

Merchant Navy Engineering Officer

Merchant Navy engineering officers are members of the team operating, maintaining and repairing all the machinery and technical equipment on board a ship. Officers are responsible for the work of the engine room ratings under their command. They may also work for the Royal Fleet Auxiliary (RFA), which supplies the needs of Royal Navy ships at sea.

The Work

You could be:

- making sure that the ship's main engine is in good working order and operating effectively
- using computer controlled engine management systems
- ensuring power generation and distribution systems are operating
- monitoring mechanical, electrical and hydraulic equipment
- identifying faults and planning and supervising the carrying out of repairs
- in charge of making spare parts and keeping sufficient stock levels on board
- responsible for replacing damaged parts with new ones
- carrying out routine checks to prevent failure
- supervising the work of the engine room ratings.

Pay

The figures below are only a guide. Actual salaries may vary, depending on:

- where you work
- the size of the company or organisation you work for
- the demand for the job.

Average starting salaries, when qualified, are around £25,000 to £30,000 a year for a junior/fourth engineer officer, rising to about £37,000 for third officer and £54,000 or more for second officer. A chief engineering officer can earn up to £70,000 a year or more. While at sea, you would have free accommodation and food as well as some transport costs.

Conditions

- You would spend much of your time in the engine room of the ship, which can be cramped, dark, noisy and hot.
- You would also work on the deck in all weather conditions.
- You would be required to work irregular hours, including shifts (watches).
- You would spend long periods with the same group of people for company.
- You may have your own cabin and bathroom on larger ships.
- Depending on the company and the ships you work on, you could be away from home for long periods.
- You would be entitled to good periods of shore leave.
- You would have to wear a uniform.

- In the Royal Fleet Auxiliary (RFA) you may work in combat zones.

Getting In

- In Scotland there are two institutions that run courses for training as a Merchant Navy engineering officer: City of Glasgow College and the University of the Highlands and Islands.
- City of Glasgow College offers a range of courses leading to marine engineering officer qualifications. See their website for details and entry requirements.
- UHI offers the Merchant Navy Cadet Programme (Marine Engineering). Entry requirements for Year 1 are 4 subjects at National 5 including Maths, English and a science subject.
- You require sponsorship by a shipping company or agency and the programme involves spending time at college and at sea. The sponsoring company may have additional entry requirements to the colleges.
- There may be transferable skills for those with a mechanical engineering (or similar) degree (SCQF Level 9).
- You will have to pass a statutory medical and fitness examination.
- [The Merchant Navy Training Board \(MNTB\)](#) careers website provides a full list of all the scholarship organisations, shipping companies and training organisations which offer sponsorship for the above entry routes.
- Specific entry requirements for the Royal Fleet Auxiliary (RFA) can differ from Merchant Navy shipping companies, including attendance of the Admiralty Interview Board. Full details are on the [RFA website](#).

There are jobs on different kinds of vessel: cruise liners, oil tankers, container ships, ferries, cargo ships.

There is a National 4 Skills for Work course in Uniformed and Emergency Services which introduces school pupils to careers in the emergency services, the armed services and the Merchant Navy. There is also a National 5 Skills for Work in Maritime Skills.

What Does It Take

You need to have:

- good mathematical ability
- problem solving skills
- a responsible attitude
- good teamworking skills
- leadership and management skills
- initiative and self-reliance
- good communication skills
- an interest in mechanics and electronics.

You need to be:

- decisive
- practical and resourceful
- aware of safety issues
- able to react quickly in an emergency

- able to stay calm in a crisis.

The members of the crew generally come from a wide range of countries and will have varying degrees of knowledge of the English language.

Training

- The programmes for officer trainees last for approximately 3-3.5 years and usually consist of three periods at college and two at sea, although this can vary depending on the college and the sponsoring company.
- All programmes qualify you as a Junior Officer, giving you Officer of the Watch (OOW) certification, the first stage of your professional seafaring qualifications.
- They also lead to professional seafaring Certificates of Competency which will allow you to work on board any ship anywhere in the world.
- You may later be able to study for higher qualifications which will enhance your career prospects.
- The training programme for the Royal Fleet Auxiliary (RFA) may differ. Details can be found on the [RFA website](#).

Getting On

- In the Merchant Navy there is a clear career structure, with promotion being based on merit, length of service and gaining the relevant Certificates of Competency.
- You can progress through the ranks from junior/fourth officer through third and second engineer to chief engineering officer.
- Experienced Merchant Navy engineering officers are also well-placed to take up shore-based positions in shipping companies and port authorities as well as in engineering and manufacturing companies, in general management and in nautical colleges.

Contacts

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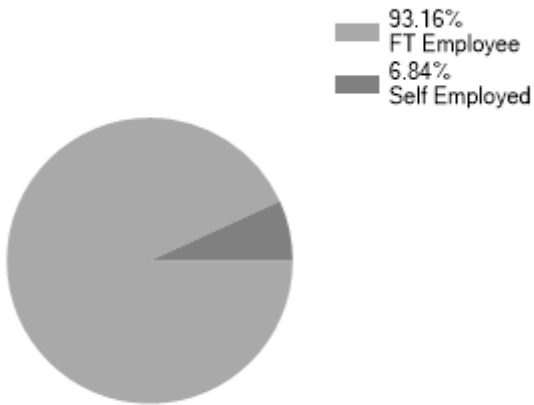
Website: www.nautinst.org

Twitter: @NauticalInst

Facebook: www.facebook.com/thenauticalinstitute

Statistics

Employment Status UK %



Past Unemployment - Scotland

No Claimant statistics available for Scotland.

LMI data powered by [LMI for All](#)

Predicted Employment Statistics : Not available this career.