

# South African Maritime Safety Authority



## Marine Notice No. 13 of 2007

---

---

### **SAMSA policy on small vessel surveys, certification and numbering, and skipper qualification and certification, in terms of the Merchant Shipping (National Small Vessel Safety) Regulations, 2007 (as amended)**

TO ALL PRINCIPAL OFFICERS, SURVEYORS, AUTHORISED AGENCIES, SAFETY OFFICERS, SAMSA APPOINTED SKIPPER EXAMINERS, AND OTHER INTERESTED AND AFFECTED PARTIES

*This marine notice replaces Marine Notice No. 13 of 2006*

---

---

#### *Summary*

This marine notice communicates SAMSA policy and interpretation of the *Merchant Shipping (National Small Vessel Safety) Regulations, 2007*, (as amended).

The policy is kept under review and may be amended from time to time.

The main changes are the incorporation of inland waters into the Small Vessel Safety Regulations which affect all users of waters to which the public has access and the relevant Regulating Authorities, Authorised Agencies, training institutions and SAMSA appointed examiners.

This marine notice sets out SAMSA's policy in terms of the Merchant Shipping (National Small Vessel Safety) Regulations 2007 (as amended). Principal Officers and surveyors must not deviate from this policy without the express permission of the General Manager Operations.

03 December 2007

SM1/5/1/46/3  
SM6/6/1

Issued by and obtainable from:  
**The South African Maritime Safety Authority**  
**161 Lynnwood Road**  
**Brooklyn, Pretoria**

**PO Box 13186**  
**Hatfield 0028**

**Tel: +27 12 366 2600**

**Fax: +27 12 366 2601**

**E-mail: [marinenotices@samsa.org.za](mailto:marinenotices@samsa.org.za)**

**Web Site : [www.samsa.org.za](http://www.samsa.org.za)**

- The quantity, type and distribution of buoyancy must be described in detail.
- The net weight (*light weight*) of the vessel must be noted, as this is the best method of monitoring absorbency or water retention of either foam or bottles.
- The certificate must attest to compliance with the requirements of regulation 6 and Annex 1 or conversely state exactly what is in fact being certified.
- Any limitations, conclusions or comments must be clearly noted; especially when bottles are used as they have a limited lifespan.

## 10 National Examination, Certification and Training of Skippers

### 10.1 Overview

The *Merchant Shipping (National Small Vessel Safety) Regulations, 2007* (as amended) require the Authority to determine the standards of competence for skippers of all commercial small vessels, as well as skippers of certain pleasure vessels (*being either a sailing pleasure vessel of more than 9 metres or a power driven pleasure vessel with a motor of more than 15 HP*). In the case of skippers of pleasure vessels, the standards were determined after consultation with the governing bodies representing the pleasure vessel sectors concerned.

There are a wide range of different types of vessel which have to be considered when setting up an examination system and therefore the varying types of skipper's certification under consideration in this section varies in composition and include:

- All "commercial" vessels (*i.e. anything not used solely for sport or recreation*) < 25 GT; and
- Any pleasure vessels which are required to carry a certificated a skipper (*as qualified above*), but less than 100 GT.

The range of "commercial" vessels which require a certificate of competence in order to be legally operated, ranges from rowing boats used for catching crayfish commercially and "chukkies" (*small wooden fishing vessels*), SAPS launches and semi-rigid inflatable boats, passenger vessels, etc through to complex fishing vessels < 25 GT, fitted with freezers and staying out for weeks at a time.

Agreements are made between various organizations and SAMSA regarding the equivalency of their internal training programmes. For instance; in terms of agreements already concluded between SAMSA and the NSRI, DWAF, SAPS and the SAN, SAMSA recognises equivalencies to specific competencies in the national system and national certificates are issued by our HO in accordance with the unified national system. In all cases the details are published in a marine circular.

SAMSA's small vessel policy reflects the developing national certification system and will be amended from time to time.

SAMSA has in place a standardised national level of training and examination for all grades of small vessel certificates of competency. This marine notice documents the national standard, which also contains the South African Small Vessel Code of Qualifications. (In this document it is referred to as the Code and is attached to this policy as annex 12)

The Code consists of various modules which set out the syllabi and standards for small vessel training, certification and examinations. (Except the restricted Day Skipper (Local Waters) certificate which is discussed later.)

There are only two ways of obtaining a national certificate of competence;

1. Examination by a SAMSA appointed examiner (whether a SAMSA officer or otherwise); or
2. Training and examination by a SAMSA accredited institution.

Authorised agencies are required to choose between either of these two options.  
For clarification on the procedure for accreditation or appointment refer to chapter 13 of this document.

## **10.2 Principles of the national certification regime**

### **10.2.1 Examiners**

It is not SAMSA's current intention or policy that its officers examine skippers of vessels  $\leq 9\text{m}$  for the national small vessel certificates and the various agencies have indicated that they are generally in a position to cater for this group of vessels. However, recognising that SAMSA is responsible for the implementation and success of the national certification, SAMSA has to be able to ensure a reasonable level of service to anyone not willing or otherwise unable, to obtain skipper certification through Authorised Agencies. Suitable external examiners (other than SAMSA officers) may be recognised or appointed in terms of section 77(4) of the Merchant Shipping Act, 1951, to carry out specific examinations on SAMSA's behalf. The appointments are not automatically renewable and each appointment or re-appointment will be made with SAMSA's interests in mind.

Any examination for national skipper certification required for commercial vessels (of any description) over 9 metres in length must be carried out by SAMSA officers at a SAMSA office who have been appointed as examiners.

ALL examiners participating in the national system must be appointed in writing by the General Manager Operations to conduct the relevant category of small vessel skipper examination. SAMSA will issue each examiner with a number by which he will be recognised.

The two main reasons for this modification are:

1. the confusion caused by the many unknown examiners working through their secretariats with our certification unit which causes long delays when there are queries regarding applications, and
2. in order to further establish the independence of examiners when dealing with competency issues.

This appointment will be for a **maximum period of three years** at a time, unless withdrawn earlier by SAMSA for non-compliance with policy or any conditions attached to the appointment.

Applications for accreditations of training institutions or appointments of examiners are to be made through the Principal Officer at the port closest to the applicant. That office will consider the application in accordance with SAMSA policy and make recommendations to the senior examiner or the General Manager Operations as required.

In cases where SAMSA does not concur with the proposal, the matter will be discussed in detail with the person or agency concerned.

SAMSA will publish and maintain a current list of these examiners and training institutions by way of a Marine Notice which will be available on the SAMSA website.

### **10.2.2 Issuing of Certificates of Competence**

No distinction is made between pleasure and commercial  $\leq 9\text{m}$  power driven skipper certification and only the national certificate of competence will be recognised for this category of skippers.

