

The words "FREE" and "GUIDE" are written in a bold, dark blue, serif font, stacked vertically inside a bright orange starburst shape.

## How to Gain a Sailing Certification

- ☑ What is the difference between a sailing certification and a resume?
- ☑ How can I document my experience?
- ☑ How do I sail in international waters, what is the ICC?
- ☑ What will a charter company accept and turn down?
- ☑ How can I get experience if I don't own a boat?

# How to Gain a Sailing Certification

## Intro



Hi, I'm Grant Headifen and I'm glad to share with you this FREE Guide on *How to Gain a Sailing Certification*. I promise to keep it short and to the point. If you've read any of my sailing blogs, sometimes I ramble and rant but not this time. I've got something important to share and I want you to get all the way through it. It will save you from making some embarrassing, uninformed and time costly mistakes. Nothing will be worse than showing up at a yacht charter base and having them turn down your certification in front of your crew and the charter company then

requiring you take out and pay for a professional captain for the week.

Additionally, I'll make the promise to you. This is not a sales pitch. It's pure logic information to get you started in the right direction and help you finish at your end goal. However, if we have FREE resources for you, I will point those out to you - OK? Deal!

Without a personal one-on-one talk, I don't know what your end goal is, but I'm sure it lies above the being a crappy sailor line. And believe me, there are plenty of them out there in command of large boats. Your end goal might extend to chartering a yacht on a sailing vacation someday or perhaps sailing around the world. Perhaps, it's as small and responsible as just having the proper knowledge so that you don't injure anyone in your local water-way. Whatever your goal is, following a proper and professional structured educational and knowledge gathering program is wise and in many circumstances, required.

Regarding pure education, Eppie Lederer, who wrote under the pseudonym Ann Landers, stated it best. She said "*If you think education is expensive - try ignorance*". She nailed it on the head if she had been referring to boating. Through lack of prowess, just one ding in the marina can be expensive or worse yet

not being aware of the boom swinging across can be fatal.

I do hope your end goal is not a check box on the bucket list - sailing is way too much fun and too good of a lifestyle to just move on to fly fishing once the box is checked. If you do need a bucket list box, write this one down as a real accomplishment:

- Skipper a yacht on a week-long sailing vacation.

But it's going to take some work. Let me show you how.

### A Certification vs a Resume

You're applying for a big time corporate job and all you bring along is your Masters Degree certificate from university ten years ago. You can pretty much imagine what would happen, either you'll be hired in an entry level position or not at all.

Now take in your extensive resume to HR and the hiring manager. Your resume covers all the experience you have had, awards you have been given, links to publications you have done, your online LinkedIn profile AND your Masters Degree certificate. You're hired!

There is no reason for any difference when it comes to sailing education, qualifications and the decision whether a charter company will let you have their \$500,000 boat for a week. You simply can not rock up with a certificate - even if it states Bareboat Charter Certified. And for simple proof pick up the phone now and call the big yacht charter companies:

- [Moorings](#): ph 844-921-5438
- [SunSail](#): ph 844-921-3589
- [DreamYacht Charter](#): ph 410 268 2140

Every one of them will refuse to consider chartering a boat to you without a resume. Your resume documents your sailing history; formal education, experience broken out by size of boat and the extent of your experience, your sailing confidence and competence, any practical verification, social proof etc.

So there I hope I have dispelled your first myth - *"If I have the appropriate certification I can rent a boat"*. It's simply not true and if you checked out what I have said, you're 3 for 3 on those phone calls you made above.

If you have printed this guide out, what I want you to do is to scan this QR code with your mobile device

<http://www.nauticed.org/sailing-blog/why-a-sailing-resume-trumps-a-sailing-certification/>



and watch the video that pops up. It discusses the above certification vs resume topic.

If you don't have a QR code scanner on your phone no worries, we built an iOS scanner feature into our

FREE NauticEd Sailing App available online at [www.nauticed.org/sailing-apps](http://www.nauticed.org/sailing-apps) or for Android just search for a QR code scanner on the Google play store. Most are free also.

Alternatively, you can watch the video on this page



So there it is - in the first 2 pages, I hope I've already changed one paradigm for you - it's not a sailing certification you should be after, it's a fully documented *Sailing Resume*. A sailing resume shows your prowess. Here are the Microsoft Word synonyms for the word prowess:

- Ability
- Skill
- Expertise
- Competence
- Dexterity
- Aptitude
- Proficiency
- Know-how
- Knack

I think my favorite word there is dexterity. On a boat, dexterity to me means that you fully understand the problem and can come up with a solution that works. Take for example, 30 miles out, your mast snaps in half. Could you rig it somehow to sail the boat back to the dock? That's an extreme example but what

about if your anchor winch (the windlass) breaks. How would you get the heavy anchor chain in? Or even simpler how would you capture a mooring ball without a boat hook. All these have simple solutions and if I could describe you with all the words above, you'd have prowess in sailing. And that is exactly what a resume will do for you. A resume will prove that you are a great sailor and will recognize you fully for the work (and fun) you've put into it.

