On-board Assessor — study guide

An on-board assessor confirms that a candidate can actually do the job, not just talk about it. This guide covers the assessment types, the process and the STCW basis.[1][2]

Key terms

Competence is "the ability to do a task adequately" — it is the combination of knowing the theoretical and the practical, described as **KNOWLEDGE + SKILLS**. The purpose of competence-based assessment is to collect sufficient evidence of workplace performance to demonstrate that individuals can perform or behave to the specified standards for a specified occupational role. A **skills-based assessment** normally tests the candidate's practical ability, demonstrated through action.

The assessment process

A typical on-board assessment runs through these steps:

1. **Prepare for the assessment** — gather materials, conduct the necessary safety checks, and inform affected personnel.
2. **Conduct a pre-assessment briefing with the candidate** — this is where the assessor informs the candidate about the documents involved in recording the outcome (for example the Training and Assessment Record Book).
3. **Observe the candidate's performance and record the results.**
4. **Evaluate the process and determine the assessment outcome.**
5. **Conduct an assessment debrief.**

During Step 5, the assessor should start with the areas where the candidate's performance did **not** fulfil expectations. A **performance improvement plan** is a document clarifying to the candidate all the areas where improvement can be made.

The STCW basis

STCW **Regulation I/14** stipulates that the **Company** has responsibility for ensuring that seafarers meet minimum standards of competency. STCW **Regulation I/6** is about training and assessment and requires that all assessors are appropriately qualified and competent.

Key facts to remember

- Competence = ability to do a task adequately = KNOWLEDGE + SKILLS; assessed to collect evidence of workplace performance.
- Skills-based assessment tests practical ability through action.
- Steps: prepare → pre-assessment briefing → observe/record → evaluate/determine outcome → debrief.
- Step 2 covers the documents (e.g. Training and Assessment Record Book); Step 1 covers materials, safety checks and informing personnel.

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- Debrief starts with areas that did not meet expectations. Improvement plan clarifies where to improve.
- STCW I/14 = Company's responsibility for competency; STCW I/6 = assessors qualified and competent.

Sources

1. STCW Convention and Code — Regulation I/6 (training and assessment; assessors) and Regulation I/14 (company responsibilities).