All national small vessel certificates of competence for power driven small vessels will be issued centrally by SAMSA for all agencies. Proper records and a data base must be kept by the Registrar of Seafarers in Pretoria.

Certificates of competence for pleasure sailing vessels > 9m are issued by SA Sailing who will still be issuing SAS certification.

The > 9m SAS certificates which are used on pleasure vessels can be upgraded to the centrally issued > 9m national certification (*motor driven vessels - but with a sailing endorsement*) following an oral examination by a SAMSA officer at a SAMSA office who has been appointed as an examiner and after producing the required ancillary courses and documentation as detailed on the application form in annex 6.

SAMSA offices may not issue any of the old system's (TV5/53) certification at all.

Appointed examiners and accredited training institutions may liaise directly with the Registrar of Seafarers in Pretoria for the issuing of a national certificate of competence, on the form and in the manner prescribed which is annexed to this marine notice as Annexure 6.

Provision has been made for examiners to issue official SAMSA "Interim Certification" following the successful completion of an examination so that candidates are not inconvenienced whilst the national certification is being issued from SAMSA head office. This interim certification is only valid for six months.

### **10.2.3 Categories of vessels and skipper certification**

The categorisation of small vessels has been radically changed with the promulgation of the *Merchant Shipping (National Small Vessel Safety) Regulations, 2007* (as amended). Small vessels are now categorised by their area of operation as follows (repeated here for ease of reference):

- (a) *Category A* — vessels operating any distance from shore;
- (b) *Category B* — vessels operating less than 40 nautical miles from shore;
- (c) *Category C* — vessels operating less than 15 nautical miles from shore;
- (d) *Category D* — vessels operating less than 5 nautical miles from shore;
- (e) *Category E* — vessels operating not more than 1 nautical mile from shore and 15 nautical miles from an approved launch site;
- (f) *Category E* — vessels operating solely on inland waters. (Now defined as all water areas accessible to the public and contained within ports and fishing harbours lagoons, rivers, dams, wetlands and lakes in the Republic)

In principle the intention of the certification levels is to allow new entrants to get to sea relatively easily by making the lower levels of certification a "daylight hours only" certificate restricted to the appropriate category and distance offshore. Thereafter the syllabi and experiential training required expand with the extended operational areas and responsibilities.

There is also a distinction made in the examination, certification and experiential training of skippers on vessels of  $\leq 9$  metres and vessels > 9 metres in length overall. However subjective the selection of this length may seem to some critics, any line or limit will generate a debate close to the line or limit itself - therefore this principle is not negotiable with respect to the competency required for any vessels close to the 9m limitation.

In practice though there is very little difference in the academic requirements between the two divisions in the lower categories of certificate, (*i.e. Day Skipper  $\leq 9m$  and Day Skipper > 9m*) however the higher certificates (*Coastal Skipper and Skipper Offshore > 9m*) are substantive

certificates which will in future allow a cross over to higher STCW (Fishing) and thence to STCW certification.

Furthermore the certification of the individual is not based on a particular craft or even type of craft, but rather the academic level and appropriate sea service. Accordingly, a person who obtains all their sea service on Category C vessels for instance can still be found competent up to a higher level as directed by SAMSA policy.

The new system also requires that candidates who wish to obtain the highest certificate such as Skipper Coastal >9 metres or the Skipper Offshore certificates, need to have at least held a lower certificate or conducted their training under a certificated skipper. This is detailed in the flow charts further on in this chapter.

### **10.3 Outline of the National Certification Regime**

#### **10.3.1 Day Skippers**

##### **10.3.1.1 Day Skipper - Local Waters (restricted) $\leq 9\text{m}$ or $> 9\text{m}$ & Skipper – Inland waters (restricted) $\leq 9\text{m}$ or $> 9\text{m}$**

This lowest (non academic and practical) level of national certificate certifies that the candidate has demonstrated that he/she has the knowledge necessary to skipper, during daylight hours (or in the case of inland waters as directed by the examiner), any specified category of small vessel from and to his home-port or launch site, in a specific local waters area as defined on the certificate.

The distance allowed offshore for vessels proceeding to sea is generally related to the category described, but the definition of "local waters" must be further defined and limited at the discretion of the examiner where considered necessary.

The sole purpose of this level of certification is to assist persons unable to achieve any higher level of national certification to operate in their local area about which they must hold relevant local knowledge.

##### **10.3.1.2 Skipper - Category R and Day Skipper -Category E $\leq 9\text{m}$ or $> 9\text{m}$**

These basic (academic) levels of national certificate certifies that the candidate has demonstrated that he/she has the knowledge necessary to skipper, during daylight hours, any category E small vessel from and to his home-port or sheltered launch site, anywhere in South Africa; or, any category R vessel at any time on any inland waters.

The syllabus is the same for both but the sea-time requirements are different. Hence a person can upgrade his category R to an E by producing practical sea-time alone. The examination should take this into account.

##### **10.3.1.3 Day Skipper - Category C $\leq 9\text{m}$ or $> 9\text{m}$**

This (academic) level of national certificate certifies that the candidate has demonstrated that he/she has the knowledge necessary to skipper, during daylight hours, any category C (or lower) small vessel from and to his home-port or sheltered launch site, anywhere in South Africa;

The sea-time requirements may be obtained on either category C or D vessels.

#### **10.3.1.4 Day Skipper - Category B $\leq$ 9m or $>$ 9m**

This (academic) level of national certificate certifies that the candidate has demonstrated that he/she has the knowledge necessary to skipper, during daylight hours, any category B (or lower) small vessel from and to his home-port or sheltered launch site, anywhere in South Africa;

The sea-time requirements must be obtained on category C or higher vessels.

#### **10.3.1.5 Coastal skipper $\leq$ 9m (Category B Day and Night operation)**

This level of national certificate certifies that the candidate has demonstrated that he/she has the knowledge necessary to skipper a small motor driven vessel  $\leq$  9m on coastal passages, day or night, but within 40 nautical miles of the coastline.

By definition therefore any candidate who cannot attain the level of knowledge required to take a vessel 40 miles offshore cannot have the designation 'coastal skipper', nor can they be allowed to navigate a vessel at night (sunset to sunrise) except if the certificate is endorsed under the conditions described further on.

Sea-time may be obtained on vessel of category C or higher, however the night hours are very important and examiners must ensure that the hours have been properly logged.

#### **10.3.1.6 Coastal skipper $>$ 9m**

This level of national certificate certifies that the candidate has demonstrated that he/she has the knowledge necessary to skipper a small motor driven  $>$  9m commercial vessel of  $<$  25GT and motor driven pleasure vessels  $<$  100GT on coastal passages, day or night, but within 40 nautical miles of the coastline.

