Overall comments

Most candidates made a good attempt at the paper and demonstrated a satisfactory knowledge of the subject, although too many included extraneous and irrelevant information in their answers which wasted their time. It is not necessary to head your answer by rewriting the question but it is essential to read the question carefully and understand what is being asked for. Most candidates attempted five questions but not all answered the questions asked. Shipping is an international business and a reasonable knowledge of geography is required in the exam, particularly when using maps. This has improved marginally but there is room for more.

Question one - Vessel characteristics

This was the most popular question and one which was generally answered quite well. Some candidates took time to draw a vessel using a pencil and ruler and were rewarded with extra marks, but too many made their drawing using neither and often these were too small and lacked detail. Many made little serious effort to name the parts of the vessel which really should be known. It is necessary to list the characteristics of the vessel and many fell down in describing a handy size vessel when a handymax was required. Several candidates spent too much time giving details of all the trades where their chosen vessel might be employed when only one was asked for. The use of maps was a little better reflecting perhaps comments in the past about the need to know the major countries, ports, seas and canals.

Question two - Voyage operations

This was another popular question which was tackled with varying degrees of enthusiasm and success by candidates dependent on their real experience and knowledge of this subject. The questions invited good, long and detailed answers to all the sections covering a variety of enquiries and actions by operators, ship’s staff and agents in concert. This should have been an opportunity to gain high marks and several candidates did so but too often the answers were not long enough with only the bare minimum of information provided and the services of the agent being reduced to ordering some tugs and keeping down costs.

Question three - Voyage estimate

One of the two least popular questions, which was a pity as those who attempted the question and who demonstrated a basis understanding of how to work out a voyage estimate earned marks even if mistakes were made in the calculations. Candidates should know about stowage factors (SF), that the grain cubic capacity of the vessel divided by this will determine the maximum cargo that physically could be loaded, although this may not be loadable for other reasons. They should realise that MOLOO is not applied to the SF; it is a commercial range of the charter party quantity. Voyage costs should only take into account the fuels used on the voyage, not all the bunkers taken during the voyage and that fuel should be used FIFO.
i.e. all the fuel already on board should be used first followed by the balance of any new fuel as appropriate. Candidates should try to lay out the calculation in a simple and clear format. It is clearly a three part question so the answer to each part should be in some kind of order. Spreading these over several pages makes it difficult for an Examiner to award marks for having the right method and difficult to find where a simple mistake has been made in the calculation. Having worked out the answers, show these clearly so the Examiner can find them.

**Question four - Incident & Insurance**

This was a popular choice and one where candidates who fully answered all four parts of the question gained good marks. The action taken on board the vessel immediately after the incident must be geared towards making sure the vessel is safe, checking on injuries and minimising any harm to others and recording as clearly as possible what has happened. It cannot be defined as just informing the management office DPA asking for assistance and calling for an average adjuster. The actions taken by the management will be determined by the structure of their office and the resources they have available to render full assistance. Showing this demonstrates knowledge of that structure. In turn some candidates also identified the agents and other resources available. The insurances available should be well known to all student and extra marks were given for those candidates who identified both of these and who expanded their answer to include specific insurances such as FFO and Loss of Hire etc. It is unlikely that the question of General Average would have arisen in this instance and those who explained what General Average was and why it did not apply scored well, as did those who made a detailed and reasoned case why or how it might apply.

**Question five - Ship management structure**

This question was attempted by several students, many of these using elements of the answer to question 4 in their efforts were rewarded with higher than average marks. Several candidates were confused by the wording of the question. Some good knowledge of the management structure was essential but in addition some clues were available in the question as this clearly showed that your company had commercial, operational and technical management functions. So an answer that built on this and contained a simple organisational chart with a commercial department, chartering, financial, sale and purchase etc, operational with operations and demurrage and the technical department with its entire backup scored well. Mention should also have been made of management, admin, DPA, crewing etc.

**Question six - Bunkers**

Given that bunkers are such a significant issue today, with the changing legislation and new fuels and systems being introduced, it is surprising that this question should have scored the lowest average marks. Bunkers are still the largest cost element of any voyage and will continue to be so in the foreseeable future and this should have been better understood. Candidates must be familiar with the regulations and where they apply and be clear about the detail of the specifications. They should also be aware of the major bunker locations and able to show these on a map. There were some good answers about the measures to have in place to ensure the vessel received the right fuel including sampling, inspection and analysis. Knowledge and common sense in the selection of suppliers would also do this and these were identified by successful candidates.

**Question seven - Crewing & ISM**

This was another question where common sense and some knowledge of the various regulations and rules should have given rise to some good answers. How does any company anywhere ensure it recruits and
keeps good quality staff? It is not a problem confined to shipping. The answer is to pay properly for good performance, provide a safe and attractive place to work and treat your employees fairly and with respect. When companies stop doing this they lose their people and cannot replace them. Candidates who mentioned STCW, White lists and MLC2000 and checking on training and documentation gained marks. So did those who answers included paying wages promptly, providing training and a career path and all the other common sense factors. Most identified some of the consequences of not doing so and mentioned Port State inspection and detention and loss of earnings. Failing to employ fully qualified crews can be common given frequent crew changes, the validity of qualifications and high workloads and many can be corrected by swift action on the part of a manager. Those who mentioned this gained marks. Some went further to show the loss of prestige, and possible Class issues and a few also mentioned the possible catastrophic consequences of sub-standard crews.

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<th>Question eight - Weather routing</th>
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<td>This was another unpopular question which in general was not well answered. Most who attempted this were able to explain what use was made of weather routeing but, too many focussed on the financial benefits and on the opportunity for charterers to check up on ships speeds and consumptions. These are benefits but so is the ability to route the vessel to avoid the consequences of bad weather on a vessel, its cargo and most importantly its crew. The real benefits of weather routing are that they allow a vessel to follow a route that minimises the discomfort and danger of bad weather while saving fuel and time and candidates who looked at this wider picture gained the best marks. Gdansk in Poland is on the Baltic Sea, Charleston is on the East Coast of the USA and a vessel on this voyage will go out of the Baltic, around the UK and across the North Atlantic Ocean in winter. This is the worst ocean weather faced by most vessels in their trading lives and candidates who showed some knowledge of alternatives such as a more southerly route gained extra marks. Those who identified possible ice in the Baltic were correct but the vessel would never go up into the Arctic, or logically be in the region of the St Lawrence seaway or the Grand Banks.</td>
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