

Below is a list of the questions we are most often asked by DPOs currently working through the training scheme to become certified DP Operators. Please read through them carefully before contacting The Nautical Institute, as they will answer most of your questions about the DP Operator's training scheme.

Please ensure that you complete your logbook in the correct order, as failure to do so may result in your application being rejected and you having to complete additional sea time and/or retake courses.

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MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS

What are the minimum requirements to start the Offshore Scheme?

Following the 2010 Manila amendments to the STCW Convention and Code, The NI has implemented the following criteria for entry onto the DP Operators Training Scheme:

The minimum qualification is set at STCW Regulation II/1 - II/2 - II/3 Deck, Regulation III/1 – III /2 – III/3 – III/6 Engine and Regulation III/6 for ETOs

STCW	DEFINITION
II/1 Deck	Officers in charge of a navigational watch on ships of 500 GRT or more.
II/2 Deck	Master and chief mate on ships of 3,000 GRT or more.
II/3 Deck	Officers in charge of a navigational watch and of Masters on ships of less than 500 GRT.
III/1 Engine	Officers in charge of an engineering watch in a manned engine-room or designated duty engineers in a periodically unmanned engine-room.
III/2 Engine	Chief engineer officers and 2nd engineer officers on ships powered by main propulsion machinery of 3,000kW propulsion power or more.
III/3 Engine	Chief engineer officers and 2nd engineer officers on ships powered by main propulsion machinery of between 750kW and 3,000kW propulsion power.
III/6 ETO	Electro-Technical Officer

Prospective DPOs with alternative appropriate Marine Vocational Qualifications (MVQs) will not need an authorisation letter from The Nautical Institute to start the training scheme if their MVQ is listed on the approved list. The approved list is available on The NI Alexis Platform website, DP Section <http://www.nialexisplatform.org/certification/>.

Officer trainees (Cadets or ratings on a defined training programme)

Prospective DPOs who are in the process of training for an initial STCW or MVQ certificate can start the DP scheme and complete the Phase A - Induction course, Phase B - 60 days DP sea time and task sections and Phase C – Simulator course.

New Offshore scheme: Once the candidate holds an appropriate Certificate of Competency or Proficiency, the remaining 60 days DP sea time from Phase D and Phase E – Suitability Sign Off shall be completed.

Note: Cadets who are starting the DP Scheme are not permitted to undertake the STR course after the Phase C – Simulator course. The full 60 days DP sea time must be completed in Phase D before the Phase E suitability is signed off.

Please see the corresponding FAQs for information on the other schemes.

COMPLETING THE SCHEME

What do I need to complete in order to apply for my Offshore certificate?

The scheme phases must be followed and completed in the order below:

- A. Induction Course
- B. 60 DP days sea time + completion of all Task Sections
- C. Simulator Course
- D. 60 DP days sea time
- E. Statement of Suitability

When the phases have been completed, a confirmation letter should be obtained from the company confirming the sea time. A template for this letter is available on our [website](#). Please note that the new scheme has a different template letter to the old scheme as more information must be verified.

I started my training in 2014. Can I transfer to the new scheme?

Yes. It has been decided by DPTEG that if you want to start the new scheme you can transfer your Induction course only. Any sea time or subsequent courses cannot be carried over from the old scheme and you will only have four years from the date of your Induction course to complete the training. The remaining phases of the training can only be completed once you receive the new logbook. This means that if your Induction course was completed 5th August 2013, you would only have until 5th August 2017 to complete the training. If you would like to convert to the new scheme, please click on the link <http://www.nialexisplatform.org/certification/dynamic-positioning/guidance-faq/certification-faq/> for the required form.

Why do I only have four years to complete my DP training?

The training time limit has reduced from five years to four years for the new scheme in line with the reduced amount of DP time which is needed for the certificate.

What counts as a DP day?

If you have started the scheme after 1st January 2015 or transferred from the old scheme, you will be entering onto the new Offshore scheme. This means that a DP day is now counted as a minimum of two hours on the DP desk per day.

Who needs to sign off my DP sea time?

Your DP sea time must be signed off by the Master of the vessel. Each recorded DP sea time record entry must also be initialled individually by the same Master whose details and signature appears at the bottom of each page. Entries that have not been signed cannot be counted towards the required 120 days DP sea time.

If you are the trainee DPO and the Master on board, you are able to sign off your own sea time in your logbook. The certified DPO will need to sign the tasks off and then you will be able to sign as the Master below each of the task sections.

