

BCU LEVEL 5 ASSESSMENT PROTOCOL

This document provides guidance for Level 5 Trainees, Mentors, Trainers, and Assessors regarding all matters relating to Level 5 Assessments run from 1st October 2011.

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ASSESSMENT DATES:

Each of the BCU Home Nations organises approximately one Level 5 Assessment a year. Dates and disciplines are advertised in CoDe at least 6 months in advance.

POST TRAINING:

After a Trainee has completed Level 5 Training, they should work through their action plan in association and consultation with their Mentor.

HOME NATION ASSESSMENT CO-ORDINATORS:

Each Home Nation has an Assessment Co-ordinator who is responsible for arranging assessment dates and can provide further clarity on the assessment process if required:

CW:	Sid Sinfield	sid.sinfield@virgin.net
SCA:	Gordon Brown	info@skyakadventures.com
CANI:	Oisin Hallissey	oisin.hallissey@sportni.net
CE:	Lara Cooper	lara.cooper2@btinternet.com

RELATED DOCUMENTS

The following supporting documents are available from Joanne Simpson¹ on request.

- BCU Level 5 Assessment Booking Form
- BCU Student Participation Form
- BCU Paddlesport Consent Form (for use with Under 18's)
- BCU Appeals Procedure

¹ Joanne Simpson, British Canoe Union, National Water Sports Centre, Adbolton Lane, Holme Pierrepont, Nottingham, NG12 2LU; joanne.simpson@bcu.org.uk; Tel: 0845 3709529.

ASSESSMENT ADMINISTRATION AND PREREQUISITES:

Candidates are required to book their place on an assessment at least 3-months prior to course, deadlines will be published. Bookings are currently handled by Joanne Simpson² at BCU HQ. Potential candidates are required to submit the following assessment prerequisites at the time of booking:

1. Completed 'BCU Level 5 Assessment Booking Form'
Available from Joanne Simpson²
2. Completed Level 5 C1 - this is returned to Trainees (stamped for assessment) after completion of their training course. The C1 is valid for three years from the date of training (unless otherwise stated). (See page 9 regarding extensions)
3. A copy of the candidates valid first aid certificate - minimum 2 days as per BCU Five Star Leader Award
4. A copy of the candidates action plan - this is normally formulated during the Level 5 training course and re-aligned during contact with their Mentor
5. Mentors letter of support and session narrative - the candidate's Mentor is required to write a letter of support that includes:
 - a formal recommendation for the candidate to attend the specific assessment;
 - an endorsement that the candidate has completed the relevant elements of their action plan;
 - a session narrative - this is written following a day where the Mentor observes the candidate coaching. It is written by the Mentor as feedback for the candidate, and requires a clear indication that Level 5 coaching behaviours were observed (See page 13-14)
6. £100 Deposit
7. Current comprehensive/full membership of the relevant Home Nation Association
8. Level 5 Project (see page 11-12 for guidance)

Upon receipt of the above, by the 3-month deadline, a place on the requested assessment is reserved.

9. At least two months prior to the course the Assessment Director will confirm the candidates place on the assessment subject to appropriate staffing being finalised. The balance of assessment fees is then due.

² Joanne Simpson, British Canoe Union, National Water Sports Centre, Adbolton Lane, Holme Pierrepont, Nottingham, NG12 2LU; joanne.simpson@bcu.org.uk; Tel: 0845 3709529.

AT THE ASSESSMENT, CANDIDATES ARE ALSO REQUIRED TO PROVIDE:

Personal logbook, which is up-to-date with all coaching and personal paddling

Logbook of long-term student work. Including a record of prior coaching with their long-term students, brief synopses of the long-term students' learning styles, quirks, action plans, review materials etc. See page 7 for more information about long-term students

A current first aid certificate

(minimum 2 days hours as per BCU Five Star Leader Award)

Two or three long-term students

(See page 7 for more information about long-term students)

A 'BCU Student Participation Form' for each long-term student, or 'BCU Paddlesport Consent Form' if long-term student/s are under 18

ASSESSMENT STAFF:

- **1 Director (for a maximum of 6 candidates)**

The Director is usually one of the Home Nation Assessment Co-ordinators

- **1 Assessor per candidate per day**

The Assessor must be a registered Level 5 Assessor, normally Level 5 Coach and 5 Star Assessor in the discipline they are assessing. Assessors should be active Tutors of Trainees and ideally be active on training courses

- **Observers**

As part of their professional development Trainee Tutors, Mentors, Trainers, or other Assessors may also be involved in the assessment to aid their development

The Director will ensure that candidate's do not have a previous relationship with their Assessor or Observers that will influence the assessment process.

