



TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY AT GALVESTON

Texas A&M Maritime Academy

Commercial Sea Term Process

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Texas A&M Maritime Academy (TAMMA) is committed to providing quality experiential learning opportunities for all cadets. To accomplish this, we encourage our license option cadets who have successfully completed MART/MARE 200 to apply for Commercial Sea Term (MART/MARE 350) in lieu of Summer Sea Term (MART/MARE 300). This commercial sea term includes the benefit of working in an operational environment on a commercial vessel for an extended period of time, but without the benefit of immediate faculty support found on the training ship to assist them with their academic sea-term projects. A competitive application and selection process is used to vet candidates for this opportunity. The purpose of this process is to ensure all cadets have an equal opportunity for commercial billets based on a holistic evaluation of academic performance, discipline and conduct, leadership, and the demonstration of Aggie Core Values. This document outlines the requirements for eligibility, the application process, elements for scoring and ranking, the billet selection process, and related training or other administrative tasks as required.

The United States Coast Guard requires TAMMA to scrutinize each company and opportunity to ensure they comply with regulatory, operational suitability, and minimum tonnage and horsepower requirements to satisfy academic and program objectives. We strive to pair cadets with companies which meet their desires, including niche areas such as Tankers, DP, Tugs, or LNG. Vessels must exceed 100 GRT and 1,000 HP for time spend onboard to count towards an unlimited license.

Commercial shipping opportunities and cadet billet availability vary from semester to semester and are not guaranteed in quantity or company participation. Because of this, cadets should also be prepared to register for MART/MARE 300 if they are not selected. Eligible cadets that are successfully placed with a commercial billet will then be registered for MART/MARE 350 by their respective academic department.

NOTE: Covid accommodations to sea time have been extended until December 31, 2024. To remain on track to graduate without needing additional sailing time outside of an established sea term, cadets graduating May 2025 or later should plan on a discharge of 90 or more calendar days onboard their vessel during MART/MARE 350.

DISCLAIMER: TAMMA cannot guarantee that you'll receive the required amount of sea time sailing on a commercial vessel in lieu of sailing with the Academy for a summer sea term.

Eligibility Requirements

The following requirements will determine eligibility to participate in this optional program.

1. Cadets must have passed all course prerequisites per their Catalog and as outlined by their academic advisor/department.

2. Cadets applying with a GPA below 2.5 cumulative may be evaluated at the discretion of their academic department head on a case-by-case basis. This evaluation will be based on GPA in major (MART and MARE), or on LO courses for non-MART majors in the deck program. A recommendation for provisional approval to advance through the commercial sea term process may be given at the discretion of the academic department head. Cadets granted provisional approval will be reviewed by the academic department head at the end of the semester for full approval to sail on a commercial sea term OR re-assignment to the next Academy Sea Term.
 - a. Cadets given provisional approval will not be assigned a billet until they are released from provisional status and should understand that there may not be billets available for them at the time of a potential change in status to full eligibility.
3. Cadets must be in good standing with the University and the Corps of Cadets at the time of application and remain in good standing for the duration of the evaluation period and commercial sea service term. The definition of “Not in good standing” is found in Student Rule 27.1. Cadets under Conduct Review are considered to be in Good Standing.
4. All holds must be resolved by the end of the semester prior to sailing. Please reach out to a TAMMA designated representative if you are having issues clearing a hold. During pre-registration for MART/MARE 350, your registration checklist must be completed.

Cadets will not be considered for commercial sea term if they are currently under University or Corps sanction resulting in one of the following conditions:

1. Conduct Probation or Restrictions.
2. Loss of Campus Housing Privilege
3. Deferred Loss of Campus Housing Privilege or Campus Housing Probation
4. Is currently under an Interim Suspension or Interim Restrictions pending the conclusion of the conduct investigation process.
5. Letter of enrollment block which has not been cleared.

If a cadet was previously sanctioned under one of the conduct violations listed above AND the specified term of the sanction expired prior to start of the current application cycle, the cadet may petition the Commandant for a waiver based on subsequent conduct using a military letter routed directly to the Commandant outside of normal cadet chain of command. The cadet must submit this waiver request prior to the in-person application review process. The Commandant will review the request and provide a recommendation and/or justification to support or deny the appeal as part of the application evaluation process.

