

## **BCU Star Award Guidance Notes January 2013**

### **Introduction:**

These notes aim to provide guidance on a range of BCU Star Award questions and issues to help candidates, trainers, and assessors. We have tried to cover the more obvious, or likely questions, however if your questions are not answered, please contact your Home Nation Association.

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### **Supporting Documents:**

The following documents are also relevant for candidates, trainers and assessors;

- BCU Star Award Syllabi
- BCU Star Award Trainer Notes / Assessor Notes / Guidance Notes
- Becoming a 4/5 Star Assessor
- BCU Staffing Ratios & Requirements

All available to download from your Home Nation website.

## SECTION 1 - INTRODUCTORY NOTES

### GENERAL NOTES

- 1.1 The Paddlesport Start Award is designed to provide a framework for a paddler's first session. It is very much an encouragement award and can be used by coaches who offer taster sessions, or that first session of a series. It is an adult version of Paddlepower Start. The 1 and 2 Star Awards are generic 'any boat' awards. The 3 Star award is discipline specific and the 4 and 5 Star Awards are discipline specific 'Leadership' awards.
- 1.2 The details of each award are described in the Star Award Syllabi, Trainer and Assessor Notes available on your Home Nation Website.  
  
3, 4, and 5 Star Awards are currently available in White Water Kayak, Canoe, Sea, and Surf. Paddlers of decked canoes or white water canoes equipped with saddles and air bags should follow the White Water Kayak syllabus with the assessors making sensible allowances. 3 and 4 Star Touring, Freestyle, and Wild Water Racing awards are also available.
- 1.3 1 and 2 Star courses can be run either individually or as a group based activity (a series of evenings or over weekends where group size is manageable) and do not need course authorisation.
- 1.4 All 3 star assessment, and 4 and 5 Star training and assessment courses require course authorisation. Course authorisation is obtained by emailing your Home Nation Coaching Department. Please note course authorisation needs to be in place at least two weeks prior to the planned course.
- 1.5 CERTIFICATES will be issued, appropriate to the award taken, on payment by the candidate of the correct fee. There is no fee for a fail. Fees do apply to **ALL** candidates who are successful.
- 1.6 Candidates should be encouraged to apply for BCU/Home Nation Membership. Membership details are available on the Home Nation Websites. Amongst other benefits, Home Nation membership provides reduced Star Award rates.

1.7 There are a number of ways of obtaining certificates:

- i) The Paddlesport Start Certificates are purchased by assessors in bulk and issued directly to candidates. Contact your Home Nation Association Office for details.
- ii) Candidates assessed for 1 – 2 Star must be issued with a Star Award Pass Slip. These are available free from your Home Nation. If forms are submitted by assessors correct assessment fees should be included.
- iii) With 3 Star assessment assessors must use the 3 Star course schedule and collect the appropriate fee(s) returning them to their Home Nation Association Office.
- iv) With 4 (and 5) Star assessment assessors must use the 4 (or 5) Star course schedule and LR forms, returning them to their Home Nation Association Office. The LR form confirms the candidate has made payment to the Home Nation.

## **PRACTICAL NOTES**

- 1.8 Normally paddlers should be able to swim 50 metres in light clothing. Discretion may be exercised, however, in accordance with a coach's training and experience, where special circumstances exist.
- 1.9 These awards are designed for performance in the craft(s) and conditions as described in the syllabi in question. Due allowance should be made / postponement considered if conditions are in excess of or not at the standard stated.
- 1.10 Candidate prerequisites and assessment conditions are clearly described within the award syllabi.
- 1.11 The knowledge necessary to pass these awards is contained in the BCU Canoe and Kayak Handbook. The sample questions are intended to demonstrate the 'level' and should not be used ad nauseam. Theory should relate to the paddlers experience.
- 1.12 **Environmental awareness** - Canoeing is an exciting, adventurous, competitive and recreational activity from which much of the enjoyment and adventure comes from the natural environment around you. Every paddler must remember to respect all wildlife and take care not to damage or destroy the environment by observing the Canoeist's Code of Conduct and the recommendations in the BCU leaflet 'Earning a Welcome'.

