

Trainee Induction

Induction is a process for helping a trainee to settle into new working and social environments. There are two periods where a new entrant may find him/herself feeling vulnerable, that is: during the first semester at college and then during the first sea phase. It is important, therefore, that the trainee is made fully aware of what the college and company expect of them, of what they should expect of the company and college and of what they should expect of those who will be responsible for their onboard training.

The induction process should start at the initial interview, during which the prospective trainee must be made aware of the various social and cultural issues that could affect their decision as to whether they are suited for a career at sea:

1. On board environment

The trainee could easily feel socially isolated, especially during the first trip to sea, if the first language of the trainee is not that of the majority of those serving onboard.

2. Discrimination

In what is a male-dominated industry, it is important that women trainees are not discriminated against.

3. Attitude and motivation

The attitude and motivation of the trainee is important – if this is wrong it can frustrate everything else.

4. Understanding different cultures

The trainee must have an understanding of the cultural backgrounds, beliefs and attitudes of the different nationality groups with which they may work, both at college and at sea.

5. Understanding the risks

The trainee must be made aware of the risks that they may face when at sea, not least piracy and criminalisation of the seafarer.

Company induction

The purpose of the company induction should be to engender in the trainee a sense of belonging to that company. The following subject areas are suggested for inclusion:

- An introduction to the company, its mission and organisational structure
- Communications
- The Training agreement
- Conditions of service (pay and allowances, subsistence, leave etc)
- Required standards of dress
- Safety
- Accommodation/living arrangements
- Discipline and complaints procedure, including bullying and discrimination

College/university induction

The first college/university phase is often referred to as pre-sea training. As such it should cover an outline of the industry and its organisation; ship familiarisation; survival and safety; accident prevention; practical seamanship; health and hygiene and further training opportunities.

Shipboard induction

The trainee will invariably arrive onboard just as the ship is preparing to leave port. Induction may not be really possible until the ship is underway, but it is extremely important that the trainee completes the Safety Induction programme before the ship sails,

Every trainee should be entrusted to a responsible crew member to show them their accommodation, explain the social arrangements and introduce them to other ship staff. The newcomer should then be interviewed by the Master or head of department who can explain about the more formal aspects of employment, pay, disciplinary procedures etc.

It is during the first few weeks on board that new trainee's attitudes and impressions will be firmly shaped and which will determine whether they stay or leave after the first trip. Onboard induction is an ongoing process that is only complete when the trainee feels accepted as a valued member of the ship's team. But, the trainee also has an important role in this process: attentiveness and a willingness to learn will engender support from the whole ship's team.

Everyone who comes into contact with the new trainee will have some influence on the induction process. Successful induction is based on pre-planning - having some formalised system that is thought out before the trainee arrives. The Master will have ultimate responsibility in ensuring that the company's induction procedures are implemented on board, but it will usually be the new trainee's immediate supervisor who will carry out the induction process.

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Alert!

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