

# Why do we need a global organization to promote excellent MET?

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## Abstract

Shipping is a global industry and will always respond to radical changes in political, economic, technological, as well as educational changes. So, a global organization such as the International Association of Maritime Universities (IAMU), should guide Maritime Education and Training (MET), which can impact the MET system worldwide. Obviously, if each nation develops its own process of MET individually, the result would be a maze of differing, if not conflicting, national MET systems.

The IAMU has clear objectives for establishing a worldwide MET network among the maritime universities of excellence. So, a comprehensive strategy for promoting MET could be developed globally, depending on the combined participation of maritime academies, institutes and universities members of IAMU.

The IAMU, due to its position as a non-governmental organization (NGO) in the International Maritime Organization (IMO) and can lead and guide the process and criteria of MET, which would lead to global standardization of excellent MET.

The paper focuses on methods of harmonizing what maritime academies, institutes and university members of the IAMU can do together in order to help the Association develop a global MET standard, and how the Association can activate it.

**Keywords:** *Shipping industry, Global Organization, MET, IAMU, Activation*

## 1 Introduction

The main objective of IAMU Working Group III is to promote global maritime excellence. Working Group III aims to establish the global standardization of Maritime Education and Training (MET). To achieve this objective, the academic access and consideration should be carried out regarding the development of existing systems in MET Universities members in the IAMU. To initiate a newly developed global system we should analyze and assess the MET systems offered by existing MET Universities.

In other words, the Association should play an important role in globalizing maritime education and training and activate this role in order to apply globalization in all maritime institutes and universities in the same manner in which IMO activates international conventions, treaties and protocols.

## **2 Globalization**

Globalization can be described as a process by which the people of the world are conjoined into a single society and function together.

Sometimes the terms internationalization and globalization are used interchangeably but there is a slight formal difference. The term “internationalization” refers to the importance of international trade, relations, treaties, etc. such as International Maritime Organization (IMO). “International” means among nations. “Globalization” means abolition of national boundaries for economic purposes and national trade.

Globalization has various aspects that affect the world in several ways, e.g., industrial, financial, economic, political, informational, cultural, ecological, social, transportation, international cultural exchange, technical, legal and ethical.

Technology has been the other principal driver of globalization. Advances in information technology, in particular, have dramatically transformed economic life.

The accelerating changes in all the walks of life are the typifying feature of the modern age; they have resulted in eliminating the borders of countries and in the globalization of organization of educational systems. These accelerating changes have had a profound impact on competition within the quest for knowledge in this age of technology and communications. These changes have necessitated reviewing all educational systems. The maritime educational system is of course no exception. Educational systems of all types should be reviewed and modified to cope with the explosion of knowledge and the tremendous developments in technology. The old concepts of traditional educational systems are no longer capable of accommodating these new developments.

Obviously, there is an urgent need to adopt new instruction and assessment techniques according to global standards with a view to achieving lifetime success and self- learning. The world is characterized by continuous activity. It has been observed that in the past three decades international shipping industries sustained momentous changes. The global era started in the last decade. Commonly, it is expected that the winds of change towards globalization will change the existing systems of international shipping industries arena; therefore passing on maritime skills and knowledge to the following generations needs to be achieved on global scale.

Globalization has been attended by the vast internationalization and multinationalization of maritime activities and problems; in order to solve the

emerging related issues we need to ensure not only a high and standard level of education, but also unified globalization of MET.

### **3 The shipping industry**

The shipping industry is one that economists prefer to think of as “capital intensive” due to the tremendous costs of the developed equipment used. Since antiquity, the spirit of man could not be confined to a country’s borders. It has been noticed that the shipping industry has continually served humanity in trading and in exporting civilization along with goods. A ship is not confined to the borders of its flag country, nor is it confined to the borders of the shipowner’s country of origin, which has always complicated things.

The economy is seen by MET mainly from an institutional consideration, whereas the effect of the globalization of the shipping industry is given some regard because it is beyond the effect of MET universities.

The provision of skilled and experienced personnel for the maritime industry to cope with the growing requirements of this global industry has been the most difficult and imposing matter that owners encounter in every shipping center.

It has been observed in the field of the shipping industry that technical innovation develops very quickly. The principle of the shipping industry is to develop the quality of seafarers in order to face the future demands of the shipping industry.

In fact, the progress of the shipping industry and related issues has been affected by the improvement of MET; maritime officers have been trying to accommodate the developments in industry demands.

The maritime industry is included among the most multifarious and global industries in the world; it is truly a global market. All shipping companies employ people coming from many countries with different backgrounds in MET and various cultures. This is why efforts must be exerted to formulate global MET.