The assessment team should be made up of Assessors from the various regions of the UK to maintain consistent standards. Staff must be available from the evening of the previous day, through to the end of day 2. If this means they are required to travel on days either side of the assessment they will be paid accordingly.

LEVEL 5 ASSESSMENT COST:

The cost for candidates pursuing their first discipline Level 5 award will remain at the subsidised rate of £750 through 2015. The cost for existing BCU Level 5 Coaches who wish to be assessed in a different discipline is £1250 (with budgets continually stretched subsidy in this area can no longer be justified).

The cost of the assessment contributes towards the staffing and administration of the course only. Candidates are responsible for meeting the costs of their own, and their long-term student's food, accommodation, transport, and water fees.

ASSESSMENTS OUTSIDE OF THE UK

These must be organised in the same manner as assessments within the home countries. A Director from the current directors list is appointed and they then become the primary contact for the assessment. Any such assessment shall have no financial burden on the BCU therefore encouraging all candidates to come to the UK for their final assessment. Actual costs for an overseas assessment are paid for by the candidates, the usual subsidised rate is not applicable.

THE ASSESSMENT PROGRAMME:

EVENING 1:

The Assessment starts at approximately 7:00 pm on the first evening of the course, with:

- **Assessment Introduction:** the Director will welcome the candidates to the assessment, running through logistics and setting the scene. The Assessors will also introduce themselves to the candidates and explain how they will be operating during the Assessment. The candidates' long-term students will also receive a brief from one of the assessment team, this will include some scene setting.

This is followed by:

- **Meet and Greet:** candidates will be introduced to the unknown students that they will be coaching the following day. This is an opportunity to establish aims and goals, and to develop rapport for the following day. By using this approach the candidate will be able to start planning their first day. This should be an information gathering session only and not utilised for coaching.

COACHING DAY 1 – COACHING UNKNOWN STUDENTS:

On this day of the assessment, the candidate will be working with 2 or 3 students unknown to them. The aim of this day is to assess the candidate's ability to coach students with whom they have no coaching relationship and to provide a Level 5 quality day coaching (see pages 13-14). The length of the first day's coaching is entirely up to the candidate and will be assessed on appropriateness.

The Assessor must be made aware of the plan for the day. The Assessor then observes the day. It is the Assessor's responsibility to get sufficient information throughout the day to make an accurate evaluation of the candidate's work (at least 80% of the coaching interaction must be observed). Assessors will do their best to put the candidate at ease, engage in conversation, and ask questions to clarify understanding (by negotiation, this can be done throughout the day at suitable breaks, or at the end of the day, but it must not interfere with the coaching).

The Assessor must gain an insight into the cognitive process of the candidate. If the candidate is comfortable to narrate sections of their coaching performance this will enable the Assessor to gain a deeper understanding of their coaching behaviours. It is expected that the Assessor will question the candidate at the end of the day.

The Assessor then completes a narrative report of the day and this is presented to the Director.

The students to be coached could be another candidate's long-term students, or two / three students arranged by the Assessor. If another candidate's students are used the Assessor would normally follow them through to the next day coaching, however this is not always possible.

The names and details of students are not communicated to candidates until the previous evening brief.

Assessors must review the relevant long-term student logbooks for the following day.

COACHING DAY 2 – COACHING LONG-TERM STUDENTS:

On the second coaching day the candidates will work with their own long-term students. The ethos of the day is seeing the candidate working with students with whom they have an established coaching relationship. The day's coaching is assessed in context of their prior experience with their long-term students, see page 13-14.

