



PRESS INFORMATION

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New developments in professional standards for marine surveyors

Seawork 2014 saw the issue of an updated UK Workboat (Brown) Code following comprehensive updating by an industry technical working group (TWG) over a long period of time, supported by the UK Maritime & Coastguard Agency (MCA).

Further detailed work has been carried out by the TWG since then and the official launching of the Workboat Code Edition 2 is expected shortly.

The new Code has been enthusiastically supported by the UK workboat industry and it is hoped that this will be recognised and adopted internationally in the same way as the UK Large Yacht Code (LY3), thus countering criticism aimed at UK commercial vessel standards (i.e. those in MGN 280 (M)) by some EU Flag States, which spurred the development of the new WB code.

One consequence of this work was an early recognition and understanding that this excellent new standard must be embedded and supported by the professional standards of the Certifying Authorities (CA) and other suitably qualified and experienced surveyors who are to apply the new code.

To explore and develop this process further, the Certifying Authority Professional Standards Working Group (CAPSWG) was set up in February 2015 comprising professional surveyors from CA's, Class, Industry and the UK MCA, with additional input and advice from leading marine industry training and education providers.

The initial report from the CAPSWG was presented to the MCA CA British Certification Committee (CABCC) at the annual meeting at MCA Head Quarters in Southampton, UK in February 2016 and accepted for implementation.

There were three significant strands and recommendations from this first report that must be adopted and implemented if the new standard is to become universally successful and to be regarded as fit for purpose:

1. minimum entry standards for surveyors engaged in the certification of vessels based on a mix of educational achievements and qualifications, experience as a surveyor and time served.
2. the use of a matrix document for individual surveyors, which must objectively match the surveyor's experience, competency and qualifications to vessel type, survey type, vessel complexity and any specialist knowledge required for certain surveys.

3. continuation and expansion of the PSWG to develop and co-ordinate common training, education and continuing professional development (CPD), whilst embracing all current communication and delivery methods to make this available to all surveyors, engineers and naval architects.

One exciting consequence of this recent work has been the realisation that the profession as a whole, not just small ships, could benefit from a long overdue, joined up, education and training programme. This work must find a way to link academic and vocational qualifications, recognised by the relevant professional institutions, potentially all the way up the ladder to chartered status, with national occupation standards developed for the surveyors, for which validated technical apprenticeships could then be developed. As appropriate to the level of education, training and experience, as a code vessel surveyor, there should also be specific levels to be attained, for example '*registered*' and '*incorporated*' along the career ladder.

There is a disparity in the UK with different educational and training providers offering general and specialised courses in the surveying profession, none of which enjoy official high level recognition by the professional bodies, such as IMarEST or RINA. There are diplomas and educational programmes on the market (these may or may not be certified by a recognised Further Education or Higher Education institution), which are generally accepted as CPD by Certifying Authorities and others. However, currently these educational programmes do not enjoy endorsement by the marine institutions towards core professional education and training. There are also leading Class Societies and the MCA providing high level training to their own people without seeking wider professional endorsement. Development and co-ordination of education and training courses towards recognition by the professional institutions must be a prime goal of this initiative.

There is now an opportunity to re-structure the surveying profession in all sectors for the benefit of the industry, those who work in it and the wider UK marine industry generally.

These ideas have already been embraced at conceptual stage by leading vocational training and education providers and by IMarEST too, who are keen to support the surveying profession and sector. The task of bringing all the disparate stakeholders together is significant and should not be underestimated, but has already begun in earnest.

The next stage of the initiative will be to bring all stakeholders together to develop a realistic and achievable road map to the '*registered*','*incorporated*' and '*chartered*' status steps and goals (ultimately awarded by the UK Engineering Council through appropriate professional engineering institutions) and to explore funding possibilities for the different entry points, for example technical apprenticeships for the vocational route.

This is not a short term project, nor a quick fix initiative. It is expected to take 5 to 10 years of development, but it is felt by those involved that it will become a vital ingredient for 'UK Marine Ltd' to achieve and maintain its status at the top of international marine standards.

This article does not set out to criticise any particular education or training providers, nor their courses and modules; rather it seeks to identify the need for all such existing and future courses and modules to have common and recognised accreditation. Course and education providers have a key role to play in this initiative. It is right and would be the intention that all those education, training

institutions, certifying, surveying authorities and organisations who wish to contribute to the establishment and development of a system should be encouraged to do so at the appropriate time.

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