



**DYNAMIC POSITIONING CONFERENCE**  
**October 7 - 8, 2008**

**Training**

---

**The Nautical Institute's Dynamic Positioning  
Training Executive Group (DPTEG)**

**Capt. Mark A. Pointon**

*The Nautical Institute*

---

## **Introduction**

The Nautical Institute (NI) administers the DP Operators certificate scheme and accredits currently 50 training centres worldwide that deliver the scheme. There are to date more than 8950 certificated operators.

The scheme was originally developed in the mid 1980's by all the stakeholders in the DP sector and was considered by all to be a "gold standard."

In the interim period, technological advances and working practices linked to a huge increase in both the number of students requiring training and the number of training centres delivering the scheme, has meant that a review of the scheme was required.

The NI instigated the reformation of the stakeholders group in the spring of 2007 leading to consultations and initial meetings.

The group consists of representation from NI, IMCA, IADC, ICS, OGP/ OCIMF and DP training providers.

The NI Council has delegated executive authority for the NI DP training system to DPTEG.

Its current remit is to undertake a root and branch review of the DP training scheme and to initiate any recommendations, with a view to restoring the scheme to a "gold standard" for 2008 onward.

## **The Nautical Institute**

The Nautical Institute is the international professional body for qualified seafarers. It provides a wide range of services to enhance the professional standing and knowledge of members who are drawn from all sectors of the maritime sector. Its work is available to the whole industry to help improve the safety and efficiency of shipping. This work, which includes seaways magazine, books, web services and projects, helps to provide real solutions to problems facing the industry and provides mariners input to decision makers internationally and nationally.

The Institute has more than 7000 members in over 40 International branches worldwide.

In the area of training and education the NI provides accreditation in a number of areas:

- 1 Dynamic Positioning
- 2 Offshore Oil stability
- 3 Maritime and Offshore Oil spill response
- 4 Leadership
- 5 Mooring operatives

In addition there are open learning schemes for the following:

- 1 Harbourmaster
- 2 Pilot
- 3 Maritime lecturer
- 4 Nautical surveyor
- 5 Square rig sailing
- 6 Management

### **The Nautical Institute DP Training Scheme**

The Nautical Institute administers the DP training scheme - it is responsible for DP operator certification and DP training centre accreditation.

The NI does not hold authority for DP training in a statutory sense, but the scheme is recognised as the Industry standard and is referred to in the International Maritime Organisation's Maritime Safety Committee's (MSC) circulars, MSC 738 dated 24 June 1996.

The training Scheme was set up set up in 1983 and was designed by representatives from industry, vessel operators, shipmasters and trainers.

The scheme consists of five phases:

Phase 1 - The DP Induction Course

Phase 2 - One month's familiarisation period in a DP-capable vessel

Phase 3 - The DP Simulator Course

Phase 4 - Six months supervised DP watch keeping experience

Phase 5 - Assessment by the Master

Two grades of certificate are currently issued - FULL and LIMITED.

If experience had been exclusively in vessels of Equipment Class 1 then the certificate issued will be endorsed "Limited". Experience in vessels of Equipment Classes 2 and/or 3 qualifies for a "Full" certificate.

A Limited certificate may be upgraded to a Full one after service in higher Equipment Class vessels.

## **Scheme development**

The NI has run the DP Training system successfully over a significant period of 25 years. As the DP industry itself has grown enormously, the number of training centres has also grown from a handful to 50 today.

<b>Year</b>	<b>Number of training centres</b>
2003	5
2004	17
2005	24
2006	31
2007	43
2008	51 (Projected)

The number of speculative enquiries indicates that this figure will continue to rise.

The number of certificates issued has followed a similar trend in growth

<b>Year</b>	<b>Total number Certificates Issued</b>
1983 – 1995	686
1995 – 2000	1400
2000 – 2008	8950 to end of August

As of the end of August 2008 the current years total is 1180. This represents a year on year increase of over 30% .

Sales of Training logbooks to the training providers indicate that this trend will continue into next year.