NOTE: if a cadet has been found responsible for an offense resulting in suspension, expulsion, or an Aggie Honor Code violation resulting in F* at any time during their academic career, and an appeal of the finding and sanction is denied, they will be ineligible to apply for or participate in a commercial sea term. If the finding is overturned through the University appeals process, cadets may petition the Commandant for a waiver via direct military letter IF any other terms of sanction assigned for that offense have been completed at the time of application.

Application Process

To allow for an efficient and timely process, cadets are required to ensure that all necessary documentation is up-to-date and included when submitting their application.

TAMMA will announce when the electronic application is scheduled to open for each sea term period. All deadlines for submitting the electronic application *and* submitting your application packet during your scheduled meeting will be announced. Following the submission of the online application, the cadet is responsible for scheduling an appointment in Navigate with the specified TAMMA designee for an in-person review of the application packet. No walk-in appointments will be accepted. If an appointment is not scheduled and/or the application packet is not received by the stated deadline, that cadet's commercial sea term application is withdrawn by TAMMA and they will not be evaluated further. Cadets are 100% responsible for ensuring their application packets contain all required documents and information, regardless of the requested documents or forms having been previously submitted to TAMMA or the University for any other purpose.

The application packet contains the following documents:

- 1) Resume and cover letter (template available if needed)
 - a) Cover letters should be written to a prospective employer and not to Academy staff
- 2) The following documents are required and must be valid for six months after the end of the commercial sea term:
 - a) Valid Merchant Mariner Credential with a current medical certificate
 - b) USCG Form-719K physical
 - c) TWIC
 - d) Passport
- 3) If applicable: Conduct waiver request to the Commandant must be submitted via military letter directly to the Commandant. (This military letter may NOT route through cadet chain of command.)

TAMMA will contact the academic and operational departments to determine each cadet's eligibility. TAMMA will also confirm that each cadet meets the Eligibility Requirements above and proceed with the scoring and ranking process. Cadets who do not meet the minimum eligibility requirements will be notified in writing and will not be considered for this opportunity.

Scoring and Ranking Process

TAMMA will score and rank all cadets using the matrix shown below. The highest ranking will be assigned to those cadets who best demonstrate adherence to the Aggie Core Values of Respect, Excellence, Loyalty, Leadership, Integrity, and Selfless Service.

Cadets must receive written approval and recommendation from each of the following to be evaluated. If that recommendation is not received, cadets will not be considered further and that cadet will be required to sail with the Academy on the next summer sea term.

- 1) Academic Department Head
- 2) Commandant
- 3) Chief Mate (deck) or Chief Engineer (engine)

Points for ranking will be assigned as follows:

- 1) **Excellence in Academic Performance:** Academic performance will be scored based on the cadet's overall GPA. A minimum GPA of 2.5 is required unless a cadet receives Academic Department Head approval under extenuating circumstances, and GPA's will not be rounded up. Points associated with GPA are as follows and comprise 50% of the total ranking score:

2.500:	0 points
2.575:	+1 point
2.650:	+2 points
2.725:	+3 points
2.800:	+4 points
2.875:	+5 points
2.950:	+6 points
3.025:	+7 points
3.100:	+8 points
3.175:	+9 points
3.250:	+10 points
3.325:	+11 points
3.400:	+12 points
3.475:	+13 points
3.550:	+14 points
3.625:	+15 points
3.700:	+16 points
3.775:	+17 points
3.850:	+18 points
3.925:	+19 points
4.000:	+20 points

- 2) **Respect, Loyalty, and Integrity as demonstrated by Corps of Cadets Standing:**
 - a) For every one (1) merit a Cadet has received during their *academic career* at the Texas A&M Maritime Academy, the Cadet will be issued one half point (+.5) with a maximum of five positive (+5) points awarded.
 - b) For every one (1) demerit *beyond 5 demerits* a Cadet has received during their *academic career* at the Texas A&M Maritime Academy, the Cadet will be issued negative one (-1) point with no maximum on negative points.
 - c) Career merit/demerit balance for each applicant will be requested from the Commandant or designated staff representative no later than two weeks after the application deadline for use in the ranking calculation.
 - d) *A maximum of five positive points will be given for this section and comprises 12.5% of the total ranking score.*
- 3) **Leadership as demonstrated in Position(s) Held:** Ranking is based on the Cadets current standing in the Corps of Cadets chain of command or other university student leadership position(s) held. Only the highest single leadership position held within TAMUG/TAMMA will be scored.

