

BCU Whitewater Rafting Scheme

The following qualifications will be recognised:

Level 1 Raft Guide (restricted, site specific):

This level will be a site-specific raft guide who has completed a BCU approved training course, and has been passed as competent to guide with clients on a single river.

Level 2 Raft Guide (unrestricted):

This status will be awarded to a candidate who has become a level 1 raft guide on a minimum of 3 rivers, 2 of which should be natural rivers. This level of candidate should also show considerable logged experience on various rivers, and have attended an SRT course. This award will be supported by a min of two level 4 raft coaches and a completed level 2 logbook.

Level 3 / Trip Leader

Level 3 raft guide, or trip leader, status is awarded to candidates who have been level 2 raft guides for a min. of 2 years. This is a leadership award and the candidate will be expected to be capable of running a rafting trip and being responsible for a min of 2 boats; this may include multi-day trips. The candidate should have completed a BCU approved level 3 raft guide training course and assessment.

Level 4 Raft Coach

This level is for candidates who have been level 3 raft guides for a min of 2 years, or alternatively 1 year if they are already a level 4 coach in an alternative whitewater discipline.

This award is a coaching qualification and candidates must have fulfilled the necessary requirements for a BCU level 4 raft coach, incl. completing a level 4 raft coach assessment logbook and have attended a coaching processes course and an assessor training day.

Level 5 Senior Raft Coach / Assessor

This is the highest qualification possible within the BCU rafting scheme. Candidates should show a high level of commitment to rafting in the UK and stay active in both the running of raft courses and assessing of level 4 raft coaches.

Candidates must have completed the necessary requirements for a BCU level 5 raft coach. 4 * in an alternative whitewater discipline is a prerequisite for candidates at this level.



Tests of personal performance / competency

Level 3 Trip leader

Level 3 Trip Leader Training

Prerequisites:

18 years old
Current first aid certificate (min 4 day HSE including CPR and EAV)
National association comprehensive member
Have been a level 2 for a min 2 years

Format:

Attend 2 day training course (technical workshop, river leadership)

Level 3 trip leader assessment format

1 day river trip assessment, min 2 boat flotilla
Or 2 half-day trips

Level 3 additional notes:

This award is designed for the guide who has been a level 2 for a minimum of 2 years and who is looking to lead trips of more than one boat on river trips or sessions.

The two-day training course or technical workshop should cover the recommended min content for a BCU level 3 training course.

The assessment should consist of either a 1-day river trip or 2 half-day trips, assessed by 2 different assessors.

The guide must show a comprehensive understanding of river leadership, client management and flotilla control, along with good personal rafting skills.

BCU
Raft Guide Scheme

Level 3 assessment format - Syllabus:

Prerequisites:

18 years old
Current first aid certificate (min 4 day HSE including CPR and EAV)
National Association comprehensive member
SRT 1 safety course
Have been a level 2 for a min of 2 years
Attended level 3 training course

Prior experience should reflect varied and comprehensive river trips, including grade 3+ rivers, the experience should show a bias towards natural rivers.

Assessment:

Candidates for level 3 trip leader assessment, should satisfy the examiners that they have the experience, judgement and competence necessary to lead a flotilla of rafts on a river trip of a min. half-day in duration. They must also show the ability and knowledge to run a multi-day trip and be aware of the logistics and problems involved with this length of trip.

Suitable rivers for assessment would include sections of grade 3+ and be of a suitable length that all the necessary leadership and organisational skills needed for this level of award, can be demonstrated.

Equipment:

The candidates personal and group kit will be evaluated.
Borrowed equipment will be assessed as if it were the candidates own.
Any equipment carried must be appropriate for the size of group and prevalent conditions on the day of assessment.

Theory:

The candidate must be knowledgeable on a wide range of subjects to include:

- Raft design, including different makes of raft and their pros and cons.
- Equipment to be carried on a multi day trip.
- River gradings, to include local examples.
- Leadership skills and organisational problems specific to rafting.
- Environmental issues and minimum impact camping.
- First aid and resuscitation, multi-day first aid kit contents.
- Client / customer care



Safety kayaksLeadership and awareness skills:

Flotilla control and communication, candidates must show that they can organise a flotilla of rafts, and have recognisable communication with the other raft guides on the trip.

