



# Sea to Shore Career Transitions

## Overview of career pathway

Transitioning from a seafaring career to a land-based role is a significant change that requires careful planning and adaptation. This pathway outlines key areas to focus on during the transition, including what to plan for, skill development, and personal well-being.

### Summary of key stages:

- Career Research and Goal Setting
- Skill and Knowledge Development
- Understanding the Workplace
- Financial and Life Planning
- Mental and Emotional Preparation
- Take Action

## Career Research and Goal Setting

A successful career transition starts with thorough research, understanding personal strengths and weaknesses and setting realistic goals. Seafarers should explore various industries, identify transferable skills, and establish clear short and long-term career objectives.

Networking with professionals and understanding job market demands are essential steps in this phase.

### Important steps for this stage:

Steps	How IMarEST can support you throughout your career journey
<p><b>1. Explore career options</b>            Research what industries and organisations align with maritime experience. Example industries can include offshore energy, maritime logistics, design and construction, port and shipyard operations, marine insurance and regulatory compliance.            Example roles can include ship management, technical consultancy, regulatory enforcement, maintenance engineering or education, where maritime expertise can be valuable.            Please note this is not an exhaustive list, the maritime world is vast and constantly changing.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explore career pathways</li> <li>• Attend networking events to meet and learn from maritime professionals</li> <li>• Engage with Membership Branches and Special Interest Groups (SIGs) to learn about the various industries and different roles from experienced professionals</li> </ul>

<p>Social media can also be a valuable tool for researching what others in different shore-based roles have in terms of skills, qualifications and experience.</p> <p><b>2. Identify transferable skills</b> Assess what skills and competencies gained from seafaring roles can be applied to shore-based positions. This can include technical knowledge, leadership experience, problem-solving abilities, and teamworking.</p> <p><b>3. Identify strengths and weaknesses</b> Conduct a self-assessment to identify personal strengths and weaknesses, allowing for a better understanding of areas for improvement and career alignment. Seeking feedback from colleagues or mentors can further refine this evaluation.</p> <p><b>4. Network with professionals in potential career fields</b> Learn more about the different industries and roles from experienced professional. This can be through attending industry events, discussion forums online, social media connections or by engaging with mentoring opportunities.</p> <p><b>5. Set short and long-term objectives</b> Determine which range of job roles to aim for and set realistic short-term goals on how to get there over the next 6-12 months. Taking into account the current job market demand, available job positions, and the necessary qualifications or experience for targeted roles. For long-term planning, consider career progression pathways in the chosen industry over the next 5-10 years.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sign up for the <a href="#">Member-to-Member (M2M) Mentoring Programme</a> and be paired with an experienced professional for advice and guidance</li> <li>• Take advantage of the vast amount of resources available such as the online library, recordings, reports and publications to learn more about the maritime industry</li> <li>• <a href="#">Marine Society Coming Ashore Programme</a> (IMarEST CPD Recognised)</li> </ul>
---	---

## Skill and Knowledge Development

To succeed in shore-based roles, seafarers must enhance their existing knowledge and gain new skills. This includes obtaining relevant certifications, staying informed about industry regulations, and improving technical and soft skills through continuous learning and training programmes.

### Important steps for this stage:

Steps	How IMarEST can support you throughout your career journey
<p><b>6. Have the right qualifications and certifications</b> Identify relevant courses and training programmes that provide essential skills for targeted industries. For example, certain roles may require professional registrations, memberships or certifications in areas such as engineering, science, technology, project management, health and safety, and/or regulatory compliance training.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explore a variety of events to stay up to date and develop knowledge further</li> <li>• Undertake CPD through <a href="#">IMarEST Learning</a> to fill skill gaps or strengthen those desired skills</li> </ul>

It is important to remain up to date with industry-specific regulations and compliance, for this it may be worth exploring refresher courses.

Other development opportunities to consider may include voluntary work, employee professional development programmes, postgraduate studies, technical workshops, or apprenticeships to build expertise and improve career prospects.

