



The Seafarers Harry Lundeborg School of Seamanship – Unlicensed Apprentice Program

Please Note: [The links to the application forms are located at the bottom of this page.](#) If you are considering applying, it is strongly recommended that you first read all of the information on this page. Please pay special attention to Step 1 of the application process – that step must be completed within 30 days of application date. [The application process is free of charge.](#) If anyone is attempting to charge money to submit an application for you, please contact the Apprenticeship Program Coordinator at 905-227-5212.



Located on the campus of the Paul Hall Center for Maritime Training and Education

[If you have attended the Unlicensed Apprentice Program previously you are not eligible to apply and retake the program.](#)

The Seafarers Harry Lundeborg School of Seamanship (“SHLSS” or “School”), affiliated with the Seafarers International Union of North America, Atlantic, Gulf, Lakes and Inland Waters District/NMU, AFL-CIO (SIU) is a vocational school dedicated to preparing students for successful careers as merchant mariners. The School has been training individuals for careers at sea since 1967. The SHLSS provides entry-level training for individuals who wish to begin a seafaring career. We do not accept students that already hold a rating(s). The program is called the “Unlicensed Apprentice Program.” SHLSS also offers classes for experienced seafarers to permit them to upgrade their skills. There are eligibility requirements for both the Unlicensed

Apprentice Program and the upgrading classes. The requirements for the apprentice program are set forth in these materials. Seafarers must meet additional eligibility requirements in order to participate in the upgrading classes.

The School is located on the campus of the Paul Hall Center for Maritime Training and Education. The campus consists of over 60 acres on the waterfront in Piney Point, Maryland, which is approximately 60 miles from Washington D.C. The campus includes the SHLSS, as well as the Joseph Sacco Firefighting and Safety Training School; various classroom facilities, including a cooking lab for hands-on training and culinary demonstrations; the Paul Hall Library and Maritime Museum, marine simulation equipment; and the Seafarers Training and Recreation Center, which contains dining facilities, living quarters, and recreational and laundry facilities. Hands-on-training is also conducted on board the John F. Fay, a vessel which is docked at the campus's waterfront.

Is a Seafaring Career for Me?

The merchant maritime industry employs men and women who work on a variety of vessels in the deck, engine and steward departments. If you become a mariner, you will have job opportunities in different sectors of the maritime industry. Jobs are available on vessels sailing on inland waterways and Great Lakes; including cargo vessels, tugs and cruise ships.

Shipboard life is very demanding. Mariners live and work together in a confined and isolated environment, and may be away from home for months at a time. There is often no immediate access to medical care. However, seafaring is a rewarding career, with good pay and benefits. If you continue your training, you will have the chance to continue to move up the career ladder into more skilled and higher-paying positions. You will also have an opportunity to travel and to be part of the "brotherhood of the sea." Once you complete the Unlicensed Apprentice Program, you will have the skills necessary to begin a career as a seafarer.

The Unlicensed Apprentice Program

The Unlicensed Apprentice Program at SHLSS is the largest training program for entry level seafarers in the United States. It is designed to prepare students with little or no maritime experience for a seafaring career.

There is no charge for tuition or room and board for Program participants. However, students are responsible for paying the costs of their uniforms (once the student receives their uniform the fees are non-refundable), a physical exam, drug test, benzene test, and fees for the following required documents: a Transport Canada Marine Medical, Transport Canada Discharge Book, a criminal record check and a current passport. These fees and costs are approximately \$850. Students must also pay for the cost of their transportation to the Center.

The Curriculum

The Unlicensed Apprentice (UA) Program is approximately 28 weeks long, and includes a combination of classroom training at the SHLSS, as well as an apprenticeship on board a vessel. The Program is broken down as follows:

Phase 1

Twelve (12) weeks of entry level training at the SHLSS.

Phase 2

Ninety (90) days or more shipboard training as a non-crew member unlicensed apprentice. This includes thirty (30) days in each department with required completion of a designated sea project. Apprentices receive a stipend while they are training on board the vessel during Phase II.