A certification alone can not do that. Why because there are many companies that hand out Bareboat Certifications willy nilly. You can even get one in two weekends from some associations. Really? Yes! But it's not worth the paper it is written on because the most basic charter company will not accept it. Why? Because the charter companies are driven by the insurance companies and in some cases government regulations. Insurance companies will not underwrite a charterer who has 5 days of experience by any school. The country of Belize is sick of charterers hitting their coral reefs every week. At the time of writing, they are considering imposing heavy requirements for charterers to have more experience. European countries have recently imposed a requirement for recreational boat skippers to have an ICC - we'll cover that later.

Thus, from here on out in this guide I will no longer refer to a certification. I'll be talking about building your Resume (which may or may not contain a certification).

### What needs to go into this Resume?

A good resume has a matching balance of theory and practical. It's obvious that you can't learn to sail or gain a valid trustworthy certification by reading a book or by just getting on a boat with a friend. Or for that matter doing an online course. A sailing resume must contain both documented theory knowledge and documented practical elements. And I can tell you from first hand knowledge, charter companies focus heavily on extensive documented practical experience as your roles of both crew and skipper of a vessel. A two weekend course is not going to cut it.

### What do the Yacht Charter Companies say?

Years ago, when we sat down with yacht charter companies and instructors worldwide to design our sailing resume system and certification system, we wanted to ensure that the end result met all the needs of proper standards of education, practical experience accounting and overall reporting. And that the result was acceptable to them with out question.

Here was their reply:

### Practical Sailing Experience

- Significant time behind the wheel
- Significant time in command
- Decent amount of time commanding a boat within 10 feet of the boat they were chartering
- Anchoring and mooring practice
- Maneuvering practice
- Med Mooring (if going to the Med)
- Preferably although not necessary, a sign off by an instructor

We couldn't nail them down on numbers so we asked what would be your dream client? Here is what we got:

- 50 days of sailing experience
- 50% of those at least in command
- 50% of those on a boat 28 ft or greater in length

### Theory Knowledge

They wanted theory knowledge on “*all aspects of Bareboat sailing*”. But again we could not nail them down mainly because there was confusion in the market and differences in quality of available educa-

tion. So we asked if the dream client had taken a 40 hour course covering all aspects of near shore sailing including the below would suffice:

- Navigation
- Rules for prevention of collision
- Tides
- Currents
- Anchoring, docking and mooring
- Boat operations
- Yacht chartering
- Maneuvering
- Boat safety
- Weather

Their response was that they could only wish for such a sole.

So there it was, sitting in front of us was a dream client resume right from the horses mouth - something that all charter companies in the world would unquestionably accept.

Next, just to clarify, we asked them if they would accept a Bareboat Charter Certificate as a stand alone acceptance. Their answers were all the same: “*Show me their resume and we'll look into it*” i.e. NO!

## Logic Break

At this stage I'm going to step back and let you take a logic look at what I have presented and what we learned from the countless interviews with charter companies.

First, logically, yacht charter company acceptance as a dream client is a good baseline standard. It means with all their experience, they believe that you will handle the boat with competence, know how, knack, ability. That you have enough prowess to bring the boat back safely and for you that means you bring your crew back safely no matter what the ocean will throw at you.

The logic prevails even if you never intend on taking a sailing vacation. You still have the baseline standard of competence for local waterway operations. On a whim, say you're on a business trip to San Diego, you have ability and trust now to grab a boat for the day and go for a toot around the harbor.

Second, what do you think? Should a sailor entrusted with a 1/2 million dollar boat and the lives of the crew have a minimum resume as above?

## How can I build this resume?

### Theory:

You should complete a structured renown program with significant content and with a test. You can't put into your resume that you read a book. There are lots of programs out there to deliver the theory. But make sure it carries authenticity. Also look for a program that covers all the topics listed above. Obviously, we think the NauticEd Crew, Skipper, Bareboat Charter Master and Captain along with the RYA Day Skipper Courses are the absolute best in the world but I promised I would not do any advertising in this guide. However, as a benefit to you, I will tell you that we have reserved two free courses for you when you create a free account with us.