### 7. Skill development

From the self-assessment of strengths and weaknesses, develop and improve those weaker skills that will be relevant to shore-based roles. This should include soft/behavioural skills as well as technical-based skills. Examples can include (but are not limited to):

- Communication: developing active listening, negotiation, and presentation skills necessary for teamwork, building business cases, and establishing a professional image.
- Emotional Intelligence: developing self-awareness, empathy, and interpersonal relationships. This is important for adapting to new social dynamics, and to effectively collaborate with diverse teams in shore-based roles.
- Leadership and management: enhance decision-making, delegation, and team coordination abilities. Learn how to motivate teams, handle workplace conflicts, and lead projects effectively in a shore-based setting.
- Technical competencies: strengthen practical and technical skills required for shore-based roles e.g. hands-on training in relevant systems, practicing with different software, and using industry tools.
- Business/commercial skills: developing business acumen through financial literacy, market analysis and building commercial awareness.

Don't forget, it is important to engage in continuous learning throughout your career to stay competitive and adaptable in the evolving job market.

- Capture, manage and demonstrate development activities through the membership [CPD recording tool](#)
- Achieve Professional Registration that validates skills, knowledge, and expertise against industry standards
- Stay up to date on the latest industry events and regulations through the Marine Professional magazine and IMarEST news
- Access a variety of different learning resources such as the online library, recordings, reports and publications to enhance knowledge
- Take part in volunteering opportunities to enhance experience and build a personal brand

## Understanding the Workplace

Transitioning to a shore-based job requires understanding different workplace dynamics, legal frameworks, and cultural expectations, which can feel completely foreign to those with only seafaring experience. Therefore, learning about employment rights, taxation, and professional etiquette will help seafarers adapt more smoothly to their new environment.

### Important steps for this stage:

Steps	How IMarEST can support you throughout your career journey
<p><b>8. Understand regulations and laws</b> When transitioning to a new role, it is crucial to understand the regulations and social systems in the region where your position is based such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Workplace laws and employment rights: to understand contract terms, right to work visa (including potential sponsorship processes), working conditions, and dispute resolution procedures.</li> <li>• Taxation, social systems, and pension schemes: to ensure financial stability and compliance with legal obligations.</li> </ul> <p><b>9. Learn about the local culture</b> Be aware of local cultural and political aspects that may affect the work environment. This could help provide an insight into the workplace norms, corporate hierarchies, and different communication styles in different regions and industries. Understanding these cultural differences can help individuals navigate workplace dynamics and build more effective relationships in diverse environments.</p> <p><b>10. Learn about workplace dynamics</b> Company policies, reporting lines, and team collaboration methods can provide some insight into how a workplace operates, but it's equally important to understand the people and culture behind these structures. Gaining an understanding into workplace politics and professional etiquette is essential, as these may differ greatly from the working environment at sea.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Join one of the international membership branches to learn more about local culture and regulations</li> <li>• Get involved or start an online discussion on IMarEST Connect forums</li> <li>• Explore CPD through <a href="#">IMarEST Learning</a></li> <li>• Explore and join Special Interest Groups (SIGs) for further learning and networking opportunities with other keen professionals</li> </ul>

## Financial and Life Planning

Proper financial planning is crucial for a stable transition. Seafarers should budget for the transition period, research into pension schemes, and maintain a healthy work-life balance to ensure both professional and personal well-being.

### Important steps for this stage:

Steps	How IMarEST can support you throughout your career journey
<p><b>11. Plan and manage relocation logistics</b> If relocation is necessary for the transition, consider key factors such as housing availability and local infrastructure, including healthcare facilities, utilities, community services, and transportation options. If moving with family or others, take their needs into account as well, such as school availability for children, employment opportunities for family</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explore CPD through <a href="#">IMarEST Learning</a></li> </ul>

members, and neighbourhood safety. Additionally, research shipping options, storage facilities, and potential downsizing requirements to create a smooth move of personal belongings to the new living space.

### **12. Financial planning during and after transition**

While preparing a budget for the transition period is necessary, it's equally important to plan for future savings and retirement options.

For the transition period, items such as living expenses, potential salary adjustments, and any training or relocation costs may need to be factored in.

It's also recommended to plan for retirement, pensions, and social security adjustments by reviewing financial plans and seeking expert advice on long-term financial security.

Consulting with financial professionals or career transition support groups can provide valuable insights into savings strategies, investment options, and risk management, helping you make informed decisions for your future financial well-being. Discussions with trusted family and friends can also help with making important financial decisions.