- a) leadership value points = 1: Co/Batt Scholastic, Special Unit NCO, Staff NCO, Representative, Orientation Week Cadre (any level); Other Officer
 - b) leadership value points = 2: Chaplain, Squad leader, Historian, Parliamentarian, Secretary, Staff Officer, Treasurer
 - c) leadership value points = 3: Co-Chair, Company/Batt XO, Vice-Chair, Student Government Committee Chair
 - d) leadership value points = 4: Captain, Chair, Company/Batt CO, Special Unit Officer, Student Organization Coordinator/ Vice-President, Maroon Delegate
 - e) leadership value points = 5: Corps Staff Officer, Student Organization President/ Director
 - f) *A maximum of five points is possible, and this section comprises 12.5% of the total ranking score.*
- 4) **Selfless Service** as demonstrated by Military or Corps service:
- a) **Military Service**: Prior military service will be considered for three (+3) points.
 - b) **Corps Service**: For every semester of participation in a Corps of Cadet organization (Hearn Honor Guard, USCG AUP, Drill Team) a cadet will be issued one-quarter (+0.25) point with a maximum allowed of one (+1) point.
 - c) *The combined score of 5a and 5b is worth up to five points and comprises 12.5% of the total ranking score.*
- 5) **Aggie Core Values** as observed by others: Evaluations of each candidate will be requested in conjunction with the recommendation of the respective academic Department Head, Chief Mate or Chief Engineer, and Commandant. Each of the three observations can grant up to five points; the average score of the three evaluations will be used for ranking, with a potential to receive up to 5 points. *This section comprises 12.5% of the total ranking score.* Observations are graded as follows:
- a) 1 point: Below average. Rarely meets expectations for professionalism in the Corps, Academics, and Vessel Operations.
 - b) 2 points: Average. Usually meets expectations for professionalism in the Corps, Academics, and Vessel Operations.
 - c) 3 points: Above average. Often exceeds expectations for professionalism in the Corps, Academics, and Vessel Operations.
 - d) 4 points: Exceptional. Always exceeds expectations for professionalism in the Corps, Academics, and Vessel Operations.
 - e) 5 points: Demonstrates the highest of standards for professionalism in the Corps, Academics, and Vessel Operations.
- 6) Lastly, any significant departure from the core values will negatively impact a cadet's ranking for commercial cruise. **A lack of Respect, Integrity, and/or Loyalty to the ideals of the Corps of Cadets resulting in significant university or corps sanctioning will reduce overall points:**
- a) **Deferred Suspension, Conduct Probation, or Campus Housing Probation**. Cadets may submit a conduct waiver appeal after the conclusion of their sanction, but their score will reflect negative three (-3) points for *each* semester included in the sanction (fall, spring, and summer).
 - b) **Conduct Review** or **Restrictions**. Cadets may submit a conduct waiver appeal after the conclusion of their sanction, but their score will reflect negative two (-2) points for each semester included in the sanction (fall, spring, and summer).
 - c) **Letter of Reprimand**. Score will reflect negative one (-1) points for *each* Letter of Reprimand received during their academic career.

All cadets will receive an official letter notifying them about their eligibility at the end of scoring and ranking. Cadets with a negative score or otherwise determined ineligible will be notified that they are no longer being considered for a commercial billet. All eligible cadets will move on to billet matching and selection and receive further instructions at that time.

