

What Is a Superyacht First Officer? And How Do You Become One?

Want to learn more about the role of the Superyacht First Officer and how you can land your dream yacht job?

Having come from a yachting background, our team is equipped to help you land the job of a lifetime as a Superyacht First Officer. Here is all you need to know:



What is a Superyacht First Officer?

Typically, the Superyacht First Officer, often referred to as the Chief Officer/Chief mate is second in command to the Captain. Meaning, they work side-by-side with one another regularly. First officers face the responsibility of being able to cover the Captain when needed due to the chain of command on board. It is not uncommon for the First Officer's duties to overlap those of the Captain, whether those responsibilities involve managing, leading, or communicating with the crew. In addition to knowledge of all deck and bridge procedures, the Superyacht's First officer must also possess the ability to teach the crew new repair and maintenance skills.

How much is the Superyacht First Officers' salary?

It's hard to say a certain figure, due to yacht crew salaries changing based on the size of the vessel, the yacht they're aboard, and so on. But realistically, for first officers, an expected monthly salary ranges from €4,500 up to €10,000.

What are the main responsibilities of a Superyacht First Officer?

Here is a more thorough list of all that is expected from a Superyacht First Officer. They have to:

- Assist the Captain with all administrative duties.
- Follow all safety procedures. This includes arranging regular safety drills.
- Use bridge and navigation systems to navigate the yacht.

- Manage the Deck Crew.
- Maintain the deck itself. This includes being in charge of deck inventory and equipment.
- Set watch schedules.
- Adhere to the deck budget.

What skill sets are required to become a Superyacht First Officer?

To fulfil their role and responsibilities, Superyacht First Officers must also:

- Have good leadership skills to lead the Deck Crew and stand-in for the Captain if need be.
- Be a good communicator with the ability to delegate.
- Have excellent organisation for boat handling and watchkeeping.
- Demonstrate very strong navigational skills.
- Have *ISM* and *ISPS* knowledge and practices.
- Show extensive knowledge of boat maintenance. This includes knowledge of carpentry, corrosion, rope splicing, outboard motors, painting, and varnishing.
- Have advanced water sports knowledge.
- Demonstrate strong computer skills.
- Basic engineering skills.

How to land a job as a First Officer:

The role of the First Officer is high up on the chain of command and therefore, experience is key. Chances are, if you're currently an experienced second officer, you can progress to become a First Officer. However, if you're just starting out as a yachtie, a minimum of five years of experience working in a similar role is expected of you. This can include work as a second officer, or experience as a

captain on a smaller vessel.

As well as this, you must have a minimum license of OOW unlimited. MCA STCW Officer of the Watch or Chief Mate certifications are required for most First and Second officers. But, these requirements may differ under certain circumstances. And RYA or IYT certificates can be obtained for yachts of a smaller size.

Listen to Brianne Wight discuss what her role as a Superyacht second officer entails:

Video by Oat Futures

Hopefully, now you have a better understanding more about the role of a Superyacht First Officer and how you can become one. If you have any questions for us, please make sure to get in contact with one of our team.

[Click here](#) to register now and view the latest yacht job vacancies via the Superyacht jobs board.

And for the latest Superyacht news, [click here](#).

Reasons Why a Degree Will Supercharge Your Career

Today we spoke to Emma Baggett, director of [The-0M](#), 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/CW5a05aLk2Q/>

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.

https://www.instagram.com/p/CW-_GyaMsuu/

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](#).