

Superyacht Crew: The Rise of Non-Mandatory Training For Yacht Crew

Below, [Emma Baggett, THE OM](#) shares an insight into Superyacht Crew non mandatory training and how the career ambitions of high performing crew, with their demand for personal and professional development, is driving the growth of innovative training and education.



There is a new phenomenon gaining traction amongst Superyacht crew, something has shifted, imperceptibly, but steadily, they are changing the way they view training. Traditionally, if training was not mandatory, then there was little appetite to engage, however this is no longer the case, in order to fulfil the operational requirements of their yachts, crew are increasingly looking beyond traditional routes of training and

seeking knowledge and development to fill the gaps that their CoC's and previous experience, have left in their professional skillset. As a result, Superyacht crew non mandatory training is on the rise.

"I am a firm believer that knowledge is power as well as being good for mental health. Even now i am studying a course online." 1st Officer (Chief Mate)

The Superyacht industry is a demanding employer, always requiring crew to step up to meet its needs, it has always therefore surprised me that whilst expecting such levels of multi-disciplined excellence, that there has been such utter lack of willingness to invest in training crew to achieve it. When you think of the complexity of the vessels technical systems and the needs and demands of owners across all departments, it has always been presumed, that crew will naturally learn "on the job" or arrive having helpfully gained the skills needed elsewhere. The reality is that there is a huge disparity between the skills and knowledge needed and the content of current mandatory training.

This of course is not surprising, current deck and engineering Coc's were never intended to be anything other than professional qualifications to ensure that crew were able to operate vessels in a safe, professional and legal manner. They were never envisaged to equip a crew member with the latest intricacies of business, accounting, refit, build, leadership and crew management.

"I would entirely embrace further non mandatory training. The shortfalls in HELM and project/refit management are evident within any of the curriculum that is currently required for either the commercial or yacht specific routes. There is so much room for improvement of how to handle situations as they arise on yachts. Even at the MCA/Orals level there are plenty of opportunities to ask questions of a candidate on how they

would manage real world scenarios.” Captain (Master unlimited)

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So why now? and what are the benefits for crew, the industry and by default the owners themselves? In a nutshell, three key factors, **Effective Operational Leadership and Management**, **sustainability Awareness** and the development of a culture of **Professional Excellence**.



There are a number of factors that have influenced this trend of non mandatory training for superyacht crew, covid has played its part, many crew have reassessed their careers in light of their experiences onboard during the pandemic and are

looking to build on their skills to open up employment beyond their current roles. The last few years has also seen the rise of online and distance learning and much to the surprise of everyone involved it works brilliantly, opening up the opportunity to study far more flexibly from the comfort of your own cabin.

“Yes, I would like to continue to develop myself further, I feel that anything extra that can be brought to the table will continue to set me apart from any competition. I also enjoy being in the learning environment, I find it recharges me and gives me a new lease of life when it comes to training and learning new things. I would really like to study a marine biology degree of some sorts – it is a world I am immersed in; I work on the sea, I play in the sea and dive under the water, yet it is a fascinating world and I know so little about the majority of it” Captain 40m.

The effect of the ILO emissions targets and the UN sustainability goals mean that the yachts currently in build will be far more focused on environmental and operational sustainability, with owners who have the budgets to accelerate the technology and crew who will need to be abreast of the latest innovations and have more diverse skill sets.

The increase in rotational positions mean crew have more available time to study and are keen to improve their knowledge and ability, whether that is initiated by the needs of their owner, or a specific operational need or issue onboard. This could be in relation to service, technical, operational, culture, sustainability or an issue with crew dynamic or an update on legislation.

“I think a lot of my generation of captains are curious and hungry for expanding their knowledge. Management companies are starting to encourage training schemes and I think that owners should participate too. I also think it depends on the

program. However busy boats where crew have little leave does not make training an appealing thought when you have t seen friends/loved ones for months/years. However if the balance is right, then absolutely” Captain 60m.

For the industries part, it is opening its eyes and acknowledging the financial and cultural impact of supporting the development of well trained and supported crew, by building a working environment that works around the simple equation of investing in crew in order for them to achieve excellence. Non mandatory training for yacht crew can help produce a workforce who feel more satisfied and valued in their careers, and in turn are more likely to commit to the industry in the long term, reducing the skills drain and hugely improving the owner experience.

For crew they increasingly see that everyday should be a school day, ultimately the process of learning should never stop and by embracing an attitude of continual professional and personal development, they will excel and stay credible within the workplace, future proof themselves for the evolving sector and improve their own career prospects into the bargain.

“I would 100% consider studying non-mandatory subjects. They will help to increase my knowledge and ability, dealing with people, managing the refits of the vessel and also allow me to have options when the time comes to revert to a shore based way of life.” 2nd Officer.

There is one training program rather than a specific training provider, which has led on innovative learning and ironically it was created because there was no mandatory training route supported for the interior department. The IAMI GUEST programme is the only Internationally Accredited Maritime

Hospitality and Service Training available to Interior Superyacht Crew. In addition, GUEST is developing a range of professional development courses and therefore the target audience has expanding to include those crew in deck/bridge/engineer/ETO roles too. As a result they have recently changed their acronym to encompass not just 'Service Training' but also 'Superyacht Training'

Interestingly the development of interior CoC's allowed the inclusion of a much broader and realistic range of modules for the senior HODs and Purser level courses than would have been allowable in a purely maritime course, the Advanced Leadership course in particular caught the eye of captains and senior crew when they were looking for the answers to develop their own crew management and leadership skills. This course is increasingly seen as the leading course for Leadership in the sector, so many crew have seen and experienced poor leadership at some point in their career, the interest and motivation to not make the same mistakes themselves has propelled the course in popularity. There are a number of established training providers currently offering the courses which you can find on the GUEST website.



Image by GUEST

The GUEST modules are developed by the members of their voluntary working groups who make a point of collaborating with crew to listen to their experiences and survey opinion to develop its courses based on feedback, offering a collaborative and progressive approach to course development.

Positioning itself in the market as the recognised yacht qualification body for non-mandatory Superyacht training its overall aim is to set the standard across the board, reassuring captains that they are employing only the most highly skilled and knowledgeable crew.

"I would love to continue studying and developing. When you stop learning you get stale and not keep up with the current times and it is easy to get complacent. That is how you can get some captains who are a long time out of training, who adopt outdated approaches to operational leadership. If you genuinely want to be a good captain, someone who you want people to look up to, then you need to continue developing yourself all the time." **Chief Mate (Master 3000)**

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Sustainability and the protection of our planet is becoming a top priority within the maritime sector driven by the IMO emissions targets legislation, and an increasing awareness of the toll of modern industrial activity on the planets oceans and eco systems. Alongside this, is the demand from the new generation of environmentally aware yacht owners who are looking for solutions for the future that are less polluting, consume less energy and exploit less resources.



Image by MLA

One bigger picture factor is that the industry is seeing a gradual change in the owner and guest demographic, they are gradually getting younger, and with that comes a stronger interest in technology and the requirement for their vessels to be able to deliver functionality and flexibility, experiential value, whilst also achieving operational sustainability. As a consequence they require crew who can not only meet this brief but actively develop it.

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arise on yachts. Even at the MCA/Orals level there are plenty of opportunities to ask questions to ask a candidate how they would handle real world scenarios.” Captain (Master unlimited)

When it comes to meeting the needs of educating Superyacht crew on sustainability, MLA College have quietly achieved significant success in developing their Sustainable Maritime Operations (BSc) and Masters (MSc) programs. MLA College is a UK based, award-winning provider of online and distance learning degrees in a range of Maritime, Marine and Sustainability based subjects. Working closely with the UN as one of their designated CIFAL centres (City of London) and offering both Bachelor's and Master's degrees which are taught via supported distance learning, allowing students to obtain a relevant degree, whilst balancing their careers, life at sea and other life commitments. Their strongest USP's are that the courses, are designed to be entirely flexible around the unpredictable complexities of life onboard for Superyacht crew (you can start and stop if you need to) and the unique and highly relevant subject areas which focus on the key areas of marine operational sustainability.



