



ICS Examiners Report

Port Agency

Overall Comments Guidelines

The overall standard for the Port agency examination in May 2025 was of a very high standard. Students made a good attempt at all the questions. It was positive to note that the laytime question received a higher percentage of correct answers than in preceding examinations. Also, there was a noticeable improvement in maritime geography.

Overall Comments

The questions were selected from within the port agency syllabus. Questions were set on laytime, operational issues, relevant abbreviations, general average, P&I Club, marketing, cargoes and trades, and legal aspects of port agency.

Question one- General Average

Generally, this question was well handled; most students were able to give a detailed account of the general average process, as well as the requirement for the port agent to work in conjunction with the average adjusters to ensure that the cargo receivers could claim their cargo after following due procedure. Of utmost importance was the requirement for the student to be able to display a knowledge of the unique phraseology of General average, such as:- Peril, voluntary sacrifice, York Antwerp rules, jettison, Common adventure, etc.

Question Two: – P & I Club

This two-part question had previously posed challenges for the students. Students had displayed a good knowledge level of the Shipowners' requirements, but struggled to identify the requirements of the Port Agent. In this examination, the students demonstrated an improved understanding of the port agents' requirements, along with a good overview of the shipowners' requirements.

Question Three – Types of Port Agents

The question was generally well handled, with the majority of students able to discuss the differing types of port agents comfortably. Namely, Protective, Charterers' nominated agent, husbandry agent, and hub agent. Some students struggled with the concept of the hub agent and also tended to overlook the requirement for the Hub agent to have a robust IT system to communicate effectively between clients and the numerous sub-agents.

Question Four Cargo Documentation

This was a new question within the syllabus. The question aimed to define the primary cargo documents required for a grain shipment. Generally, this was well handled, focusing on Bills of Lading, manifests, NOR, mates' receipts, and statements of facts, among other relevant documents. However, in some cases, students made an error and discussed the ship's certificates, which are held by the ship's master. This was incorrect.

Question Five- Laytime.

The laytime question was well handled by students, who displayed a significant improvement from previous years, with an increased percentage of students achieving a correct answer and scoring 20 marks. Those who did not achieve full marks were generally able to produce a reasonable laytime statement and achieve a pass mark; only a small number of students were unable to provide a laytime statement.

Question Six – Operational question

The question was a multipart question, asking about pre-funding and a specific issue with the crew. Previously, multipart questions have not been well handled by students, but in this case, the students provided a reasonably good level of response. Generally, students managed to focus on the financial aspect and ensure that the company was protected, and were quick to involve their PI club. The issues with the crew were challenging for several students, but were reasonably well handled.

Question Seven- Marketing – Marketing

This question was generally well handled, although several students produced poor formats. In general, the majority of students were able to supply a reasonable overview of their company's history and service levels. Additionally, students were able to advise several relevant added-value services aligned to the steel trades.

Question Eight Trade Routes

The majority of students selected crude oil as their preferred choice, and were able to supply relevant trade routes and vessel types. Map work was much improved on previous examinations, with the majority of students selecting loading terminals in the Arabian Gulf and relevant discharge ports. One area of improvement would be the rather ad hoc approach to the vessels' tonnages and main dimensions, which should have been communicated in full, but often this was not the case.