

Mate aboard Excelsior

The Excelsior Trust | 2027 sailing season

Help sail the historic Lowestoft sailing smack LT472 Excelsior and give a new generation the confidence to discover what they can achieve at sea. We are seeking a capable, enthusiastic Mate to join Excelsior for an ambitious 2027 programme around the UK and the immediate Continent.

This is an opportunity to develop your sailing career while combining traditional seamanship, adventure sailing and meaningful work with young people and adults. You will join a long-established sail-training charity, working with our Skipper, Bosun, volunteers and shore team to deliver safe, welcoming voyages that build confidence, skills and lasting memories.

The appointment

Contract:

- Option 1 - Seasonal 1 April to 31 October 2027
- Option 2 – Continuous, to include winter refit in Lowestoft.

Base: Lowestoft.

Cruising area: UK and Northern Europe.

Salary: £27,000–£30,000 per annum pro rata, depending on experience.

Annual leave: 28 days per annum pro rata plus field break accrued at rate of 1 week per 5 weeks on board
8 days per annum pro rata.

Closing date: 30 November 2026.

An exceptional vessel and a worthwhile purpose

Excelsior is a 1921 Lowestoft fishing smack, preserved and sailed as a working historic vessel. Since rebuilding in 1985 she has taken over 10,500 people to sea. She is a Category Zero UK-registered sail-training vessel, listed on the National Historic Ships Register and part of the ASTO fleet. Her programme combines youth sail training with adult voyages, private charters and public trips.

As Mate, you will help care for an important part of our maritime heritage while making her accessible to people who may be stepping aboard a sailing vessel for the first time. We are looking for someone who enjoys sharing their knowledge and can turn the demands of life afloat into a positive experience for everyone aboard.

What you will do

- Support the Skipper in the safe operation of LT472 Excelsior, taking responsibility for the day-to-day running of the vessel and onboard activities under the Skipper's direction.
- Lead a watch, assist with navigation and passage planning, deputise for the Skipper when required within the scope of your qualifications and experience.
- Work closely with the Bosun, volunteers and trainees, setting clear expectations and developing their confidence and seamanship.
- Deliver engaging, inclusive sail training, adapting your approach to different ages, abilities and needs.
- Promote high standards of safety and welfare; help deliver briefings and drills, maintain records and look after safety equipment within the Trust's safety management system.
- Help coordinate voyage preparation, routine maintenance and defect reporting with the Skipper and shore team, respecting the vessel's historic character.
- Communicate clearly with trainees, group leaders and the shore team, represent the Trust professionally in every port.

- Out of season, assist with Excelsior annual refit, voyage planning and berth sales

About you

You will be a practical, dependable team player with sound judgement and a positive, hands-on approach to a busy sailing programme. You will enjoy working with young people, lead by example and be willing to get involved in everyday tasks aboard. You will understand that a successful voyage depends as much on people as on sailing skills, and be keen to develop your own abilities while helping others learn.

Essential experience and qualifications

- RYA Yachtmaster Offshore under sail with commercial endorsement.
- Experience of sail training with young people.
- A current ENG1 medical certificate and an appropriate radio operator's certificate.
- Proficiency in first aid.
- Sea survival and MCA-approved firefighting training; diesel engine and radar training; Level 2 food hygiene.
- General engine-maintenance skills.
- Clear verbal and written communication, good leadership skills and a collaborative approach.
- Willingness to undergo an enhanced DBS check.

Desirable experience and qualities

- Experience of sailing traditionally rigged vessels and maintaining or refitting wooden vessels.
- A commitment to preserving traditional seamanship and the authenticity of historic vessels.
- Awareness of the marine environment and a willingness to encourage responsible practice aboard.

Life aboard

The role involves residential voyages, watches, weekend working and extended periods away from Lowestoft. Flexibility is essential, alongside careful planning of duty, rest and leave. Hours of work and rest will be recorded and managed in accordance with the applicable requirements.

How to apply

Please send your CV and a short covering letter to sailing@excelsiortrust.co.uk by 30 November 2026. Tell us about your relevant sailing and watch-leading experience, your work with young people, and why you would like to join Excelsior as Mate. Please include your qualifications and availability for the season.

For an informal conversation about the role, contact Joe Farrow on 07761 613345 or email sailing@excelsiortrust.co.uk.

Find out more about the Trust at www.excelsiortrust.co.uk.