Phase 3

Four (4) weeks of follow-up training in Piney Point, MD. This phase focuses on the specific skills of each department (deck, engine, galley).

Deck

Marlinespike seamanship, cargo handling, watch standing duties, routine maintenance regimes and shipboard safety.

Engine

Diesel and steam plant familiarization, use and care of tools and equipment and shipboard safety.

Galley

Food preparation fundamentals, handling stores, nutrition, shipboard sanitation, laundry operations and shipboard safety.

Students are required to take classes concerning shipboard emergencies and operations including: firefighting, water survival, first aid, CPR, industrial relations and social responsibilities on board a vessel. Each course is designed to provide the students with skills and knowledge to perform safely and effectively aboard a ship. Apprentices also learn about citizenship and individual responsibility through a series of classroom discussions and visits to the U.S. Capitol in Washington, D.C., and the SIU Headquarters in Camp Springs, Maryland. The prospective seafarer will also learn about the nature of the shipping industry, the economics of marine transportation, and government policies and regulation that affect the vitality of the fleet.

What Should I Expect if I Attend the Unlicensed Apprentice Program?

The work of a seafarer is physically demanding, and requires a certain level of physical fitness. You should be aware that upon arrival you will be evaluated to determine whether you are physically able to perform the essential tasks of a merchant mariner. This evaluation will include an assessment of your ability to climb ladders and stairs; your agility; your sense of balance; your ability to lift loads of at least 40 pounds; your ability to crouch, kneel, crawl, and stand on your feet for extended periods; your manual dexterity; and your ability to use survival equipment. [If you are physically unable to perform these essential tasks, you cannot work as a mariner on a ship. For this reason, you may be sent home to improve your fitness level if you cannot successfully perform these tasks upon arrival.](#) In addition, as part of your training at SHLSS, you will be required to participate in regular fitness training.

The UA Program curriculum has been developed to meet all US Coast Guard requirements. The daily routine of a UA is very much like the routine a merchant mariner will experience on board a ship. Below is a typical day in the life of a UA during the first phase of the program:

- > 0400 – wake-up
- > 0415 – prepare dorm for morning inspection
- > 0430 – breakfast
- > 0445 – report to work in the Galley
- > 0730 – mustering for morning colors
- > 0800 – march to class
- > 0800 – 1100 class
- > 1100 – march to lunch

- > [1130 – report to galley for lunch detail](#)
- > [1300 – march to class](#)
- > [1300 – 1600 afternoon class](#)
- > [1600 – return from class and march to evening meal](#)
- > [1630 – report to galley for evening meal duty](#)
- > [1630- 1930 – galley duty](#)
- > [2000 – lights out](#)

In addition to the daily routine, a UA is required to work scheduled watches that are similar to the watches stood while working on a ship. An ideal candidate must be able to handle the mental and physical aspects of shipboard life. Working long hours requires fitness and the mental capacity to remain safe onboard a ship.

The Unlicensed Apprentice Program is a structured and disciplined program. The UA is required to wear a uniform (once the students uniform has been issued the fees are non-refundable) and march to and from classes. Apprentices must adhere to strict grooming standards. Students are not allowed to wear jewelry or makeup. Students are not permitted to have cars on campus, and are not allowed to leave the campus. Drug and alcohol use are prohibited at all times and students may be required to submit to drug and/or alcohol testing.

An applicant must be self-motivated to succeed in the classroom and other assigned areas of detail. The UA is observed and monitored during all phases of training. Excelling in the classroom is not the only requirement. A UA must also possess a strong work ethic to succeed.

All apprentices must comply with the Program's Rules and Regulations. Apprentices are required to sign a copy of the Rules and Regulations upon arrival. Disciplinary issues are handled by a Review Board which consists of staff and members of the UA Program. Demerits are issued for violations of the rules and regulations. Five demerits will result in dismissal from the Program.