Sea-time must be obtained on category B vessels of  $>$  9 metres and with sufficient properly logged night hours.

#### **10.3.1.7 Skipper offshore $\leq$ 9m or $>$ 9m**

This level of national certificate certifies that the candidate has demonstrated that he/she has the experience and knowledge necessary to skipper a small motor driven vessel of either  $\leq$  9m or an  $>$  9m commercial vessel  $<$  25GT and recreational vessel  $<$  100GT - according to the wording on the certificate - on any extended or ocean passage.

The academic level for both divisions is similar, with the  $>$  9m syllabus having extra modules on 'power' and 'law'.

Sea-time may be obtained on category B vessels or higher on vessels of the appropriate length and with sufficient properly logged night hours.

### **10.4 Additional Endorsements to national certification**

#### **10.4.1 Dive skipper endorsement (May be issued by appointed examiners)**

This is a specific and additional endorsement which can be added separately to any of the above mentioned national certificates.

All skippers operating a commercial diving or dive charter vessel are required to have this endorsement added to their Small Vessel Certificate of Competence before SAMSA considers the vessel to be properly and safely manned.

**10.4.2 Passenger Vessel (<25GT) endorsement to any national certificate** (May only be issued by a SAMSA office.)

All skippers operating a small passenger vessel (*i.e. carrying more than 12 passengers*) are required to have this endorsement added to their Small Vessel Certificate of Competence before SAMSA considers the vessel to be properly and safely manned.

The endorsement shall indicate whether the skipper is qualified to operate a passenger vessel operating at night or otherwise state the limitations of any night operations. **Note that this additional endorsement is not the same as the Commercial Night Operations endorsement described in the next part.**

This requirement includes any current dive charter, whale watching or shark diving vessels operating with more than 12 passengers.

**10.4.3 Commercial Night Operation endorsement**

This endorsement is available only to *bona fide* commercial fishers (*especially traditional fishers*) who for whatever reason are unable to attain the higher level of certificate (*i.e. Coastal Skipper*) which is the normal level of competence before being allowed to venture out to sea at night.

The candidates must however hold at least a Day Skipper (*Local Waters*) Certificate and have accumulated sufficient experience in the local area (*very limited area to be defined by a SAMSA office*) to satisfy the SAMSA examiner that the endorsement is warranted.

Any such endorsements must be severely limited in the area of operation as it is only intended to assist locally based traditional fishers and NOT to replace the attempt to improve the safety standards, training and certification of commercial fishers.

Externally appointed examiners or accredited institutions may not examine candidates for this endorsement.

**10.4.4 Sailing Endorsement to a national certificate** (May only be issued by specifically appointed examiners)

No separate or combined motor and sailing certification is envisaged, sailing competency will be reflected on a national motor driven certificate by way of an additional endorsement.

This endorsement is available to candidates who have passed a relevant SAS examination (*i.e. Day Skipper, Coastal Skipper, Skipper Offshore and Skipper Ocean recreational sailing certification*) and are upgrading to the national certification.

It is also possible for SAMSA appointed examiners to examine candidates for the issue of this endorsement, but only where specifically appointed to do so.

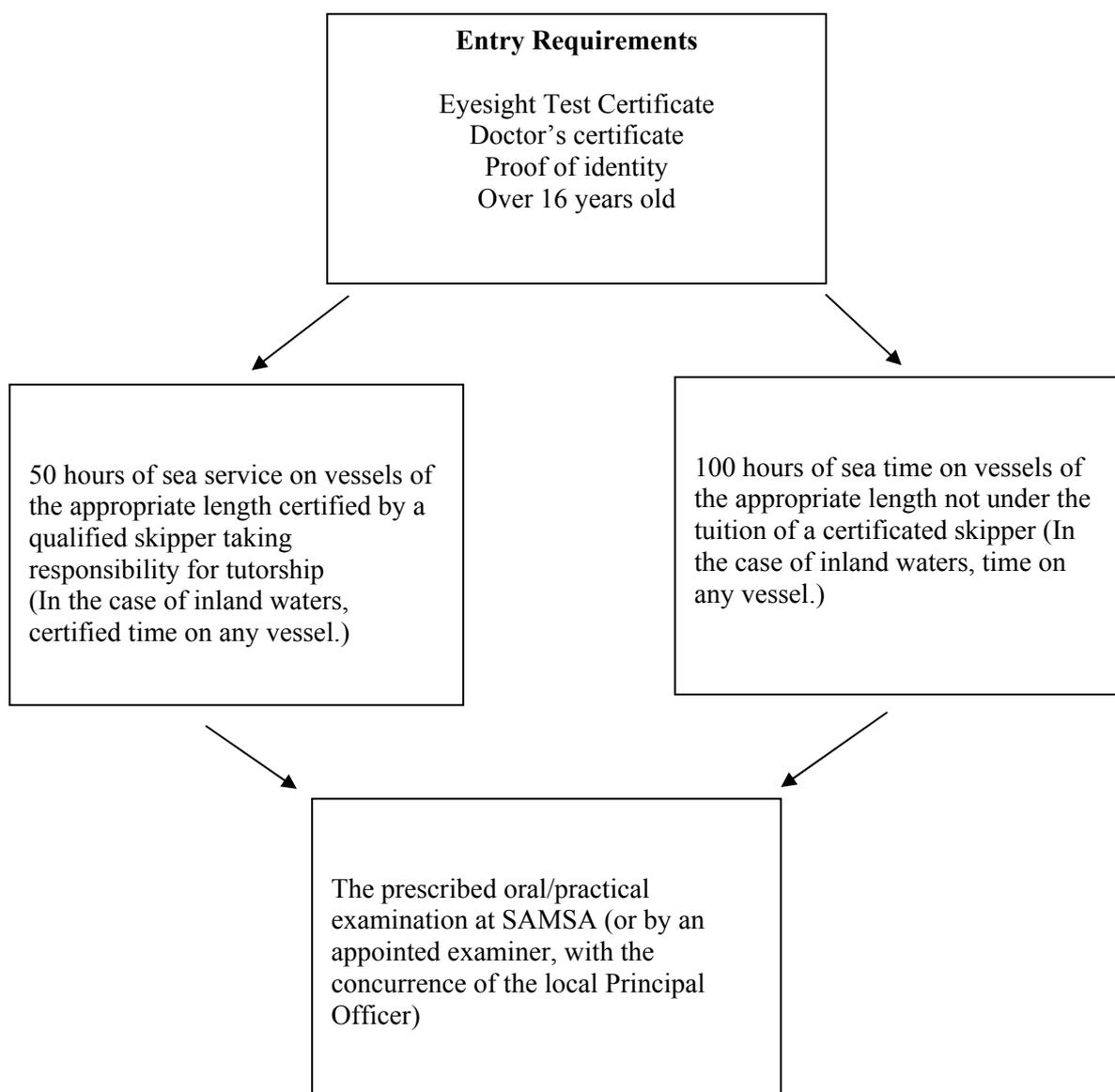
**10.4.5 Surf Launching Endorsement** (May be issued by appointed examiners)

The standard national certificate is only intended to cover vessels operating from a port, fishing harbour or protected launch site and certainly does not certify that the holder is competent to tackle the high energy surf and river launches experienced on the South African south and eastern coastlines.

