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MOHD REZA SUHAIDI, TETA RECIPIENT

Engineering Design at the Institute of Technical Education (ITE) College Central. He graduated in April 2016 as the top student in his Higher Nitec course. He was also among the top 3 per cent of the school's graduating engineering cohort.

Reza found out about the TETA programme while at ITE College Central and applied to it. He was selected, and started the TETA programme soon after graduation.

ALL-ROUND TRAINING

The programme is divided into three training phases, comprising eight months of pre-sea classroom training at Wavelink Maritime Institute (WMI), the training arm of SMOU, followed by 15 months of on-the-job training on board a commercial vessel, and then eight months of preparatory courses and examinations. Cadets who pass the course then graduate to become engineers.

The majority of the TETA programme is conducted at WMI, which is home to some truly state-of-the-art training facilities, including an Engine Room Simulator.



TO QUALIFY FOR TETA, YOU MUST:

- Be Singaporean
- Have completed National Service (applicable to males)
- Have earned a diploma or Higher Nitec qualification from a local institution, preferably in Marine Engineering, Offshore & Marine Engineering Design, or Marine & Offshore Technology
- Be physically and medically fit
- Not have night and/or colour blindness
- Commit to 31 months of training, including 15 months on board vessels
- Be disciplined and motivated

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we'll have to do a lot of maintenance work and keep track of all the system maintenance, upgrades and watchkeeping on board a vessel."

Reza points out that the TETA programme does not just get down to the nuts and bolts of marine engineering; it also allows cadets to pick up soft skills such as managing interpersonal relations, gain actual work experience, and learn from experts and veterans in the maritime industry.

He says: "We have received immense support and guidance from many experienced seafarers, such as Captain Robin Foo, President of SMOU, and our mentor Mr Kalyan Chatterjea, who is the TETA Course Commander. They have inspired me to continue confronting any challenges that come my way as I work towards my goal."

He believes that the well-rounded exposure provided by TETA will put him on good footing when he starts work as a marine engineer after graduating from the programme in 2019.

He says: "I will be out there (on a vessel) alone with a multinational crew. I will have to work as a team and learn how to communicate with them. We will have to depend on each other to survive."

"Because of my previous work experience, I am confident I can learn how to do this, how to interact with different people."

Beyond the TETA programme, Reza looks forward to forging an exciting career path within the maritime industry. Marine engineers can expect a starting pay of around US\$3,000 (S\$4,326) a month when they graduate, and more than US\$7,000 a month as they work their way up to the position of a chief engineer.

Under the programme, cadets pay only 10 per cent of the course fees. e2i pays 80 per cent while SMOU pays the remaining 10 per cent. In addition, cadets receive a training allowance of between S\$1,200 and S\$1,400 per month during the programme.

A key feature of TETA is that its cadets are required to be given training berths and employment opportunities by shipping firms before the programme commences. This is something that Reza, who is employed by shipping firm AP Moller-Maersk, especially appreciates.

He says: "It's a good experience, especially if you are looking for something adventurous and unique to learn."

"At the same time, we are given the opportunity to learn in a conducive environment in which we are able to learn from mistakes and understand why they happen, and are taught the proper measures to take before accidents happen."

Reza, who has completed one third of the programme as of January 2017, says that he finds the TETA course subjects interesting. Among the subjects he has studied are the strength of metals, the viscosity and chemical properties of residual and lubricating oils, and applied mechanics and thermodynamics, as well as welding.

He adds: "We'll also be training on board a vessel, so we will have to learn about the workings of that vessel. Once we start work in the future,



FACING PAGE, FROM TOP
Mohd Reza Suhaidi (left) at a welding workshop held at the LHUB Industry Skills Centre@Benoi; Reza during a TETA course; Reza (front row, second from right) with other TETA cadets, as well as Manpower Minister Lim Swee Say, SMOU General Secretary Mary Liew and MPA Chief Executive Andrew Tan.