It was reported on 1 December that MLA College* had won the Gold award for the Best Online Distance Learning Programme at the Learning Technologies Awards 2016 in London on 30 November for their submission: Delivering degrees to seafarers without internet.

The panel of independent academics judging the submission were impressed with the way MLA College combined innovative technology with traditional academic tutoring that was personalised to each student, enabling a whole new generation of seafarers to gain a higher qualification whilst remaining in their full-time job.

The Awards gathered 800 people to celebrate the best learning technologies across the world, with shortlisted entries from Canada, Australia, New Zealand, India, USA, Turkey, Germany, Hungary, Switzerland, Spain and Italy.

In the words of Richard Thain, Chief Executive, MLA College: ‘I am extremely pleased that our programmes have been recognised in this way and I feel that this really highlights the quality of the design and delivery of the courses. By utilising new technologies we have been able to take university learning to seafarers who would not otherwise have had the opportunity to engage with higher education.’

MLA College’s digital manager, Jon Scott and e-learning advisor, Luke Denner were the proud recipients of the award at the ceremony at Park Plaza Westminster Bridge Hotel on the night of 30 November, having written the submission and prepared and delivered a presentation to the judging panel in September.

Said David Loosley, Chief Executive, Institute of Marine Engineering, Science & Technology (IMarEST): ‘Winning Gold in this category is an incredible and well-deserved achievement for our learning arm, MLA College. We are delighted to be acknowledged for providing state-of-the-art teaching through technology and firmly believe that this kind of education will play a huge role in the progress of the marine sector and in narrowing the skills gap we currently face.’

**About MLA College**
MLA College uses state-of-the-art technology to provide distance learning courses in a range of marine and maritime based subjects, offering individually tailored learning experiences to its students. In addition to its established Hydrographic Academy courses, new programmes include undergraduate and
postgraduate degrees in Sustainable Maritime Operations for seafarers (deck and engineer), and Masters programmes in hydrography, meteorology, oceanography and navigation.

Courses can be downloaded and learnt offline and can be completed flexibly, balancing around careers and other life commitments. MLA College is an award winning educational provider and although students learn from a distance, the courses are fully tutor-supported and no question or confusion will go unanswered, it is understood.

In addition to higher educational programmes, technology-enhanced education and training is also available and is currently being delivered to a number of large organisations both within and outside the marine and maritime sectors.

Further details can be found at: www.mla-uk.com

About IMarEST
The IMarEST is an international membership body and learned society that brings marine engineers, marine scientists and marine technologists together into one multi-disciplinary professional body. The largest marine organisation of its kind, it spans 128 countries and works to promote the scientific development of marine engineering, science and technology, providing opportunities for the exchange of ideas and practices and upholding the status, standards and expertise of marine professionals worldwide. Members are able to gain professional registration through the Institute such as Technician, Incorporated, Registered or Chartered status.

Education is supported through MLA College, the part of the IMarEST Group that delivers marine education and training courses through distance e-learning.

The IMarEST is an NGO with consultative status at the IMO and observer status at the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission, International Hydrographic Organization, the London Convention/London Protocol (LC/LP) and the Joint Group of Experts on the Scientific Aspects of Marine Environmental Protection (GESAMP).

IMarEST has special consultative status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations (ECOSOC), which facilitates its access to other international intergovernmental meetings where its specialized marine expertise is of particular use, for example the United Nations meetings on Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and the work of the International Seabed Authority on marine mining.
See also www.imarest.org

* Marine Learning Alliance Ltd. is a subsidiary of IMarEST and an academic partner of Plymouth University. Marine Learning Alliance Ltd is a company registered in England and Wales. Registered number: 9188277. Marine Learning Alliance Ltd is a subsidiary of IMarEST. Registered office: 1 Birdeage Walk, London SW1H 9JJ, UK.