Image by MLA College

They currently have Captains, Chief Engineers, Chief Officers and a wide range of crew from the Deck, Bridge and Engineer departments enrolled into the programmes. All of whom are

interested in equipping themselves with relevant knowledge that they can implement in their day-to-day roles onboard, which will also enable them to move into shore-based roles with a greater insight and experience in the future. This success is due to tapping into the developing demand for knowledge amongst crew across all specialisations, who see first-hand through their day to day working lives the impact of their vessels and want to be proactive and have a voice in driving forward both operational and environmental sustainability.

“I believe it is important to continue growing even at master level, and if there is a subject which you feel interested in or passionate about why not explore it further. This not only increases your own personal understanding but is a great way of exploring your horizons when it comes to being shore based” Chief Officer (Master 3000)

Uniquely MLA College took the step in 2021 to recognise and value Superyacht crew's CoC's and professional and life experiential learning in place of academic qualifications for those wishing to apply to the BSc or MSc SMO programs. This has been a huge step in opening up higher education to those crew who do not have the benefit of post eighteen education but have worked hard for their professional qualifications and have years of professional experience. Currently, this ground-breaking opportunity is open to any crew member who has achieved their OOW/EOW/Chief /Mate/Chief Engineer/Masters CoC's.

Both the [MSc and BSc in Sustainable Maritime Operations \(SMO\)](#) are designed to give world class qualifications and provide a wide array of both maritime subject-specific and transferable business and managerial skills. The SMO programmes allow students to reach their desired professional goals and enhance their understanding of sustainability within the context of their industry. With a range of modules to choose from and

subject areas that range from offshore renewable energy, ocean processes, corporate and social responsibility, ethical business practice and environmental impact and protection.

“I believe it is important to carry on growing even at master level, and if there is a subject which you feel interested in or passionate about why not explore it further. This not only increases your own personal understanding but is a great way of exploring your horizons when it comes to being shore based” Chief Officer (Master 3000)

The next few years are going to be an interesting time for the industry, there is the real opportunity to support crew from all departments in their pursuit of personal and professional development, empowering them with the skills and knowledge to better perform in their roles. Investing in crew in this way has the potential to result in more efficient, cost effective and professionally run vessels. What's not to like?

Get in touch

If you are interested in becoming an MLA College student and continuing to learn and the themes of this article resonate with you, Emma Baggett and her company, THE OM, have partnered with [MLA College](#) to promote an opportunity for Superyacht crew to access a final year BSc or MSc In Sustainable Maritime Operations. This degree is delivered via online distance learning, designed to be accessible and completely flexible around working routines. If you don't have previous academic qualifications, you can use your CoCs to gain entry. With the opportunity for qualified OOW and Engineer Officers to gain direct entry to a final year BSc and Masters and Chief Engineers to jump straight to an MSc. Whether you want to build on your maritime qualifications or translate your

experience and qualifications gained in the sector into a successful career ashore find out more at <http://the-om.co.uk/smo>

How Do MLA College Students Complete Their Work Remotely?

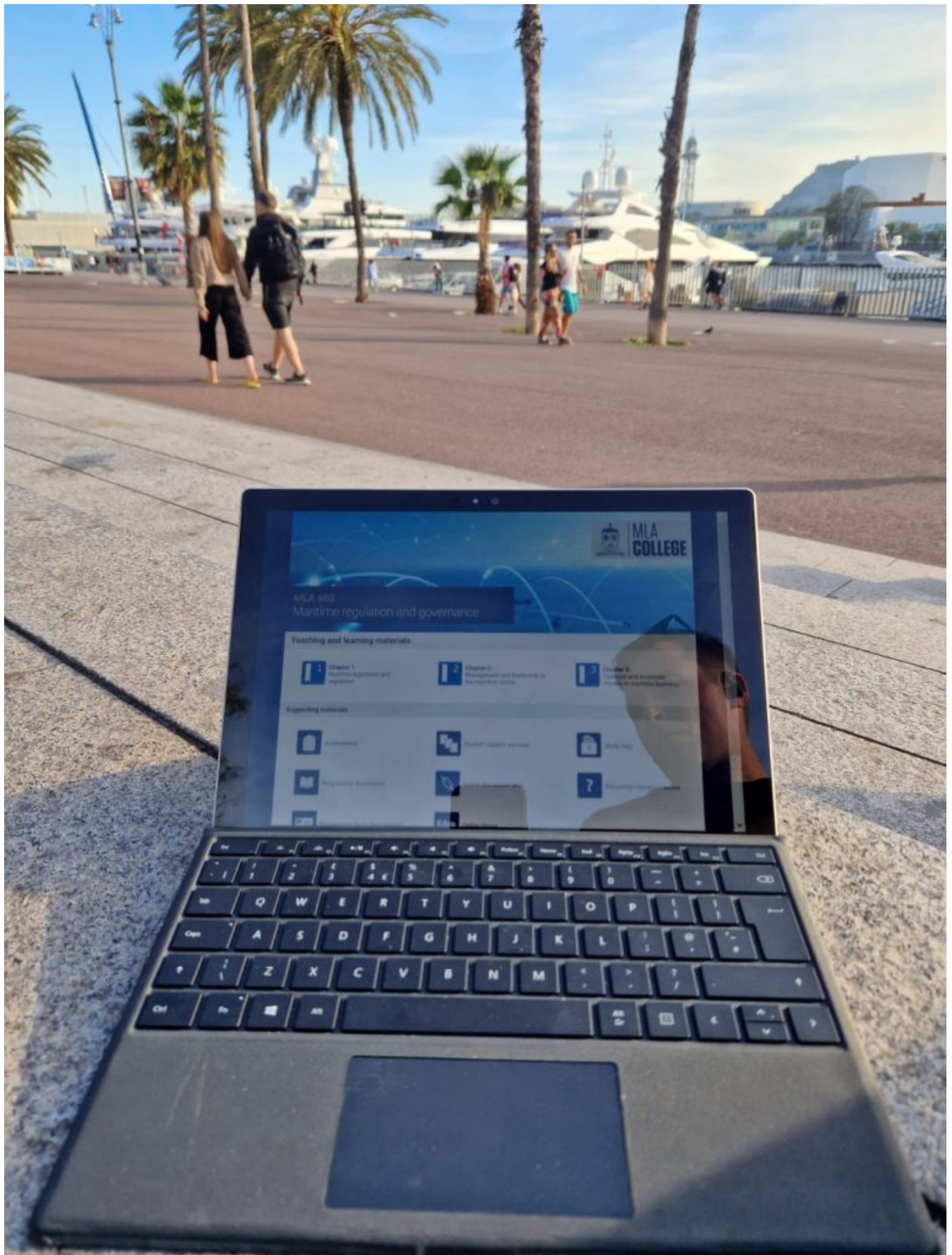
WHERE DO YOU STUDY?

How do Superyacht crew/MLA College students manage to study for a maritime sustainability degree and balance their working life in the industry?

Earlier this year we looked at a Q&A session with [MLA College](#) student Richard, who managed to fit his BSc coursework in by putting in an hour before work each morning during a very busy season. We thought this was worth exploring further – Emma Baggett has tracked down some of the other Superyacht crew/MLA College Students currently enrolled on the MSc and BSc Sustainable Maritime Operations (SMO) courses and asked how they approach the tricky dilemma of balancing work, play, and studying a degree-level program, and what was their motivation to enroll on the program?



Matt: Chief Officer



My approach to studying whilst working on a busy vessel has been to employ the idea of using good organisation, and studying little and often – this hasn't always gone to plan, though. My advice for anyone thinking of doing this course is don't do what I did and start the BSc in the middle of a busy charter season. I was completing my first piece of coursework over five pretty intense days on charter, getting very little sleep!

I gained a foundation degree through my yacht cadetship and passed my Officer of the Watch 3000GT exam, something which required a lot of focus. For around two years, I was either at work or maritime college doing my modules, only seeing my family and friends in the scraps of time I had left. While it was a major commitment, putting all my effort into my studies led to passing everything the first time. Additionally, all the knowledge I've gained has become quite firmly lodged in my brain, giving me real confidence in my ability.

