



The Mission to Seafarers

Appointment Brief

**Welfare Officer,
Trainer (Maritime Students) and Ship Visitor
Chennai**

January 2026

About The Mission to Seafarers

With a history dating back to 1856, The Mission to Seafarers (“MtS”) supports the men and women working at sea when they need us most through providing emergency assistance, practical support, and a friendly welcome in ports all over the world. Operating under the trusted sign of the “Flying Angel”, MtS touches the lives of seafarers in numerous ways, responding to their needs and connecting them with local communities, including providing:

- Advocacy, advice, and counselling
- Communication, transport, and centre hospitality
- Emergency response
- Hospital and prison visitation
- Ship visitation
- Spiritual support

There are an estimated 1.89m seafarers across the world operating on 74,000 ships. These men and women, of all nationalities, spend up to nine months at sea, far from families, friends and loved ones.

The Mission to Seafarers (“MtS”) has a presence at over 200 ports in 50 countries, operating day and night, 365 days a year. As a Christian-based organisation, our help is importantly offered regardless of nationality, rank, faith or no faith.

Our core work is face-to-face ship visiting which is undertaken by our chaplains, welfare officers, ship visitors, volunteers and centre managers. In more recent years, we have added a digital element to our work in response to the pandemic and the increased speed of ship turnaround times in ports.

In addition to our port-facing work, we have also expanded our portfolio of services to include Family Support Services in the Philippines and India, WeCare training courses in social communications, financial wellbeing and suicide awareness and MtS’s Happiness Index.



Our Values and Culture

MtS is a collaborative, collegiate and respectful organisation. We place great importance on our values which define and reflect our organisational culture.

- **Pioneering:** We encourage innovative thinking and seek to be flexible and entrepreneurial in our ways of working.
- **Inclusive:** We are unconditionally committed to the support of all seafarers and their families without discrimination.
- **United:** We are one global, intergenerational, multicultural family united in vision and purpose, while respecting diversity of culture and context.
- **Collaborative:** We are co-operative in our approach to our work – in relation to individuals, the church, ecumenical partners, and organisations and institutions that work for the welfare of seafarers.
- **Accountable:** We are accountable as stewards of the resources entrusted to us, to each other in recognition of our mutual inter-dependence and to those charged with governance at station, regional and international level.
- **Caring:** In all our dealings we strive to behave with compassion, to act with integrity and to treat everyone with respect.



The Middle East and South Asia Region

The Middle East and South Asia Region of the Mission to Seafarers covers one of the most diverse and strategically important maritime areas in the world. The region includes major shipping hubs such as Cyprus, the United Arab Emirates, Jordan, Bahrain, India and Sri Lanka, serving millions of seafarers who pass through these ports each year.

The Mission's work across the region focuses on providing practical, emotional, and welfare support to seafarers of all nationalities and faiths. This includes ship visits, seafarers' centres, emergency assistance, and collaboration with port authorities, shipping companies, and other welfare agencies.

The Mission is committed to promoting the wellbeing, dignity, and rights of all who work at sea, ensuring that seafarers receive help and support when they need it most. Our regional teams operate in partnership with local stakeholders to maintain a trusted and compassionate presence in ports throughout the region.

The Port of Chennai, Tamil Nadu

Chennai Port is the largest port in the Bay of Bengal and, despite being the second smallest port in the country by surface area, encompassing only 274 hectares, it is the second largest container port in India, after Mumbai's Jawaharlal Nehru Port (also known as Nhava Sheva). Chennai Port also has a unique location, being situated within the city limits. Whilst official port operations began at Chennai in 1881, maritime trade started much earlier and Chennai has been an established port of trade since the 1600s. Once a major travel port, Chennai is now a major container port and is a primary reason for the economic growth of Tamil Nadu and has contributed greatly to the development of the city of Chennai.

Chennai port is an artificial and all-weather port with wet docks. The area is divided into north, central and south zones in addition to fishing harbours. The port has is a hub port for container ships, cars and project cargo in the east coast of India and handles more than 60 million tonnes of cargo each year. In addition it has a cruise ship terminal. Located on the Southeast coast of India, Chennai Port is one of the most important gateways for South India's container market. It is strategically positioned to offer South and East India the quickest transits to the Far East and its existence has led to the city of Chennai becoming known as the *Gateway of South India*.

The port has two container terminals providing direct connectivity to more than 50 ports around the world. **Chennai Container Terminal (CCT)** was built in 1983 and is currently operated by DP World. Offering direct services to China, West Africa, Europe and the US. The terminal can handle fifth-generation vessels up to 6,400 TEU and services the entire range of international trade in Chennai and the South India hinterland, supporting 60% of South India's container market. **Chennai International Terminal (CITPL)** started operations in 2009 and is a joint venture between Singapore's PSA International and Chennai-based Sical Logistics Ltd. It is specifically designed to accommodate 3 deep-draft vessels and provides a vital link between Chennai and key destinations such as Northeast Asia, Southeast Asia, the Indian Subcontinent, Oceania, East Coast America, Europe, the Arabian Gulf, and Africa. Both the terminals have daily trains to Inland Container Depots (ICDs) and are served by various container liner services, handling containers as well as liquid and dry bulk, and breakbulk cargoes.

