

RYA Advanced Powerboat Examination – a guide

Generally speaking if you want to work commercially in a RIB or a single engine Motor Cruiser up to c33ft then you will need to acquire your Advanced Powerboat Commercial Endorsement. If you intend using single or twin engine motor cruisers in the 10m – 24m size bracket then you would do best to consider either Coastal Skipper or Yachtmaster commercially endorsed qualifications.

How you obtain a commercially endorsed Advanced Powerboat Certificate will vary as follows:

- 1) If you attained your Advanced Powerboat Course Completion Certificate prior to 31st December 2004 then you can commercially endorse this certificate.
- 2) If you either do not have an Advanced Powerboat Course Completion Certificate or acquired it post 1st January 2005 then you will need to undertake the Advanced Powerboat Examination.

How do I commercially endorse my existing Advanced Powerboat Course completion certificate?

To endorse the certificate, you will need to send to the RYA:

- The original certificate
- A Certificate of Completion of a Basic Sea Survival Course.
- A Medical Fitness Certificate. (The RYA or MCA can provide a form ML5, which can be completed by any Doctor. – this form is also available via our website)
- An endorsement fee of £20.00 (correct April 2006)
- A passport size photograph (print name on back of photograph)

What prior experience do I need before considering the Examination?

The RYA state:

"Minimum Seatime Required: 2 Years relevant experience including night pilotage (As a guide 30 days, 2 days as skipper , 800 miles, 12 night hours). If you hold a RYA Advanced Powerboat Course Completion Certificate the seatime is reduced to: 20 days, 2 days as skipper, 400 miles, 12 night hours.

As with any role where you are responsible for the safety of others you should not underestimate the magnitude of the responsibility you are taking on. If you are unsure whether you have the requisite skills and experience then chat to a RYA Training Centre, the RYA or an Examiner.

Many Training Centres (us included) offer 'work ups' to the Examination. Often this consist of the Advanced Powerboat Course itself however equally it could entail a bespoke 3-4 days focussing on a variety of areas. Details of the Advanced Powerboat Course are available in a separate document.

How do I book the Examination and what does it cost?

This can be done via the RYA website or via the school (this is how most are booked). There is a fee for the Exam and a fee for the commercial endorsement (April 06 - £123 and £20 respectively. Note the RYA pages later in this document are out of date re prices). You will also need to provide a suitable vessel – Training Centres will generally allow you to use theirs.

Do I need evidence of my logged hours?

Some Examiners like to see logged experience others do not ask for it. Either way expect to discuss your experience in detail with the Examiner and be prepared to provide them with the following figures:

Number of days, miles & night hours for both tidal and non-tidal waters.

What does the examination entail?

As pages 3 to 6 of this document we have included the RYA's "RYA/MCA Advanced Powerboat Examinations – Notes for Candidates". This document details the subjects that you need to be au-fait with and provides some additional background info.

There is no prescribed format for the examination itself and the structure of the exam will vary from Examiner to Examiner according to a variety of factors. For example the operating area that the exam is being conducted in could affect how an Examiner seeks to structure a course, equally the number of candidates attending or the weather may impact their approach. A reasonably common format is:

- Shorebased discussion with candidates
- Afloat session to assess boat handling capability
- Shorebased session to address a theory paper and plan a passage
- Afloat session (in the dark) to execute planned passage.

An Examiner will not try to catch you out, create outlandish scenarios to test you or seek to place you under undue pressure however they will expect to see evidence of highly competent boat handling, see through your test paper and their discussions with you clear evidence that you have the knowledge required to plan and execute passages and generally be confident that you can competently and safely take responsibility for others in your care. Do not expect them to address every area on the syllabus as there is simply not the time however you should be capable of doing so.

There may be times during your exam where a particular manoeuvre does not go as you planned it. If this happens the Examiner would generally be happy for you to decide to undertake this task again, repeated failures to successfully execute a task or a repeated inability to successfully execute tasks at the first attempt is unlikely to lead to a pass.

The approximate exam duration is stated as follows:

- 1 Candidate 4-5 hours
- 2 Candidates 5-6 hours
- 3 Candidates 6-7 hours

No more than 3 candidates can be examined in one session. In our experience examinations can often last longer than this.

Do not hesitate to call Paul Glatzel with any questions on 01202 686666 or email him at paul@powerboattraininguk.co.uk Paul is a RYA Powerboat Trainer and an Advanced Powerboat Examiner



RYA / MCA ADVANCED POWERBOAT EXAMINATIONS NOTES FOR CANDIDATES

The Advanced Powerboat Examination is a practical test of boat handling and pilotage. It includes an oral and written test on passage planning, chart work, tides, collision regulations, weather and safety. At least some of the test must be undertaken at night.

Booking the Exam

Exam bookings should generally be made online through the RYA's website. Details on how to do this are available from training@rya.org.uk. If you are unable to book online, please contact the Certification Department on 0845 345 0377.

Exam Fee

£118.00 including VAT payable to RYA. If your exam is booked online you will be asked for your credit card details when you confirm the exam. Only if the exam is booked direct with an examiner will you need to pay by cheque (no cash) which should be given to your Examiner at the start of the exam.

Pre-exam Experience and Qualifications

Minimum Seatime required:

- 2 years relevant experience including night pilotage. (As a guide 30 days, 2 days as skipper, 800 miles, 12 night hours). If you hold an RYA Advanced Powerboat Course Completion Certificate the seatime is reduced to: 20 days, 2 days as skipper, 400 miles, 12 night hours.

