

Recognition of Micro-Credentials in Seafarers' Education

Ana Gundić ¹, Dalibor Ivanišević, ², Dino Županović ³, Ljiljana Peričin⁴

University of Zadar, Croatia

Abstract

Acquiring competencies needed for jobs on board for seafarers rarely, if ever finishes with formal education or with achieving certain qualification. It continues throughout their working life. Therefore, lifelong learning has a crucial role in maritime industry. Apart from formal education, carried out at accredited educational institutions according to accredited programs, short learning programs for seafarers has an essential role in maritime industry. It is carried out according to previously defined program at privately owned training centers or those which are part of the specific unit of the higher educational institutions. These short learning programs are the programs leading to micro-credential. Problem is certification of short learning programs leading to micro-credential, which the students have attended and passed regardless of the educational program at undergraduate level. It is not unusual that seafarers start their career on board upon graduating from high school. Upon gaining navigational experience, i.e., after working for several years on board, they usually enroll in faculties and finish their education at higher education institutions. It is important to emphasize that even before the first on board experience seafarers take part of the short learning programs prescribed by STCW Convention that are needed for jobs on board. During their navigational experience, they take additional short learning programs which are the result of their companies' requirements i.e., of maritime industry. The moment the seafarers decide to continue their education, the short learning programs they have taken before enrolling in the formal education program at higher education institutions, will not be recognized. This is the case even in situations when programs contents coincide entirely with parts of the study program and even when certificates are obtained at training centers owned by MET Institutions.

The other category of short learning programs refers to programs that are the result of companies' needs and requirements. The number of such short learning programs and their contents differ not only for different types of vessels but for the same type of vessel owned by different companies. Educational institutions do not recognize these short learning programs.

Therefore, it is important to identify reasons leading to such a situation as well as to define guidelines for the possible future recognition of short learning programs for seafarers. Recognition of these programs will improved students' employability by creating a modern education and training for seafarers based on the needs of the maritime industry. Also, the recognition of these programs will contribute to the standardization of seafarers' education and training process and cooperation among maritime higher institutions from different countries, as well as between maritime higher institutions and other key stakeholders.

Keywords: certification, lifelong learning, short learning programs, STCW Convention, qualification