When I passed the exam, after the initial 15 minutes of absolute joy, I was hit, quite firmly, with the simple question of "now what?" This leads quite neatly to why I applied for the BSc Hons in Sustainable Maritime Operations with [MLA College](#), the course which has given me options for a career after working at sea. I have decided to not pursue any higher qualification beyond my current Chief Mate 3000 CoC as I really enjoy the role of Chief Officer, in the long term I want to get a shore-based job, especially if I ever have a family. I'm also lucky enough to be in a position where I can find extra time to learn about things that interest me and focus on my personal development. I believe this is one of the greatest advantages of this course. My professional seafaring career has been a mixture of hard work, sheer effort and commitment, right-time right-place, and a lot of luck. When I first started, you had to walk up and down docks all over the Riviera handing out CVs and "dock walking". I have come a long way since then and I see this next phase of the study as my

next big challenge. It's hard work but the advantages it brings to me personally make it worth it.

Archie: Chief Officer



I started the BSc SMO in January this year, and for me, the distance learning format could not be better, I love the idea of being able to work remotely, and in this new post-COVID19 world that we are living in, I expect it will become the new norm. The freedom of movement and being able to complete this degree from wherever work takes me is a huge draw. In terms of balancing my workloads, I am not too concerned. I have become well-practiced at utilising my valuable free time. Having spent the last 5 years working on dual season charter motor yachts in high-pressure environments, this has shaped how I operate in not just my professional life but also in my

personal life.

However, what happens when I am ready to hang up the epaulettes and return to a shore-based life? How will I provide for my family when I reach an age where that is expected of me? The ocean has become my home away from home, and the environment and its preservation is something I feel extremely passionate about. Therefore, continuing my study into maritime sustainability makes a lot of sense to me. My practical experience gives me valuable insight into the sector and now allows me the opportunity to further my knowledge. I have seen first-hand the negative impacts that come with these big boats on this delicate ecosystem, I have a genuine desire to do my part to rectify this. After all, there is no maritime industry without a healthy thriving marine environment. For us preservation is everything.

Going forward, I am excited to complete the BSc program with [MLA College](#), I know that I have a lot more travel in-store... many more interesting people and experiences. One day when I hang up my mop, I believe that the skills and qualities I have gained from my service so far will transfer well into the shore-based corporate structure, and I have learned that I am a pretty adaptable and will turn my hand to whatever opportunity comes my way.

Mick: Chief Engineer



I started studying for my MSc in January 2022, balancing my study with a rotational chief engineer's role and a busy family life. In practice, this means putting in a lot of late nights and early mornings in order to complete module assignments, times where I can work uninterrupted and keep my focus.

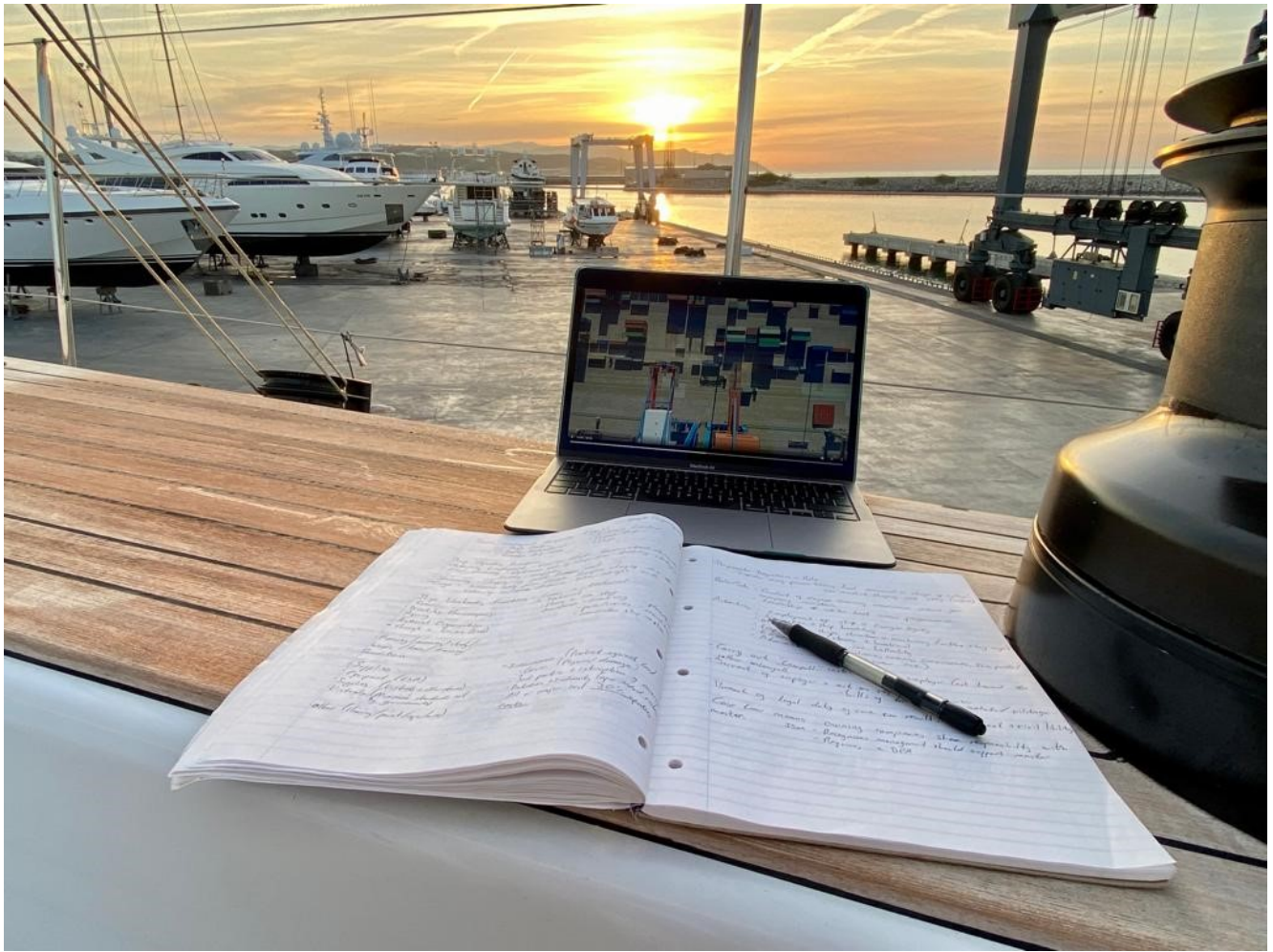
I find it important to maintain two values: the first is balance and the second is patience. Social life, family life, rest, and exercise are extremely important parts of a fulfilling life; human needs must be balanced with college workload – spending time to reduce stress helps maintain focus. Patience is necessary because I have found it necessary to read volumes of research papers just to get a few sentences. It can be necessary to write, delete and write again many times to make a point and keep to a word count. It's daunting and frustrating at first but ultimately rewarding.

I feel that the MSc syllabus aligns strongly with my career arc, particularly as I commence the Project and Data Management module. I aim to continue my seagoing career as chief engineer for now, while also focusing on building skills for an eventual transition to shore-based employment. Studying at this level supports these aims and has been an ambition of mine for a long time. I have become increasingly interested in sustainability in recent years, particularly since becoming a chief engineer.

Working towards sustainable goals is an important part of my role onboard, it's something that has value to the community as well as my employer. I know that building experience and knowledge in this field will allow me to develop my career in interesting and fulfilling ways.

To read my most recent piece on Sustainability and STCWs for engineers, [Click here.](#)

Sam: Delivery and Yard Captain



After 10 years of working full-time onboard sailing yachts with very little time out, I decided to expand my knowledge of the marine industry as a whole. The inbuilt flexibility of the Sustainable Maritime Operations BSc program has allowed me to juggle working, studying this course, and pursuing my MCA qualifications alongside some personal time out. I hope that the broader appreciation of all marine sectors helps me not only make more informed decisions onboard my current vessel but also move forward in my long-term career, wherever that might take me.