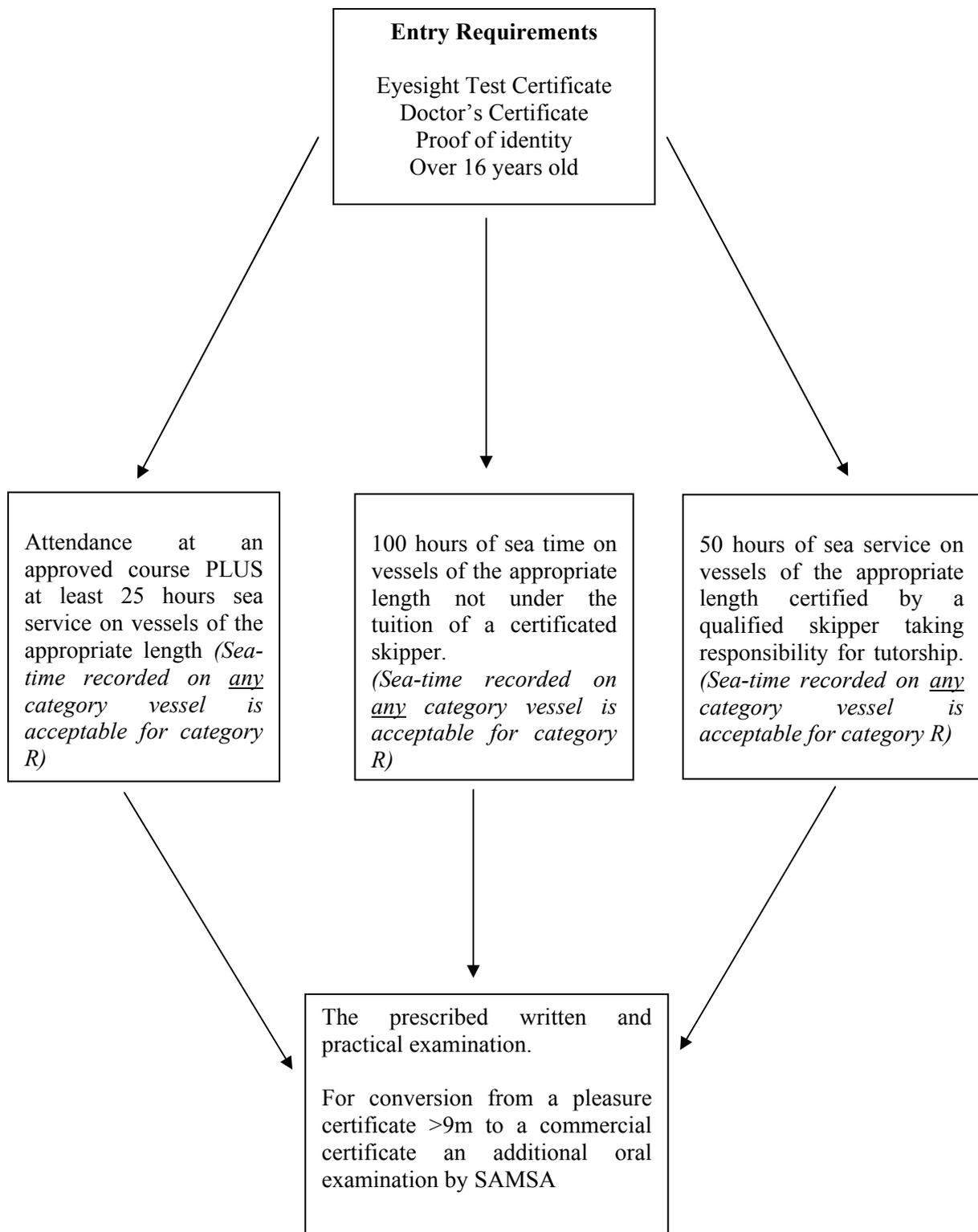
The purpose of this endorsement is to indicate which skippers have demonstrated their proficiency in this particular and necessary skill.

### 10.5 Flowcharts detailing the entry requirements, experiential training and examinations process for the various categories of skipper certification

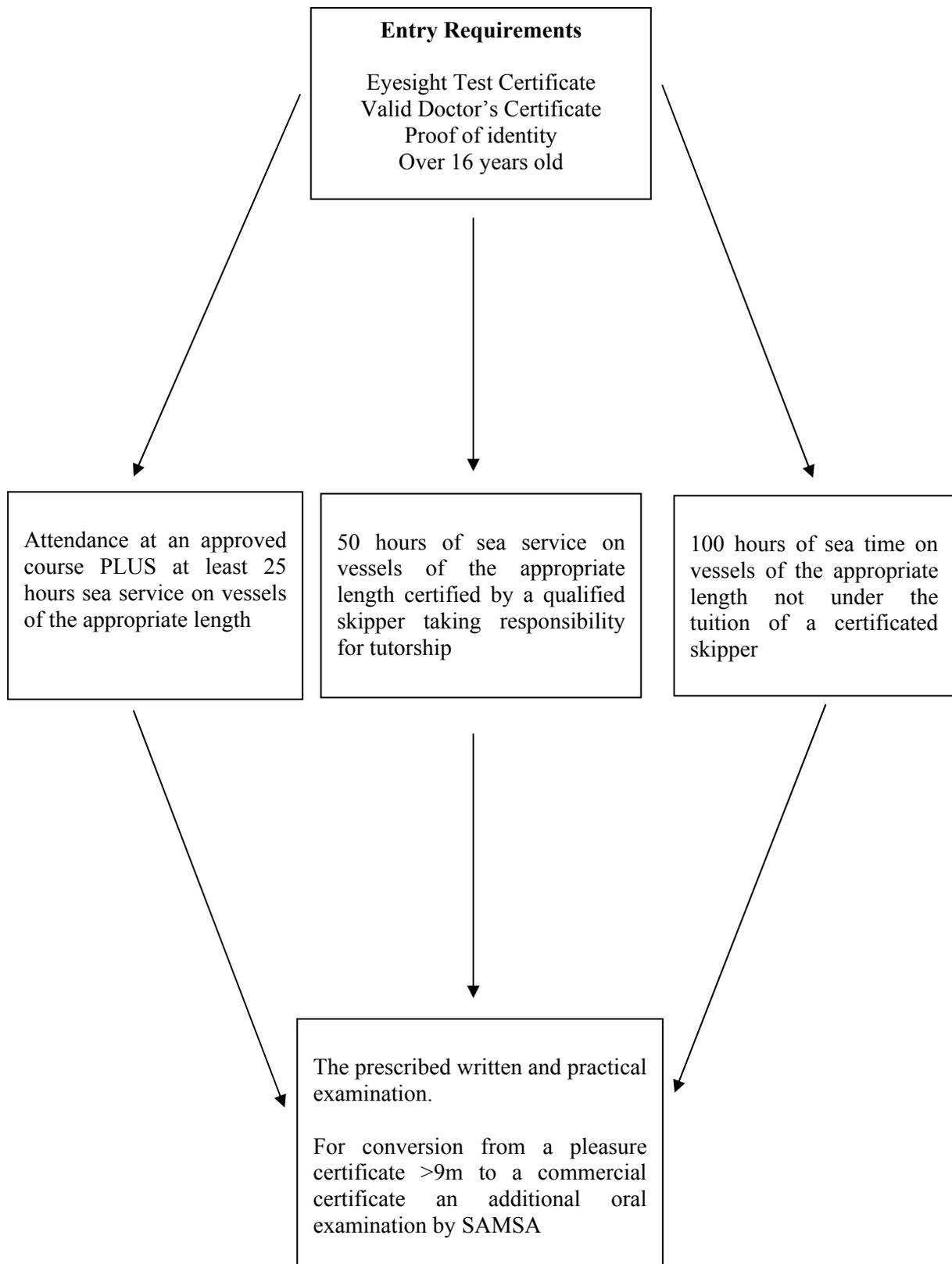
#### 10.5.1 Day Skipper Local Waters (Restricted certificate - $\leq 9\text{m}$ and $> 9\text{m}$ in length) & Skipper Inland waters (Restricted $\leq 9\text{m}$ and $> 9\text{m}$ )



