

DECK-CADET TRAINING AT ANGLO EASTERN SHIP MANAGEMENT (AESM)

Deck Cadet Harsimar Kapoor



Friends! I am Harsimar Kapoor, a proud Deck Cadet of Anglo Eastern Ship Management (AESM), and will be shortly appearing for the 2nd Mate's Certificate of Competency.

Quite frankly, I was drawn to join this profession initially because of the glamour attached to the profession and my parents too were excited about my choice.

I was chosen by AESM for the pre-sea training, only after a rigorous selection procedure. I joined the 12 month pre-sea training programme at a pre-sea institute as a sponsored cadet of AESM. Only after joining did I realize how tough and disciplined pre-sea training was going to be and this whole process was not going to be a bed of roses. However today, after having completed the pre-sea programme through AESM, as well as getting trained so methodically during the 18 months at sea on board Anglo Eastern (AE) ships, I have absolutely no regrets. In fact I can say with a lot of confidence that the overall quality of shipboard training was excellent as also the motivation and encouragement of my seniors on board. The support and guidance by the dedicated faculty at Anglo Eastern Maritime Training Centre (AEMTC) and the managers at Anglo Eastern (India) made me feel confident and positive as a trainee and generated a feeling of accomplishment.

At the pre-sea institute I was taught nautical (navigation, stability, chartwork, ship construction, cargo work, etc.) as well as non-nautical subjects (like maths, physics, chemistry and English) – a total of 19 subjects actually! Besides classroom studies, there was plenty of practical training in the workshop as well as outdoors – like seamanship, survival at sea, fitter's jobs, etc. There was also a lot of recreation in our spare time and all kinds of games as well. It was undoubtedly a very strict and disciplined life that was necessary to prepare us for life at sea. During my pre-sea training, I observed that there would be very little application of subjects like maths, chemistry and physics on board the ships later on. On the flip side, what I found most interesting and exciting were subjects that dealt with the practical aspect of navigating a ship - such as Navigation, Bridge Watchkeeping and Chartwork.

After completion of the pre-sea training I underwent a 2-week Induction programme at AEMTC which did me a world of good. I was briefed and given practical training in the well equipped workshop at AEMTC on a lot of activities and tasks involving safety and quality on board as also put through a lot of value added HRD topics like teamwork, motivation, etiquette training, work ethics, personality building, officer-like qualities, etc. A series of written, oral and practical tests were carried out right through the course as also a psychometric evaluation.

I then sailed on 3 different types of vessels to complete my 18 months sea time, with AESM ensuring that I get an exposure on all types of ships. On board my first vessel I

was able to apply my pre-sea training in a practical way on the ship in its day-to-day running. I was taught safe working practices, cargo work and tank/hold cleaning while in port or while at sea, and I was given plenty of opportunity to assist in Bridge watches, whether they were sailing watches, coastal passages or even while the vessel was at anchor. My seniors on board were excellent Mentors and I was given a chance to be a part of various surveys and inspections, during which I learnt a lot. I even got a chance to keep engine-room watches to gain knowledge about various machinery.

Each time I had to join a vessel I had to undergo a 'debriefing' and then a 'clearance process' at the AEMTC, in which I had to demonstrate my knowledge and understanding on various relevant topics, and only then cleared for joining the next vessel. This process ensures that the cadets are always up to date with their knowledge, and nobody becomes slack or nonchalant about their studies and practical work. The final clearance enabling me to appear for my first Certificate of Competency is termed as the 'sea time clearance' and this is more stringent than the earlier ones.

After my first ship, I attended a 3-week training programme at AEMTC that covered key areas of practical tasks and the cadets were given the chance to do intensive chartwork, bridge watchkeeping on the simulator, passage planning, project work, stability and navigation exercises, and at the same time their various doubts are clarified by the excellent faculty. This Midterm Course is very helpful as it improved my understanding of 'why' a job was done in a particular manner on board. Having sailed earlier, my understanding of what was taught in the mid-term course further enhanced the fundamentals in a quick and easy way. This innovative method of a 'sandwich' type of training was much more beneficial to me than the 12-month pre-sea course and my 'learning graph' shot up steeply.

To sum it all up, in hindsight I would say that the merchant navy is an excellent profession, AESM an excellent organisation and the training at AEMTC on par with the best in the maritime industry anywhere in the world. However, I strongly feel that the pre-sea training should be reduced to about 6 months and the on-board training should be increased to about 24 months, as this profession is more practical-oriented rather than just subjective or theoretical.

The greatest part of sea life is that I get to travel the whole world soaking in the various experiences, interacting with people of various nationalities, and the best part is one keeps earning at the same time. On the other hand, without doubt, the negative aspect is staying away for long periods at a stretch from family and friends, and the little pleasures of life ashore are sorely missed.

I will always cherish my apprenticeship and experience with AESM. Last but certainly not the least, I must say that life at sea has really measured up to my expectations by making me mature and changed my outlook to life. I am now looking forward to sailing as a 3rd officer soon.

Engineer Cadet Harsimar Kapoor



Hi! My name is Gavi Coutinho and I have just obtained my Class IV (Motor) Certificate of Competency. I was selected by Anglo Eastern Ship Management (AESM) for the Graduate Mechanical Engineer (GME) pre-sea training course after obtaining my graduation degree in Mechanical Engineering.

The pre-sea training was a new and exciting experience wherein I learnt about the ship, different machineries, their operational aspects, safety constraints and also the environmental hazards posed by these ships. This pre-sea training was very helpful after joining the ship, particularly topics such as engineering knowledge (general and motor) came in very handy since they helped me understand the working of main engines and the vast ancillary machinery. The hands-on practical training provided was really useful in that I was confident in carrying out the day to day shipboard tasks. As for the duration of the pre-sea training, I feel that one year is adequate provide the training is taken seriously.

Before I joined the ship, I had to undergo a Junior Engineer induction training programme at the Anglo Eastern Maritime Training Center (AEMTC) as also the engine Operational Level course on a full mission engine room simulator. The induction training conducted by the excellent faculty at AEMTC, further enhanced the understanding of what was expected by Anglo Eastern on board their ships with added emphasis on Safety Management Systems.

Finally, the big day had come. It was my joining day. With lots of dreams, aspirations and hopes I stepped on board 'my first ship'. Initially it did appear a little strange to me for a few days but then things changed with tide and time! I understood my responsibilities and started fulfilling them religiously. The tasks as detailed in the Training and Record book helped me to understand what exactly I need to know as far as the day to day running and maintenance of machinery is concerned. My seniors were excellent Mentors in that they helped me carry out different tasks and guided me very well. As a result, I was able to complete most of the tasks required to be finished on board prior appearing for the Class IV Certificate of Competency. This assisted me in being successful in my Class IV examinations and I feel that the overall structure of the training is a good way of ensuring that one becomes a good engineer later on.

In the end it was a tough life. But the satisfaction of completing a task and the compliment from your seniors was just priceless. So also the opportunity to see different places was something I really enjoyed. I feel the entire training process is good enough and should be continued even in the future!