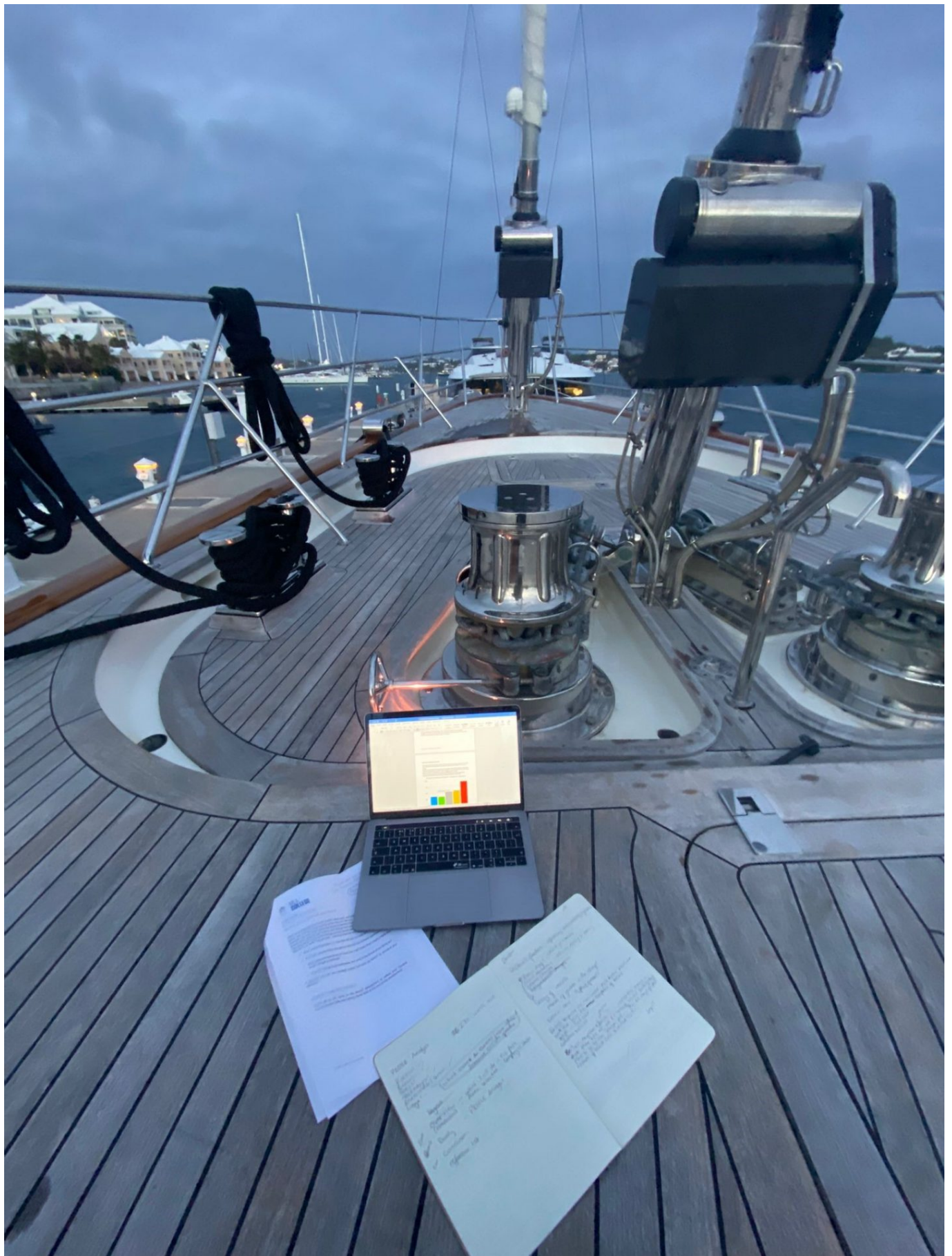
I have been incredibly fortunate to work on a variety of sailing vessels throughout my career, growing skills in management and leadership, navigation and seamanship, fund, and time allocation, all whilst working up the hierarchal ladder. Finding solutions for many and varied obstacles in different geographic areas, whilst meeting the requirements of high-net-worth individuals, their families, and friends

requires a positive and resourceful outlook. Currently, I am the chief officer and delivery captain onboard a dual-season performance yacht.

In the last couple of years, I have overseen two multi-million-euro refits and completed two successful Atlantic crossings. This growth in position and responsibility has been challenging but also extremely rewarding. The management of crew, who are from diverse cultures, have various levels of knowledge and experience, who have different aspirations, and who all need continuing support physically, mentally, medically, and encouragement to achieve is something I enjoy. The process of planning, budgeting, monitoring, updating, and keeping to a determined time frame during escalating projects has improved a distinct set of skills, aside from the fundamentals of sailing and running a deck I believe that the more experience and knowledge someone has, the more informed a decision is with greater perspective and real-time relevance. I have sacrificed pushing through my OOW and onwards at a pace because I have had amazing opportunities that cannot be bought.

However, I feel it is now time to level up my experience with structured learning that will help me continue my career in the marine industry. I have only experienced a small aspect of this sector and I hope to expand and challenge my current knowledge and beliefs, the Sustainable Maritime Operations BSc (Hons) degree with [MLA College](#) is a hugely exciting prospect to aid in the growth of my maritime career. I have been incredibly fortunate to have done so much by twenty-eight, but there is much more to achieve and knowledge to gain.

Ryan: Mate 56m Sailing Yacht.



I started a new job in January at the same time as I began my degree and immediately after passing my 00W 3000. To be

honest, flying halfway around the world to join the vessel and then straight into a busy season has been tough. Managing my time to put my all into both is a challenge, but I know it's going to be worth it in the long run. The course is designed for seafarers, and let's face it – we are inherently busy. Recently, I had to contact my tutor as I knew that I would struggle to submit an assignment due to an extremely busy charter period. I was granted an extension with no problem at all and managed to finish it properly, to the standard I wanted in the extra time given.

So far, I've been fortunate and have worked in the sailing fleet since the start of my career. I've been working to high standards, whilst experiencing some incredibly varied itineraries, refitting in New Zealand, racing, sailing across the Pacific, rounding Cape Horn, and sailing up the coast of South America – an experience I will struggle to ever forget. I am certainly not afraid of doing some long miles and going off the beaten track. Although I currently have much more to achieve in my career at sea, completing the BSc is important to me in planning for my long-term future and investing in my own personal and professional development.

Poppy: Bosun



My time at [MLA College](#) started in May 2021 after deciding to begin the course when I quit my last seagoing position to have some time out. I aimed to take the summer off and enjoy some time with my partner whilst travelling around Europe in my self-converted van. I started my second module the same week that we left the UK and completed all of the coursework whilst living in the van. It was rewarding having something to focus on whilst I wasn't working, and it kept my brain ticking throughout this period. Studying in interesting places whilst travelling made the whole process much more enjoyable, and in the end, the two coexisted with one another very successfully. At first, I struggled to manage my time with the coursework – it was very easy to prioritise having fun and enjoying my time off, whilst forgetting about the latest essay. I had to set strict boundaries and expectations for myself; I focused on 1 hour of lectures and 1 hour of extra reading per day. Once I had finished my lectures, I swapped that hour out for writing my assessments. This really helped me feel more in control of the workload. Simple solutions like instead of taking a book to the beach, I would take a journal or report I found online.

I also often read when I was a passenger during long drives, you forget you're actually working towards your coursework, and therefore it becomes a lot more enjoyable.

Throughout the past year, I have been working closely with a mentor, Emma from THE OM, to help me focus on where I want to take my career in the future. At the point of leaving my last position, I knew I wanted to stay in the industry but also knew I needed a break from seagoing positions. This degree helped me keep a foot in the door of the industry, whilst also learning and developing in a sector that I think is becoming ever-more important. At the start of 2022, I started working for a crew agency based in the UK – this worked perfectly alongside my degree and allowed me to have evenings and weekends to complete my coursework. I believe the workload in the coursework is more than manageable whether you are working or not. Nevertheless, it requires pre-planning in order to keep from falling behind. I found I was achieving better grades and feeling more confident as my modules went on, which I think has a lot to do with my personal management of time and priorities. Having completed the MLA College degree, I now have the confidence to start on my OOW modules, and I am looking forward to my next steps back into the industry.

Get in touch

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Engineers to jump straight to an MSc. Whether you want to build on your maritime qualifications or translate your experience and qualifications gained in the sector into a successful career ashore find out more at <http://the-om.co.uk/smo>



To find out how an MLA College, flexible learning degree can supercharge your degree, [click here.](#)

Superyacht Crew: Feeling Burnt out? How to Stay Happy and Focused in Your Career

Are you feeling burnt out? Superyacht crew have a tendency to burn the candle at both ends, often finding themselves feeling overworked, overwhelmed and fed up with their career. Emma Baggett industry professional and founder of [The-0m](#), speaks with us about the different things superyacht crew can do to stay happy and focused in their career.

