

World Maritime University
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WORLD MARITIME UNIVERSITY

In July 1985 the inaugural class of students of the World Maritime University (WMU) graduated from the Malmö-based institution. There were nearly 70 of them from 39 different countries, and in a sense they were pioneers – the first to benefit from an institution which, it is hoped, will help to transform maritime development around the world.

The project was launched in 1983 by the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) and is generally regarded as the most important and most ambitious project ever undertaken by the London-based specialised Agency of the United Nations.

The purpose of the University is to provide advanced training for senior personnel mostly from developing countries who are involved in various maritime activities. Training of this type is normally not available in the developing countries and there is no comparable institution anywhere in the world.

The WMU therefore fills an important gap in maritime training and in the years to come will have a marked and beneficial effect on the two areas of greatest concern to the Organisation – the improvement of maritime safety and the prevention of marine pollution from ships. IMO recognises that the improvement of personnel standards – on shore and at sea – is crucial if its regulations are to be effectively implemented.

Considerable progress has already been made towards improving training standards in the past. But these efforts have concentrated on training at relatively lower levels. The WMU is the first international effort to provide training opportunities for personnel who have already reached positions of some authority – personnel, in fact, who are responsible for the effective implementation of IMO standards.

The manpower crisis

All the developing countries among IMO's 127 Member States have shown a great awareness of the need for tackling safety and pollution at an international level, through the adoption of conventions, codes and other recommendations under the auspices of IMO. The majority of these instruments are highly technical in nature – a reflection of the increasing complexity of the shipping industry itself, which has changed more in the last 30 years than in any similar period in history.

Ships are bigger, faster and more versatile than they were. Their equipment is more complex. The cargoes they carry are more diverse. Ports and loading terminals are more sophisticated. At the same time, more and more nations are becoming involved in shipping. Many of them are developing nations which recognise that the creation of a

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strong and efficient merchant marine can make an important contribution to national growth and economic independence.

All of these developments provide opportunities – greater efficiency and economy and, the most important of all, greater safety.

These opportunities are accompanied by great challenges. The nature of the shipping revolution means that those involved in the industry must possess far greater skills than their predecessors, otherwise they will be unable to take proper advantage of the technical opportunities now becoming available. This skill can only be acquired through extensive training followed by long experience.

Training of this type is of course essential for the personnel on board ships. In many ways it is even more important for the men and women in more senior posts – the administrators, teachers, inspectors and other key figures – upon whom a nation's shipping industry depends.

The problem is that many countries, especially in the developing world, lack the trained personnel needed to fill posts at this level. To make matters worse, they often lack the means to train people of the right calibre to fill these posts.

IMO has been aware of this problem for many years and has taken steps to help Member States to overcome it. Several years ago the Organisation established a technical assistance programme designed to help countries wishing to improve their maritime activities. It soon became clear that the crucial problem was the shortage of proper manpower and while the recruitment of expatriate staff did offer a solution of sorts, ultimately the problem could only be solved by training their own personnel.

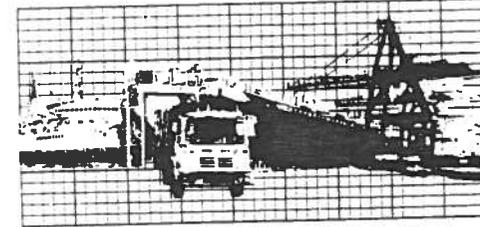
The IMO technical assistance programme has helped developing countries to improve the expertise of maritime personnel by establishing training academies, providing technical experts, arranging for training to be provided in other countries through fellowships and other measures. They have done a great deal to help developing countries to train staff – especially sea-going staff. But they have not been able to solve the problem of the shortage of staff qualified to fill senior posts.

Despite the success of the IMO technical assistance programme in other areas, it became clear that a new approach was necessary if real progress was to be made. Some way had to be found to enable developing countries to train the required staff quickly and to the necessary high standards.

The creation of the University

In 1976, the Secretary-General of IMO, Mr. C. P. Srivastava, visited Sweden for talks with representatives of the Swedish Government.

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Sweden had always given great support to the IMO technical assistance programme and during this visit there was considerable discussion about the problems developing countries were experiencing in finding personnel of sufficiently high calibre.

During the next few years, IMO organised a series of seminars on various technical subjects for representatives of developing countries. Many of these seminars were supported by the Swedish International Development Authority (SIDA) and some were held at the Merchant Marine Academy in Malmö, in southern Sweden.

These seminars and other efforts made by IMO to improve training were so successful that many of those involved began to consider ways of extending the programme still further.

In November 1980 a seminar on the implementation of global training standards was held in Malmö, with financial support from SIDA. In connection with the preparation of this seminar, informal exchanges of views and discussions were held between the representatives of the Swedish Government and the Secretary-General of IMO about possible Swedish support to the IMO technical assistance programme through further co-operation in the field of maritime training.

As a result of these discussions, at the beginning of the seminar the Minister of Transport of Sweden made an important statement relating to the establishment of an international University of Maritime Sciences and Technology in Sweden designed to provide up-to-date training in various maritime activities for students from developing countries.