## **Rationale for DP Training Executive Group (DPTEG)**

To support the scheme, regular instructor group meetings were held to generate feedback from centres that had been accredited and students. Whilst this enjoyed reasonable attendance and provided significant feedback, it did not provide a mechanism for input

from the rest of Industry.

It was felt by a number of organisations and individuals that the DP Industry as a whole was of such a size that the employers, ship owners and trade associations should have a voice.

The need for an empowered DPTEG was compelling bearing in mind the following issues:

- 1 Accurate communication in a burgeoning industry is essential to underpin credibility and reduce administration costs.
- 2 A self-regulated industry is potentially vulnerable to powerful interests that may prejudice an independent and mutually effective training scheme.
- 3 360-degree feedback on the effectiveness of the training scheme is vital to its credibility within and without the industry and to support effective DP operations. This process must be swift and representative.

### **Composition of DPTEG**

DPTEG consists of representatives from the following organisations / industry stakeholders:

- 1 Nautical Institute
- 2 Ship owners/Operators: - IMCA, ICS and IADC
- 3 Charterers: - OGP – MSSC / OCIMF
- 4 Training providers By region (3)

Recognising the Nautical Institutes role within the industry, the NI DP Training Manager is the "working" Chairman of the group and the NI retains responsibility for certification, administration and accreditation of the DP Training system.

### **Terms of reference**

DPTEG seeks to make consensual decisions regarding the NI DP training system, including certification, competency, training support and fees.

To empower the Group and thereby ensure its credibility, the NI Council approved devolved delegation of executive authority for the NI DP training system to DPTEG.

### **Strategic plan agenda**

A meeting was held in May 2008 at which a strategic plan was agreed.

In broad terms, consultations and discussions have indicated that issues exist in 2 main areas. The meeting of stakeholders felt that the initial review should be targeted at the scheme structure, with the follow up review looking at potential changes to the

certification structure.

The initial review will address the following areas:

- 1 Course Assessment
- 2 Review of course curriculum
- 3 Simulator specifications
- 4 Development of model courses
- 5 Standardised training materials

For the purposes of this paper I will address the reasoning and rationale for the inclusion of the first 2 items.

### **Course Assessment**

It has long been felt that there should be some form of assessment during the shore-based courses. The argument, from some quarters, that there is “on the job” assessment in the training logbook and an evaluation by the Master of the trainee’s last vessel, which negates the requirement for shore-based assessment, no longer holds water.

It is proposed that the Induction course assessment will consist of a theory test and a practical test - I would envisage the theory test being a test of generic DP principals rather than being system specific. I would favour this to be formative rather than summative. This would reduce potential issues connected with a student failing a "one off" test on the last day of the course.

The practical test would be in the form of a practical exercise that contains the performance criteria needed for a student to demonstrate understanding of the principals of taking a vessel from manual mode to DP auto - this could be adapted to any system and could include instructor verbal questioning.

### **Review of course curriculum**

The course curriculum was devised at a time when the induction course was primarily theory based and the practical element was relatively small due to the equipment constraints of the time. The development of individual student trainer consoles has led to the increased introduction of practical elements to the Induction course. At the same time the theory content has evolved as well. This has led to a situation, where in effect “a gallon of information is having to be poured into a pint container.”

The introduction of testing will put further pressure on the already crowded curriculum.

The review will address the course content, as well as the balance between theory input and practical exercises.

### **Follow up agenda**

The follow up agenda will address issues relating to the certification of DP operators:

- 1 Review of Certification structure
- 2 Sea time reduction training
- 3 Extension of scheme

## **Conclusion**

It can be seen that a lot of work has been already undertaken in the formation of the DP Training Executive Group. It has taken place at the same time as the Institute has had to manage the large increase in certificate applications, together with managing the extensive travel needed to continue the accreditation / re accreditation process.

There is still a lot of work to do but I am confident that because of the development of DPTEG, and more importantly the willingness of the major stakeholders to grasp the issues, that the Nautical Institutes DP Training scheme will once again be seen as a “Gold Standard”, fit for purpose as we move into the 3<sup>rd</sup> decade of its existence.