Superyacht Crew: How to Stay Happy and Focused in Your Career

Your career can send you off on many tangents or keep you in a rigid and structured cage. Either way, it is easy to drift,

being carried along without a clear plan as to where you are heading. Sometimes it can take a while to get to that point when you know you are ready for something new. Some people get that lightbulb moment, that flash of inspiration, but for most of us, it does not always happen like that. It is a more slow realisation that you are not actually that happy or fulfilled by your job anymore.

Perhaps you have not drifted at all. Your career has followed a carefully prescribed plan. The realisation comes when you have finally achieved the goal you have spent years striving towards, the Captain, Chief Officer, Head of Department position, with rotation that you thought was the ultimate accolade.

It often comes when you are sitting in the departure lounge waiting for your flight back to work. You experience that moment of clarity, that home, a simple life and frankly everything that you thought you didn't want, is looking pretty attractive and, to be honest, you could happily contemplate never flying anywhere ever again.

I speak to professional crew daily, who are admitting reluctantly that they are burnt out, disillusioned, and are struggling to see a future in the industry. They hold senior positions onboard, jobs that they have worked very hard to achieve and on paper look like they have the "dream ticket". Great income, rotation, several properties bought and rented out, great toys, clothes, cars, watches and Instagram accounts that support the "living the dream" illusion.

It's not surprising that for many, their career and their enthusiasm has a finite life. After a while, the pressures of the industry and the relentless toll of the seasons can leave you feeling like you are experiencing Groundhog Day. It might look like you're working in paradise, but the reality of the yacht, and your surroundings, leave you feeling captured and confined.



Over the last two years, the impact of COVID on yacht crew and the long-term effects on mental health cannot be overstated. Surveys and reports continue to prove the fallout and impact on superyacht crew will continue to be felt. Much of the issue also sits with the industry itself, not recognising that a few fundamental changes to the way it values and supports crew would also help to minimise the tendency for short-term careers and vastly improve the work-life balance and longevity of those that operate the owner's prize asset.

In the yachting industry, wanting something more, or more to the point, recognising that something vital is missing does not always mean leaving the industry. In fact, I think it's the most common mistake that yacht crew make. It is not all doom and gloom. Sometimes, investing time in yourself, making a few adjustments, setting some new goals and finding new inspiration in your professional development can make all the difference and bring back the vital spark you are looking for.

Half the battle is acknowledging the issues and the problems and admitting to yourself that something needs to change and, if you decide you are ready to leave and seek the next stage of your career, it can be difficult to know where to start. What are your options? How will you maintain your earnings? Will you be happy? It's a lot to consider, but with thought and planning and a bit of effort, life does successfully continue.

The first step in moving forward is identifying the answer to the following question – **“Are you sure you want to leave the industry?”**

If the answer is **“yes”**. Then it would be best if you committed to no knee jerk decisions. Your exit needs to be planned, researched and realistic. You need to take your time.

If the answer is **“no”**. Then you need to identify what actions you need to take to re-set, recharge and refocus, to find fulfilment in your current career.



Is it your job?:

Are you staying on board a vessel in a role that is making you miserable because you're determined to display longevity on your CV?

Having preached the importance of longevity, commitment and professionalism for years, I will admit something – it's all very well but being miserable can have such a long-term effect on you, that sometimes you just have to think of yourself first.

I don't advocate flouncing off and leaving your vessel in the lurch, but don't let yourself get deeply unhappy unnecessarily. It's a waste of your energy. Even with the best planning and consideration, some jobs don't turn out to be what we think they will be, and once you have given it your best shot, it's best to admit that for all concerned. Or is it the opposite? Maybe you work on a fantastic vessel with a great crew and owner, but you are no longer happy, and you are reluctant to leave because you know how good your situation is? Either way, if you are unhappy, you need to act.

Feeling burnt out? Don't be afraid to stop for a while:

Stopping doesn't mean coming to a complete stop but, it could mean giving yourself some breathing space. Having a proper holiday, travelling, or simply spending some time enjoying a simple life is hugely beneficial.

Taking a full season out of the industry will not adversely affect your career if you can illustrate how you have benefited from doing so. You might be able to do this within your rotation or it might mean a bigger decision.

Is it time to resign and move on, or would your vessel consider a kind of sabbatical? Would they support you in taking a few months or a season out and returning refreshed and repurposed? It's always worth asking and negotiating before thinking that handing in your notice is the only option. The key is making the time that you take work for you.

Find a mentor or coach to find a way forward:

Don't keep things to yourself. Talking to your fellow professionals and seeking guidance and wisdom from others is a very effective way to find out what you really want to do and

how to achieve it.

A mentor will use their professional experience to help you understand your options and share knowledge, insight, and advice. A coach will help you help yourself by asking key questions that give you the tools to understand and develop your own personal pathway.

Look at the LEGASEA initiative to find a mentor: www.legasea.org.uk or look at the www.lifeafteryachting.com platform to find a coach and mentors who specialise in careers after you leave the industry.

<https://www.instagram.com/p/CYBbsVOKBQi/>

Focus on your mental and physical health:

This may be an obvious one to discuss. Still, huge benefits can be gained from focusing on your body and mind. Mental and physical fitness, or lack of it can affect your well-being, focus, and a sense of purpose and worth so much more than many people realise. Spending time working on your fitness levels, eating healthy and understanding what your body needs to function can all have a huge impact on your happiness and confidence and inner calm.

Stress, unhappiness, excess alcohol, lack of sleep, are the perennial issues suffered by superyacht crew. They can all have an impact on your cortisol levels and be affecting you far more than you may be aware. Don't be afraid to admit if you are suffering from your mental health and reach out to friends and colleagues and the organisations that are there to help you, like www.yachtcrewhelp.org

Financial planning:

Everyone will tell you this, but money gives you choices, it also gives you the ability to have time out and breathing space to think things through or it could be the factor that

allows you to spread your wings and set up your own business or retrain for a new career path. Spending on luxuries and short-term thrills is great for a while, but if you haven't done it already, make sure you maximise the income you earn, stop spending and start saving, especially if you are thinking of leaving the industry.

Set a goal and work towards having a target amount of savings. Put some structure in place, invest in property and don't bury your head. Educate yourself and take some good financial advice, www.crewfo.com can offer you a broad range of advice to put you in the best possible financial position.

https://www.instagram.com/p/CWS4_nfg0hu/

Adjust your outlook:

You may not realise that you have developed a pretty negative approach to life. If you imagine this analogy, it might put this into perspective. (*From **The 7 habits of successful people**, Stephen R Covey*)

You plan a day out, but on the day the weather forecast is awful, are you the sort of person who cancels the day? Or do you enjoy the day despite the weather? You can't change the weather, but people who are proactive don't let themselves be adversely affected by it; they control their own narrative. Conversely, reactive people allow external circumstances to dictate their behaviours and emotions and let themselves be a martyr to it and might say things like, "It wasn't my fault" "It was out of my hands". Think about how your reaction to the outside influences around you onboard could be adjusted, and you might find this is really helpful.

Write a bio document:

A "Bio" or biography document is an overview of your working life that is not structured in the way a CV is. It is a way of

looking at your achievements, skills and accomplishments in the round. Write freely and when you're done, try editing it back to a page, then take a good long hard look at yourself. I will be honest, this can be an excruciating exercise if you are not very good at promoting yourself, but it's a handy tool in identifying your strengths and potentially the gaps in your skillset. It also gives a potential employer a much broader understanding of what you can offer.

Use your rotation and annual leave wisely:

If you haven't done it already, plan to use your rotation time off to work better for you. Not only to take time out but to use it to achieve things that make you feel happy and fulfilled or plan and research your future plans. There is potential to target and gain working experience with organisations that interest you, consider giving back and volunteering at a charity, perhaps go back to your roots and teach kids to sail?



**Invest in your professional development.
Get excited about what you can learn and
achieve:**

Just because you have achieved success in your maritime qualifications or position onboard doesn't mean that you have nothing left to learn. In fact, it's just the start. There are so many courses that can be studied online by distance learning. Look for courses that bring you knowledge that you can apply to improve your performance in your current role and

that improve your long-term employability.

