The Royal Institution of Naval Architects

Design & Operation of Ferries & Ro-Pax Vessels

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The last 10 years have seen a steady continued growth in the passenger ferry and Ro-Pax market, with particularly strong growth in passenger numbers. Despite the recent freight market downturn there is political pressure, particularly in Europe, to move more road traffic to intermodal maritime based logistics chain the so called "motorways of the sea" but these vessels are often still in competing with fixed links (tunnels & bridges) and the budget airlines. The introduction of the existing and possible future Emission Control Area's (ECA's) is having a major impact on ferries and Ro-Pax vessels. These vessels need to take full advantage of technical innovations to improve fuel efficiency, stricter exhaust emission limits, environment performance, reduced maintenance, improved reliability and safety.



Modern roll-on roll-off passenger ferries have to be a flexible design able to cope with varying mixes of freight and passenger cars depending upon the route and season. To maximise their operational efficiency the on-board equipment need to be able to be swiftly adjusted to suit changes in cargo mix to provide efficient use of the cargo space and allow the cargo and passengers to be loading and discharged in the minimum amount of time.

Similarly, the accommodation space has to be a compromise between number and mix of cabins types, size of seating areas, retail, catering, and entertainment space. While the freight drivers may have more functional demands the car passenger may have more luxurious expectation. All these requirements will be effected by route and season.

Passenger ferries and Ro-Pax vessels tend to have long service lives often involving moving around routes and changes of operators. Many will undergo modernised or convert during their lifetime to match new market needs.



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- More efficient hull design
- Improved seakeeping and manoeuvrability
- Propulsion systems; low sulphur fuels, dual fuel. LNG, code ironing, reduced emissions, etc.
- Contemporary interior designs and on-board passenger facilities
- Port vessel interface
- Conversion and upgrading existing vessels

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www.rina.org.uk/Ferries_Ro-pax

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