They must also show experience in identifying potential hazards and in picking suitable rafting lines for different ability rafting crews.

Safety skills should be demonstrated in both preventing a situation arising and in dealing efficiently with any problems that arise. Sound decision making skills should be in evidence along with the provision of a back up plan and organisational skills, using to maximum effect both the equipment and manpower available.

Candidates should be conversant with a range of rescue techniques and be able to demonstrate their efficient use in a variety of rescue incidents.

Examples would include:

- Flips
- Wraps
- Marooned crew member
- Multiple swimmers
- Stopper rescue

Personal skills:

Candidates should show a high level of personal rafting skills, to include:

- Launching and landing
- Manoeuvring in rapids
- Ferry gliding
- Stopper surfing
- Use of oar rigs

Candidates should exhibit anticipation whilst running rapids and not just a reaction to events.

Multi-day trips and camping:

Candidates would ideally show evidence of several multi-day trips and show sound knowledge in:

- Choice and location of campsites
- Minimum impact camping techniques
- Packing rafts and the use of frames.
- Cooking.

Raft course recommended minimum content

1) Equipment:

Rafts:

Design, construction, materials, valves, repair.
Loading, unloading, transport
Correct inflation/deflation, working pressures.
Rigging of rafts, frames, equipment within the raft, oar rigs.
Paddles, guide and client
Equipment carried in boat, single/multi day
Rescue / wrap kit

Personal:

Guide equipment / personal safety kit
Client equipment
First aid kits
Throwlines

2) Pre trip procedures:

Client safety briefing, medical briefing
Dangers of alcohol and drugs
Loading and launching of rafts
Tying up boats

3) Raft handling skills:

Paddling strokes:

Guide - forward and reverse sweep, pry, draw, rudder and/or rowing techniques-pulling, pushing (portage), turning.

Client – forwards, backwards, left turn, right turn.

Boat handling:

Momentum and drift
Positioning in waves and holes
Break ins, break outs,
Ferry gliding
Highsides
Distribution of crew for optimum balance and power

4) River skills:

Rapid reading - identifying whitewater features, from the boat and from bank (scouting)
Rapid running – Choosing and running a line in a rapid using appropriate techniques
Throwline use, from bank and boat
Positioning of boat to pick up swimmers
Lining and portaging, care of crew and equipment.
Assessing of crew and rapids, judging what is and what is not, feasible to run.
Motivation of crew
International grading system of rivers, local examples



5) Rescue equipment and use:

Use and storage of ropes, slings, prussiks, pulleys, carabiners and other rescue hardware

Knots and basic ropework, no knots, figure of eights, bowline, clovehitch, Italian hitch.

Shallow water crossings

Mechanical advantage systems, 3:1 z drag, 4:1 pig rigs.

Rescue / wrap kit, contents, appropriateness.

6) Communication:

With passengers – paddling commands

With other rafts – system of signals - stop, eddie out, emergency, first aid required, move closer, spread out, lost paddle, swimmer.

Use of whistle – 1 blast stop, attention. 3 blasts repeated, emergency

7) Emergencies:

Factors contributing to accidents, poor equipment, strainers, swimmers, high water, bad judgement, importance of maintaining visual contact with other boats.

General emergency procedures:

Situation assessment, deciding on a course of action, carrying out an effective rescue using resources available, time limits and safety priorities, informing and using crew effectively.

Situations:

Swimmers, long or short swimmers

Wraps, likely places on river, priorities

Tensioned diagonals, correct angle, appropriate water

Multiple swimmers, use of boat, throwline

Foot entrapment, speed of rescue appropriate technique for situation

Stranded crew member, reach, throw, row, go principle

Flips, priorities - dependant on river, basics - head count, reflip or pull up passengers.

Hypothermia and Hyperthermia, differences, precautions, treatment.

8) The environment:

Minimum impact techniques.

Erosion problems associated with regularly used sites.

Other river users, consideration and courtesy.

SSSI's

Good rafting code of conduct