Often called the Detroit of Asia, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chennai_Port Chennai Port handles Ro-Ro services for the export of vehicles, with a dedicated terminal and significant capacity for passenger cars and commercial vehicles, notably for manufacturers such as Hyundai and Ford. It serves as a key export hub for various automobile companies, providing services such as vehicle stockyard management, inland transport, and terminal operations, as well as offering concessional rates for some large exporters to boost foreign shipments.

Chennai Port is the only port on the East Coast of India with a cruise terminal and is one of the five major ports in the country that has been identified by the Ministry of Shipping for the development of cruise terminals.

Job Description

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| Department: | Ministry |
| Responsible to: | Regional Director, Middle East & South Asia & The Programme Manager |
| Other Key Working Relationships: | Indian Coordinator, Chennai Port Authority MtS colleagues across the MESA region and IMU |
| Term: | Initial term of 3 Years - with potential to renew |
| Hours: | The full-time working week is 40 hours. This is a full-time role, worked flexibly (including weekends, evenings and public holidays) to accommodate shipping schedules and academic terms. |
| Role Purpose: | <p>To support the personal, social, and academic well-being of maritime students at the Indian Maritime University ("IMU") by providing welfare services, guidance, and training. This role ensures students are mentally, emotionally, and physically prepared for the demands of maritime education and careers, while also delivering essential life skills and professional development training.</p> <p>To provide emotional, spiritual, and practical support to seafarers visiting port, ensuring their well-being and offering a compassionate presence. The role combines ship visiting duties with pastoral care, often in collaboration with maritime welfare organizations, chaplaincies, and port authorities.</p> |

Principal Duties and Responsibilities

Student Welfare & Support

- Provide confidential counselling and support to students facing personal, academic, or social challenges.
- Act as the first point of contact for welfare concerns, ensuring timely intervention and referrals.
- Promote mental health awareness and well-being initiatives across the campus.
- Liaise with IMU authorities, and external agencies, when necessary, in consultation with IMU and MtS.

Ship Visiting

- Visit ships docked at the port to welcome and engage with crew members.
- Offer spiritual, emotional support and advice to seafarers as required, including directing them to other sources of support as appropriate.
- Offer information about local services, welfare support, and shore leave opportunities.
- Distribute reading materials, SIM cards, toiletries, or other requested items when needed.
- Liaise and partner with other port chaplains and welfare workers locally to ensure ministry continuity, particularly in cases of ongoing pastoral care, and justice and welfare cases.
- Identify and report any welfare concerns or urgent needs to the appropriate authorities or chaplaincy.

- Support the provision of communications and transport facilities to seafarers as required.
- Maintain an up to date record of ship visiting activity using the MtS Ship Visitor App.

Pastoral Care and Welfare

- Provide a listening ear and emotional support to seafarers of all faiths and backgrounds.
- Offer spiritual guidance or prayer when requested, respecting cultural and religious diversity.
- Support seafarers experiencing loneliness, stress, or crisis situations.
- Assist in organizing or facilitating religious services onboard or ashore when requested.
- Visit and provide practical and emotional support to seafarers who are in hospital or prison.
- Provide a swift and effective response to any relevant emergency involving an individual seafarer or group of seafarers, where appropriate in close liaison with port authorities or other relevant bodies.

Collaboration & Advocacy

- Work closely with port chaplains, welfare organizations (e.g., Stella Maris, The Mission to Seafarers), and port authorities.
- Advocate for the rights and dignity of seafarers, especially in cases of abandonment, unpaid wages, or medical needs.
- Maintain accurate records of visits and report significant issues or trends.

Training & Development

- Design and deliver training sessions on wellbeing, soft skills, personal development, and maritime-specific topics (e.g., resilience, teamwork, leadership, cultural sensitivity).
- Deliver training sessions on suicide alertness and intervention, in particular *Livingworks SafeTALK*.
- Conduct workshops on stress management, time management, and adapting to life at sea.
- Support induction programs for new students, helping them transition smoothly into maritime education.

Compliance & Safeguarding

- Ensure all welfare practices comply with maritime education standards and safeguarding policies.
- Maintain accurate records of student interactions and interventions in line with data protection regulations.

Community Engagement

- Foster a supportive and inclusive student community through events, peer mentoring, and engagement activities.
- Collaborate with academic and administrative staff to create a holistic support environment.

Other

- Ensure e-mails, telephone messages, and Happy at Sea App are regularly monitored and respond as required.
- Participate in personal training opportunities as appropriate/requested.

