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 can be made online through the RYA's website www.rya.org.uk or via an RYA recognised training centre that provides Advanced Power Boat courses.

Exam Fee

£168.00 including VAT payable to RYA. Payment should be made to your examiner by cheque (GBP) or credit / debit card immediately prior to the exam.

Pre-exam Experience and Qualifications

Minimum age – 17

- 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. Your theory knowledge should be at the level of Coastal Skipper or above.

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 £32, 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 Coastal Skipper & Yachtmaster Offshore 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 either a cheque or card details.

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 impellors

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 navaids 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
- Awareness of risks to passengers and crew through shock and vibration caused by operating at speed
- Awareness of strategies to mitigate risk of injury caused by shock and vibration

Candidates should be familiar with all the equipment on board the vessel, as they may be asked to use this during the examination.