- [Basic Sail Trim](#)
- [Rules for Prevention of Collision](#)

With today's fast paced requirements and all the pressures draining your time, we also recommend that you search for a theory delivery program that is convenient to you and using multimedia teaching systems rather than a boring ol' book and a paper test where you need to drive to a location to be proctored. Doctors, nurses and airline pilots all do online eLearning and take tests online. You should be able to do the same.

### Practical Experience:

If you own a boat, this is not going to be a problem but this is not most people's case so I will address that heavily below. Actually, even if you own a boat, read the below - you'll see why.

### What if I don't own a boat?

You don't need to own a boat to get experience. In fact, I say that you will get more varied experience if you sail with other owners.

Once, when pilot training, I could not get my landings to be smooth. By chance, I went out with a different instructor the next time. He showed me one trick and voila - I got it. Going out with lots of owners of different boats is going to give you more well rounded experience.

### Yacht Clubs

Some yacht clubs have created a stereotype of snootiness for all yacht clubs. This is far from the truth. By and large, yacht clubs are a friendly and open place for people to join in. So dispel any attitude about yacht clubs. What you will find at yacht clubs is a lot of boat owners desperate to get people on their boats for the regattas. That creates a huge opportunity for you to gain experience from

lots of different skippers.

### Regattas

Whether you are the competitive type or not, regattas are hands down THE BEST WAY to gain experience and gain it fast. Everything happens in regattas. Shit breaks, things explode, collisions happen, sails get hoisted and doused dozens of times, you fly a spinnaker, you broach, sails tear - everything happens. You get more experience in one regatta race than an

## Club Notice Board

*Looking to learn the ropes,  
willing and able to crew.  
Call John @ 555-1234  
p.s. easy going guy*

*Wanted Crew  
First 40.5 looking  
for crew member  
to join in on Spring  
race regatta series  
Call Brian @  
555-4321*



entire year of cruising. Personally, I think they are a blast. And you get to learn how each skipper handles a situation.

My biggest advice is to join a yacht club and participate in as many regattas as possible. Just put your name on the wall and say you're willing to be a reliable crew member for the next series. Or look on the wall - there is probably a few notices there already from a boat owner.

### **Friend's Boats**

A friend of mine used to call me up and say "Would you like to go sailing on your boat today?"

"*How cheeky*" you might think. Quite the contrary. As the boat owner, I would really appreciate that because it would get me out on the water. The same just happened now as I write this paragraph - I'm taking a break and heading out because another friend just called and said "it's blowing let's go (on your boat)". See how it works! If you wait for an invitation, you're not going to get out there and you're not going to get experience and you're not going to build your resume and you're not going to charter your own boat - ever. You'll die a poor miserable death - not really but I'm just making a point. Make a list of friends who have boats. Make a list of acquaintances that have boats.

Call them and tell them they are going sailing on their boat today and you'd be open to helping out.

### **Shared Boat Arrangements**

Every boat owner every month swears they are going to sell their boat every-time they have to make the marina payment. That list you just generated - call the owners and ask if they would be open to sharing their boat for a monthly fee. Heck, put an ad on craigslist offering the same. In Austin Texas, we share a boat amongst friends. It just makes so much sense.

There are also lots of professional shared company systems out there. Just do a Google search around in your city.

Regardless of your circumstances or finances, there are plenty of ways to get experience.

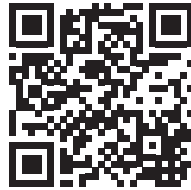
### **Logging your Experience**

In order to build your resume, you must log your experience. This is absolutely essential! A charter company will always ask for your resume. Always!

Ahhr what a hassle right?

No, fortunately we have devised the world's only elec-

tronic logbook that integrates right into your resume AND it's FREE. You can start building your electronic logbook right now. With the FREE NauticEd logbook, you first enter past history to bring you up to date then each time you are on the water you just make a new entry. If you have an iOS device you can make the entry via our [NauticEd App](#) (which is FREE) Android is coming at time of writing.



book, you have the option of entering a CrewMate who was out with you. That sends them an email whereby they do one click which automatically authenticates yours (and their) outing. Your resume practical experience section then shows the percent of outings that have been authenticated. This gives confidence to those reviewing your resume. It's a really cool and unique feature of our Logbook. Yacht Charter Companies love it.

### Proving your Experience

It's one of the biggest questions we get - *“yeah but people can just fake the entries”*.

Well until now, that can be true. By and large, sailors are honest people right? I agree, but I've definitely heard of plenty of white exaggerations! A seemingly harmless exaggeration just to convince the charter company over the top. Prudence would suggest this is not a good practice - right?