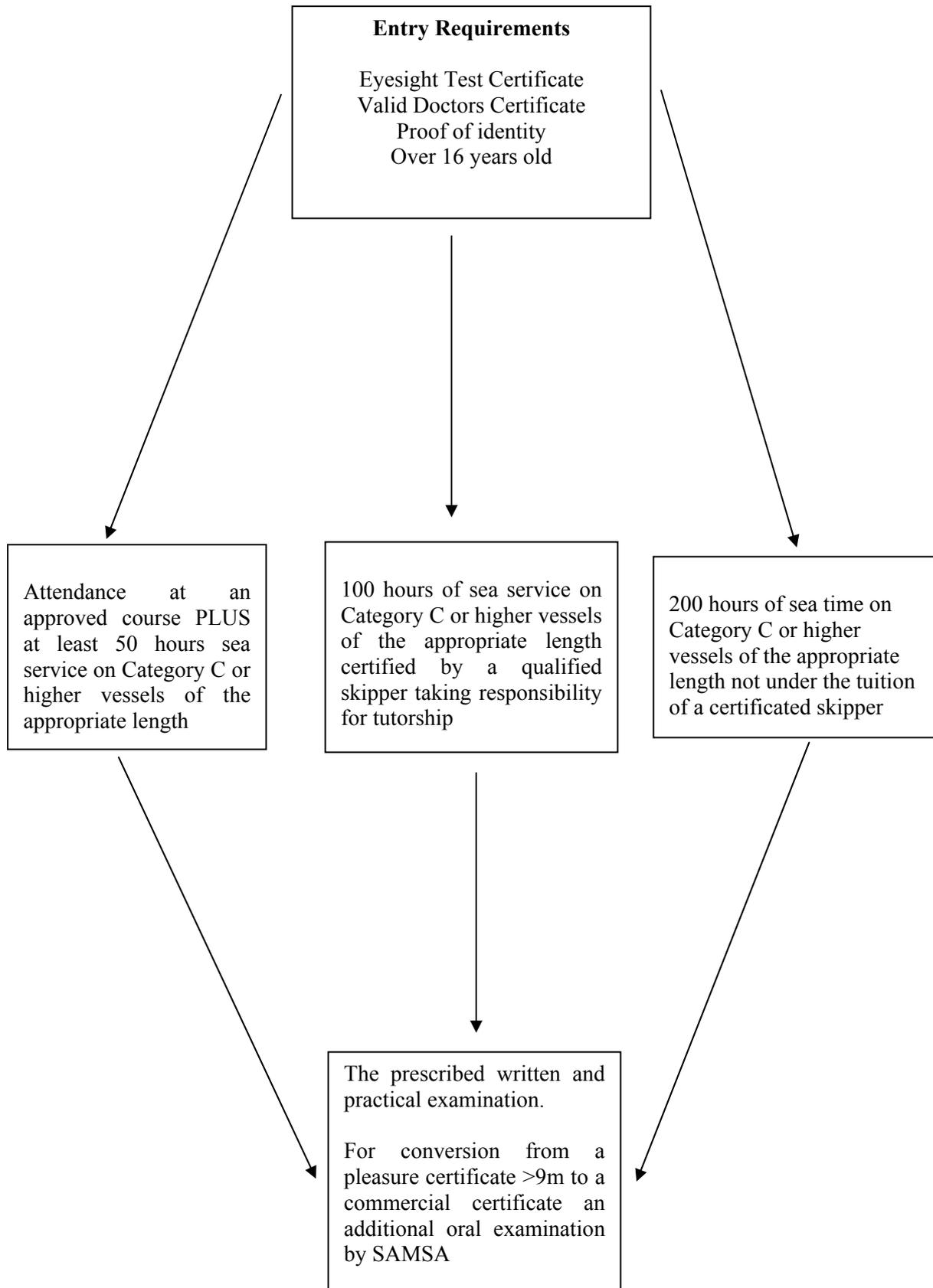
### 10.5.2 Day Skipper Category E and R ( $\leq 9\text{m}$ and $> 9\text{m}$ in length)



