

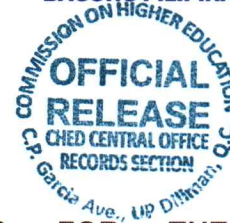


Republic of the Philippines
OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

COMMISSION ON HIGHER EDUCATION



BAGONG PILIPINAS



CHED MEMORANDUM ORDER

No. 07

Series of 2025

SUBJECT: POLICIES, STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NATIONAL MERCHANT MARINE APTITUDE TEST (NaMMAT)

In accordance with the pertinent provisions of Republic Act (RA) No. 7722, the Presidential Directive to the Commission on Higher Education to provide maritime schools with the National Maritime Aptitude Test¹, by virtue of the recommendation of the Technical Panel for Maritime Education (TPME), Chaired by the MARINA Administrator and as approved by the CHED Commission en banc (CEB) through Resolution No. 356-2025 dated April 15, 2025, the following policies, standards and guidelines for the implementation of the NaMMAT are hereby adopted and promulgated, thus:

ARTICLE I INTRODUCTION

Section 1. Background and Rationale

The nature of the merchant marine profession demands a specific set of aptitudes that will help identify students who have the potential to develop the competencies required of seafarers. These aptitudes encompass not only technical and academic skills but also the physical, mental, and emotional resilience necessary for the demanding and dynamic environment at sea. Identifying and nurturing these potential seafarers ensures a steady supply of skilled and competent maritime professionals capable of meeting the industry's global standards and challenges.

During the Inspection Mission of the European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA) to the Philippines, from February 24 to March 12, 2020, the EMSA cited, particularly in the inspection of maritime higher education institutions (MHEIs), that some MHEIs are offering elective courses, e.g., Mathematics (plane and spherical trigonometry, solid mensuration, differential and integral calculus and complex numbers, among others),

¹ Presidential Directive PBBM-2023-371 dated April 11, 2023 - Provision of the National Maritime Aptitude Test to Maritime Schools

because the secondary education program that students had followed did not cover topics that would prepare them for higher education professional courses².

Cognizant of the importance of ensuring the entrants possess the underpinning knowledge required for tertiary maritime education, in the 2022 Philippine Response to the European Commission Assessment Report, the institutionalization of an examination to screen incoming students is one of the strategic initiatives that is put forward to assure that the maritime sector gets the best and brightest among the pool of potential Filipino seafarers³.

Meanwhile, on the labor side of seafaring, the latest BIMCO/ICS⁴ Report shows that the Philippines is the largest supplier of both officers and ratings among five other countries⁵, attesting to the Philippines' international stature as the preferred supplier of sea-based manpower. However, the BIMCO/ICS Report for management, operational and support level roles, in those roles for ages 41-50 should motivate the country to institute further improvement in ensuring that Filipino seafarers are ready to assume high level shipboard positions, to sustain a steady supply of confident and skilled Filipino seamen at all age brackets.

In terms of student demographics, the pacing and rate of completing the maritime degree programs is slow and low⁶. As the data shows,

Degree Program	No. of Enrollees (AY 2015-2016)	No. of Graduates (AY 2019-2020)	Success Rate
BSMT	21,811	5,220	23.93%
BSMarE	14,548	3,960	27.22%
Combined	36,359	9,180	25.25%

The low percentage in success rate is attributed to the large number of enrollees vis-à-vis the capacity of the shipping industry to accommodate students for onboard training⁷, which is accruing on an annual basis, adding burden to both higher education institutions and the shipping industry in making sure the students complete their

² European Maritime Safety Agency. Compliance with the requirements of the STCW Convention, The Philippines, 24 February - 12 March 2020, Inspection Report, p. 13

³ Maritime Industry Authority. 2022 Philippine Response, p. 22

⁴ BIMCO is the Baltic and International Maritime Council; ICS is the International Chamber of Shipping

⁵ 2021 Seafarer Workforce Report

⁶ Based on the data collected by the Division of Programs with International Conventions, Office of Programs and Standards Development, CHED

⁷ Maritime Industry Authority (MARINA). Maritime Industry Development Program 2028, p 94



studies within six years upon completion of three years of academics as provided in the relevant CHED and MARINA circulars.

The seafarer and student data, therefore, make it imperative to institute aggressive quality assurance measures, including but not limited to enforcing carrying capacity requirements, upgrading the selection of applicants into maritime schools and improving the quality of maritime education in the country to relentlessly advance compliance and development initiatives to give the International Convention on the Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for seafarers (STCW), 1978 as amended, full and complete effect.

In view of the foregoing, the Commission en Banc, through CEB Resolution No. 669 - 2022 approved the development of a national aptitude test which shall be patterned after the National Medical Admission Test (NMAT).

Recognizing the strategic advantage of the Philippines as the leading global supplier of seafarers, the country endeavors to sustain and enhance its position as the top producer of qualified, competent, and globally preferred maritime professionals. To this end, following the nationwide public consultations conducted on July 17–19, 2024, the National Maritime and Marine Assessment Tool (NaMMAT) is hereby instituted.

