



TUCSIN 2019

CAREER FOCUS  
NAUTICAL SCIENCE –  
DECK OFFICER

*Dear Students*

*Are you drawn to a career at sea, and would like to navigate a cargo vessel? A career in Nautical Science can be an exciting and well-paid profession. Depending on what type of ship you work on, you may sail the world's oceans, or you may work in local waters and be able to go home to your family each night. Let's learn more about the requirements and opportunities on this adventurous career!*

*- Martina*

## NAUTICAL SCIENCE - DECK OFFICER

Nautical science prepares students for a career at sea and covers seamanship, coastal and astro – navigation, ship construction, cargo stowage, ship stability and communication amongst others.

Choosing one's career in nautical science prepares a person to become a deck officer.

## WHY IS NAUTICAL SCIENCE SO IMPORTANT?

Nautical science is a three years course that results in an undergraduate degree or diploma after which the student joins a ship as trainee cadet officer (commonly referred to as a deck cadet). After completing sufficient time at the sea (experience/ sea time required as a deck cadet varies with the course pursued at the undergraduate level) and clearing required certificate of competency exams, the cadet becomes eligible to be employed as a navigating officer on-board a merchant ship. This first promotion comes with the designation of a Third Mate (or Junior Officer in some cases wherein the shipping company might require additional experience before becoming an OOW).

## ASPECT OF THE JOB INVOLVES

Deck Officers work in water transport vessels such as cruises, riverboats, merchant ships, or any type of self-propelled water vehicle that transports passengers or cargo across oceans, coasts, or inland waters. Their main duty involves all the daily operations necessary to keep the vessel running. Deck Officers work as parts of a team with each member being assigned a crucial task to maintain the ship in top shape and do the several navigational tasks related to sailing.

Furthermore, being part of a team also means that there's a certain hierarchy within the crew. There are first, second, and third mates on board a ship. The rank of each individual Deck Officer is assigned based on seniority and performance.

Depending on the size of the ship, the team of Deck Officers will be bigger or smaller. There is no universal rule of how big the team should be, however, this is often decided by the company owning the ship or the Captain.



### Inside this issue:

1. Why is Nautical Science so important?
1. Aspects of the Job
2. Skills and abilities, Work ethic
3. Requirements
4. Training opportunities



## SKILLS & ABILITIES

Whenever you work on a ship you need to have a lot of skills to ensure the safety of everyone on board. Here are some of the skills and abilities that you will require to apply for maritime jobs:

- Judgment and decision making,
- communicating effectively and active listening,
- operation and control, operation monitoring,
- coordination, instructing and teaching,
- social perceptiveness and critical thinking,
- time management, oral expression and oral comprehension
- far vision,
- problem sensitivity and depth perception,
- speech clarity and control precision,
- selective attention, spatial orientation, and deductive reasoning among other things.

## WORK ETHIC

The way that you work will have an impact on your job and how you progress as a seafarer. Here are the basic work ethics that you require for any job at sea: dependability, integrity, leadership, stress tolerance, attention to detail, self control and composure, initiative, responsibility, independence, persistence, and being adaptable and flexible.

Some other things that you have to be aware of when applying for maritime jobs is how prepared you are to work and live at sea for sometimes months at a time. Here are some tips that will show you exactly what you need to do:

- Combat your sea sickness if you have any.
- Realize that you will live in cramped quarters most of the time. You will either share a room with another member of the crew, or you will sleep in a tiny space, so be sure that you are not bothered with the lack of absolute privacy and you must not be claustrophobic.
- How home sick will you get? You must be able to work effectively and be on top of your game at all times, so you cannot afford to get too home sick.
- You need to live off very little. You will have limited supplies and resources on board and must be comfortable with only a few basics and hardly any luxuries.
- Make sure you are physically fit for this intensely active job. You must be fit enough to withstand long hours of work, demanding conditions at sea, tough daily duties that you have to complete, and you must be prepared in case of emergencies to ensure your safety and that of your fellow crew and passengers.
- You must be a good team player. You are working with people that you might never have met before and that might be from different countries. You have to be friendly and approachable and work as a team at all times no matter what.

With all of the requirements above that you need to have a successful job application process and go on to have an equally successful career at sea, you must also be willing to learn all the time on the job, as the best kind of skills and work ethics are learned at sea. This experience will allow you to move on to the next level in your maritime career, or give you the sustainability in your career as it is.