Person Specification

Qualifications

- Bachelor's degree in Nautical Science / Marine Engineering or Social Work, Psychology, Education, or related field (Maritime background) would be an advantage.
- Certification in counselling, mental health first aid, or student welfare is preferred.
- Training in mental health first aid, suicide prevention, safeguarding, or crisis response is desirable.

Experience and Skills

- Given MtS's priority of better supporting all seafarers, candidates should have a practical understanding of and empathy with the particular challenges seafarers experience.
- Strong background in pastoral care, chaplaincy, social work, or related field preferred.
- Experience of offering pastoral support to seafarers and/or marginalised communities would be an asset.
- Experience in maritime welfare or cross-cultural engagement preferred.
- Experience working with young adults or in an educational/training environment.
- Knowledge of maritime industry standards and student lifestyle challenges.
- Skilled in training delivery and student engagement.
- Strong and adaptable interpersonal skills, including being an empathetic listener.
- Able to quickly develop productive working relationships with colleagues and other partners.
- Able to quickly establish rapport and trust with colleagues and all seafarers.
- Able to constructively challenge the status quo.
- Solutions focused, able to explore alternative means of doing things to create positive impact
- Excellent organisational and administrative skills.
- IT literate, fully conversant with MS Office and willing to learn and use any in-house programmes.
- Fluency in spoken and written English and Hindi is essential.
- Fluency in spoken and written Tamil is desired.

Personal Qualities

- MtS is an Anglican Christian 'Charity' and this post is open to persons who possess strong faith-based values that align with MtS Anglican roots, and with the work and charitable purpose of our work.
- Empathetic, approachable, and culturally sensitive.
- Ability to handle confidential information with discretion.
- Crisis management and problem-solving abilities.
- Compassionate, non-judgmental, and culturally sensitive.
- Strong interpersonal and communication skills.
- Collaborative and inclusive, able to work as part of an ecumenical team.
- A highly motivated self-starter, able to work under own initiative and unsupervised.
- Acts with discretion and professionalism in handling sensitive situations.
- Empathetic, supportive and understanding with good self-awareness.
- Demonstrates sound judgement, emotional intelligence and sensitivity.
- Culturally and politically aware.
- Resilient and able to remain calm and measured in challenging situations.
- Shares ideas and is receptive to those of others.

- Flexible in approach with the ability to adapt to changing priorities.
- Demonstrates integrity, acting at all times in the best interests of MtS.

Special Working Conditions

- Visiting ships is an essential part of this role and you may visit as many as eight ships per day. You will be required to climb gangways with as many as 80 x 60 degree steps leading to the deck on board ships and then perhaps a further three floors to get to the bridge.
- The Chaplain will be required to comply with the Health & Safety and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) protocols throughout the Port of Chennai
- May involve travel for student placements, maritime events, or training sessions.

General Requirements

- Applicants must already have the right to live and work permanently in India.
- Applicants must have a full clean driving licence that is valid in India.
- An offer of engagement is subject to a satisfactory medical, references and a Criminal Record Check.
- This job description should be treated as a guide to the duties that the post holder is expected to perform. As a term of this contract the post holder can be required to undertake such duties as are commensurate with his or her position.
- The job description may be amended to meet changing requirements at any time after discussion with the post holder.
- The Mission to Seafarers operates an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy. The post holder will be expected to comply fully with this Policy in carrying out their duties.
- The post-holder is required to be aware of their responsibilities towards Health & Safety and Safeguarding and must adhere to the Health & Safety and Safeguarding Policies.
- The post-holder is required to be aware of their responsibilities towards the EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and to adhere to MtS's GDPR and Data Retention Policies.

Terms of Appointment

- Location:** Port of Chennai & IMU Campus Chennai
- Term:** Full-time on a consultancy basis
- Hours of Work:** The full-time working week is 40 hours. This is a full-time role, worked flexibly (including weekends, evenings and public holidays) to accommodate shipping schedules and academic terms.
- Remuneration:** The post offers a highly competitive salary.
- Annual Leave:** 30 days per annum (including Good Friday and Christmas Day and any local public holidays).

How to Apply

To apply for this position, please submit your CV (no more than two A4 pages) and a Cover Letter (no more than 500 words) outlining your interest in the role and how your experience matches the person specification. We encourage you to use specific examples from your professional life, and reference how you will address the responsibilities of this role.

Submissions should be emailed to thomas.ohare@missiontoseafarers.org, titled 'Application – Welfare Officer – [Name of Applicant]'. The deadline for submissions is **noon on Monday 9th February 2026**. We regret that applications received after this date will not be considered. Applications that do not contain both a CV and Cover Letter will not be considered.

The Recruitment Process

- First round interviews:** Anticipated to be week commencing 16th February 2026 (online)
- Second round interviews:** Anticipated to be week commencing 2nd March 2026 (in person in Chennai, India – to be confirmed)