### **13. Create a work-life balance**

Transitioning to a new role requires adapting to different work schedules and routines. Including a change to leave entitlements and availability, which may differ significantly from the extended periods of leave traditionally associated with seafaring roles. Through creating a structured daily routine it will help support both productivity and well-being. Establishing clear boundaries between work and personal time helps prevent burnout and allows time for hobbies, family, and self-care. Prioritising mental and physical well-being supports long-term career success and creates greater opportunities to enjoy time with friends and family.

### **14. Recognise the potential impact on homelife dynamics**

Returning to shore full-time may bring major lifestyle changes for both the seafarer and their family. The shift from extended absences to daily presence can affect routines, relationships, and personal space. Try to consider what practical and emotional changes will impact these dynamics and engage in open, honest and positive dialogue with those involved to prepare for this.

## **Mental and Emotional Preparation**

Adjusting to a new role and environment can be mentally and emotionally challenging. Developing resilience, managing change effectively, and seeking support from mentors, peers and professionals can help ensure a smooth transition.

### **Important steps for this stage:**

Steps	How IMarEST can support you throughout your career journey
<p><b>15. Learn how to build mental resilience</b> Transitioning to a new role can bring emotional challenges, such as shifts in identity, job insecurity, and adapting to a new lifestyle. Developing coping strategies like mindfulness techniques, stress management, and setting realistic career expectations can help manage uncertainty. Finding the right technique for coping with challenges is key, as everyone has different methods, and it's important to seek healthy approaches.</p> <p><b>16. Manage change and learn to adapt</b> Cultivating a mindset open to new challenges is essential for managing change. This involves embracing setbacks as learning opportunities and stepping out of comfort zones to adapt to different work environments. Navigating change can also be achieved by engaging with colleagues and adjusting to new processes. Self-awareness and reflection are key in recognising emotional shifts and learning to adapt to different situations or even knowing when to walk away. Being open to feedback from other professionals will further support professional growth and adaptability.</p> <p><b>17. Build a support system</b> A strong support system can ease the transition process. Seeking guidance from mentors, building professional networks, and maintaining strong personal relationships will provide valuable encouragement and practical assistance during this period. Professional associations, support organisations and charities may be able to offer career advice, resources or facilitate connections with others facing similar transitions. Family and friends can also provide an invaluable form of support for emotional backing and encouragement before, during and after transition.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Look out for training events where you can learn and network with peers</li> <li>• Be part of a Branch or Special Interest Group (SIGs) and develop professional relationships with other keen professionals</li> <li>• Join the <a href="#">Member-to-Member (M2M) Mentoring Programme</a> to receive advice and guidance</li> </ul>

## Take action

Successfully transitioning from sea to shore requires proactive planning and actions for job searching. Updating CVs/resumes, preparing for interviews, and continuously learning from feedback will help secure a rewarding shore-based career.

### Important steps for this stage:

Steps	How IMarEST can support you throughout your career journey

**18. Job searching preparation**

Once the research is complete and goals are set, it's important to build a strong CV/resume that highlights transferable skills, expertise, and education to attract potential employers. When writing a cover letter, ensure it addresses the key points in the job advert while staying authentic to your experience and knowledge. Finally, prepare for interviews by conducting mock interviews and researching the employer (such as their mission, vision and values) and industry-specific expectations. It may be worth considering a recruitment agency that understands maritime roles to ask for advice and support.

**19. Adapt and learn from setbacks**

Things may not always go according to plan, so it's important to keep this in mind when creating and following plans. In such situations, don't give up. Instead, learn from the experience and where possible, ask for feedback. Adjust the timelines and budgets of the plan if necessary and keep striving towards those objectives.

**20. Celebrate the wins**

Track progress towards milestone goals and make time to celebrate wins (even the small ones) as progress is made towards the bigger objectives.

- Explore job vacancies and connect with recruiters on [Marine Jobs](#)
- Place a submission for an industry award that will showcase achievements and enhance the CV/resume
- Read up on the latest news and reports on events, challenges and trends available through IMarEST news channels and publications
- Explore CPD through [IMarEST Learning](#)
- Engage with a mentor through [M2M Mentoring](#) to receive feedback and share progress and small wins