With the NauticEd FREE logbook we have introduced a really cool social proof factor. It's called CrewMates™.

Simply, when you make an entry into your log-

### Bolstering Your Sailing Prowess

Badges: FREE again (in-keeping with a no sales pitch), is a system whereby we drive you into the right behavioral activities to become an excellent

## NauticEd Badges



Active



Education



Good Boat Owner



Maintenance



Practical



Racing



Safety



Social



World



Yacht Charter

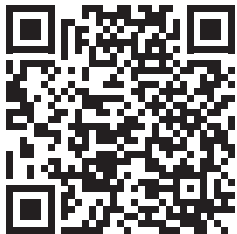
## Instructor Proficiency Verification

sailor.

We have broken down about 100 good sailor activities into 10 badges. For each activity you do you gain points towards a badge. These badges are reported on your resume. Points also decline over time. For example, with the active sailor badge you gain points each time you go out. But because sailing yesterday is worth more value to your resume than sailing 2 years ago, if you don't sail often you will lose active sailor points. With the safety badge, if you have checked your EPIRB in the last six months you maintain that point. If not you lose it. AND the system will even send you an email if you lose a badge because of inactivity.

Badges reported on your resume indicate that you are doing the right kind of activities to become and stay an excellent sailor. It is not only an indication to others but it is an excellent behavioral teaching program for you. Whether you are new to sailing or an old hat,

you will definitely stay on track with your sailing abilities, know-how, knack, boat maintenance and competence with Badges.



[Read more about Badges and Status online here](#)

Built automatically into your resume, is a report if you have been verified to be practically proficient by an instructor.

See, here is the problem the world has been facing up until pre-NauticEd. Sailing certification companies need you to go out with an instructor because that is the only way they make money. Thus, you could not be awarded a certificate without going with an instructor. This left about 3/4 of the world sailors making up their own unstructured resumes - *Ummmm I read a book and have been sailing 100 times and I've been on about 10 different boats.*

So that brings us backwards again to the Certification v Resume argument right?

When you start thinking along the proper lines of a structured resume, ALL of the world can now build a recognized resume with certifications sitting inside the resume or if no certifications have been achieved they still have a structured and powerful resume. Your college degree sits inside your resume. If you don't have a college degree that's OK you still build a resume. I think Michael Dell's resume is probably pretty powerful despite dropping out of University.

## Free Guide: How to Gain a Sailing Certification

So, Instructor verification of proficiency is just one element to your resume. Admittedly, it's a pretty powerful element but none the less, I have meet incredibly competent sailors who have never been out with an instructor. Just to be clear however, if you are getting started - I definitely advise you to go out with an instructor and get this on your resume. Recently, I went to the Bahamas to complete my own requirement for the ICC since I will be heading to Europe this summer. (Even with a United States Coast Guard Captain Masters License, without the ICC, I could not go). In the Bahamas I went with a 30 year instructor veteran and wow did I learn lots of tips and tricks, so much so it was invaluable. With sailing, the great thing is you never stop learning.

Back on topic, when your instructor goes out with you, he/she simply logs into NauticEd and clicks a button to mark your resume that you are deemed practically proficient. Your school instructor can easily set up an account with NauticEd to perform this act. NauticEd will verify this new instructor at our admin level. After a check out by NauticEd they are good to process the verification. This process is FREE to you. And FREE to them!

So in summary here, a resume contains all the elements of your sailing life. If you have been with an

instructor it will show up. If not, no worries - all the rest of your sailing life is there and a charter company or insurance company can still access your prowess from your resume.

The NauticEd Free resume system will show all these items and in addition when you pass certain Ranks with NauticEd, namely :

- Qualified Crew
- Skipper
- Bareboat Charter Master
- Captain
- ICC

you have a downloadable certificate that you can hang on the wall and get the bucket list check box if you really need it. It's even stored inside your mobile App so that you can show friends anytime.

## The International Certificate of Competence

This is widely known as the ICC. You can read more about the ICC on [Wikipedia](#).

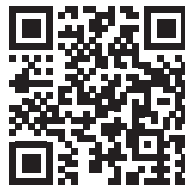
As of 2014, an ICC is the required license for sailing in Europe. And globally, it is becoming widely accepted as the standard license to



accept. Again, if you're going for a bucket list certification or license this is the one because of its world-wide acceptance and the excellent standard to which the issuing bodies are held. Worldwide, it is mostly administered by the Royal Yachting Association (RYA) in the UK. Other European countries also have their own government sponsored entities. Only countries that are signatories to the United Nations Resolution 40 authorizing the creation of the ICC are able to issue the ICC through their appointed national sailing bodies.