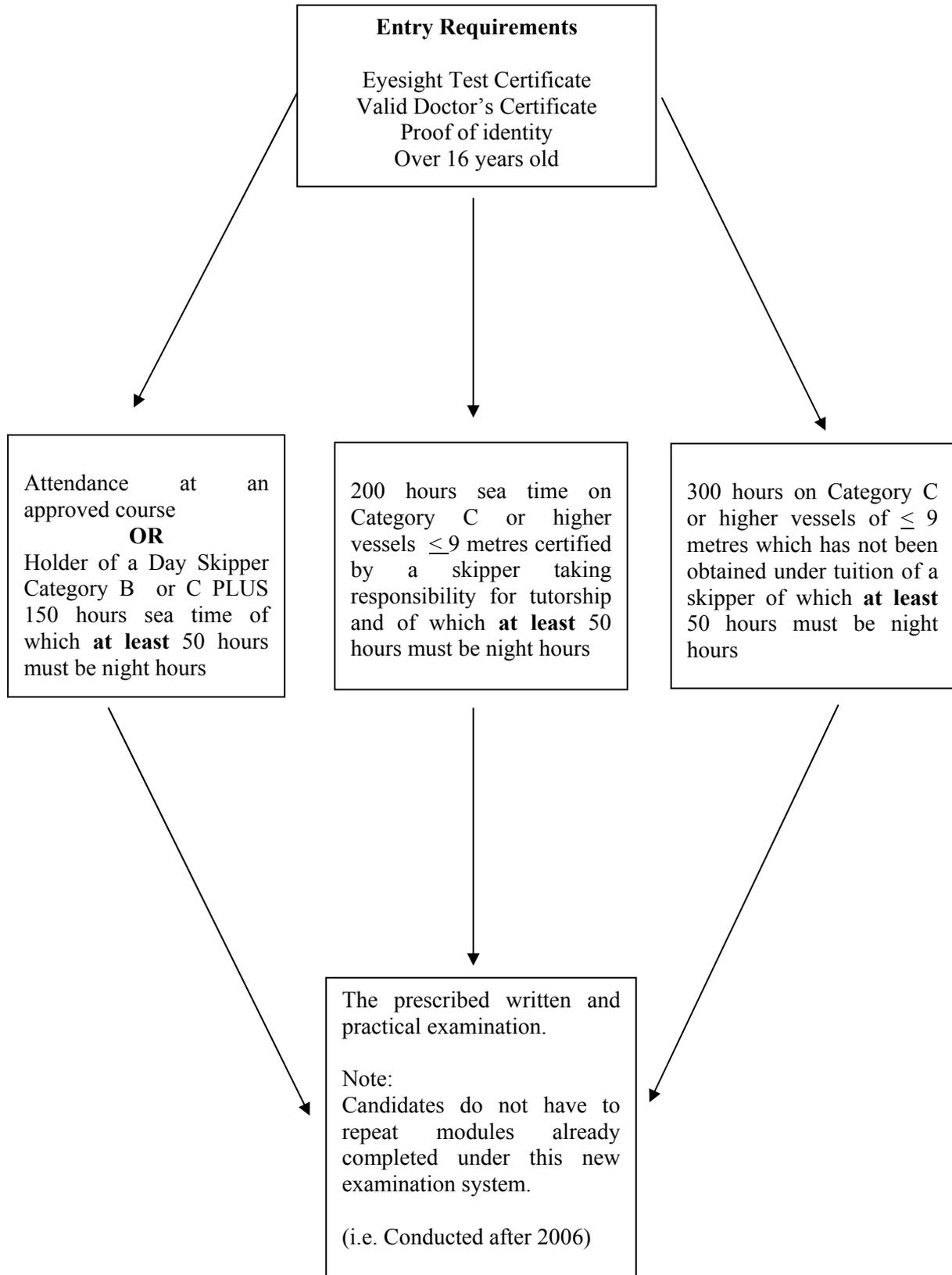
### 10.5.3 Day Skipper Category C ( $\leq 9\text{m}$ and $> 9\text{m}$ in length)



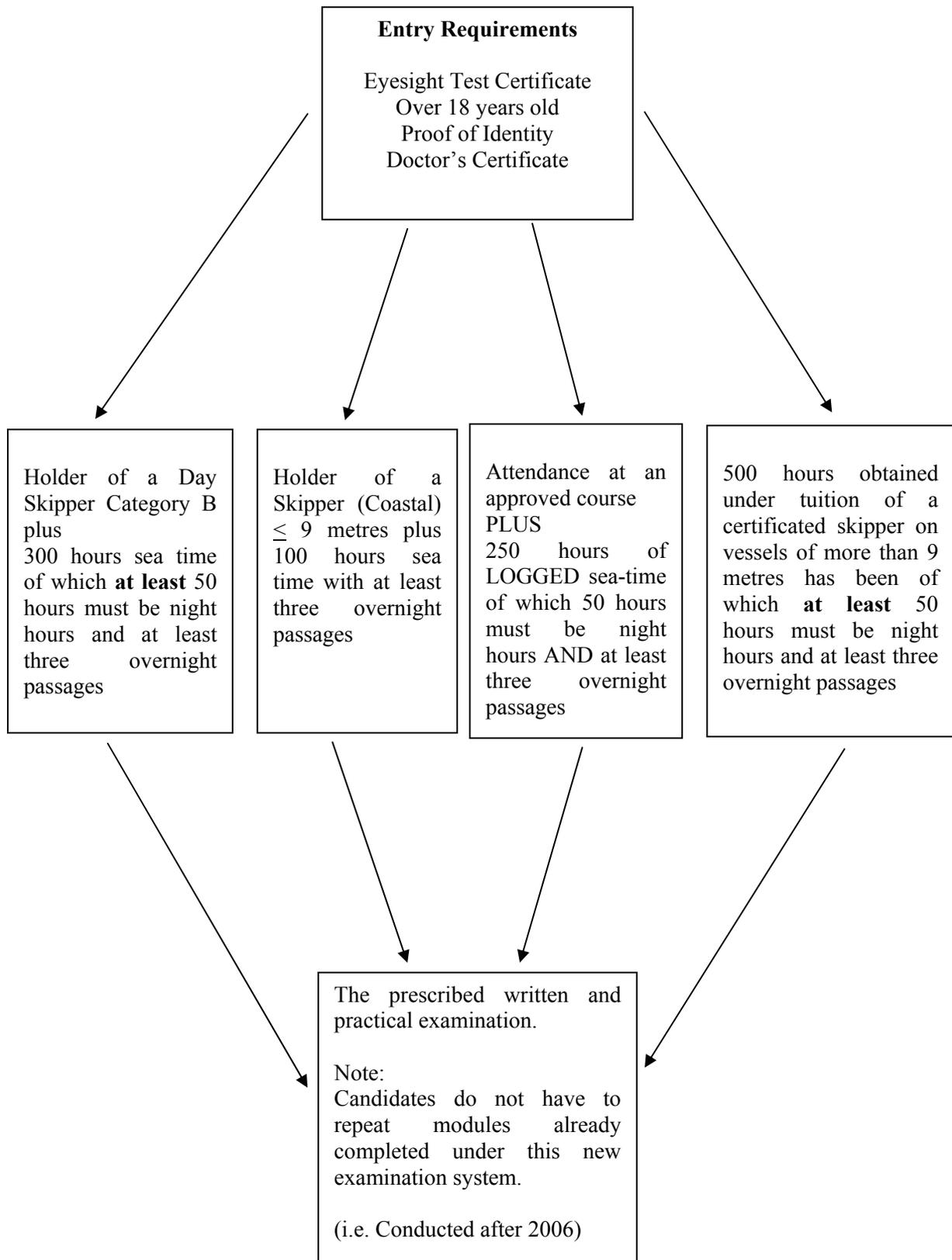
#### 10.5.4 Day Skipper Category B ( $\leq 9\text{m}$ and $> 9\text{m}$ in length)