## REQUIREMENTS

### Secondary Education

**UNAM** requires a HIGCSE/NSSCH/IGCSE/NSSCO Grade 12, or equivalent qualification, with passes in five subjects and a minimum of 25 points on the UNAM point evaluation scale.

### Recommended subjects

Mathematics, Science and English

### Tertiary Education

UNAM offers a **Nautical Science** course after which students join a ship as trainee cadet officers. Nautical science imparts nautical technology knowledge which is important to become a **deck officer** on-board ship. Theoretical and practical knowledge required for navigation, ship maintenance and operation is imparted during the 4 years course, along with exposure to some areas of humanities and social sciences. Hands-on training is extremely important as a deck officer and thus detailed procedure and maintenance techniques of important deck machinery is an integral part of this course. Emphasis is also given on providing specialized knowledge on subjects such as seamanship and working in marine environment. Several modular courses that are required to join a ship are also included in the syllabus of nautical science, along with special training on boat handling, rope and ladder climbing.

To become a **Deck Officer**, you have to study Nautical Science. It consists of three main elements, namely: Navigation and ship handling, safe operation of a ship and shipboard administration and handling of cargoes. Persons wishing to become Deck Officers on-board vessels other than Fishing Vessels can follow a structured training program leading to a qualification as holder of certificate of competence at Operational Level (Class 4/3) and Management Level (Deck Officer Class 2/1). Courses leading to qualification as Deck Officer are approved by the Namibian Directorate of Maritime Affairs (DMA). The courses are offered by **NAMFI** following the agreed minimum standards of the International Maritime Organisation's (IMO). Upon satisfying all the requirements of the Directorate of Maritime Affairs, candidates may be issued (by the DMA) certificates of competence for the level that they qualify for. Also see training opportunities at DEBMARINE Namibia on pg4.

### Personality

You should be a strong-willed person who knows what responsibility means, is able to make important decisions and can remain calm under pressure.

### Work Opportunities

Deck Officers can be hired by private companies such as cruise lines, water transportation companies, or even the Government to work as part of the Coast Guard.



## TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

**DEBMARINE NAMIBIA** offer the following long term training schemes and usually advertise when trainee positions are vacant. All applicants should be Namibian. Below is some insight into available programmes and candidate requirements :



### **Deck Cadet**

This cadetship is a development programme in order to qualify a Grade 12 school leaver towards a Marine career on Deck of a vessel.

The programme includes academic learning, mandatory marine training, signed off competencies, time at sea and passing an oral examination. To qualify, candidates must have passed Grade 12 with at least five subjects on IGCSE and HIGCSE (with pass grades of A/1, B/2 or C/3) including Mathematics, Physical Science and English of which at least two subjects would need to be completed on Higher Level. The programme takes at least 3 years to complete.

### **Marine Engineering Cadet**

This cadetship is a development programme in order to qualify a Grade 12 school leaver towards a Marine Engineering career. The programme includes academic learning, mandatory marine training, signed off competencies, workshop training, time at sea and passing an oral examination. To qualify, candidates must have passed Grade 12 with at least five subjects on IGCSE and HIGCSE (with pass grades of A/1, B/2 or C/3) including Mathematics, Physical Science and English of which at least two subjects would need to be completed on Higher Level. The programme takes at least 4 years to complete.

### **Trainee Able Seafarers: Deck**

This development programme is designed to qualify an Able Seafarer Deck according to international standards. It includes the completion of mandatory marine and other training, as well as structured competency development whilst doing active sea service of at least 14 months. To qualify candidates would be required to have passed Grade 12 with Mathematics, Physical Science and English as subjects.

### **Trainee Able Seafarer: Engine**

This development programme is designed to qualify an Able Seafarer Engine according to international standards. It includes the completion of mandatory marine and other training, as well as structured competency development whilst doing active sea service of at least 8 months. To qualify candidates would be required to have passed Grade 12 with Mathematics, Physical Science and English as subjects.

For more information on these long term training opportunities follow this link :

<https://debmarinenamibia.com/main/careersdevelopingpeople>



References : <http://www.namfi.net> ; <https://www.cruisejobfinder.com> ; <https://debmarinenamibia.com/main/careersdevelopingpeople>

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