

Overall Comments Guidelines

The overall standard for the Port agency examination in November 2025 was high. Students were able to give a good attempt at all of the questions. It was positive to note that the laytime question received a higher percentage of correct answers than in preceding examinations. However, once again there were concerns regarding the students' ability to accurately identify port locations on the provided world map.

The questions were selected from within the port agency syllabus. Questions were set on laytime, operational issues, port agency nominations, rain letters, relevant abbreviations, ship's certificate, marketing, cargoes and trades and legal aspects of port agency.

Question one- Charterers Nominated Agent

This question posed some challenges for the students. A number of students struggled to define the legal position of the port agent within the charter party in such a case where the charterer has nominated the port agent.

Question Two: – Rain Letter

The question was a multi-part question that asked about the concept of the charterers' nominated agent, the use of a rain letter, and the port agent's requirement to negotiate a mutually agreeable position. Many overlooked the concept of the charterers' nominated agent and the need to negotiate a solution, focusing solely on the use of a rain letter.

Question Three – Abbreviations

The question on abbreviations was generally well handled. Most students were able to answer fully with examples on FHEX, VLCC, NOR and BIMCO. Solas was a little more challenging.

Question Four: Ship Certificates

This question proved to be very popular with students, and many students who attempted it gained full marks, with a number also achieving high marks.

Question Five- Operational Question

The students were required to understand the importance of the charterers' nominated agent in the context of the question, but this was largely overlooked. Most students were, however, able to provide a solid discussion on the roles of the bill of lading and also provide some logistical options.

Question Six – Laytime Statement

The question was well handled. The majority of students who attempted this question were able to provide detailed laytime statements, and even when the answer was incorrect, the formal laytime statement helped the examiners award marks.

Question Seven- Marketing – Trade and Geography

This question was generally well handled; most students selected iron ore and provided detailed answers, naming Brazil and Australia as the main export regions and China and Japan as major recipients. The provision of vessel details was limited, and the map's accuracy was often poor. Students selecting LNG frequently confuse load ports with VLCC crude oil terminals.

Question Eight Operational Question

Very few students chose to answer Question eight. Those who did struggled to make an impact and tended to offer basic comments rather than providing detailed analysis of the topic or proposing commercially acceptable agreements. The students should have addressed some of the issues that led to the mistake, such as the introduction of the Port agents P and I club to offer acts, errors, and omissions cover, and some form of negotiated settlement, along with internal training to ensure the error is not repeated.