

# Yachtmaster Preparation Course and Exam

## Course Outline

Elite Sailing has long experience and an excellent record of success in preparing candidates for the RYA Yachtmaster examination. We understand the standards required and know how to coach to achieve them. But in the end you have to have the knowledge and skill and demonstrate that on the day. If you are unsure about your readiness for the exam, call us.

We will always give you clear, objective advice on your skills relative to the exam criteria and then work with you to achieve your objectives. For the prep courses we employ only the most experienced Yachtmaster Instructors working under the guidance of a Yachtmaster Examiner.

A preparation course is intended to identify and address any weaknesses and polish skills and performance to achieve a high probability of success at the exam. Candidates must arrive on the course already equipped with the basic knowledge and skill and in reasonably current practice. There is no time to teach professional knowledge or skills from the beginning.

### Please note:

Full details of the Yachtmaster Examinations and Certificates of Competence and requirements for qualifications and experience prior to applying for an exam are [available here](#). The detailed syllabuses are set out in the RYA Syllabus and Logs for Sail and Motor Cruising – G158. For convenience these are reproduced below but candidates should refer to the RYA documents for authoritative information.

## Format Options

- Yachtmaster (Sail) – 5 Days Prep and up to 2 days Exam
- Yachtmaster (Power) – 4 Days Prep and up to 2 days Exam
- Yachtmaster Conversion Exams

## Next Course Date

Scheduled dates are shown on the website page: <https://www.elitesailing.co.uk/yachtmaster/yachtmaster-prep-exam/>

## Previous Knowledge/Experience

**Candidates for the Yachtmaster (offshore)** examination should already be reasonably confident and competent skippers with good skills in boat handling at close quarters in any conditions of wind and tide and in day and night pilotage in unfamiliar waters. You should be able to demonstrate an ability to look after a yacht and crew, make sound decisions and communicate them effectively. Your knowledge of tidal navigation theory, chartwork and International Rules for Prevention of Collisions at Sea should be excellent. Candidates for sail should be competent in boat control under sail in close quarters situations and be able to anchor or pick up a mooring under sail in any

conditions of wind and tide. Candidates for YM (power) should be able to operate the vessels radar effectively for collision avoidance and pilotage.

**Candidates for the Yachtmaster (Coastal)** examination should have the same breadth of knowledge and skills as indicated for the Yachtmaster offshore. The only difference is that the Yachtmaster Coastal candidate has less experience and so is not expected to be able to demonstrate the same level of ability and confidence in skippering the yacht. We strongly recommend that you should have already completed a Coastal Skipper Practical course prior to the prep course.

If you are short of any elements of experience Elite Sailing can help – for example with qualifying passages or further boat handling training.

## Course Conduct

For courses and exams based at Chatham the training and exam area will be the rivers Medway and Swale and the Thames Estuary and rivers flowing into it. The course will begin with a briefing on the examination requirements, style and standards of skippering, a check of paperwork and logged experience, and a thorough briefing on the boat and its equipment. The course will then follow the pattern of the exam, with candidates taking turns in charge for short passages and tasks. The tasks will cumulatively cover the full range of pilotage and boat handling situations and each one will be debriefed with the whole group. There will also be some set-piece evaluation and training sessions – including man overboard recovery, sailing onto moorings etc. By the end of the preparation course we will have checked your knowledge and skill in all areas – theoretical and practical – and coached you to achieve improvements where necessary. You will also have the opportunity to become thoroughly familiar with the boat and with the local area. The course is intensive and but everyone finds it enjoyable and satisfying, and the examination should hold no surprises.

## What do I need to bring?

1. You should bring with you copies of your First Aid certificate and VHF licence, a passport photograph, and your RYA Yachtmaster application form. Link to the RYA website: <https://www.rya.org.uk/training/certificates-of-competence/exam-payments-service>.
2. If you want a commercial endorsement on your YM Certificate you will need: a completed application form for the commercial endorsement, the application fee, a certificate showing you have attended a Sea Survival Course (either RYA or MCA) and a personal medical examination form completed by your GP or medical practitioner. Application forms can be obtained from the RYA website or Elite Sailing. [More details about commercial endorsements](#).
3. The only specialist requirement is a sleeping bag and some suitable footwear – deck shoes (trainers will do) and in case of rain we recommend sea boots. Further information is provided in the suggested packing list – see below under Downloads.

## What's included:

The price includes a berth on the yacht, all meals aboard from lunch on the first day to lunch on the last day, tea, coffee etc and all operating expenses. Water from the boat's tanks is drinkable. Alcoholic drinks, bottled water or other soft drinks are not included but you are welcome to bring your own. Often people contribute to a 'kitty' to buy some wine with dinner. Wet weather clothing hire (jackets and trousers) is available at £25 for the week. There are no other essential extras, but you may want to buy one or two books (see below) and bring a little pocket money for use if you go ashore.

## Downloads

- [Recommended Packing List](#)
- [Directions to Elite Sailing at Chatham Marina](#)

## Detailed Syllabus – Yachtmaster Offshore and Coastal (Sail)

IRPCS – including General Rules (1 – 3), Steering and Sailing Rules (4 – 19), Lights and shapes (20 – 31), Sound and light signals (32 – 37), Signals for vessels fishing in close proximity (Annex ii), Distress signals. Awareness of existence of local regulations.

Safety – including awareness of safety equipment to be carried (refer to RYA Boat Safety handbook C8, or ISAF Special regulations, or Codes of Practice for safety of small commercial vessels). safety harness, lifejackets, distress flares, fire prevention and fire fighting, rescue procedures, helicopter rescue.

Boat Handling in various conditions of wind and tide including coming to and weighing anchor under power or sail, all berthing and unberthing situations, recovery of man overboard, towing in open sea and in confined situations, boat handling in heavy weather, helmsmanship and sail trim to best advantage, use of warps for securing in an alongside berth and for shifting berth or winding.

General seamanship including maintenance – properties use and care of synthetic fibre ropes, knots, engine operations and routine checks, jury rigs following gear failure.

Responsibilities of skipper – including effective management of yacht and crew, communication with crew, delegation of responsibility and watch-keeping, preparation for sea and for adverse weather, tactics for heavy weather and restricted visibility, emergency and distress situations, provisioning for a cruise and feeding at sea, customs procedures, standards of behaviour and courtesy.

Navigation – including charts and publications, chartwork including position fixing and shaping course to allow for tide and leeway, tide and tidal stream calculations, buoyage and visual aids to navigation, Instruments including logs, echo sounders, radio nav aids and chartwork instruments, passage planning and navigational tactics, pilotage techniques, navigational records, limits of navigational accuracy and margins of safety, lee shore dangers, use of electronic aids for passage planning and navigation en route, use of waypoints and electronic routeing.

Meteorology, including definition of terms, sources of weather forecasts, weather systems and local weather effects, interpretation of weather forecasts, barometric trends and visible phenomena, ability to make passage planning decisions based on forecast information.

Signals – all candidates must possess a VHF Short range radio certificate or higher grade certificate in radiotelephony.