The candidate must communicate with the Assessor/Director on the previous evening to discuss location and timings for this day. Before the coaching day starts, an interview occurs between the Assessor and the candidate in which the work to date with the long-term students is reviewed and the plan for the day explained to the Assessor.

The candidate dictates the timing of the start of this day. Candidates should be aware that the second coaching day is a shorter day and that Assessors will normally leave the coaching session at lunchtime (unless it has already finished), having undergone a period of questioning.

At the end of the day the Assessor completes a narrative report of the coaching and this is presented to the Director. There is discussion between the assessment team, for each candidate, and a final conclusion drawn. The overall performance is considered.

At least 1 hour must be allowed for Assessors to produce the written feedback, and plan the verbal feedback session.

RESULTS:

The candidate needs to demonstrate appropriate and consistent coaching performance on both days, which meets the needs of their students (see pages 13-14).

Candidates are given the option of how they wish to receive their assessment result, this is normally one of the following options;

- By the Director as soon as the result is known (with no information other than the result, or along with the written feedback)
- By one of the Assessors, with a period of reflection prior to feedback
- By one of the Assessors immediately prior to feedback

Results are given privately.

DEBRIEF / FEEDBACK:

Candidates will receive feedback from both Assessors in a formal setting at the end of the second day coaching, with 20 minutes allocated. No feedback is provided until this time. The written feedback is used to lead the verbal feedback. This will consist of a narrative, interspersed with detail/specifics and examples, action points, and is based loosely around the 'Guidelines for Good Practice of a Level 5 Coach' pages 13-14.

Candidates must leave with a draft of the written feedback at the end of the assessment. This will include copies of the assessment narratives, the result with justification, and action points for further development. A final copy of the feedback is sent to candidates within 7 days of the assessment.

LEVEL 5 STANDARD:

See pages 13-14.

LONG-TERM STUDENTS:

Candidates must spend a minimum of 6 days with their long-term students in the 6 months prior to the assessment. This is established via the logbook of coaching with their long-term students. It is essential that long-term students be at an intermediate to advanced level at the time of the assessment. If the candidate is unable to bring two appropriate students they will be unable to be assessed. Therefore, candidates are encouraged to be working with a minimum of three long-term students to deal with any unforeseen circumstances close to the day.

Candidates will be expected to have established a strong coaching relationship with their long-term students (i.e. clear understanding of learning styles and performance profile) and be able to provide action plans and review material that tracks development.

BEHAVIOUR OF DIRECTOR AND ASSESSORS:

There will be no consultation between the candidate's two Assessors until both Assessors have drawn their conclusions about the result and written their feedback. Only the Director has the whole picture.

There will be no discussion of the result with any third party outside the Level 5 Assessment team (confidentiality is paramount) until the candidate has received their formal letter and certificate from the BCU, the result (pass or fail) is then assumed common knowledge.

There should be interaction and discussion between the candidate and Assessor both pre- and post-activity. Considered interaction within the session, when required, will ensure clarity of observation is achieved. The Assessors will interact, but not intervene with the candidate's coaching. The intention of this statement is that, Assessors do not ask questions during the coaching that may affect the candidate's decision-making process. Assessors will do their best to put the candidate at ease, engage in conversation and ask questions to clarify understanding. After the initial briefing candidates will be left to make their own decisions with regard to the direction the coaching session takes; the Assessor will not ask to see anything, or interject with comments or suggestions to the candidate or their students. With minimal input from the Assessors, purity of the candidate's performance is more likely to be maintained, and this in turn should lead to a more objective and clear verdict.

An option remains for the candidate to be interviewed by the Director if that is felt to be valuable.

On each of the two days, the students being coached are considered to be in the care of the candidate on Assessment. If an Assessor needs to intervene for the safety of the students this would normally constitute grounds for a fail.

Once debriefs have been concluded the assessment team must review the assessment.

Further guidance on the role of the Director is detailed on page 15.