Can I sign off on a DP1 vessel to receive an Unlimited DP Certificate?

No. The requirement is that the last 30 DP sea time days served must be on a DP2/3 vessel. If you have enough DP sea time to qualify for an Unlimited DP certificate but sign off with your last 30 DP sea time days on board a DP 1 vessel you will be issued with a Limited DP Certificate. This is because a Master on board a DP1 vessel cannot attest to your competency as a DP operator on board a DP2/3 vessel as he would not have witnessed your handling of the equipment on board this class of vessel.

If you wish to be issued with an Unlimited DP Certificate, you can do one of the following.

New Offshore Scheme Frequently Asked Questions

- Delay applying for a certificate until you have obtained 30 consecutive DP sea time days on board a DP2/3 vessel.
- Apply for a Limited Certificate first – you can then apply for an Unlimited DP Certificate after you have accumulated 60 DP sea time days on board a DP2/3 vessel, dated after the issue date of your Limited. If your courses and/or DP sea time are due to expire soon, this option ensures you will not have to retake/redo them.

How many days do I need to complete to be issued with a certificate?

The new Offshore scheme requires 120 DP days. Please note that you must complete a minimum of 2 hours on the DP desk for any time that you are claiming. This does differ from the previous scheme.

I have completed more than 60 DP days in Phase B. Can I carry any over into Phase D?

Any time gained in excess of the 60 DP sea time days between the Induction and the Simulator course will normally be counted towards the total requirement of 120 DP sea time days. However, the candidate must complete at least 30 DP sea time days after the Simulator course and obtain the Statement of Suitability signed by the Master of the last vessel the candidate has served on before submitting his/her documents to The Nautical Institute.

Please also note that no passive time can be used in Phase D and a maximum of 30 passive DP days can be used in Phase B.

CADETS: If entering the scheme as a cadet, only the 60 DP sea time days before the Simulator course can be completed before the issuance of the STCW certificate. Please see question [What are the minimum requirements to start the Offshore Scheme?](#)

Where can I take the Induction and Simulator courses?

Please check our website for the latest list of [accredited training centres](#).

Do I have to complete the examination after my course?

Yes. The Induction course examination has been in place since 2012 and the Simulator course is being implemented for the new Offshore scheme.

What happens if I fail the examination?

If the Induction examination is failed you will have two additional chances to retake the course. The first is within 24 hours at the same training centre where the Induction course was taken. If the second attempt is failed you have six months to retake the examination and this can be done at any training centre.

What is active and passive time?

Active – with propulsion under the guidance of an NI-certified DPO

- Using DP system to control ship.
- Setting up on DP.
- Completing task sections combined with DP operations.
- FMEA, annual, class, charterer, field arrival and DP proving trials.
- Emergency ship handling training using manual controls using ONLY the thrusters available after worst case failure.

Passive – without propulsion under the guidance of an NI-certified DPO

- Training on in-built ship-based DP simulator on a vessel with simulator mode in the DP system or a standalone DP simulator.
- Task sections training and assessments by an NI-certified DPO and countersigned by the Master.

Note that you can only claim for a maximum of 30 DP passive days and these must be logged in the Phase B only. Passive time cannot be counted towards Phase D.

Can I use time from before my Induction course towards my certificate?

No. In the new scheme, time completed before the Induction course cannot be used for the application.

Can I use dry dock time towards my certificate?

No. Time must be active or passive. Dry dock time cannot be counted.

Can I reduce the amount of actual sea time that I need?

Yes. The Sea time Reduction (STR) course can reduce the amount of sea time to be completed for the new Offshore scheme. This course can only be done after the Simulator course and must be followed by 30 DP sea time days on board a classed DP vessel.

Please note that if you started the scheme as a Cadet, you are not allowed to reduce your time with the Sea time Reduction course.

Can I use a mixture of classed and unclassed DP time to gain a Limited/Unlimited certificate?

No. If you are working towards a Limited or Unlimited certificate you must complete 120 DP sea time days on board a classed vessel.

Can I use correction fluid (white-out) to amend dates in my logbook?

No. Any dates that have been altered with correction fluid may automatically make your application unsuccessful. If there is a simple mistake, please put a line through and have the correct information entered. Please then have the Master sign next to the correction so that it shows he is aware of it.

If you are not sure, please check our logbook guides which are available on our [website](#). Please contact the DP department (dp@nautinst.org) for any further clarification if needed before sending your documents in.

