

PhD Studentship: Optimum crewing strategies for the Merchant Navy

School of Maritime Science and Engineering

Summary

Bursary: £15,000 per year (for 3 years) stipend, and all fees included (UK based). Travel budget included to attend UK meetings.

The PhD studentship will examine the optimum crewing strategies for the merchant shipping industry. The student will be joining part of an established research team and will be undertaking supervised research in the area of stable and fluid team work within the Merchant Navy. This role will include carrying out literature searches, gathering primary and secondary data in areas including team working and the benefits of stable and fluid crewing strategies within the Merchant Navy. The successful applicant will also examine fixed teams in other industries and how best practice there can be translated to the merchant shipping industry. The role also involves liaison with the project lead and the PhD supervision team. Internal and external contacts to the University will need to be consulted for the data collection. You will be expected to undertake and successfully complete a Post Graduate Certificate in research methods (under supervision) within the 3 year time period.

Background

The student will be joining part of an established research team and will be undertaking supervised research in the area of stable and fluid team work in the Merchant Navy.

A safer and more efficient shipping industry is of great importance to society as global business depends on the international trade of goods transported by ship. Understanding and creating the best possible team working environment on-board is paramount to the advancement of more sustainable ways of working, promoting safety and responsible working practices.

Crew composition and assignment are an essential component to the efficient running of a ship but can vary considerably. In the merchant shipping industry there are companies operating a stable crewing strategy where the same senior officers (top 4) operate on a back to back basis and return to the same vessel for several trips, with all four joining and leaving the vessel at the same time. More usually, companies operate a fluid system where senior officers are assigned to any appropriate vessel and will sail with different senior officers every trip; the companies will generally avoid changing all four senior officers at the same time.

Little apart from anecdotal evidence is known about the measurable differences between these two approaches within the shipping industry. However, evidence from other industries e.g. healthcare, aviation and professional sports suggest that there are benefits in maintaining stable teams in: improved safety, building team identity, sharing skills, improved efficiency, motivation and morale. The purpose of this research is therefore to examine the benefits of stable and fluid crewing strategies with a range of people from within the shipping industry and from other industries.

For enquiries, and to express your interest please email research.degree@solent.ac.uk by Tuesday 23 May 2017.