The main thing to remember is that leaving the industry is not your only option. In fact, there are many steps that you can take before you reach that point. It's all about how you approach it. Maybe it is time to move on and is the catalyst to break into something new or it is about finding the perspective that keeps you focused and brings you newfound enjoyment in your role. Take the initiative, and see it as a positive step to start planning, thinking, talking and actively seeking that fresh path.

If you're interested in continuing to learn and the themes of this article resonate with you, Emma Baggett and her company, THE OM, have partnered with MLA College to develop an opportunity for superyacht crew to access a final year [BSc or MSc In Sustainable Maritime Operations](#). This degree is delivered via online distance learning, designed to be accessible and completely flexible around working routines. If you don't have previous academic qualifications, you can use your CoC's gaining entry. With the opportunity for qualified masters to jump straight to an MSc. Whether you want to build on your maritime qualifications or translate your experience and qualifications gained in the sector into a successful career ashore, find out more <http://the-om.co.uk/smo>. Wondering how difficult completing a degree whilst working on board a superyacht is? Have a read of Emma's recent [interview](#) with a student currently on the course.

Are you looking for your next position in the superyacht industry? Head over to our [Jobs Board](#).

Q&A – Getting a Degree as Superyacht Crew

Over the last few weeks, we have been looking into getting a degree as superyacht crew and whether it is possible for crew to broaden their knowledge and employability inside the industry and on land.

You might have read our most recent article by Emma Baggett at [The-OM, Reasons Why a Degree will Supercharge Your Career](#). If you missed this one, make sure you have a read. Emma left us wondering what the reality of doing a degree whilst working onboard is? Is it possible? And, what drives superyacht crew to sign up?

We talk to Richard, a lead deckhand on an 80m Motor Yacht, who is currently a student on the BSc Sustainable Maritime Operations program with MLA College. He is also studying for his OOW modules. Richard reveals what gaining a degree qualification at sea is like for those thinking it is a path they may like to take:

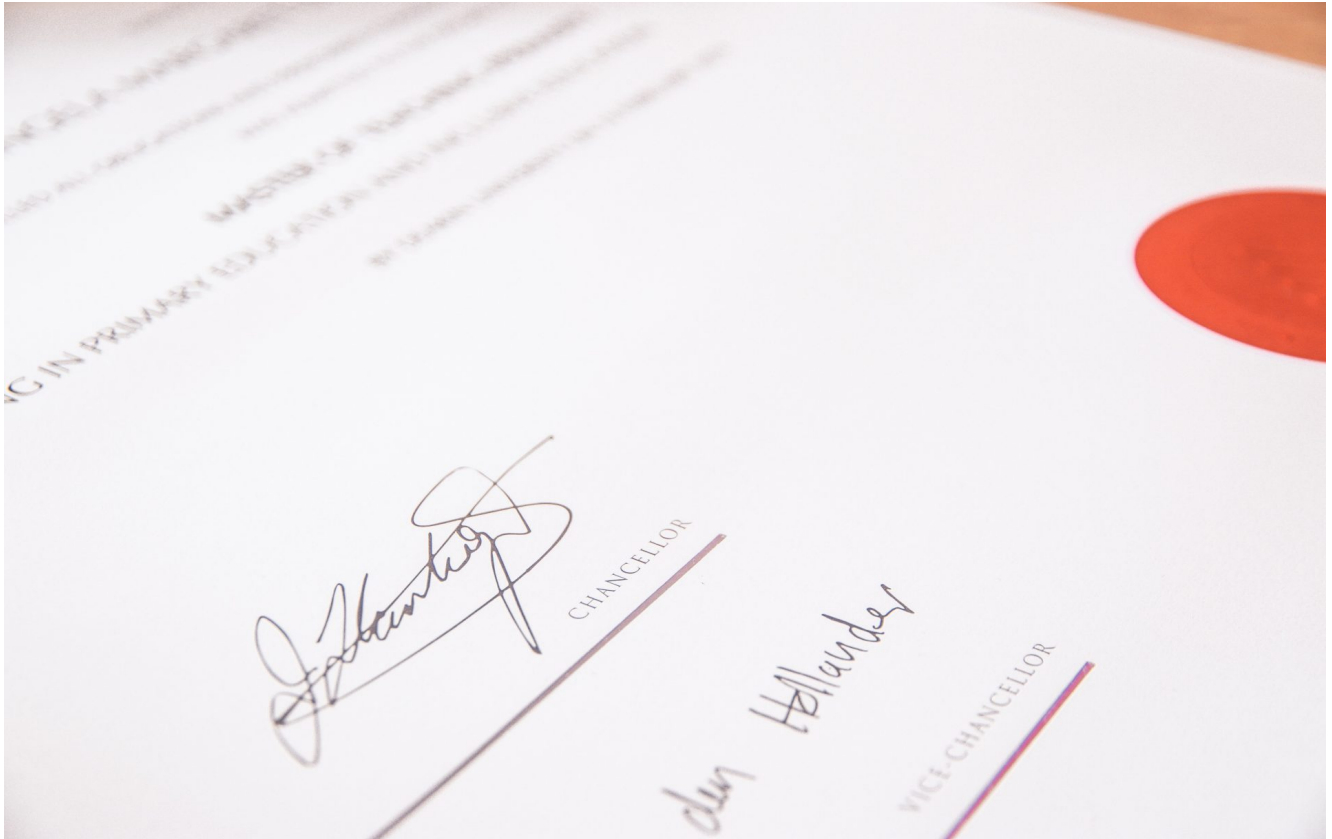


Photo by [Lewis Keegan](#) on [Unsplash](#)

Why did you sign up? What are your career plans and goals, and why is this degree qualification part of that plan?

Personally, I signed up because I don't see myself in the industry beyond the age of 30, if I am honest. I am 24 now, and hopefully, in the next few months, I will have my OOW. Qualifying and working as an officer is my ideal, and it would be great to achieve my Masters. So, my thinking is that a Masters qualification combined with an honours degree qualification will be crucial in finding a good opportunity down the line. By that, I mean interesting work, rather than having to go out of the industry and settle for less. I want to open up as many opportunities as possible and give myself the best chance of success.

How long does the course last?

It lasts 18 months, but if you need to take longer, you can. The flexibility is perfect for an industry like ours. It really does make getting a degree possible for superyacht crew.

What is a BSc Hons Course?

BSc stands for Bachelor of Science, and the Hons is the research project you do in the final six months. When you do this course, it is the equivalent of stepping into the last year of a three-year degree program. I used my foundation degree to gain access, but if you have your OOW/Chief Mate/Masters or engineering CoC's, you can also enrol onto the course.

It says the course is flexible but is it really? Did it work around your job?

Yes, absolutely, of course, it is flexible. It has to be, doesn't it with the life we lead? I applied for an extension with evidence from my captain, but to be honest, they have set the course up knowing that you are a seafarer. Therefore, they understand the realities of yachting and that there will be times when you need to pause or extend your time to complete assignments. They had no problem with that, even without evidence. There are opportunities for me to stop and start or delay studies if needed at any point in the program if I feel my workload is too much.

How did you balance your 00W module study with the degree?

As an example, I completed my degree this summer in the allotted year, but my focus at the moment is my last qualifying modules and my 00W oral exam. So I have deferred the final six months of study until May, when I will pick it all up again and complete my research project.

How have you fit the study time around your work, rotation, charter and boss trips?

With study time around work, I found that the best solution for me was getting up at 5.30 am and putting in an hour and a half every day during the week. I don't do any study at weekends, so I still go out and have fun.

When I was on rotation with a module underway, I got up early and put an hour or so in each morning. This way, it didn't affect my day, and I still felt that I could do what I wanted.

With boss trips and charter, I did absolutely nothing. I just let my tutor know I wasn't going to do anything, and I focused on my work and didn't try and push myself beyond that.

Is it worth the money?

I think so for sure. It's so much cheaper when you consider the cost of university fees in the UK for a year, plus your only expense is the initial fee. There is no need for accommodation, food, fuel, etc., or loss of wages.

Did you have to pay upfront for it, or can I pay as I go?

I paid for it upfront by choice, but you can pay module by module. And, in the last few months, they have two-thirds of cost student loans available now.

What was the biggest challenge of completing the course for you?

The biggest challenge of completing the course for me was managing it through a busy med season on the boat I am on. We are constantly on standby, and we did a lot of boss trips. I like to get into the swing of things; I like to have a solid chunk of time to get some work done and have a routine going. So, with all the boss trips going on with charters, it would ruin my flow. So the nature of the industry was a challenge, making it hard to sustain ideas and the flow of my work.