GUIDANCE FOR CANDIDATES ON VENUES:

Whilst the Assessment meeting point/base will be predetermined, the choice of the coaching venue is the candidate's alone, and needs to take into consideration logistics, and any access agreements/conditions that exist. Suitable venue selection is all part of the process of providing a quality day coaching. For example, classroom, flat-water, and swimming pools are all acceptable options if they are deemed appropriate for the students' needs.

If candidates require assistance with transport for their long-term students, or shuttles, this should be discussed with the Assessment Director prior to the Assessment. If candidate's long-term students are being coached on Day 1 (by another candidate) it would be expected that they have their own transport. However, it may be possible to facilitate other options via pre-arrangement with the Assessment Director before the Assessment.

APPEALS PROCEDURE:

As with all BCU Coach assessments the Level 5 Assessment process is underpinned by the BCU Appeals procedure. Candidates with a grievance are encouraged to discuss and hopefully resolve matters with the Assessment Director; impasse at this point can be followed up via the BCU Appeals Policy.

ASSESSMENT EVALUATION:

The Level 5 Development Team appreciates feedback from candidates regarding the assessment process. This aids the future development of the award. The BCU Level 5 Assessment Evaluation form will be distributed to all candidates, and we ask that this is returned to BCU HQ within 7 days.

LEVEL 5 TRAINING VALIDITY:

Level 5 Coach Training is valid for three years from the date of training. It can be extended through the following:

A WRITTEN EXTENSION:

Level 5 Training can be extended, in exceptional circumstances, for a period of up to one year. An application is made by the Trainee to the Home Nation Level 5 Coordinator before the expiry date of original training.

The letter of request must include:

- The reason for the request
- Details of their coaching activity since training
- Details of the support they have had from any Mentors
- A copy of their original Level 5 action plan along with any comments
- A new action plan detailing how they plan to prepare for a future assessment; this must be endorsed and dated by their mentor (or an active Level 5 Tutor or Assessor)

Within one month of receipt of this information, the candidate will receive a formal letter detailing the outcome, and where appropriate the conditions of the extension.

Where candidate's Training has lapsed beyond the expiry date of their original training they will be required to attend a further training course if they wish to continue.

FOLLOWING AN UNSUCCESSFUL ASSESSMENT:

If, a candidate is unsuccessful at assessment their Training validity is extended for a further two years from the assessment date. See note below regarding 6-year limit.

Under no circumstances can Training be extended beyond 6 years from the date of training.

EXISTING LEVEL 5 COACHES WISHING TO BE ASSESSED IN A DIFFERENT DISCIPLINE:

Existing Level 5 Coaches who wish to be assessed in another discipline need to complete a C1 with all registration requirements fulfilled. The Coach is then required to formulate an action plan. This process can take place via:

- with a discipline specialist Level 5 Trainer or Assessor agreed by the Level 5 Assessment Coordinator
- on a formal Home Nation Level 5 review day

The C1 is then signed by the Tutor/Assessor and returned to the BCU in order to register Trainee status. This is then stamped for assessment and is valid for 3 years from the date of the above, or until 31st December 2017, whichever date is earlier.

In the event of a fail, Trainee status is not automatically extended. A new action plan is formulated as above. This extends Trainee status for a further 3 years, or until 31st December 2017, whichever date is earlier.

If an existing Level 5 wished to be an Trainee in more than one discipline this would be acceptable.

TRAINEE LEVEL 5 COACHES WISHING TO SWITCH DISCIPLINE:

Coaches who are currently Level 5 Trainees and wish to change to a different discipline need to complete a C1 with all registration requirements fulfilled for the alternative discipline. The Coach is then required to undertake 2 days of training and formulate an action plan. This process can take place via:

- with a discipline specialist Level 5 Trainer or Assessor agreed by the Level 5 Assessment Coordinator

The C1 is then signed by the Tutor/Assessor and returned to the BCU in order to register Trainee status. This is then stamped for assessment and is valid for 3 years from the date of the initial training course, or until 31st December 2017, whichever date is earlier.

The Trainee's original Training Course Director is informed.

When a Trainee wishes to transfer disciplines, the original discipline is 'lost'.