ARTICLE II DEFINITION OF TERMS

Section 2. For purposes of this PSG, the following terms apply:

Aptitude - the natural ability, or inclination to learn and perform tasks in seafaring which are described in Section 3 and are assessed through the NaMMAT

Admission - the process of accepting people into a higher education institution as students or learners

National Merchant Marine Aptitude Test (NaMMAT) – an examination to assess the readiness of student-applicants, local and foreign, to undertake an approved maritime education program in any CHED-MARINA-approved Maritime Higher Education Institutions

Test Administrator - an entity authorized by CHED to develop, conduct and administer the NaMMAT



ARTICLE III GENERAL RULES AND REGULATIONS

Section 3. National Merchant Marine Aptitude Test (NaMMAT)

Merchant Marine Aptitude Test is hereby instituted to assess the readiness of student-applicants, local and foreign⁸, to undertake an approved maritime education program leading to the certification as Officer-In-Charge of a Navigational Watch or Officer-In-Charge of an Engineering Watch.

For purposes of ensuring the validity, reliability, integrity, and confidentiality of the test, a non-profit educational testing agency, hereinafter referred to as Test Administrator, with experience in government-commissioned aptitude tests shall be authorized, in accordance with existing procurement laws and regulations, to administer the affairs and activities related to the operation of the NaMMAT that includes the design and development, assessment of validity and reliability, administration of the tests, and processing of test results.

Section 4. Scope of NaMMAT

The NaMMAT comprises two parts: Part A, the Attitudinal and Personality Assessment, and Part B, the Academic Proficiency Test.

Part A intends to assess the aptitude of student-applicants on seafaring and the probability of the candidates' determination to finish the degree program and is composed of the following:

- a. Organizational Aptitude for Seafarers;
- b. Leadership Skills;
- c. Management Abilities; and
- d. Attitude and Adaptability.

Part B intends to assess the academic proficiency of applicants on English, Science, Mathematics, and Abstract Reasoning.

ARTICLE IV ADMISSION RULES AND REGULATIONS

In addition to the admission requirements provided under the existing Joint CHED-MARINA Memorandum Circulars on maritime education, the following policies, standards, and guidelines are hereby promulgated, thus:

⁸ Foreign students shall be required to take the NaMMAT, provided they comply with the requirements for the entry and stay of foreign students pursuant to Executive Order No. 285 series of 2000



Section 5. Admission Policy and Selection

All MHEIs shall have admission policies including a clear description of the process of selection defined, approved, and documented in its Quality Standards System. The minimum criteria for admission shall include the following:

- a. Latest General Weighted Average Grade;
- b. NaMMAT Score (criterion-based); and
- c. Such other criteria deemed necessary by the MHEI.

The MHEI shall determine its NaMMAT cut-off score.

Section 6. Admission Committee

There shall be an Admission Committee that shall implement the admission policies and standards established by the College in accordance with the rules and regulations set forth in this CMO. Qualified applicants shall be recommended for admission by the Committee subject to approval by the Dean.

Section 7. NaMMAT Cut-Off Score

MHEIs shall declare their respective NaMMAT cut-off scores as part of their annual report to be submitted to the CHEDROs, before the start of Academic Calendar. The MHEIs shall publish on their websites the NaMMAT cut-off score.

The NaMMAT cut-off score shall also be defined, approved and documented in the Quality Standards System of the Institution.

Section 8. Pilot Implementation

The pilot implementation of NaMMAT shall begin in Academic Year 2025-2026. It shall be free of charge to student-applicants and thereafter, fees may be collected, subject to approval of the Commission on Higher Education.

Test centers, dates, and other details will be posted by the Commission on its website. Application forms for the examination may be obtained from the MHEIs, the Test Centers and their websites, and the CHED Regional Offices. The Test Centers will be identified and coordinated by the Test Administrator.

Further inquiries on the administration of the NaMMAT including the requirements of the application and preparation for the test, may be addressed in writing or email to the Test Administrator / CHEDROs.



Section 9. Reporting of Test Results

The Test Administrator shall submit the results of the pilot implementation, including learner profiles and data analysis to the Commission.

The Test Administrator shall prepare and send the individual test results to the examinee via email.

On a per test schedule basis, the Test Administrator shall prepare the Official Test Results and submit the same to the Office of Programs and Standards Development and CHED Regional Offices (CHEDROs). This will provide the MHEIs, regardless of their locations, access to official test results through the CHEDRO website as examinees have the option to choose the MHEIs they prefer to enroll.

On a per academic year basis, the Test Administrator shall prepare the criterion and the norm-referenced test results after all individual test results have been processed.

Student-applicants who obtained scores lower than the cut-off, as defined by the admitting institution, may retake the succeeding NaMMAT as per schedule published by the Test Administrator.

ARTICLE VI MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS

Section 10. Incentives

The Commission on Higher Education shall develop a program or guidelines to incentivize maritime higher education institutions which are implementing the NaMMAT effectively.

Section 11. Transitory Clause

The full implementation of the standardized NaMMAT shall be before the start of the Academic Year 2026-2027.

Section 12. Repealing Clause

This Order supersedes all previous issuances concerning admission for enrollment in the BSMT and BSMarE programs which may be inconsistent or contradictory with any of the provisions thereof, if any.



Section 13. Separability Clause


If any part or provision of this Order shall be held unconstitutional or invalid, other provisions hereof which are not affected thereby shall continue to be in full force and effect.

Section 14. Effectivity Clause

The policies, standards and guidelines shall take effect immediately.

Quezon City, Philippines, May 27, 2025.

For the Commission:



J. PROSPERO E. DE VERA III, DPA
Chairman
Commission on Higher Education

