- Copying, 'chunks', from someone else's work and including them within your work without acknowledgement
- Cutting and pasting from the internet without acknowledgement of the source
- Using a direct quote without using quotation marks or acknowledgement
- Changing a few words in a sentence without changing the structure.

These are only a few examples so do be careful.

What are the consequences?

Plagiarism is taken very seriously by all academic institutions. If plagiarism is proved it will result in action being taken by OOL and the following action will be taken:

- First offence – a written warning will be given
- Second offence – de-registration from the course

An appeal against the decision may be made within ten days of the decision being communicated.