GUIDANCE FOR BCU LEVEL 5 PROJECTS

The following notes provide guidance on the Level 5 project requirements for Trainees, Tutors, and Assessors. Candidates are expected to show a level of development that indicates that they are working at the standard of Level 5, with the processes that have to be gone through in producing their project being many and varied.

Projects need to follow one of the following three formats:

1. **Knowledge Dissemination:** The project should have a clear form of dissemination that makes it a resource for Coaches in paddlesport. Examples of this could include:
 - a paper for publication in a magazine
 - DVD, video, CD, or audio file
 - book or chapter
 - significant course materials
 - a physical resource which aids learning and teaching

This list is not exhaustive and is only an indication as to some of the possibilities available. Any resources should be accompanied by a project rationale, explaining the development processes and aim of the resource.

1. **Reflective Practice:** This can be defined as “a set of abilities and skills, to indicate the taking of a critical stance, an orientation to problem solving or state of mind” (Moon). This covers the wide range of activities associated with thinking about your learning. Reflective practice is an approach that promotes autonomous learning through developing understanding and critical thinking skills. For example;
 - the use of a learning and teaching strategy or materials (DVD etc) and an evaluation and recommendations for future use.
 - self reflection and evaluation of coaching delivery for an experimental coaching session, workshop, or series of sessions
 - the reflective evaluation of the practice of a number of Coaches
2. **Empirical Research:** Projects based around values, attitudes, or equipment testing should clearly show effective use of data gathered by the candidate. The aim of this is to move the project beyond the level of the Candidate’s opinion and establish a factual basis for the conclusions that they make. This will not necessarily involve complicated statistics or specialist equipment. It may be simply at the level of comparing kayak speed in two or more craft at a consistent heart rate or evaluating the views of experienced Coaches on the usefulness of a particular teaching approach in a specific situation. Ideally in the write-up of any research based project, follow-up studies should be proposed that would add to the evidence gathered. These studies do not need to be completed, but their inclusion would be indicative of an understanding of the limitations of the research undertaken and how these limitations could be addressed.

Presentation Quality: Irrespective of the chosen format, the quality of the submitted project should be of a professional nature (the use of a ‘critical friend’ to ‘proof-read’ projects in any format before submission is recommended).

Appropriateness of Topic: The project topic should show a level of interest in paddlesport that is creative and informed. The Level 5 Coach should be capable of looking at information and problems in a novel, accurate and innovative manner. Project subjects should reflect this. The project should show some progression beyond what is known, common practice at the time the project is undertaken. Projects should not present well known material in formats that are already in common use.

Content Accuracy: It may be impossible to judge accuracy for some elements of a project. Where this is possible, information presented should be factually correct. Science elements should be accurate. Theories discussed or models presented should be represented honestly and clearly. The wish to present accurate information should be a core value of a Level 5 Coach.

Acceptance of a Project: Projects are required to be submitted prior to booking on Assessment. They will then be reviewed by a panel of experts who will decide if any further action is required on the part of the candidate, and it's future use.

GUIDELINES FOR GOOD PRACTICE OF A LEVEL 5 COACH

This document is intended to be of benefit to Trainee Coaches, Coach Tutors, and Coach Assessors to help clarify the requirements of the Level 5 Coach Award. The intention is that it does not become a "tick list" but enables Coaches to constructively appraise their own performance. It also provides a framework for Mentors to work with when observing their Trainee at work.

Whilst still respecting the individualism of coaching at this level, the objective of this document is to identify the key competencies that are considered to be essential components to the holistic performance of an effective BCU Level 5 Coach.