The seminar was attended by delegates from 45 developing countries who concluded the meeting by adopting a resolution requesting IMO and the United Nations Development Programme – which acts as the main funding agency within the United Nations system – to support the idea of establishing such an institution. The resolution referred to the 'enormous need' of developing countries for administrators, teachers, surveyors, examiners and other senior personnel, stating that a minimum of one or two years in a suitable academy would be necessary to acquire the extensive training needed.

From this point events moved swiftly. In Sweden the Government began considering possible sites for the proposed university, finally opting for Malmö. In IMO itself the idea attracted wide support. IMO's senior technical body, the Maritime Safety Committee, welcomed the proposal, as did the Marine Environment Protection Committee, and in November 1981 the IMO Assembly unanimously adopted a resolution

authorising the Secretary-General to take the necessary steps for the establishment of the University at Malmö.

The proposal for establishing the University had thus been unanimously supported. The next problem to be dealt with was finding the money to pay for it.

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) agreed to provide preparatory financial assistance. The Swedish Government agreed to pay \$1 million annually and UNDP a further \$800,000 annually for the duration of the current UNDP cycle. Several other Member States also responded to the appeal with great generosity.

In addition to governments and organisations, the city of Malmö itself gave the WMU project enthusiastic backing. The authorities made available to the University, free of charge, the premises of the former Malmö Merchant Marine Academy. Excellent apartments were provided for the students at very modest charge.

One other feature of the WMU project was the speed with which it was brought into being. The idea received formal approval from the IMO Assembly in November 1981. During the next year financial support was secured, physical facilities provided, a board of governors named, academic and administrative staff appointed, curricula worked out and a charter prepared and adopted.

Barely 15 months had passed between the start of the project when, in February 1983, an agreement concerning the establishment of the University was formally signed by the Secretary-General of IMO and the Swedish Ambassador in London, His Excellency Mr. Leif Leifland. Following approval by the Swedish Government this agreement became effective on 1 May: six weeks later the first students arrived in Malmö.

The aims of the World Maritime University

These can best be stated by quoting the Charter of the WMU, which says:

"The World Maritime University shall be the international maritime training institution for the training of senior specialist maritime personnel in various aspects of shipping and related fields concerning the improvement of maritime safety, the protection of the marine environment and the efficiency of international shipping, in furtherance of the purposes and objectives of the International Maritime Organisation as a specialised agency of the United Nations."

In order to achieve these objectives, the Charter says that the University shall:

"provide interested countries, and in particular developing countries, with the most modern and up-to-date facilities for the

training of their high-level maritime personnel in all areas of shipping and related maritime activity including

- (i) teachers and instructors for maritime training institutions
- (ii) examiners for maritime training courses, certificates and qualifications
- (iii) senior maritime administrators
- (iv) technical administrators and senior managerial personnel
- (v) marine accident investigators
- (vi) maritime surveyors
- (vii) specialists in naval architecture, marine science and technology and related disciplines
- (viii) technical port managers and related personnel."

The University will also:

"help to establish an internationally recognised cadre of experts in the major aspects of shipping, including visiting professors, lecturers, consultants and other experts to provide suitable knowledge and assistance to developing countries and other governments as appropriate, on problems relating to maritime safety, efficiency of navigation and the prevention and control of marine pollution."

Finally, says the Charter, the University will:

"help in developing a uniform international system for the training of experts in the maritime field as a means of facilitating and promoting international co-operation in shipping and related maritime activities."

Who will benefit from the World Maritime University? Shipowners certainly because the level of expertise in shipping operations in the developing world will rise steadily as the graduates of the University take up senior posts at their home administrations.

Port operations will become more efficient and faster, helping shipowners and shippers to save time and cut costs.

Safety standards will rise: the University puts primary emphasis on the proper implementation of IMO and other safety measures.

Crew standards will improve: the University runs special courses for teachers in maritime training academies and nautical schools. This will result in standards in merchant marine academies around the world rising in the years to come.

The environment will benefit: the University emphasises the importance of IMO anti-pollution measures.

Governments will gain: as the administrative capabilities of newly-emerging shipowning countries improve so it will become easier to establish and maintain effective co-operation between governments.

Business will gain: improved efficiency means that delays in ports and administration will be reduced, enabling businessmen to deliver and receive goods more quickly and with less cost.

The courses offered

The World Maritime University concentrates primarily on two-year courses leading to a Master of Science degree.

Courses run from February to December, with a December-February break, and are offered in the following subjects:

General Maritime Administration
 Maritime Safety Administration
 Maritime Education
 Technical Management of Shipping Companies.

All instruction at the WMU is in English and for students who need to upgrade their proficiency in that language two special intensive courses of 18 and 10 weeks' duration are held prior to the regular maritime courses.

Organisation of courses

The teaching methods used at the World Maritime University have been carefully designed to meet its special requirements and take full advantage of modern technologies and teaching methods.

The courses include a number of compulsory units together with a number of optional subjects which can be selected by the student. This approach ensures that key subjects are covered but at the same time allows sufficient flexibility to cater for the needs of students from different countries and organisations.

