

Skipper aboard Excelsior

The Excelsior Trust | 2027 sailing season

Take command of the historic Lowestoft sailing smack *LT472 Excelsior* and help a new generation discover what they can achieve at sea. We are seeking a capable, enthusiastic Skipper to lead Excelsior through an ambitious 2027 programme around the UK and immediate Continent.

This is an opportunity to combine traditional seamanship, adventure sailing and meaningful work with young people and adults. You will join a long-established sail-training charity, working with our Mate, 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: £32,000–£36,000 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

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 Skipper, you will 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

- Take command of *LT472 Excelsior* with responsibility for safe navigation, passage planning and the safety and welfare of everyone aboard.
- Lead and support the Mate, Bosun, volunteers and trainees, delegating clearly and developing their confidence and seamanship.
- Deliver engaging, inclusive sail training, adapting your approach to different ages, abilities and needs.
- Work within the Trust's safety management system and MCA requirements; maintain records, oversee safety equipment, lead drills and briefings.
- Coordinate voyage preparation, routine maintenance and defect reporting with the shore team, respecting the vessel's historic character.
- Communicate clearly with the shore team, group leaders and charterers, and 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 calm, practical leader with sound judgement and a positive approach to the challenges of a busy sailing programme. You will enjoy working with young people, be willing to get involved in everyday tasks aboard, and understand that a successful voyage depends as much on people as on sailing skills. You will be commercially aware, able to exercise prudent cost control and willing to promote Excelsior to potential clients and charitable donors.

Essential experience and qualifications

- RYA Yachtmaster Offshore under sail with commercial endorsement.
- Experience of sail training with young people and some experience of sailing traditionally rigged vessels.
- A current ENG1 medical certificate and an appropriate radio operator's certificate.
- STCW Proficiency in Medical Care, or its predecessor, the Ship's Captain's Medical Certificate.
- Sea survival and MCA-approved firefighting training; diesel engine and radar training; Level 2 food hygiene.
- Clear verbal and written communication, a collaborative approach and the ability to lead by example.
- Willingness to undergo an enhanced DBS check.

Desirable experience and qualities

- RYA Yachtmaster Ocean under sail with the appropriate commercial and STCW endorsements, or equivalent.
- Experience of maintaining or refitting traditional wooden vessels, together with practical engine-maintenance skills.
- 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 leadership experience, your work with young people, and why you would like to skipper Excelsior. 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.