Cadet Billet Matching and Selection

TAMMA will contact all companies to confirm their availability and willingness to accept cadets for the upcoming sea term. The cadet billet matching process will be done in two phases. Many companies utilize their own HR application process when selecting cadets. To be considered for a company-specific billet, a cadet *must* complete that company's application process in addition to the TAMMA commercial application process. All other commercial billets will be selected according to rank order, with follow-up paperwork to be completed as required.

Please note the following points:

- Commercial billets for MART /MARE 350 obtained outside the purview of the academy, whether by the cadet, their family/friends, or any additional third party, are subject to review by the academy to ensure the vessels meet Coast Guard and academy requirements. All eligible cadets have an equal right to compete for a commercial billet, and as such special consideration or preference will not be given.
- Companies must have cleared either EMBARC certification with MARAD or 4S (Safer Seas Safer Ships) certification with TAMMA to host cadets from TAMMA and the other state maritime academies. Companies that do not wish to be evaluated to either of those standards cannot host TAMMA cadets.

Phase 1: Commercial Carriers requesting consideration of multiple candidates or candidates with specific qualifications

TAMMA will contact all eligible cadets with information about the commercial carriers who have offered cadet billets for the upcoming sailing term. Cadets who wish to be considered for assignment with a specific company will be given details about that company's internal application and hiring process; cadets may indicate their interest in being considered for multiple opportunities. TAMMA will submit the list of interested and eligible cadets to each of these companies and will support the cadets in the application process.

NOTE: Some of our partner companies have specific criteria they consider when evaluating applicants. TAMMA works with those companies to identify and present the cadets most suited to their unique criteria.

After the companies complete evaluation of interested cadets, TAMMA will be notified of those requested for specific assignment. This selection is independent of TAMMA rank order. All cadets not specifically selected for commercial assignment by one of these companies will proceed to Phase 2 of this process.

Phase 2: Group process to select commercial billets

A group meeting will be held with all eligible cadets to select billets. The list of all remaining commercial billets will be provided, including any special provisions or training pertaining to each. The cadet with the highest ranked score will select first and this proceeds until all available billets are matched. If additional billets become available, we will offer those to the next cadet according to ranked order.

TAMMA will inform all commercial carriers of the final cadet billet selections and will support the transfer of required documents to each company. TAMMA will make every effort to fill all available billets with eligible cadets. Working in the commercial industry requires flexibility due to many circumstances and conditions beyond TAMMA's control. Cadets should notify TAMMA staff immediately if they encounter any issues or changes working with their selected company prior to reporting for- or during- their assignment. If this should occur, TAMMA will provide all possible assistance.

During a commercial sea term, the cadet is both a student with academic requirements and a short-term employee of the company. Expect to be treated as a member of the ship's crew and to be held to the same standards of performance and conduct. Cadets will conform to the vessel schedule and should not expect the company to go to extraordinary measures to accommodate individual scheduling requests.

Phase 3: Post selection training and administrative tasks

Cadets will be required to engage in the following tasks between the time of selection and the end of the academic semester:

- 1) SASH training:
 - (a) All cadets are required to complete annual SOCP SASH training and submit proof of completion via Canvas prior to being cleared to report to their company. Specific timing requirements vary per semester and will be communicated as required. Cadets are also required to attend enhanced 4S (Safer Seas Safer Ships) training with senior Academy staff. Failure to complete either training may result in delayed departure or loss of billet.
- 2) Company HR paperwork:
 - (a) Cadets will complete hiring paperwork and training as required by the company prior to reporting. Each company has slightly different processes, specific requirements are communicated as required.
- 3) Commercial Sea Term Advising:
 - (a) Cadets must complete commercial sea term advising with either an academic department or Academy Commercial Sea Term Advisor (CSTA). This advising meeting will provide additional tools and resources and formalize the expectations for communications and conduct for cadets. Failure to attend CSTA advising will result in either delayed departure or loss of billet.
- 4) Potential medical requirements:
 - a) Depending on the assignment, some cadets may have additional medical testing or vaccination requirements. Cadets needing to complete these additional items will be informed on an individual basis.

TAMMA reserves the right to disqualify cadets for gross violations of conduct at any point during the commercial sea term process, or to request their removal from their assigned vessel during their commercial sea term.