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Courses include:

- *Lectures
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- *Laboratory work
- *Field Trips
- *Demonstrations
- *Case studies
- *Projects
- *Industrial experience.

The field trips are a unique feature of the University. They are organised with a view to the students acquiring invaluable practical experience and on-the-job training.

Visits normally begin during the students' second semester at the University and generally consist of relatively short visits to ports, industries and other organisations involved in shipping.

The third semester is mainly dedicated to 'on-the-job' training. Students studying general maritime administration, for example, are attached to administrations in various IMO Member States. These include France, the Federal Republic of Germany, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain and the United States. Students studying the technical

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management of shipping companies spend the semester with a shipping company. Countries which have assisted in this way include Denmark, France, the Netherlands, Norway and Sweden.

The fourth and final semester of the two-year course is devoted to the finalisation of theses, preparation of reports and final examinations (examinations take place during every semester).

It cannot be emphasised too strongly that the World Maritime University is an essential practical institution designed for students who have already proved their abilities and have been selected for further advancement. While courses include a considerable amount of traditional classroom work, the practical content is much greater and more varied than in normal post-graduate studies.

Board of Governors

The University is supervised by a Board of Governors, the chairman of which is Mr. C. P. Srivastava, the Secretary-General of IMO. The members of the board have been chosen for their pre-eminence in shipping and related areas and have also been chosen to give a wide representation to both developed and developing maritime nations.

Professional faculty

The academic and administrative work of the University is directed by the Rector, assisted by the Vice Rector, eight professors each specialising in a different field, and three lecturers. Like the students, the teaching staff come from many countries.

In addition to the full-time academic staff, the University also benefits from short-term visiting professors and lecturers to cover certain specialised subjects. The University arranges for the services of these specialists who, not available on a long-term basis, can as top persons in their field provide a valuable teaching resource. The combination of full-time staff and visiting professors and lecturers thus allows the University to provide a comprehensive coverage of each subject as well as to give the students access to the leading experts in their respective professions. It has been a particularly encouraging feature that so many renowned persons in maritime transport have served the University free of charge.

In addition to the full-time professors, the Rector is assisted by an administrative staff including course administrators who are involved in organising the field trips and the practical aspects of the on-the-job training programmes, and aiding the professors and visiting lecturers as well as the students in the conduct of the University's course work.

Living accommodation

Students at the University are provided with their own individual apartments in the Henrik Smith House, a building in the centre of Malmö which has been put at the University's disposal by the Malmö municipal authorities.

Finance

By careful management, the annual budget of the World Maritime University has been kept to barely \$4 million – a fraction of what it costs to build even a medium-sized cargo ship today.

This budget includes all operational, administrative and staff expenses of the University itself, as well as all expenditure on travel, board and lodging of students. The budget has been kept to a minimum thanks primarily to the great generosity of many donors and supporters. For example, leading manufacturers have donated marine equipment to the University and the visiting professors have provided their services free of charge.

The money for the University comes entirely from voluntary contributions, both in cash and in kind.

Over half the \$4 million annual budget comes from recurring contributions from Sweden which provides \$1 million; the United Nations Development Programme (\$800,000); Norway (\$350,000); and the Commonwealth Secretariat (\$120,000).

The countries which are sending students to the University in many cases contribute towards the costs involved. Donations have come from private individuals with an interest in shipping. A group called the Friends of the World Maritime University has been established in the United States and has already made several donations to the University. However, the World Maritime University needs assured recurring financial support in order to plan its activities appropriate to function efficiently. The Board of Governors has therefore resolved that the University should establish a Capital Fund with a target of US\$25 million to provide sufficient investment income on a recurring basis. IMO has recently launched an appeal for donations to this Fund.

The future

Although the first student from the University only graduated in 1985, the institution has already proved its worth. Some 65 students enrolled for the second two-year course, beginning in 1984, and last year a record 82 students began their studies.

The most crucial factor, perhaps, in assessing the value of the University is the students themselves. They come from more than 70 countries, have a wide range of backgrounds and experience, and most of them are in their thirties. The staff of the University have been

delighted at the high standard and ability of the students who have so far gone to Malmö. Their hard work and dedication has meant that only a handful have failed to complete their courses.

Experience has shown that the original plans for holding short courses and one-year courses at the University are not a good idea: the cost of sending and accommodating students for such a short period are too high. The University therefore intends to concentrate on two-year courses, while shorter courses will be held at regional centres closer to the students' home countries. The standards will be the same as those at the University. Plans are also being developed for establishing branches of the University in key regional centres.

Undoubtedly improvements may be made as the University develops. However whatever happens, the enthusiasm which led to the establishment of the University is certain to be maintained. The first two years have shown that it can achieve its objectives. On 9 July, 1985, the first batch of students will get their Master of Science Degree. By December 1986 over 200 students will have completed their training, obtained their degrees and returned to serve their countries, 74 of them in different parts of the world, imbued with IMO's spirit of co-operation for which this Organisation is renowned. The years ahead will undoubtedly benefit the whole maritime world.

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