

# Maritime education and careers: preparing the next generation

It is well known that trade and logistics (including maritime) form one of the four pillars of Hong Kong's economy. In 2015, trading and logistics contributed HK\$517.4bn to Hong Kong's GDP and provided employment for 746,900 people. Perhaps one maybe more interested to know more about what the Hong Kong Government and, more recently, the Hong Kong Maritime and Port Board (HKMPB) are doing to ensure the on-going sustainability of the sector.



Similar to other industries, shipping and the related value-added maritime services it depends upon are undergoing massive disruption. Increasing automation along the supply chain and the growing use of digital task processing will inevitably lead to job losses.

The good news is more knowledge-based careers will replace many of the traditional grafting jobs. It is with an eye on the transition from blue-collar work to white-collar professions that the HKMPB has designed an education and career strategy for the territory's emerging generation of young professionals. Central to the work that the HKMPB is doing is to open the eyes of the younger generation to the extraordinary range of career opportunities that the maritime sector offers.

When the HKMPB began operations in April 2016, a bedrock for its work in manpower development was already laid down in the form of the HK\$100m Maritime and Aviation Training Fund (MATF), established in 2014. For the benefit of Hong Kong's maritime sector the MATF offers funding for participants in the following schemes:

- Professional Training and Examination Refund Scheme
- Maritime and Aviation Internship Scheme
- Local Vessel Trade Training Incentive Scheme
- Sea-going Training Incentive Scheme
- Ship Repair Training Incentive Scheme
- Overseas Exchange Sponsorship Scheme

There are also six MATF sponsored scholarship schemes at The University of Hong Kong (HKU), The Hong Kong Polytechnic University (PolyU) and City University of Hong Kong at undergraduate and postgraduate levels covering programmes in maritime law, seafaring, international shipping and transport logistics. Among the scholarship schemes, two have been arranged in collaboration with Dalian Maritime University (DMU) and Shanghai Maritime University (SMU) so as to nurture maritime legal talent in Hong



**Willy Lin,**  
Chairman of the  
HKMPB's Manpower  
Development  
Committee

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Kong and on the mainland.

"Riding on the success of the HKU-DMU Collaboration Scheme, HKU has collaborated with SMU to roll out a similar scholarship scheme under MATF for the 2017/18 academic year. So far, three scholarships have been awarded," says Willy Lin, Chairman of the HKMPB's Manpower Development Committee.

"The scholarships are a recognition to students who are interested in maritime programmes for them to excel and is an encouragement to pursue a maritime career that is both challenging and rewarding. The Government will closely monitor the implementation of scholarships and will explore each opportunity necessary for our talent cultivation efforts," Mr Lin adds.

The BBA (Hons) in International Shipping and Transport Logistics programme, taught at PolyU, illustrates well the objectives of the HKMPB sponsorship scheme. Professor at the Department of Logistics and Maritime Studies, Kee-hung Lai explains:

"The maritime and logistics scholarship scheme established by the HKMPB recognizes and attracts talented individuals to develop their career in the industry. In return the awardees demonstrate a commitment to serve the maritime industry in Hong Kong for not less than 12 calendar months (undergraduate), and undertake six training credits on a maritime industry internship (postgraduate)," he says. "Such government-university cooperation has multiple benefits. It improves students' confidence in their career prospects within the maritime sector. It enhances public recognition of the industry and promotes maritime-related professions. But most importantly it instils a sense of pride in students who have chosen to embark on a career in the maritime and logistics service sectors," adds Professor Lai.

Ms Chuen Sui Ting is a Year 4 student of the International Shipping and Transport Logistics degree programme.

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**Prof Lai Kee-hung,**  
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learned there is strong demand for logistics services in Hong Kong and across the world. This programme helps to cultivate a broad knowledge of logistics theory from an international perspective as well as the day-to-day operational functions," she says.

The opportunity to interact with the industry has been a highlight of the programme for Ms Chuen.

"I really like that this programme enriches our learning beyond the confines of the classroom. Even in my first semester in PolyU, I got the chance to join site visits to different logistics firms. Thanks to this programme, I have been able to reach out to some overseas logistics institutions when I went on an exchange trip to the National University of Singapore."

"The Department of Logistics and Maritime Studies also introduces us to many internship and part-time job opportunities. This allows us to put what we have learnt into practice and clarify our career goals," concludes Ms Chuen.

Many opportunities in ship management, marine law and consultancy start with a career at sea.

Jackie Wong is currently a deck cadet with the iconic Hong Kong-based Orient Overseas Container Ltd. Career-wise he is aiming for the top.

"After graduation, I knew I didn't want an ordinary 9-5 office job. Facing a computer every day was certainly not my plan. I wanted something more challenging and adventurous."

"When I was introduced to shipping I discovered it wasn't a popular career in Hong Kong, and there was a shortage of manpower. This surprised me as the career path at sea is highly rewarding and offers a skills set that opens up many opportunities in later life." Mr Wong's immediate goal is to gain his Deck Officer Certificate of Competency Class 1 to become a Master Mariner. After that the world is his oyster, as they say.

For MATF and maritime-related programmes and courses offered by academic institutions, maritime-related organisations or professional bodies, please visit [www.hkmpb.gov.hk](http://www.hkmpb.gov.hk).



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