Was the subject matter interesting and relevant? How relevant is the subject matter to the industry?

It was certainly interesting and helped open my eyes to aspects of sustainability that I had an idea about but didn't know anything in detail. The degree is very relevant to yachting, especially from the point of view that it focuses on the operational sustainability angle.

Did you end up going over subject areas you had already covered in your 00W modules?

Those who have or are studying towards their 00W/Masters will be familiar with MLS, ISPS, MARPOL, ISM and the ships SMS. Knowledge of these conventions and codes is very relevant to the course and valuable when tackling the coursework, but you certainly don't cover the same ground all over again.

<https://www.instagram.com/p/CSraC7PsT8n/>

Why do you think this degree qualification will help you achieve your career goals?

Having spoken with people who have already made the move to go shore-based, the general consensus was that a relevant degree combined with your yacht qualifications and experience makes a big difference to your employability. So, I went with that.

What skills have you learnt during the course?

Researching, this was not one of my strengths before; I didn't know what I was doing really in my previous studies. I have learned how to take key information from articles and books, extract the information, and present that with my opinion. It has opened my eyes to so much more than I knew before. I have definitely learned how to figure things out myself, as you're not spoon-fed at this level. There is help available, but they expect you to have an enquiring mind.

Is it hard to study via online distance learning?

No, it's not hard at all, in 2022, we have access to any book in any library in the UK on our PC's. I actually found it easier, if I am honest, than when I used to have to go into libraries and study. I like that I can study when I want, and the support is there if I need it.

Is maritime operational sustainability an important issue to you?

Yes, I am not a tree hugger, but I do care about the environment. We have a sea bin onboard that we use, but to be honest, it is more a study of how we can develop sustainability in the everyday operation of the industry, and that is important to me and its direct implications that I can take back to my job and implement in my day-to-day role.

The degree includes a final project. What subject are you/have you going to be tackling?

I will be studying crew mental health, particularly crew after COVID. It is something that has impacted me personally and my friends and particularly crew like me who were working away from home for ten months at a time at the height of Covid. It certainly has had a lasting effect. It's a big subject, and there will be lots of information to access online as well as my own research and feedback from fellow crew, so I hope that what I produce has some use.

Did you have an academic background before coming into yachting?

It depends on what you call academic; I had three A levels before I came into yachting and studied a foundation degree whilst I was in my yacht cadetship, but I certainly wouldn't call myself academic. I am hardworking and focused, which has been more valuable to me than the previous study.

A Bachelor's of science degree qualification? is it too maths-based?

Not at all. I am useless at maths and have found it very manageable. I would also suggest choosing modules that play to your strengths. For example, Ocean Met is more science/maths-based than the others.

Does the lack of published literature and research unique to the superyacht sector cause an issue?

No. The reports and essays I have written asking for comparisons between sectors have allowed me to use superyacht magazine, reports from other yachties, and my own experience for my claims.

It's not too late to apply for the SMO degree, January entry. If you are interested in finding out more, [THE OM](#) handle all advice and applications. Visit www.the-om.co.uk/smo or get in touch with Emma direct to discuss your options at [emma@the-](mailto:emma@the-om.co.uk)



For more of the latest industry news and content, click [here](#).

Reasons Why a Degree Will Supercharge Your Career

Today we spoke to Emma Baggett, director of [The-OM](#), about why a degree will Supercharge your career. We discuss the five reasons a new online distance learning BSc and MSc Sustainable Maritime Operations degree might be the answer to your future career dilemmas.

<https://www.instagram.com/p/CW5a05aLk20/>

ONE: Your key to a successful exit strategy or empowering your career progression:

As a crew member in the superyacht industry, your career provides you with multiple skill sets that evolve as you work your way up the ranks. Initially more practical as your responsibilities grow, so do the range of tasks and duties you have to take on. To a certain extent, it's easy to take the sheer array of knowledge and ability you have for granted.

Not everyone is looking to further their studies to leave the industry successfully. However, one of the biggest challenges facing superyacht crew when considering their future career is the tricky issue of illustrating their incredible range of experience, skills and responsibilities into something that translates into success outside of or alongside the industry.

The irony is that you should start planning for the future the moment you enter the superyacht industry. There is a lot to keep you busy and distracted for several years until you are at the point of considering your options.

The best approach is to accept that everything you have done so far is invaluable. The most effective next step is to build on that experience. For this reason, a degree qualification can provide that "glue" that ties all of your experience and knowledge together. The combination of extensive maritime experience and an academic qualification is powerful. It will completely change your professional dynamic, resulting in a substantial difference in how you are perceived and the success you achieve when moving forward in your career on land.

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TWO: Tap into the industries need to value human capital:

The superyacht sector's drive towards sustainability is not just focused on changing our impact on the oceans. There is about to be a change in the industry's attitude to the way they work with superyacht crew.

The turnover of superyacht crew in the industry is phenomenal. Historically, there has been a presumption that there is an endless stream of readily trained crew rearing to step into the shoes of those who drop out.

rather than focusing on negating the issues that mean crew leave the industry and cause all their experience and value to be lost. Whilst there are many ways to improve the situation. One of the most basic and effective is to support crews' quality of life and improve their working environment.

Allowing time for a good work/life balance and offering support to crew to pursue study and professional development will be a powerful way for them to achieve personal achievement and allow crew to grow and commit to long term careers in the industry.

<https://www.instagram.com/p/CSraC7PsT8n/>

THREE: Empower yourself with professional development:

Professional development means exactly that, any additional study that you do will enhance your knowledge and understanding of the job you currently do in order to advance your career. It's all about continuing your education beyond your mandatory qualifications so you can stay up-to-date on current ideas and innovations and develop as an individual.

Taking positive steps towards improving your skills and knowledge and taking ownership of your development can make a massive difference in making you feel empowered and confident in your abilities.

Being able to show a potential employer that you have dedicated time to building up expertise helps improve the perception that you can make intelligent, perceptive and valuable contributions. By increasing your skill set, you can approach challenging projects and operational issues with increased confidence by drawing on newly learnt strategies. All of this combined increases your personal and professional value and employability.



A Degree Could Supercharge Your Career

FOUR: Be part of the drive to sustainability:

Most superyacht crew see the effects of pollution daily and the impact of the yachts that they work on. They are also often passionate about the oceans and say that they care about our planet. This doesn't always mean that they feel in a position to make much of a personal impact.

Whilst we stand on the edge of a global ecological disaster, the industry has been focusing on evolving for some time and is now taking significant and immediate action. As a result, it is an incredibly positive and exciting time, with huge changes on the horizon. The major build yards are focused on design materials and build processes. They are initiating significant research into alternative fuels, battery technology, and emissions innovations.

Whilst many crew are following this with interest, how many crew take it upon themselves to develop a strong understanding of the UN Sustainable Development Goals or the IMO Emissions Targets or are familiar with the theory and purpose behind the Circular Economy? Now is the time to actually do something about equipping yourself with the knowledge to truly make a difference? You can do more than just keep up and instead be part of contributing to this new era.



Be part of the drive to sustainability.

FIVE: Develop your academic skills and research new innovations.

By the time you reach officer level in the industry, you will be using a wide range of operational and academic skills. Compliance with legislation and regulations, accounting and budgeting, leading refit and development projects requiring analysis, research, and comparison skills. So, to step into final year degree study is not such a gigantic leap. You will

also have the advantage of not spending two years sitting on the sofa watching “Countdown” like most students and will be used to multitasking and working to deadlines.

After completing the main modules of a degree, your final piece of work is a dissertation or a research project. This allows you the opportunity to tackle an issue in the industry that you care about. Bringing new ideas to the table, this part of the study process is the bit you can really utilise for your benefit. Perhaps you have a business idea or are focused on moving into yacht management or a project management role.

Your research could be the opportunity to raise ideas and solutions that have a significant impact on the industry. These could be new ideas for process-driven innovation, new sustainable operational practices that would transform working life on board for both owner and crew.

New technical advances would make a major difference on the yachts environmental impact. The only limit is your imagination. It’s a fantastic opportunity to showcase your ideas and build a strategy to help you achieve your career goals.