### **4 Maritime Education and Training: "MET"**

MET is the process which provides maritime education and training for seafarers at both the operational and management levels for the shipping industries and wherein candidates become acquainted with knowledge, attitudes and skills necessary to perform various duties on board ship and to enable them to work in varied fields of maritime industries. It is the wider aggregation of education and training systems in general.

As the 21<sup>st</sup> century started, we expected to witness radical changes in the proficiency required by seafarers. The crew (officers and ratings) remain most energetic element to the safe and efficient operation of any vessel. The influence

of the human element is very high. The human element is a very important factor in the process of carrying out the various functions of shipping companies. The human element plays the most crucial role in almost all operations at sea and ashore.

It should be noticed that there has been an increasing need for personnel working in the field of the shipping industry to do more than just actual practical tasks. People working in the field should be more professional in their attitude, thinking about their jobs and how they can operate in a professional manner and have enhanced inquiring intellects. Education and professional training, as well as development of performance, should be given due consideration, as well as -- and it is a very significant point -- the needs of expedient crew training for tasks which are very specialized and complicated. The important role of those providing this training should be highlighted because we must ensure that they are highly qualified, well-motivated and provided with a work environment that helps improve their skills and encourages them in carrying out their professional responsibilities. Consequently, developing the educational process of the university members of the IAMU is an important task to be entrusted to the IAMU.

The constant development of the shipping industry led to developing MET which has faced many new requirements, such as the requirement for further fostering of seafarers' practical skills and proficiency. The process of meeting these requirements can be seen as a new promotion of MET. Diverse difficulties and problems are encountered in such process.

In the future, the development of MET should keep pace with the development of the shipping industry, which includes both development of technology and of maritime management science.

Promoting MET for seafarers means that they are better educated and trained and have the ability to exercise greater functional adaptability.

The continuous promotion of MET should depend on: the ability to implement the criteria, a global MET system which should be proposed and organized by the IAMU, and on the capacity to overcome cultural differences and different types of education and training.

The proper implementation of IAMU criteria should go towards achieving IAMU objectives. The important role of those providing MET should be highlighted because we must ensure that they are highly qualified and can provide the appropriate educational environment.

MET universities, which are responsible for tutorage, are necessary to interface between the tutorage procedure and the shipping industry in order ultimately to obtain the expedient process to avoid problems resulting from new technologies, international conventions or new trends in international transport. The MET of merchant marine officers is affected by changes in technology, industry and society.

The question now is: what are the necessary requirements to achieve a sound process of MET in MET universities so as to meet the continuously increasing requirements of technology and globalization?

MET universities obviously have a vital role in shaping the attitudes of seafarers, and their approach to becoming professional and acting in an effective manner. A wider globalization education approach is needed.

MET universities have the ability to deliver quality courses that meet the individual's and the shipping industry's demands. But the IAMU should ensure that this is achieved within a global system, and here the role of a global organization becomes crucial. The IAMU should be prepared to undertake this task if we are to ensure success and not failure in promoting MET standards worldwide.

## **5 MET universities**

The role of MET universities is very important in delivering higher education and playing an energetic and crucial role in diversifying and shaping the attitude of seafarers, i.e., developing their ability to become professional and to perform in an effective manner. Nowadays, the goal of MET universities is to develop a new MET program with effective teaching and learning tools to cope with the demands of the shipping industry and global standards, and to provide practicing personnel with career improvement programs which provide professional mobility founded on high technology. Global promotion for this MET approach is needed.

It is not easy to judge the excellence of any maritime university. Some characteristics which distinguish excellent universities from others are: MET courses, staff, facilities and equipment, operating standards, external audit/accreditation, and the quality of the graduates.

It is clear that not every MET university can be the best, but every MET university can strive to achieve quality MET. IAMU criteria should be seen as a call for MET universities to enhance their performance. Some MET universities providing four years of education with boarding facilities and disciplinary systems have been constituted with the apparent desire to provide well-educated seafaring officers for the national and international shipping industry.

Some maritime universities have responded to the social, cultural, economic and political forces of globalization. Such organizations as the IMO and the IAMU work to spread ideas within a global arena. Some MET universities have started to include theories, subjects and practices of globalization into various courses, such as visiting foreign ports, which helps to enhance multicultural aspects.

Seafarers play an important role in enhancing and developing careers at sea. So, empowering seafarers starts with developing MET universities within a higher integrated education and improving on multiple skills. This improves their careers at sea and makes working at sea more attractive by offering

multiple career choices. Attracting students to sea careers and equipping them with high standard MET are very important to safe and effective operation in shipping industry.

