

Technical Syllabus

Part A – Personal Paddling Skills

A.1 Lifting, carrying, launching and landing

Paddlers should demonstrate their understanding of the safe and correct lifting and carrying techniques when carrying a boat on their own. They should be able to launch and land unaided from the beach using efficient, effective and safe methods.

A.2 Control

Although clearly not in complete control the paddler should look relaxed with the basic concept of running along a wave and remaining upright when moving sideways. Given the range of surf conditions likely this would include occasions when the paddler might capsize. As in all awards a capsize is not 'failure' in isolation but in the context of learning must hold a relevance to the skill being attempted.

A.3 Paddle out

In the conditions of the assessment a sophisticated strategy may not always be necessary. With this understanding the provider should orchestrate opportunity for the paddlers to show understanding of the key elements involved in a more demanding paddle out; speed, angle, wave judgment, trim and timing. Paddlers should be able to demonstrate effective methods for paddling through/over broken waves.

A.4 Positioning and wave selection

Waves at this level do not always 'shoulder' or 'wall', however, positioning and wave selection still require decisions to be made. Providers should observe paddlers over a reasonable period of time, giving them ample opportunity to demonstrate a considered and effective positioning and wave selection strategy. Decisions NOT to catch a wave should be evident.

A.5 Take off

Paddlers' efficiency in paddling should be shown through powerful engagement of a full blade, with a high top hand and strong pulling action on the blade. A clear understanding of 'short bursts of powerful strokes' should be observable, some directional error is acceptable.

A.6 Riding

Paddlers should be able to surf along a wave, both to their left and right, demonstrating good forwards dynamic body position, and accurate rail engagement. They should be able to link turns, using appropriate body position, edge control, rudders and prys. Paddlers should be able to control their craft in a sideways sliding position, showing good edge awareness and minimal use of a low brace. Paddlers should show means of actively exiting a wave.

A.7 Turns

Paddlers should initiate turns through a combination of forward body posture, positive rail control and accuracy of stroke selection. Paddlers will be expected to attempt to turn the boat with similar consistency in both directions. Providers should look for the foundation skills of good edge engagement, along with a forward dynamic body position during turns at the bottom of the wave. There may be occasions where the paddler's ability could be overwhelmed by the surf conditions, requiring additional stroke work to achieve the desired result. This is acceptable at this level.

A.8 Ruddering and prys

Paddlers should have a basic understanding of the use of rudders and prys. They should be able to display an accurate stroke that keeps the boat under control. This would be shown in turns at the bottom of the wave, S transitions and diagonal rides across the wave. Active posture should be maintained in a positive forward position.

A.9 Supporting

Paddlers should show a good upright posture, elbows high and a dynamic hip action to allow the craft to travel sideways in both directions. This will normally be in a broken water situation. It should be evident that weight is predominately off the paddle blade unless a recovery action is being completed.

A.10 Rolling

Paddlers should be able to perform a suitable roll on one side. This could be shown in a flat water environment, or if it naturally occurs during the surfing sessions.

A.11 Securing

Paddlers should be able to effectively secure a surf craft to a trailer or roof rack.

Part B – Rescue Skills

B.1 Capsize and return to shore

On capsize paddlers should immediately move to the seaward side of the exited craft, maintain control of the paddle, and control and monitor the hull in a safe manner until shallow water is reached. Safe handling skills should be shown in the possible situation of a fully swamped kayak high and dry on the sand.

B.2 Stern carries and tows

Paddlers should be conversant with the requirements of carrying and towing in the surf. They should be a useful swimmer, knowing what to do in the event of requiring a rescue. Providers should note that although paddlers will perform carries and tows, this performance does not need to be assessed at this level.

B.3 Capsize and recovery

Paddlers should show a number of techniques for righting or remounting a capsized craft, dependent on the depth of water.

Part C – Safety, Leadership & Group Skills

C.1 Personal risk management

Paddlers should be aware of their own limitations and have an understanding of other water users, however, they should not be expected to lead groups in any way. They should be able to identify the difference between one foot and two foot waves, spilling, wind waves and shore breaks. Paddlers should be able to identify river based and headland rips, and take into account the position of rocks and groynes when choosing a site in which to surf.

C.2 Awareness of others

Good etiquette should be practiced by paddlers whenever on the water, along with tolerance and understanding for other users of the surf zone. Paddlers should be able to look after themselves as part of a group led by a competent paddler. Their actions would not compound incidents and indeed their assistance could be of value to a leader. Providers could verbally test paddlers' knowledge of the management issues facing the leader in a group situation, and paddlers should be able to explain how they would take responsibility for those actions in moments of pressure. Paddlers should not be assessed in any decision making context.

C.3 Paddle as part of a led group

Part D – Theory

D.1 Equipment

Paddlers should be able to identify features in boat design which dictate their performance in general terms, and hence be able to predict their effectiveness in the surf. These might include length, profile, shape of hull and edge profile. Providers could also question paddlers on paddle length and personal clothing. Kayaks should be fitted with airbags and have grab tapes attached.

D.3 Tides, weather and bathymetry

Paddlers should have an understanding of high and low, spring and neap tides, and their impact on the selection of a venue. They should be able to describe the creation of swell in weather systems and explain how local wind conditions effect the quality of the surf. Paddlers should be able to identify the bathymetry of a beach being used, including detail on beach profile, aspect and angle. They should have knowledge of good sources of beach, tide, weather and swell information.

D.3 Etiquette

There should be an understanding by the paddlers of the drop in rule and other principles of etiquette, when selecting a site not in conflict with the safety and interests of other water users.

D.4 Safety

Paddlers should have a sound safety basis, along with the knowledge of and ability to carry out basic risk assessments in order to keep themselves and their paddling partners safe.

D.5 Wellbeing, health and first aid

Linked with sound safe judgement, paddlers should be able to deal with the most likely injuries and long term health issues that may occur as part of paddlesport activities.

D.6 Environmental Awareness

An appreciation of the environment we paddle in is a key underpinning principle for many in paddlesport. Being able to gain maximum enjoyment from this natural environment and how to protect it should be at the core of our behaviour.

This would particularly be relevant to water quality, pollution and over-crowding on our beaches.

D.7 Planning and group awareness

Paddlers should be productive members of their paddling group. They should know what questions to ask and how to go about organising a day out. They should understand different roles within a group of paddlers on the water.

D.8 General knowledge

Paddlers should be aware of the very diverse nature of paddlesport and the rich history that canoeing has within the UK and beyond.