Could a degree be your next step?

Think a Degree will Supercharge Your Career?

Suppose any of this resonates with you. Or you are considering how your current experience and qualifications will translate into the next stages of your career. Emma Baggett and her company, THE OM, have partnered with MLA College. Together they have produced something truly ground-breaking for crew looking at their future alongside and after yachting.

They have developed an opportunity for superyacht crew to access a final year BSc or MSc In Sustainable Maritime Operations. This degree is delivered via online distance learning, designed to be accessible and completely flexible around working routines. If you don't have previous academic qualifications, you can use your CoC's to gain entry. With the opportunity for qualified masters to jump straight to an MSc. Whether you want to build on your maritime qualifications, empower your current role or translate your experience and qualifications gained in the sector into a meaningful and

successful future career ashore find out more
<http://the-om.co.uk/smo>

Read Emma's previous article [here](#).

Superyacht Crew: Prepare For Your Future Today

Superyacht Crew: Prepare for your future today. Why your CoC's could be the key to accessing a career-enhancing maritime sustainability degree qualification.

Are you a superyacht crew member thinking about your future?

There comes a point in your career when you start to wonder, what next? It could be that feeling that you are nearing the end of your time in the industry or have recently completed your OOW, Chief Mates or Masters or simply you are settled in your career and having achieved a rotational position, you are interested in committing to some professional development.

For most, after the time, cost and blood, sweat and tears of achieving your CoC's, you could be forgiven for feeling very glad to see the back of any further study. But for many, once the euphoria of achievement dies away, there is often a feeling of a need to keep moving forward and building on your knowledge and skillset. There is also the question of how, when the time comes, to translate your experience and qualifications gained in the superyacht sector into a

meaningful and successful future career ashore.

However, it's not simple, committing to any kind of study or professional development is difficult when you work in an environment where operational schedules and the demands of the yacht's owner are so liable to change. There is also the human factor, will you have the time, energy and concentration levels to apply yourself to a study programme? When it comes to a degree, for many crew it can seem completely out of reach, giving up your career to attend university would entail a huge loss of earnings and investment in course fees and accommodation. Combine this with one simple factor – most crew quite wrongly don't consider themselves particularly academic, and you have a series of barriers that might seem insurmountable.

Where THE OM come in

It is for all these reasons that after 12 years working at sea as a yachtie, and 20 years developing and delivering superyacht training and mentoring, I set up my company [THE OM](#), to address the need for crew to find pathways and solutions to achieve success in their professional lives, and for the industry itself to develop new strategies to evolve as an innovative, sustainable and equitable place to be.

With this in mind, The OM has forged a partnership with MLA College in Plymouth (part of the BAU Global International University Group and a partner of Plymouth University) to help promote and develop their degree level and professional development programs, designed for superyacht crew who wish to educate themselves beyond the limits of their professional qualifications.

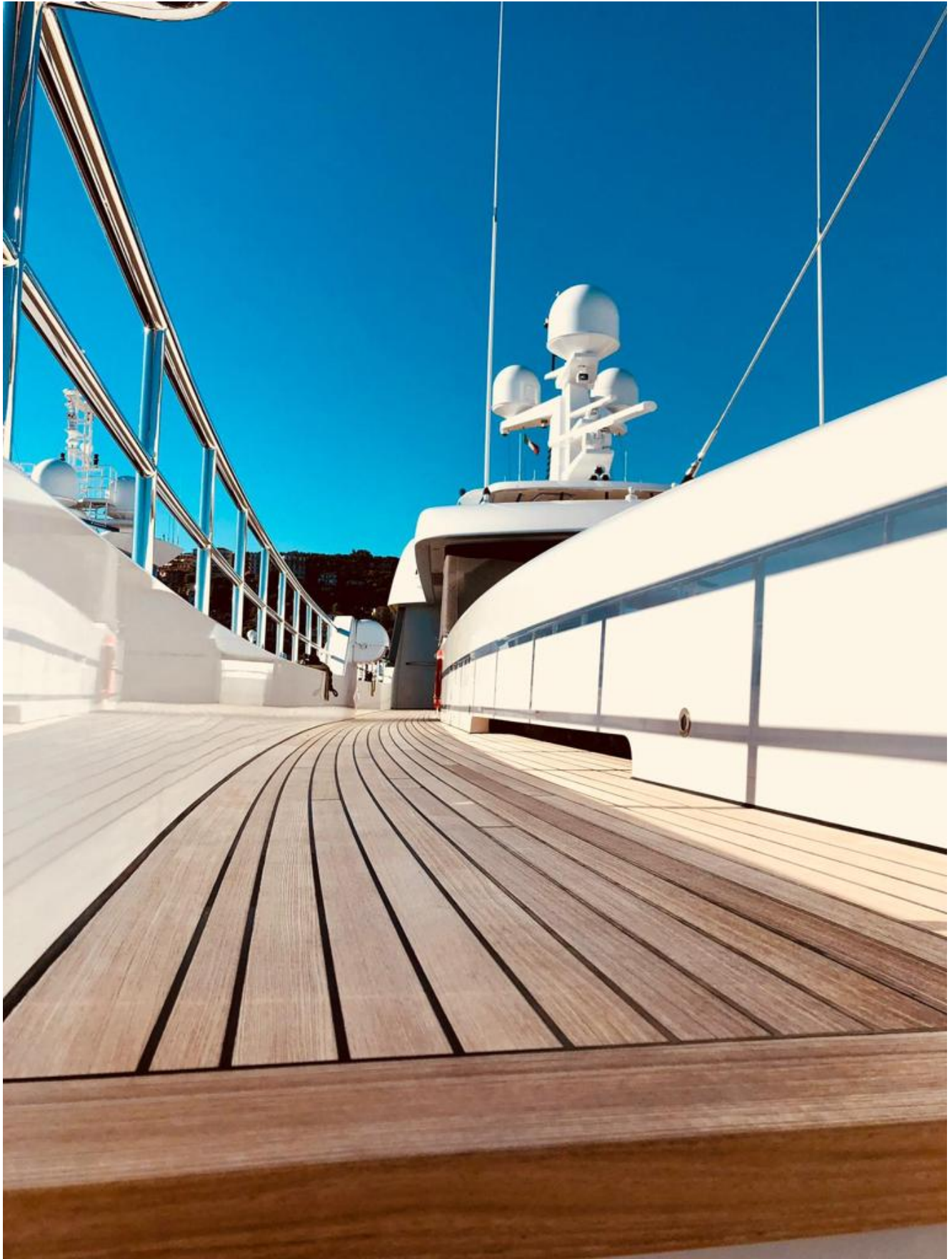
MLA has developed a final year BSc (Hons) degree and MSc programme in Sustainable Maritime Development, designed to be accessible and completely flexible around the complex working lives of maritime professionals and in particular, superyacht

crew. With sustainability a subject area of huge importance in all aspects of the industry, combined with the colleges' close links with the United Nations and its sustainability goals, the course also represents an ideal stepping stone for crew to take their onboard experience to something more tangible in shore-based employment. If you have an existing HNC, HND or FdSc qualification then the application is straightforward.

This year, we have taken this a step further, based on my experience of so many of the crew I work with, I knew that the programmes we had designed were still out of reach to a huge section of those we were trying to help. I believe very strongly that there should be no barriers to learning, superyacht crew have extraordinary jobs, with pressures and responsibilities rarely encountered in more "normal" shore-based employment. So many of the senior crew that I have trained went straight into the industry at 18, and although having achieved career success do not consider themselves "academic". We, therefore, needed to value the experiential learning and CoC's of non-academically qualified crew and create a unique access route to Higher Education study. We are therefore now able to accept applications based on CoC's and individual's professional and life experience as a viable alternative for crew who do not have the benefit of post eighteen education.

Currently, this ground-breaking opportunity is open to any crew member who has achieved their OOW/Chief Mate/Masters CoC, Engineering Officers are also welcome to apply. With three entry points a year, and several options for payment including a student loan, it provides options for crew to develop their life and professional skillsets, empowering them to real excellence in their onboard roles, whilst gaining valuable careers beyond the industry when that time comes.

[THE OM](#) handles all applications to the programme from superyacht crew. To find out more and discuss your options, please [click here](#).



At superyacht content, we provide a wealth of resources to crew members to help with career progression. You can find more [here](#).