Higher standards of MET will also help acquire flexible operational skills, proficiency and competency needed in shipboard operations today. The role of MET universities, and consequently the role of the IAMU, is very essential and vital in empowering seafarers.

MET universities, the World Maritime University (WMU) and the IAMU play a crucial role in the development of the criteria needed to achieve excellence and globalization of MET. Cooperation among them will not only improve the quality of maritime education but will also make seafaring a truly global profession. Thus, the development of a network of learning and facilitation that centers across the maritime university members of the IAMU is required. I think that the majority of MET universities members of the IAMU can be networked. The IAMU can organize this. MET collaboration should exist and the role of the IAMU should be activated to facilitate such a process and provide a common platform.

## **6 MET and the shipping industry**

It is unquestionable that good MET in the shipping industry is essential for the success of this industry. The maritime industry should educate and train candidates up to approved international levels.

Because of the nature of the maritime industry, global compatibility of MET standards constitutes a real challenge. It is operated by people from different nationalities and different cultural backgrounds. Nevertheless, they are required to work together in excellent teamwork with efficient cooperation. Indeed, it is universally recognized that real competency could only be achieved by globalizing MET practices.

## **7 IAMU**

It is therefore proposed that the IAMU's goals of promoting a global system of MET of excellence concerning maritime safety management at sea by providing high standards of MET could be achieved by unification of MET universities and of course maritime businesses. This unification could be recognized as shaping the Association to utmost cooperative interests. It is obvious that global academic collaboration can have significant potential for MET and it could also be beneficial in innovating an advanced MET system.

## **7.1 The IAMU and its role in the globalization of MET**

The IAMU has MET experts from all over the world who can fill academic managerial positions in MET universities. The Annual General Assemblies and conferences provide an ideal way to exchange experiences, ideas and motifs in order to put the criteria and the system of globalization of MET in effect and also to activate it.

It is also convenient to perceive the future role of IAMU as a global organization - not international - in promoting MET to determine what efforts and measures are considered necessary to adapt globalization of MET to its changing environment of economy, regulations, society and technology.

The IAMU not only provides the chance for communication between staffs of MET universities worldwide, but also provides the channels for the development of cooperative efforts.

The “common objective,” of which all MET experts approve, is seen as serving the shipping industry and the individual, improving safety and security, protecting the environment and efficiently operating the shipping industry on the one hand and, on the other hand, developing employment opportunities for MET graduates.

The IAMU can make it clear that the “common objective” is farther away for some than for others. It can also make it clear that the service of MET for the industry has to be extended more than it is now to a service of MET for the individual’s professional mobility. The IAMU should give a high priority to the development of MET and the development of the human element and resources by promoting the highest quality of MET of all levels. One of the subjects given a high priority has been the establishment of a global MET system.

## **7.2 IAMU stars**

IAMU stars are the mechanism by which universities which have implemented the new criteria are required to submit to the IAMU adequate documentary evidence to testify or demonstrate that action has been taken to implement the new criteria requirements. Every university report must then be subjected to evaluation by IAMU experts before being approved by IAMU’s committee.

## **7.3 Star/Stars**

The IAMU stars is seen as being at the center of the package of controls designed to help ensure compliance with IAMU criteria, and it is assumed that it will become the key tools used to assess universities.

MET universities members of IAMU can be classified as \*, \*\*, \*\*\* stars.  
Etc.

- 1- \* University offers the essentials, i.e., its syllabi meet the minimum requirements of STCW 95 + extensions to B.Sc.
- 2- \*\* + Master of Science (Post Graduate Courses) at Master degree or higher level.
- 3- \*\*\* 1 and 2 above + Ph.D.

Many renowned universities from developed countries and some from developing countries such as AAST-MT have their own postgraduate programs which are recognized by shipping industries. However, some academies in developing countries have problems in progressing and handling postgraduate studies. This is a future area for enhancing collaboration between IAMU member universities. In order to resolve these troubles and problems, the IAMU should create a working group or committee to supervise and accept the MET programs of those universities.

## Conclusion

For so many years, since the establishment of the Association, we have been talking about globalization of maritime education and training, which is one of the objectives of the Association. Many papers have been delivered about globalization. It is time we raised the questions: “Have we actually achieved this objective? Have globalization criteria been set? It is time we started thinking seriously about how to activate this objective. I think that if we start with the universities which are members of the Association, other universities will soon follow the same path.

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