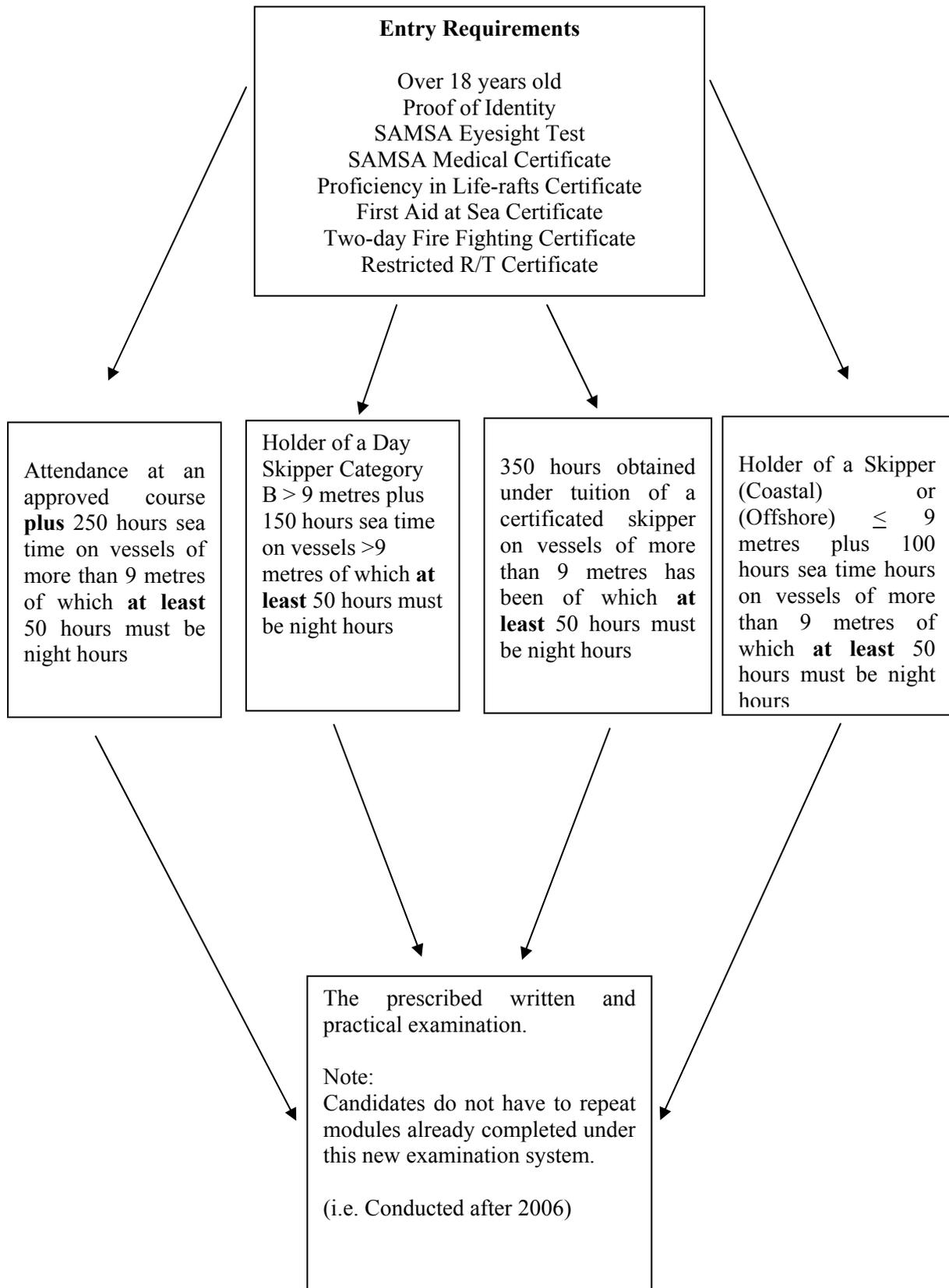
### 10.5.5 Skipper Coastal $\leq 9$ metres



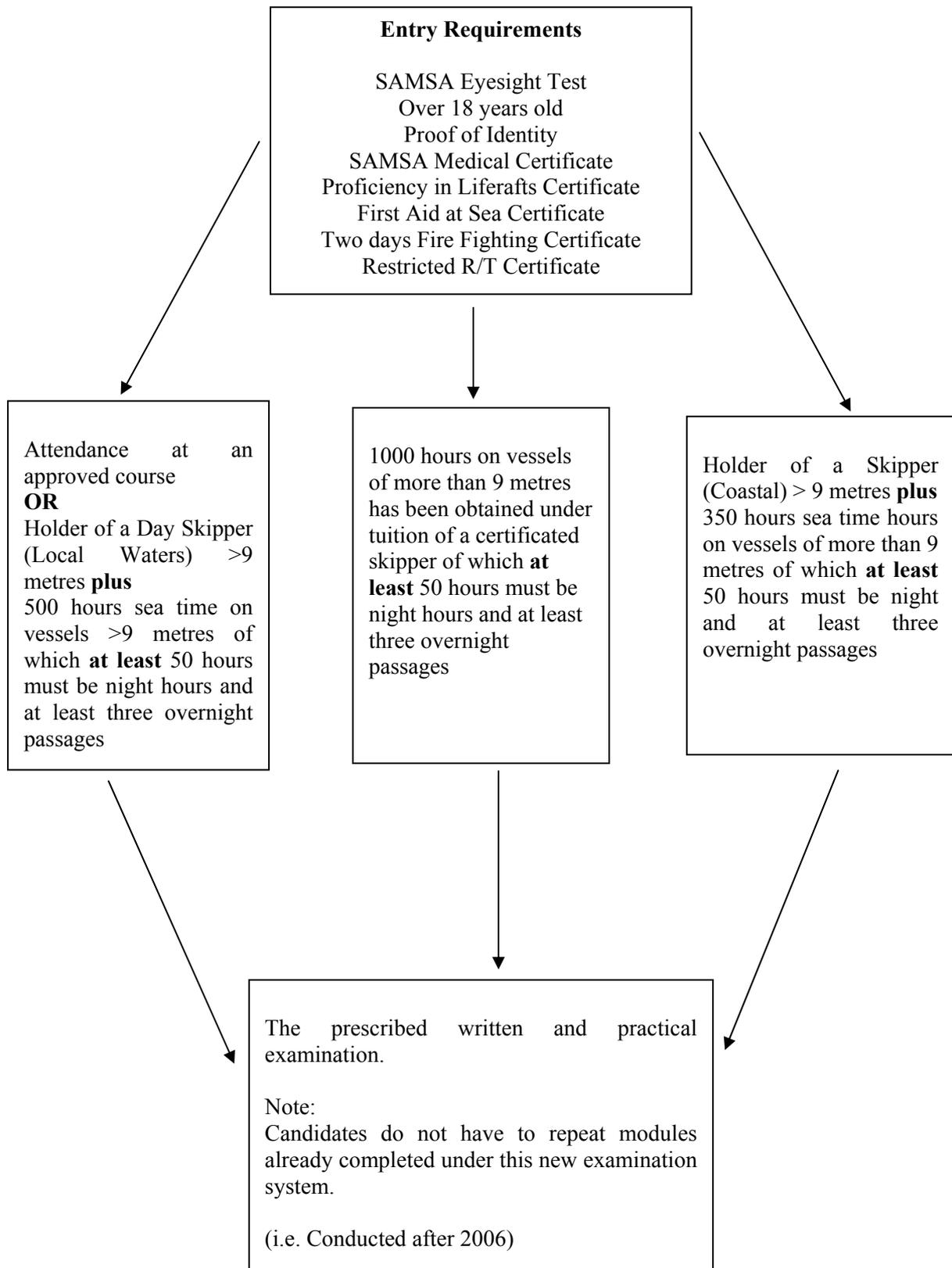
### 10.5.6 Skipper Offshore $\leq 9$ metres



