

Technical Syllabus

Part A – Personal Paddling Skills

Paddlers are required to show all skills in both canoe and kayak.

A.1 Lifting, carrying and launching

- The paddler must demonstrate launching from a variety of bank types.
- Assistance is recommended for safe practice.
- The paddler must demonstrate safe lifting and carrying principles.
- The paddler should know how to alter the position of the footrest, backrest if fitted and where practical the seat.

Once at the water, the paddler's boat needs to be floating and entry into it achieved without aid from the paddle. The paddle needs to be close enough to reach once in the boat.

Spray decks are to be used if appropriate.

A.2 Efficient forward paddling

Paddlers must show that they can control a kayak and a canoe in a straight line over a distance of approximately 250m. The kayak should be kept running in a straight line with only limited use of correction strokes. Canoeists may switch sides to generate initial momentum and then should proceed via power strokes and steering element on one side only.

Paddlers must:

- Show an active posture using the larger muscles of the body (appropriate to the boat.)
- Show power being created from rotational trunk movement from the seat/hips upwards, built around strong connections between paddle shaft and upper trunk.
- Demonstrate a smooth power transfer from paddle to boat with no excessive bobbing of boat or body.
- Drive the paddle into the water with an extended front arm and have an appropriate grip, dependant on the style of boat.

A.3 Steering

In canoe: paddlers need to demonstrate steering solutions including stern sweeps, rudders and J-strokes. The provider should facilitate this by asking the paddler to paddle a course that is reasonably straight, but that requires them to turn gently between markers. In windy weather the paddler needs to demonstrate appropriate trim or they must be aware of its effect.

In kayak: paddlers need to demonstrate keeping the boat straight through a narrow gap (2 boat's width) by use of a trailing paddle or rudder (starting from a good running speed).

BCU 2 Star Assessment Notes

A.4 Manoeuvring in a confined space

Paddlers should demonstrate controlled and accurate manoeuvring and positioning of the boat. The provider should set up a situation whereby a paddler has to move into a confined space and then reverse out to exit. When reversing the paddler must be looking where they are going. The paddler must be accurate; touching the sides of the space is not allowed. The paddler(s) must, however, have enough room to effectively place their paddles in the water to enable a controlled exit.

A.5 Moving sideways

Paddlers should be able to move the boat sideways 5m without excessive swing, to both left and right. The active blade must remain submerged throughout the stroke.

Canoe paddlers have to demonstrate both draws and pry strokes or cross-deck draws.

A.6 Preventing a capsize

Paddlers should show an efficient low recovery stroke, on both sides, with the paddler off balance. Tandem canoe paddlers have to use draws and low recovery strokes.

A.7 Turning

The boat must be turned whilst on the move, the aim being to perform a selection of smooth turns, e.g. wide and tight turns at 90°, 180°, 270° and 360°.

A.8 Returning to the bank and getting out

Paddlers should demonstrate the correct approach to the bank and exit boat without using the paddle. Balance and control of the boat should be retained throughout. The exit should be performed without damaging boat, bank or themselves.

A.9 Securing

The paddler must be able to secure a boat at the end of the session, by tying down onto purpose made racks, or roof rack, by using ropes or straps.

Part B – Rescue Skills

Paddlers are required to show all skills in both canoe and kayak.

The provider may use a swimming pool for these elements of the assessment if appropriate.

B.1 Capsize, swim and self-rescue

Paddlers must capsize the boat, with a spray deck or straps in place if appropriate, and show no sign of panic. They then should rescue themselves by one or other of these suitable methods; climb back in and bail, or swim ashore with all their equipment and empty. Paddlers may assist each other at any time. Care and concern should be shown to all paddlers and equipment.

BCU 2 Star Assessment Notes

B.2 Rescue a capsized paddler

Paddlers should demonstrate helping a peer get back into their boat after a capsize. Suitable methods would include; x-rescue, curl, or tow/shunt to the shore as appropriate.

Part C – Safety, Leadership and group skills.

Paddlers can show this in either canoe or kayak.

Paddlers should plan and execute an accompanied paddle journey. Groups must be between 3-5 paddlers (i.e. minimum of 1 paddler, 1 paddler and the provider) and take 30 – 60 minutes. Providers are still responsible for the group and must ensure they take appropriate safety precautions.

C.1 Personal risk management

C.2 Awareness of others

C.3 An assessed accompanied sheltered water journey

During assessment paddlers should be questioned about the details of the start and finish locations, description of the river, lake, anticipated weather, kit list, transport arrangements, access permissions, anticipated hazards, anticipated timings and emergency procedures. Detailed knowledge is not required but some awareness of these issues should be in evidence.

The provider must ensure that:

1. The BCU Code of Conduct is followed.
2. The safety of the group is not compromised.
3. The decisions made are appropriate.

Part D Theory

The provider should ask a question or two of a similar level under each heading.

D.1 Equipment

Sample questions:

- What materials are most modern boats made from?
- Why should you wear some form of wind/waterproof?
- Why is it important to wear a buoyancy aid when on or near the water?
- Name two manufacturers or models of canoes that are sold in Britain.

D.2 Safety

Sample questions:

- What clothing would you wear in cold weather and why?
- Why is the wind direction important when considering where and if you should go paddling?
- How would any current on a river be used to help make progress easier, or to turn around a bridge pillar?
- What is the 'rule of the road' on a busy river or canal?

D.3 Wellbeing, health and first aid

Paddlers should understand the factors that contribute to hypothermia or hyperthermia and have strategies to avoid them. They should be able to deal with the most likely paddlesport injuries.

Sample subject areas:

- Prevention, signs and treatment of hypothermia & hyperthermia.
- Importance of first aid knowledge.

D.4 Access

Sample questions:

- Are you allowed to paddle on any river?
- What sort of behaviour is most likely to upset other river users?
- What is meant by 'a navigation'?
- On which side of a navigable river or canal should you paddle?

D.5 Environment

Sample questions:

- Why is 'seal' launching not recommended?
- Who would you contact if you came across signs of serious pollution e.g. oil, sewage, foul smells, dead fish and birds?

D.6 Planning

Sample questions:

- What is a 'shuttle' with regards to a canoeing journey?
- What questions would you ask the leader if, as a 2 Star paddler, you were invited to take part in a day tour travelling about 4 miles down a slow moving river?