Estimated Costs (Costs vary)

Step #1:

[Six \(6\) passport size photos = \\$30](#)

Step #2:

[TC Marine Medical = \\$100](#)

[Canadian Passport = \\$110](#)

[Dental = varies depending on work that needs to be completed](#)

[Drug and Alcohol Testing = \\$150 \(approximate cost\)](#)

Once scheduled and prior to arriving to school:

[Uniforms = \\$470](#)

[Travel to be held in account at school = \\$200](#)

[Transportation expense to get to school = varies depends on location and mode of transportation](#)

[Miscellaneous/required clothing costs = \\$450 \(varies\)](#)

Academic Policies

Students are required to pass an exam at the end of each course in order to pass the course. If a student fails the exam, he or she is allowed one additional opportunity to take the exam. If a student fails a course, the case will be referred to the Review

Board to decide whether the student should be allowed to continue in the Program.

Applicants should be aware that if they do not complete the entire Program, (Phase I through Phase III) they will not be eligible to receive certificates for the courses they have taken up to the point that they were dismissed, decided to leave or discontinued by the school for not completing all three phases.

Application Process and Admission Requirements

The application process to the Unlicensed Apprentice Program is selective. The Program only accepts applicants whom the Admission Committee determines will be able to successfully pursue a seafaring career. A candidate must demonstrate that he or she possesses the discipline, ability, and fitness level necessary to work as a merchant mariner in order to be accepted into the Program. Candidates are accepted throughout the year. The detailed description of the Application Process below contains more information about how frequently applicants are accepted.

Admission Requirements

Applicants seeking admission to the Unlicensed Apprentice Program must meet the following requirements:

General Requirements:

- > Must be 18 or older.
- > Must be eligible to work in Canada.
- > Must be able to meet all Transport Canada qualifications/requirements. Must also obtain a Transport Canada issued 2 year marine medical certificate.
- > Cannot be on any form of probation or parole. Must provide a recent Police Background Check.

General Physical Requirements – Applicants must meet the following physical requirements:

- > Be in good physical, mental and dental health. Applicants must be able to pass a complete physical and drug test performed by a Seafarers Health and Benefits Plan contracted clinic.
- > Have blood pressure normal for their age.
- > Have a dental check-up.
- > Have normal color vision as determined by T.C. approved doctor color vision testing or mariner could be restricted to sailing steward department. (included in the T.C. medical)
- > All deck department applicants must have a minimum of 20/20 vision in each eye, and corrected to 20/40 in both eyes.
- > All engine department applicants must have a minimum of 20/20 vision in each eye, and corrected to 20/50 in both eyes. NOTE: If the applicant does not meet the vision requirements for upgrading in either the Deck or Engine departments, he/she may be restricted to sailing in the Steward department.
- > Applicants who wear corrective lenses or glasses need to bring either two (2) pair of glasses or one (1) pair of glasses and one (1) pair of contact lenses.

Application Process

Step #1

(YOU HAVE 30 DAYS TO COMPLETE STEP #1, FROM THE DATE YOU SUBMIT YOUR APPLICATION, OR YOUR APPLICATION WILL BE VOID)

- o ➤ 1. Please read all information about the Unlicensed Apprentice Program in its entirety prior to filling out the application. Fill out the electronic application online. The link to the application form is located at the bottom of this page.
- o ➤ 2. On a separate paper write an essay, of no less than 400 words, about "Why I want to be a Merchant Mariner." The essay may be handwritten or typed on a computer. At the end of the essay, you must include the following statement: "I hereby affirm that this essay was written by me, and no one else." After this statement, sign your name. Please mail this to the Admissions Office along with other required paperwork.
- o ➤ 3. Provide three (3) non-family character references (ONE FROM EMPLOYER SEE BELOW) to be mailed to the Admissions Office by the person writing the reference. Letters should include the person's name writing the letter, their relationship to you and a contact phone number. Please be sure they include your full name and mail to : SIU Canada, 70 St David Street East, Thorold, Otario, Canada L2V 4V4, Attn: Apprenticeship Coordinator; **ONE REFERENCE LETTER MUST BE FROM YOUR CURRENT OR MOST RECENT EMPLOYER ON COMPANY LETTERHEAD. LETTERS FROM EMPLOYERS NOT ON COMPANY LETTERHEAD WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED!!** If you are not currently employed you need to provide a written statement explaining why you are not employed and when you last worked.
- o ➤ 4. Provide high school and/or college transcripts.
- o ➤ 5. If prior military, provide a copy of your service record. If discharge from military was anything other than honorable please provide information about discharge as well.
- o ➤ 6. Send six head shot size photos (similar to those used for a passport), (no hats, head covers or sunglasses unless hat or head covering is worn for religious reasons) FAXED or SCANNED PICTURES ARE NOT ACCEPTABLE.