### 10.5.7 Skipper Coastal > 9 metres



### 10.5.8 Skipper Offshore > 9 metres



## 10.6 Entry requirements, experiential training and examination process for the various endorsements

### 10.6.1 Dive skipper endorsement

The Dive Skipper endorsement is an additional qualification which can be added any national certificate and is interpreted to be the only valid small vessel qualification suitable to skipper or operate a commercial diving or dive charter vessel (which includes white shark cage diving).

The requirements are as follows:

	Dive skipper endorsement
<p><b>TOTAL EXEMPTION FROM EXAMINATION</b></p> <p>Proof to be submitted through an examiner to Pretoria in order to add the qualification to a national certificate.</p>	<p>Candidates or skippers who hold a dive leadership qualification may have the endorsement added to their skipper certification by the Registrar of Seafarers without undergoing any examination.</p> <p><i>(i.e. 'Dive Master' or 'Dive Instructor' issued by either PADI or NAUI, or SAUU '2 star diver' or Instructor) or a commercial diver issued by Department of Labour</i></p>
<b>OR</b>	
<p><b>Qualifying practical experience</b></p>	<p>A basic dive qualification (i.e. 'Open Water I or II' issued either by PADI or NAUI or, a SAUU '1 star diver')</p> <p><b>OR</b></p> <p>10 hours logged on any small vessel engaged in dive operations <i>(Sea-time to be certified by a dive skipper)</i></p>
<p><b>Written Examination</b></p>	<p>A written examination as detailed in the Small Vessel Code of Qualifications with pass mark of 65%.</p>
<p><b>Practical Examination</b></p>	<p>A dive skipper practical examination may or may not be required at the sole discretion of the examiner.</p>

### 10.6.2 Surf Launching Endorsement

A candidate wishing to have the surf launching endorsement [*which gives him/her the authority to launch through the surf which is mostly encountered at the launch sites (other than Ports, Fishing Harbours and 'protected' launch sites) on the Eastern and South Eastern seaboard of South Africa*] is to produce an affidavit signed by a certificated surf launching skipper that he or she has successfully completed the practical training specified in the Code.

The affidavit is to state the full name and address of the certificated skipper, the details of his certificate of competence and must indicate his opinion as to the competence of the candidate.

The affidavit itself is no longer deemed to be sufficient to sign off the endorsement. A practical demonstration is called for as detailed in the code and carried out in the presence of a SAMSA appointed examiner.

Generally the national system does not distinguish between the many variations of motor driven craft in considering competency for the various categories of certification. However the same cannot be said for surf launch endorsements where for instance there is a huge difference between the competencies required to skipper a small single engine rubber duck, versus a 9 metre rigid hulled vessel, through the surf.

In cases where small inflatable vessels are used for the demonstration, examiners are required to restrict the candidate to that type of craft unless the examiner can attest to the candidate's competency for all types of craft.

### **10.6.3 Passenger Vessel Endorsement**

The Passenger Vessel <25GT Endorsement is an endorsement to a national certificate at Day Skipper Category E (or R on inland waters) or higher i.e. it may not be an endorsement to a Skipper (Local Waters) Certificate. It certifies that SAMSA has assessed and considered the candidate competent to be put in charge of the safety of more than twelve passengers in either sheltered waters or at sea.

There are two standards for the endorsement, one for vessel used at sea and the other for inland waters which now includes ports and tidal waters and the competencies are to be portable therefore no further concession on competency must be allowed. Refer to the matrix in the Code for full details and examination requirements. The examination for the passenger endorsement is an oral examination carried out by a SAMSA officer.

Examiners are to note the following:

- Minimum age is 18 years
- These endorsements are portable and NOT job specific, therefore no concessions must be made in respect of competency.
- If the candidate has a Skipper Coastal or Skipper Offshore > 9m many of the entry requirements will already have been met.

### **10.6.4 Sailing Endorsement**

SAMSA has limited examiners appointed to carry out these examinations, however, SA Sailing is quite prepared to make their examiners available where required and their current examination requirements are considered sufficient.

What this generally means is that any holder of a SA Sailing or CASA certificate is entitled to an appropriate sailing endorsement on a national small vessel certificate. (*The national standard is for motor driven vessel skippers!*) The endorsement must not allow him to exceed the limitations of the national certificate.

Otherwise, should the holder of a national certificate desire to obtain a sailing endorsement to an existing certificate for commercial purposes they must approach the local SAMSA Principal Officer or examiner who will consider the merits of the case. If necessary, SAMSA will approach SA Sailing officially with a request to carry out an appropriate examination on our behalf. A syllabus still needs to be drawn up to cover the sailing module.

**Note:**

*SA Sailing recreational certificates issued to skippers of pleasure yachts may operate motor driven vessels of the appropriate category and size for pleasure. SA Sailing certificates endorsed for motor only require additional and relevant sailing sea-time as well as examinations on sailing theory and practice.*