

The Merchant Navy is a non-combatant commercial fleet, which deals with transporting cargo and occasionally passengers by sea. The Merchant Navy fleet includes cargo ships, container ships, a barge carrying ships, tankers, bulk carriers, refrigerator ships, passenger ships as well as roll-off/roll on ships.

The two main functional areas in the Merchant Navy are Navigation and Engineering.

Navigation: Officers in this category concern themselves with navigation of the ship, the loading and off-loading of cargo and safety of the passengers (if any) and the crew. The Captain of the ship is the chief navigator. He decides the course the ship would take and guides the ship to safety during inclement weather and other emergencies. The Captain takes complete charge of the men and materials boarding the ship. All other officers help him in carrying out his duties.

Engineering: The marine engineers are responsible for the efficient and smooth operation of the ship. They take care of all engineering equipment's installed on the ship including all electrical and refrigeration machinery.

Eligibility Criteria:

Pass in the 10 +2/ equivalent examination with Physics, Chemistry, and Mathematics.

Upper age limit for the program is 20 years (25 years for SC / ST).

The candidate also has to fulfill certain medical norms.

Merchant Navy entrance exam:

The All India Merchant Navy Entrance Test (AIMNET) is conducted by Bharat Shipping Limited usually in the month of November-December every year for following courses:

B.Tech Naval Architecture & Ship Building (4 years) Qualification -Pass HSC OR 10+2 from a recognized board with 50% average in PCM (Physics, Chemistry, Mathematics) maximum age-25 years.

B.Tech – Marine Engineering: Qualification - Pass HSC OR 10+2 from a recognized with 60% average in PCM (Physics, Chemistry, Mathematics) maximum age-25 years

B.Sc Nautical Science: Qualification - Pass HSC OR 10+2 from a recognized with 60% average in PCM (Physics, Chemistry, Mathematics) maximum age-25 years

Pre-Sea Training G.P. Ratings: Qualification – 10th pass with a total average of 40% marks (with Mathematics & Science) OR has passed in Govt. approved 2 years ITI course from a recognized institute with 50% minimum aggregate marks. 40% marks in English subject shall require in 10th or 12th OR any Degree OR Diploma course approved by AICTE maximum age-25 years.

Procedure:

After successful completion of your engineering degree in any of the above-mentioned streams, you will have to undergo a pre-sea training. The pre-sea training is conducted by Marine Engineering and Research Institute. The duration of this course is one year. The advertisement for this course is published in the employment section of newspapers in the month of November every year.

Courses to Join Merchant Navy:

There are various courses to join after 10th or 12th in both private and Govt training institute recognized and approved by Director General of Shipping, Ministry of Shipping. They are:-

Pre Sea Training – In this course, you will get proper training of maintenance of engine as well as the deck. It is also known as G.P.R (General Purpose Training) you can join this course after 10th with a minimum aggregate percentage of 40% with Mathematics, Science, and English as a compulsory subject and should have 40% marks in each of them. The time duration of this course is 6 months and age limit is joining this course is 17 to 25 years. Beside this other short-term courses are:

- 3-month Pre-Sea Course in Deck rating.
- 3-month Pre-Sea Course in Engine rating.
- 4-month Pre-Sea Course in Saloon rating.

Deck Cadet – In this course you are given a diploma in Nautical Science. The minimum education qualification for this course is 10+2 with P.C.M (Physics, Chemistry, and Math) as compulsory subjects and you should have scored minimum 50% in aggregate and 50% in English at 12th level.

Institutes that offer this course:

- Tolani Maritime Institute (TMI) 1st Infinite Courses Pune
- Samundra Institute of Maritime Studies Infinite Courses Rank Mumbai
- International Maritime Institute (IMI) Infinite Courses Delhi
- Vels Academy of Maritime Studies Infinite Courses Rank Chennai
- Maharashtra Academy of 5th Naval Education and Training Infinite Courses Pune
- Institute of Technology & Marine Engineering Infinite Courses Rank Kolkata
- B.P. Marine Academy Infinite Courses Mumbai
- TS Rahaman Infinite Courses Mumbai
- Indian Maritime University (IMU) Infinite Courses Chennai
- Coimbatore Marine College (CMC)

Other Private Training Institutions: -

- Orissa Maritime Academy, Jagatsinghpur
- Trident College of Marine Technology, Kolkata

- Asha Institute of Marine Technology, Varanasi
- Sriram Institute of Maritime Studies, Delhi
- Aquatech Institute of Maritime Studies, Delhi
- Euro Tech Maritime Academy, Cochin
- Commander Ali Academy of Merchant Navy, Secunderabad (Hyderabad)
- Sri Chakra Maritime College, Pondicherry
- Balaji Seamen Training Institute, Chennai
- Maritime Training Academy, Goa

Different roles in Merchant Navy:

Deck Officer - The officers from this branch primarily look after the ships navigation, loading/unloading of cargo and the general maintenance and administration of the ship. The officer joins in the rank of 3rd officer and is subsequently promoted to the rank of 2nd Officer, Chief Officer and finally the Master of the ship.

Engineering Officer - These are the officers who are qualified in Marine Engineering. They join as 4th Engineer and step by step, get promoted to 3rd, 2nd and Chief Engineer, subject to their passing the competency exams and performance on board the ship. The Engineering department in addition to looking after the main engines is also responsible for associated equipment like power generation equipment, cargo pumps, and air - conditioning etc.

Radio Officers - The Radio Officers look after all the electronic communication and the related records. In addition, he also looks after electronic navigation aids such as radar, depth measuring devices, long-range navigation equipment and global positioning system etc. However, this category of personnel has been almost phased out and their duties passed over to other deck officers. To be qualified as Radio Officer an individual needs to do a two-week GMDSS course.

Purser - He is an officer who looks after all the administrative work related to pay and perks of personnel on board. However, this category of personnel has also been almost phased out and their duties passed over to other deck officers.

Ratings - There are three kinds of ratings - deck, engine room and catering. Deck rating is responsible for cargo handling, mooring/ unmooring and general maintenance of the ship. Similarly, the engine room ratings assist the engineering officers in maintenance and operation of engines and associated equipment. The catering crew consists of Steward / Cooks and as the name suggests, they look after the catering and the housekeeping of officer's cabin.

Employment Opportunities:

Merchant Navy is the backbone of international trade, carrying cargo all over the world. Without the merchant navy, much of the import-export business would come to a grinding halt.

may be found on various types of ships such as tankers, cargo and passenger ships. Companies that run merchant ships require trained people who can operate and maintain the ships. Trained people are required for the three main departments of the ship: the deck, the engine, and the service department. Therefore, there is enough scope for employment in Indian as well as foreign ships. In the domestic companies, the starting salaries may vary from Rs 20, 000 to Rs 50, 000 per month. In foreign ships, it could be as high as Rs1, 00,000.