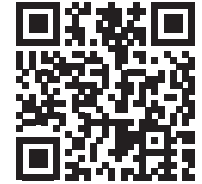
The United States and Canada have not signed Resolution 40 and thus their national sailing bodies can not issue an ICC. For citizens of non signatory countries, the ICC is issued by the RYA. Especially for Americans, Canadians Australians and Kiwis, this process was a bit clunky. Late in 2014, this "clunk" was resolved by NauticEd globally by being approved to supply the RYA Day Skipper Course which is the approved course and required knowledge base for the ICC. The RYA have 500 practical sailing schools world-wide. They are the largest boating certifying body in the world. The School we recommend in the USA for the ICC is:

[www.YachtingEducation.com](http://www.YachtingEducation.com)



For other world-wide practical school locations go to:

[www.rya.org.uk/wheresmynearest](http://www.rya.org.uk/wheresmynearest)



Backtracking, there is a reason that the ICC is the global baseline standard. We know because we had to write the theory course to be approved by the RYA as a supplier. NauticEd offers the on-line theory course for the ICC under its [RYA Day Skipper Course](#). The course is very extensive and far beyond other courses for "101-104 type certifications". On top of that, the ICC has a required practical verification of competence which is a very high standard. The standard is high because of the requirements set for the schools, their boats and their instructors by Resolution 40.



Under the RYA system, each school must pay quite a lot of money each year to be re-inspected. Instructors take years to gain the proper credentials to instruct. They are professionals and not a guy with a Catalina 22.

ICC graduates and license holders must be familiar with and are tested on all aspects of the above mentioned skills and know how. Repeated here:

- Navigation
- Rules for prevention of collision
- Tides
- Currents
- Anchoring, docking and mooring
- Boat operations
- Yacht chartering
- Maneuvering
- Boat safety
- Weather

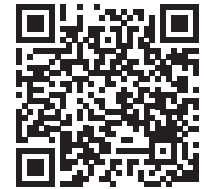
One thing to still to note regarding the ICC however is that even though you meet the country requirements for legally sailing in their waters, the yacht charter companies will still require you to supply your resume.

### Resume storage and delivery

In today's digital world, you should be able to click a button to update your resume and deliver your resume in real-time to a yacht charter company or insurance company (or even if you are a social public butterfly drop it up on facebook so your friends can see). You shouldn't have to manage a paper booklet

with shiny stickers mailed to you whereby you're guaranteed to loose your book at the back of some drawer.

For FREE, NauticEd will store your resume and allow you to update it in real time via web browser or via our FREE mobile App.



View our example student by going online to:

[http://www.nauticed.org/student\\_verification](http://www.nauticed.org/student_verification)

At anytime, you are welcome to [login to NauticEd](#) and start building a FREE resume and download your certificate.



## In Conclusion

- You've learned that Yacht Charter Companies do not accept a stand alone certification. You must submit a resume.
- You now know WHY this is the case
- You know it is prudent to meet a baseline standard on experience and theory knowledge
- A good resume contains all or some of:
  - » Your certification achievements
  - » Proof of theory knowledge
  - » Logbook of practical experience
  - » Practical proficiency verification
  - » Social proof
  - » Activity driven acknowledgments
- A resume can be stored digitally and easily shown and updated in real time.
- If you want to sail in European Waters, the International Certificate of Competence is the only license allowed for recreational boating operations in Europe. The ICC is attained via the Royal Yachting Association in the UK. NauticEd delivers the theory portion of this license.  
Go to the [RYA Day Skipper Course](#)



Finally, as promised, in this guide, I covered:

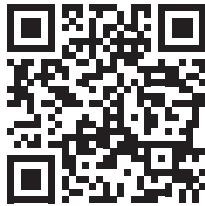
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So there you have it. We are glad we were able to share this information with you.

Please feel free to take advantage of all the FREE resources NauticEd has created for you including:

- [Two free courses](#)
- [Free logbook when you sign in for free](#)

- [Free Badge training system](#)
- [Free resume when you sign in](#)
- [Free mobile App](#)



We are more than happy to supply them to you even if you buy nothing else from us. It's our gift to the sailing community!

We are always happy of course to also help you build your theory knowledge and prowess via our online and mobile device driven courses and Sailing Resume program.

Above all else, be safe and have fun.

Please go to [www.NauticEd.org](http://www.NauticEd.org) now and sign up for a free account. You just won't believe all the free resources we offer to our students.

Sincerely,



**Grant Headifen**

Director of Education

NauticEd International Sailing Education



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