Please mail all necessary paperwork to the SIU Apprenticeship Program – 70 St David Street East, Thorold, Ontario, Canada L2V 4V4. You have 30 days after an electronic application has been submitted to forward the remainder of the necessary paperwork and test at your local SIU Hall or your application will be VOID and you cannot reapply. Once your application is received you will be contacted via email (make sure you give a correct, active email address) and instructed to schedule a reading and math test at one of the SIU Halls. (If you have not heard from the program coordinator within 7 days after you submit your application it is your responsibility to follow up on your application, call 905-227-5212) You must contact the Union Hall prior to arriving to set up the test and you must take your letter with you in order to be permitted to test. This all must be done within 30 days of your application being received by the Admissions Office, including testing!

Upon completion of Step #1, including testing, your application will be submitted to the selection committee. The committee will meet once a month to pick applicants to move onto Step #2. You will be contacted by mail or email within 60 days after completing Step #1 if you have been selected to move onto Step #2. Due to the economy and other conditions, the need for apprentices fluctuates throughout the year therefore, the class sizes will fluctuate depending on the amount of mariners needed. At any time the school reserves the right to not hold a selection committee. Any money spent as part of the application process is non-refundable and the sole responsibility of the applicant.

Step #2

You will be notified by mail or email whether you are selected to continue on to Step #2 of the application process. At this time you must provide copies of the following documents within 30 days or your application will be VOID. If you are unable to obtain the following documentation within the allotted time frame it is the applicant's responsibility to advise the Program Coordinator of any issues.

- o ➤ 1. Transport Canada Marine Medical Certificate

- > [2. Transport Canada Discharge Book](#)
- > [3. Police Clearance Certificate](#)
- > [4. Valid passport](#)
- > [5. Drug and Alcohol Testing results](#)
- > [6. All applicants must have a complete dental examination administered by his/her private dentist. A dental letter must be sent to the Apprenticeship Program Coordinator, on your dentist's letterhead and must specifically state that the applicant does not have any cavities, pyorrhea, or periodontal disease and currently needs no work to be done. The letter must contain a current date.](#)

Any money spent as part of the application process is non-refundable and the sole responsibility of the applicant.

All official government documents (Marine Medical, Discharge book, Police Clearance, passport) should be copied and mailed to the Apprenticeship Program Coordinator, please do not send originals. Make sure you send the page that contains your picture and your CDN #). Please be sure to also send the original dental letter.

Once an applicant has a completed file they will be advised approximately three months prior to their report date that they have been selected for class. If the applicant is unable to pass all medical exams within six (6) months of his/her originally scheduled start date, the applicant will lose their conditional acceptance. The applicant may re-apply for admission after waiting at least one year from the date their conditional acceptance was withdrawn, but must re-submit the entire application, beginning with Step #1 and be selected to move to Step #2. They must pass all medical requirements (physical exam, benzene test, drug test) before he/she will be considered for admission. Students will be scheduled for classes on as needed basis depending on industry needs. Once the student has paid for their uniforms and they have been issued the uniform fee is non-refundable.

If you have any questions about the application process please contact the Apprenticeship Program Coordinator, 905-227-5212 or by email to: sti-ifm@seafarers.ca

If you have attended the Unlicensed Apprentice Program previously you are not eligible to apply and retake the program.

Click the button/s below to access our secure online application form or other relevant documents.

[ONLINE APPLICATION FORM](#)

[STUDENT PRIVACY POLICY](#)

[CONSENT TO RELEASE FORM](#)