Required for your exam:

- A passport photo
- A copy of your VHF/SRC operator's licence
- A copy of your valid first aid certificate

If you wish to add a commercial endorsement to your certificate you will also need:

- A copy of your Sea Survival certificate
- A completed ML5 medical report

Adding the commercial endorsement will cost an additional £17, payable (by cheque) to the RYA. This can be handed to the Examiner with the paperwork listed above.

Recommended:

- RYA Level 2 Powerboat Certificate or equivalent knowledge
- RYA Intermediate Powerboat Certificate or equivalent knowledge
- RYA Day Skipper shorebased navigation course completion certificate, or equivalent knowledge
- RYA Advanced Powerboat Course Completion Certificate.

Duration of Exam

1 candidate 4 - 5 hours
2 candidates 5 - 6 hours
3 Candidates 6 - 7 hours

No more than three candidates can be examined in one session.

Application

On the day of the exam, hand the Examiner your completed application form, a passport photo and copies of your VHF/SRC operator's licence, a valid first aid certificate and, if the exam was not booked online, the exam fee.

Boat

You will need to provide a seaworthy vessel capable of a minimum of 12 knots equipped with the following:

- Compass
- Lights conforming with IRPCS
- VHF radio (may be portable)
- GPS (may be hand held) or Plotter
- Depth Sounder
- Anchor, Chain and Warp
- Tow line
- Torch
- Basic tool kit and spares
- Heaving line
- Paddles or additional means of propulsion
- Flares – 2 hand held, 2 orange smoke
- Bilge pump or buckets / bailer
- First Aid Kit

Additionally if not on the boat you will need to bring to the exam:

- Laminated or waterproof charts
- A GPS set (may be hand held)
- Tide tables
- Pilotage information for the local area, eg pilot books, port information etc
- Plotting instruments

You must wear a 150 or 275 Newton lifejacket with a DoT(UK) approved lifejacket light.

Venue

The Examiner will discuss with you the venue for the examination. In general, large ports or estuary locations will be chosen rather than small ports with access opening directly to the open sea. Some areas due to lack of marks or other features are not suitable for an examination.

Oral Test

Part of the oral test must be conducted at a table either ashore or on a boat with an enclosed chart table. It is not possible to conduct this part of the test in an open boat.

Results

The Examiner will debrief you and give you their recommendation of pass or fail at the end of the examination. All qualifications are awarded by the Yachtmaster Qualification Panel. If you are successful, the RYA will send your certificate.

SYLLABUS FOR ADVANCED POWERBOAT EXAMINATION

1 Preparation for sea

- Preparation of vessel
- Safety brief
- Stowing and securing gear for coastal passages
- Engine operations and routine checks, fuel systems, kill cord
- Fuel system, bleeding, changing filters and impellers

2 Boat handling

- Hull forms and their handling characteristics, propeller configurations.
- Knowledge of action to be taken in rough weather
- Significance of tidal stream on sea conditions
- Steering and power control through waves
- Understanding and correct use of power trim and tabs
- Towing, under open sea conditions and in confined areas
- Strategy up and downwind and in heavy weather

Awareness of the effects of wind and tide when manoeuvring, including

- Steering to transits and in buoyed channels
- Turning in a confined space
- All berthing and un-berthing
- Picking up and leaving a mooring buoy
- Anchoring
- Recovery of man overboard
- Awareness of ground speed and ability to hold the boat on station

3 Responsibilities of skipper

- Can skipper the vessel with effective crew communication
- Preparing the vessel for sea and for adverse weather
- Tactics for heavy weather and restricted visibility
- Emergency and distress situations
- Customs procedures
- Courtesy to other water users

4 Passage making and Pilotage

Your chart work and theory knowledge should include:

- Charts, navigational publications and sources of navigational information
- Chart work, including position fixing and shaping course to allow for tide
- Tidal heights and depths
- Buoyage and visual aids to navigation
- Instruments, including compasses, logs, echo sounders, radio nav aids and chartwork instruments
- Passage planning and navigational tactics
- Importance of pre-planning

- High speed navigation, pre-planning and execution
- Use of electronic navigation (GPS & Radar)
- Pilotage techniques and plans for entry into or departure from harbour
- Use of leading and clearing lines, transits and soundings as aids to pilotage.
- Navigational records
- Limits of navigational accuracy and margins of safety
- Lee shore dangers

You should be able to enter and depart from a charted port by day or night. Your Examiner will give you a pilotage exercise and ask you to explain your planning. You will need to be aware of the problems of collision avoidance and how to determine your position by night.

5 Meteorology

You should be able to use weather and tidal information to predict likely sea conditions and make passage planning decisions.

- Definition of terms including the Beaufort Scale, and their significance to small craft.
- Sources of weather forecasts
- Weather systems and local weather effects
- Interpretation of weather forecasts, barometric trends and visible phenomena
- Ability to make passage planning decisions based on forecast information

6 Rules of the Road

Application of the International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea.

You should be able to identify power and sailing vessels by night. Identification of types of ship by night is not required except a knowledge of the lights of tugs and trawlers.

7 Safety

Candidates will be expected to know what safety equipment should be carried on board the vessel, based either on the recommendations in RYA booklet C8, or the Codes of Practice for the Safety of Small Commercial Vessels. In particular, candidates must know the responsibilities of a skipper in relation to:

- Fire prevention and fighting
- Hull damage/watertight integrity
- Medical emergency
- Towing and being towed
- VHF emergency procedures
- Explanation of helicopter rescue procedures
- Use of flares
- Man overboard
- Search patterns
- Lifejackets
- Life rafts