Can I use time not recorded in my logbook?

No. All DP sea time to be used in the application must be recorded in your NI logbook. Any time used in the application which is not logged in the NI logbook will not be counted towards the certificate and may result in your application being rejected.

My company won't provide a confirmation letter. What should I do?

Unfortunately all sea time being claimed for an application does need to be confirmed on a letter from the company. Any time which does not have a confirmation letter cannot be used. If you are unable to obtain this letter, the DP sea time will need to be redone.

Why have I been asked to retake my Induction/Simulator course(s) and/or sea time?

It is required that ALL components of the training programme be completed within four years.

At the time of application, any element (within Phase A, B, C, D and E) of the scheme not completed within the four year period will have to be repeated.

I need to repeat my Induction course as it is over four years old. Can I get a new scheme logbook?

No. Your repeated Induction course information can be added to your current logbook on the same page.

APPLICATION PROCESSING

How will The NI verify the logbooks and task sections?

Dates in the task sections will be verified against dates of joining and leaving the vessel and according to the dates logged in the DP logbook. The tasks which are to be completed on active time must match with days recorded in the logbook as days on DP with a minimum of two hours per day on the DP desk.

Can I accrue DP time whilst my logbook is at the NI offices?

No. Only time whilst you are in possession of your logbook can be claimed. Any time claimed whilst your logbook is in our office will not be counted towards the application.

What do the statuses on my account mean?

In Progress – the applicant is currently filling in the online application.

Eligible – the application is only able to make the payment for the application once the status has changed to eligible. Please be aware of the error messages that show on the account.

Submitted/Paid – the applicant has completed the online application and made the payment. The original documents should now be sent into our office along with the signed PDF Checklist which can be downloaded from the account main page.

Received and in progress – the application has been received in our office and is currently in the queue for processing.

Query Raised – a query has been raised on your application. Either you or your company has been contacted for more information.

Certificate Issued – the application has been processed and the DP certificate has been issued. The documents will be sent back to the address on the account via courier.

Unsuccessful – the application contains errors and/or is missing information. The communication note should be checked on the account and once the logbook has been returned, it should be checked through against our documents in order to rectify any issues.

Will my certificate have a validity date?

Yes. The Nautical Institute now issues a validity date on all certificates. The certificate will be valid for a period of five years. At the end of the five years, you will need to revalidate this certificate. Please ensure that during the five years, you are logging your DP time ready to use for revalidation. Please see the revalidation pages on our [website](#) for more details.

Can you send me a copy of my certificate before it is sent out?

It is The Nautical Institute's policy not to forward copies of issued certificates to DPOs. Once the certificate is printed, it will be despatched back to the address on the application.

Why can't I have my documents sent back to a Russian/Chinese home address?

This is a requirement from our couriers. They are unable to deliver to Russian/Chinese home addresses. Please ensure that you enter either a Russian/Chinese company address, or a home address other than Russia/China. Please also provide the company registration number for the return address. This will stop any delays when sending your documents back to you.

Please note that all deliveries to Crimea have also been stopped by our courier.

Why can't I have my documents sent back to a PO Box address?

Our courier requires a signature on delivery which is why the delivery address cannot be a PO Box address. There must be someone physically at the address to sign for the documents. If you are going to sea and there will be no one at home, please ensure that you provide an alternative address that we can send your documents to.

Do I need to continue to log my DP time after my certificate has been issued?

Yes. You should continue to record your time in your logbook as you will need to provide evidence of DP time when the certificate is due for revalidation. For more information, please go to the Revalidation page of our [website](#).

TASK SECTION

What is the Task Section of the logbook?

The new Offshore scheme has designated tasks in 11 sections in the logbook with individual tasks to be completed and signed off by the certificated DPO on board as well as the Master.

When do I need to complete the Task sections?

The Task Section of the logbook must be completed during Phase B of the new Offshore Training scheme. If the tasks are not completed, you will not be permitted to attend the Simulator course.

Affecting logbook numbers with the range of 15OF0205001 and 15OF0210000

If you have been issued with an Offshore scheme logbook with a number between 15OF0205001 to 15OF0210000, please note the training centre which originally issued that logbook will be contacting you shortly. They will supply additional pages containing the sign-off sheets for tasks that are missing in those numbered logbooks only.

These extra task sheets will need to be filled in by the DPO and Master on board and added to your application when you are ready to apply for your certificate. If you have a logbook with one of the above numbers, these four tasks will be accepted if they are signed off during Phase D DP sea time. All other tasks must be completed during Phase B, as per the scheme standard. The application will be deemed unsuccessful if the tasks in the logbook are not signed off correctly.