It is not necessary to display all the behaviours listed. Coaching at Level 5 is about the skilful application of the following behaviours, to ensure the learning potential is maximised for each individual;

COACH BEHAVIOUR:

- Agreed, achievable, measurable, and appropriate personal learning goals are set for the student
- Sharp and effective observational techniques are present, with the ability to diagnose root causes of student's signs and symptoms
- A varied approach to fault correction is demonstrated with the Coach being able to analyse elements of performance with specific breakdown of component parts
- Original and individualised solutions to a paddler's problems are used
- Feedback is given that is appropriate to the student's needs, with the balance between praise and criticism calculated
- Coaching styles are used that are appropriate to the skill, the individual, and the environment, with a balance between macro and micro coaching as appropriate
- The Coach can work with autonomy, lead in complex environments and operate with a wide variety of groups
- Design individual programmes and refine the coaching process to meet each individual's needs in the long term
- Provide individualised coaching that results in maximum long-term learning
- Run a session on a plan-do-review basis that is appropriate and modified to accommodate each individual's rate of progression and delivered to suit the individual's learning style

SESSION MANAGEMENT:

- Adequate planning and preparation including contingencies
- Efficient organisation of people and resources
- Account taken of both environmental factors and group capabilities
- Initial introduction with suitable explanation of session objectives
- Logical learning progression with a clearly defined rationale and structure
- Effective organisation at and use of coaching sites

- Emphasis of the session kept on the key learning objectives
- Remained open-minded to students' alternative techniques
- Remained student-centred throughout the session
- Responded flexibly to students' needs during the session
- Worked at different abilities with more than one student
- Maintained a suitable pace throughout the session
- Showed appropriate progression throughout the session
- Summarised the session for each student including next steps
- Reviewed the session against the agreed objectives

PEOPLE:

- Rapid rapport, building and establishing a friendly, relaxed relationship
- Talk ratio between Coach and student appropriate
- Ratio between action and discussion appropriate
- Range of styles from directive to consultative used effectively
- Used effective questioning to make the students think
- Enthused students with sound motivational techniques
- Remained empathic and sensitive to students throughout session
- Awareness of the degree to which the students are enjoying the session
- Explanations are clear and concise and language appropriate
- Understanding of technical terminology and jargon is checked
- Teaching techniques are both flexible and effective
- Approach is professional, mature and receptive to feedback
- Listened and responded to students' comments
- Created the right learning environment for the students
- Awareness of the effect that arousal and environment has on performance

TECHNICAL:

- Prevention of sports injuries including suitable warm-up exercises
- Utilised a wide breadth of experience within canoe sport
- Depth of understanding of specialist area extensive
- Safety awareness and management including an emphasis on prevention and protection
- Competent safety and rescue techniques in own discipline that reflect current best practice
- Competent leadership techniques in own discipline
- Identification of coaching sites in relation to session objectives
- Confident and appropriate use of demonstrations
- Competent personal performance in own discipline
- Setting of achievable and measurable physical challenges
- Numerous wide-ranging enjoyable coaching exercises
- Formal presentation technique is sound and effective
- Content of presentation is well researched and prepared
- Degree of transference of skills from other disciplines of the sport

THE ROLE OF THE LEVEL 5 ASSESSMENT DIRECTOR

PRE-ASSESSMENT:

- Arrange date and venue
- Arrange staff
- Send out pre-course letter to confirm place on course, including assessment protocol document
- Agree Assessors for candidates
- Send out final confirmation to candidates to include details of assessment, staffing and any other details

AT THE ASSESSMENT:

- Be there first
- Brief assessment team, candidates and long term students
- Collect and check all paperwork
- Be aware of location of each assessment group
- Arrange location and laptops for Assessors to write up feedback at the end of each day, and the means to print draft feedback
- Arrange locations for debriefs
- Arrange location for assessment teams to meet and discuss outcome
- Programme results and debriefs
- Inform candidates of order of debriefs
- Issue and collect feedback forms
- Be available whilst debriefs are going on
- Manage the assessment team to ensure all Assessors are working to the same protocol
- Consider all logbooks, prerequisites, student diaries, C1, completed project, mid-term review narrative, and letter from Tutor.
- Sign logbooks
- Return paperwork
- Discuss the result and way forward from the assessment with the candidate before they leave, irrespective of the result
- Food and accommodation will be arranged and provided for the assessment team throughout the duration of the assessment course

POST ASSESSMENT:

- Post paperwork to BCU
- Post assessment letter and feedback to candidates within 7 days
- Resolve issues raised from candidates post-assessment