

New Belgian E-Learning Oriented IHO Cat. B Hydrography Program (2021)

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SUMMARY

A study on hydrographic education in Belgium carried out a few years ago, pointed out a shortage in hydrographic training. Before the introduction of the new "Postgraduate in Hydrography", most hydrographic surveyors in Belgium work in one of the main European dredging companies where they received additional specific hydrographic surveying training. Therefore, in 2013, a 1-year English spoken curriculum degree of "Postgraduate in Hydrography" in Belgium was accredited by the IHO (International Hydrographic Organization). Then, in 2019, a renewed curriculum, including extensive e-learning facilities, was established. The program (Cat-B) is a cooperation between the Geography Department of Ghent University and the Institute for Hydrography of the Antwerp Maritime Academy, which is the hosting institute. The aim is to combine the compulsory theoretical courses with on-the-job training provided by partners in the industry to ensure maximum competences. All courses are lectured in English, and can be taken up over several years to facilitate part-time work. These procedures allow for a qualitative and professional, yet accessible program. The theoretical courses are taught on two different campuses, the campus of the Antwerp Maritime Academy (HZS) and a campus of Ghent University (UGent) based on the available expertise and infrastructure, thus ensuring the quality. As travel time between both cities is relatively fast (ca. 45 min. travel time by public or private transport) together with the boundary condition that both locations are never used on the same day, this presents no problems to the students. The navigation related topics are taught at the Maritime Academy while the geodesy/data management/geology and ICT related topics are provided by the Geography, Geology and Informatics Departments at Ghent University.

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