Please see below circular for more information and copies of the additional pages.

[Circular 007/2015 with additional task sections missing in the Offshore logbook.](#)

Who needs to sign the task section?

Each task item must be completed and signed by the certified DPO on board the vessel who has been assigned to supervise you. If the Master is the assigned certified DPO on board he/she must still complete and sign each item individually. The Master must also complete the Master's sign off at the end of each task section.

If there is no certified DPO on board the vessel, the tasks cannot be signed off and additional time will need to be completed before moving onto the next Phase of the scheme (Phase C).

If you are the trainee DPO and also the Master on board, the certified DPO will need to sign the tasks off and then you will be able to sign as the Master below each of the task sections once they have been completed.

UPGRADE

How do I upgrade from Limited to Unlimited?

A minimum of 60 DP 2/3 sea time days is required to upgrade from a Limited certificate to an Unlimited certificate. This time must be completed after the issue date of the Limited certificate and must be on a classed DP2 or DP3 classed vessel. A Statement of Suitability must also be completed after this time. There is a designated page in the NI logbook for this purpose. Confirmation letter/s should be obtained from the company for the upgrade time and an application must be completed online before submitting the documents to the NI office.

The logbook will also be checked for continuous DP time so please ensure that all DP time is recorded.

How do I upgrade from Unclassed to Limited/Unlimited certificate?

You will need to have completed 120 DP sea time days on board a classed DP vessel. This is the equivalent to minimum active time necessary for the initial application. DP time logged for the initial Unclassed certificate can be carried over towards the 120 days even if it is over four years old and it would be the remain time that would need to be completed for the conversion. Please note that a minimum of 60 DP days must be completed for conversion.

e.g.1 Initial Unclassed certificate – 50 DP2 days were used

Conversion to Limited/Unlimited certificate – 50 DP days can be used, 70 DP classed days must be completed.

e.g.2 Initial Unclassed certificate – 85 DP1/2 days were used

Conversion to Limited/Unlimited certificate – 85 DP days can be used, 60 DP classed days must be completed (although only 35 DP days are required, a minimum of 60 must be completed for the conversion).

A new Statement of Suitability will need to be signed at the end of this time and a confirmation letter must be obtained from your company confirming your DP time.

When all Phases have been completed, you need to go onto your account and apply online for the Conversion.

Can I use a sea time reduction course to upgrade my certificate?

No. To upgrade a Limited certificate, you must complete a minimum of 60 DP2 or DP3 days followed by a new Statement of Suitability.

APPLYING ONLINE

How do I apply?

You will need to apply online before sending your documents into The Nautical Institute office. Please check our Help section for the online application guide. There are also help buttons on all pages of the online application to guide you.

How much will the application cost?

The current fee can be found [here](#). This cost includes the processing of your documents and the return via courier.

Can I pay via bank transfer or cheque for my DP certificate?

No. You must apply online before sending your documents into our office. The payment must be done through the Alexis Platform. The online payment system is linked to the PDF Checklist which becomes available on the account once the payment is made.

Applications made without the payment online may be sent back as unsuccessful via standard post (untracked).

I am getting the error message 'Failed to validate ship and DP class'. What does this mean?

This error message means that we do not hold a classification certificate on our system for the vessel that is/was valid during the dates you are trying to enter. The message also appears if the DP class you are entering does not match the one on our system. You can check the validity dates and DP class of vessels held on our database via our website:

<http://www.nialexisplatform.org/certification/dynamic-positioning/check-vessel-classification/>.

If we are missing the information or the vessel has changed class, please forward a copy of the classification certificate for the vessel for the time required to dp@nautinst.org. We aim to update the vessel information as soon as possible to allow people to continue with their applications.

What do I need to submit to The Nautical Institute when I have completed my training?

All applicants must submit:

1. Original NI DP logbook
2. Copy of CoC and passport
3. Original signed letters from companies confirming the sea time and offshore loading operations dates and location.
4. Signed PDF Checklist (available on your online account home page when application has been submitted and paid for)
5. Any additional supporting documents

Where do I send my documents once I have applied online?

Please send all relevant documents into our offices at the below address:

DP Department
The Nautical Institute
202 Lambeth Road
London
SE1 7LQ
United Kingdom

Please ensure that you check the PDF Checklist for the documents you are required to send in.