- 1.13 **Pollution** - All awards should be taken in the appropriate environment (see syllabi). Please note that some waterways are subject to serious pollution. Assessors are reminded that where there is reason to believe that the level of pollution is such as to render capsizing drill potentially hazardous, alternative safer methods/locations may be used for those aspects of performance Awards that require deliberate immersion.
- 1.14 **Manual Handling** – All Canoeists need to raise their awareness of Manual Handling and that damage can occur to joints and muscles, particularly when they are moving or lifting people or any equipment related to the sport of Canoeing. This could, of course, include a body, especially when performing rescues. In addition, Risk Assessments of how to prevent harm and injury to paddlers should be undertaken as a matter of routine. Coaches and assessors are charged through the training and assessments they provide with a 'duty of care' for paddlers and should ensure they make an appropriate risk assessment of activities provided. It is recommended that candidates seek help when emptying and carrying their craft.
- 1.15 **Staffing Requirements** - For details of staffing requirements and ratios, please refer to the latest version of the BCU Staffing Requirements and Ratios document, available from the Home Nation websites. Training and Assessment may only be conducted by those qualified and registered to do so. Please see section 3 for more details of the requirements to become an assessor.
- 1.16 **Training and Assessment Durations** – For details on the training and assessment durations, refer to the latest version of the course syllabus.
- 1.17 **Cost of Certification / Registration**
- Paddlesport Start Certificates are £1 each, bulk order rates are available to BCU Affiliated Clubs and Approved Centres
  - 1 and 2 Star fees are £6 for members, £7 for non-members
  - 3 Star fees are £12 for members, £25 for non-members
  - 4 & 5 Star registration fees (inc. Certification) are £12 for members, £25 for non-members

## SECTION 2 – PROVIDER MATTERS

2.1 In order to achieve uniformity of assessment standards, careful attention should be paid to the definitions in both the practical performance and theoretical sections of the awards. All trainers and assessors must be fully familiar with the syllabi, and trainer / assessor notes for the award concerned.

2.2 **Assessor Registration** - Coaches wishing to assess any of the BCU Star Awards are required to register their intention to do so, listing the awards they wish to assess. On completion of Star Award Registration their assessor role/s will be confirmed. See section 3 for more details.

2.3 **Assessing family and friends** - Assessors of the BCU Paddlesport Start, 1 and 2 Star should endeavour to refrain from assessing close family or friends.

Assessors of the BCU 3, 4 and 5 Star Award **must not** assess close friends or family and should avoid, where practical, assessing candidates they have themselves trained (or their employees).

2.4 **3 Star Training** - 3 Star Training courses are not subject to course authorisation. Training can be delivered via a series of sessions or via a specifically calendared training course(s). The training programme, while needing to cover all aspects of the 3 Star syllabi, does not need to be restricted to these areas and should reflect a wide range of boat handling and experiential opportunities.

2.5 **3 Star Assessing** - All 3 Star Assessments need to be notified and authorised as per note 1.4.

**Assessors and candidates are reminded that while not necessarily needing to have completed the 2 Star Award prior to a 3 Star Assessment candidates wishing to gain a coaching award will need to hold the 2 Star Award as a prerequisite.**

All 3 Star Assessments must be recorded on the appropriate 3 Star Course Schedule.

The 3 Star Touring Award will be certificated as either *3 Star Touring (Canoe)* OR *3 Star Touring (Kayak)*. When applying for a course authorisation number there is no requirement to state whether the assessment will be assessing candidates in Canoe/Kayak and a mixture of candidates may be assessed at the same time. Two course numbers will automatically be given and one course schedule should be returned for each canoe and kayak. When completing your Course Schedule please mark them

clearly as either 3 Star Touring (Kayak) or 3 Star Touring (Canoe) and always use separate schedules for each.

- 2.6 **4 and 5 Star Leader Training** - BCU 4 and 5 Star Leader Training courses need course authorisation as per 1.4. Training can be delivered via a series of sessions or via a specifically calendared training course(s). The training programme while needing to cover all aspects of the 4 / 5 Star training course (see syllabi) does not need to be restricted to these areas and should reflect a wide range of boat handling and experiential opportunities.

Providers of the 4 and 5 Star Award should ensure that candidates hold the appropriate prerequisites prior to 4 or 5 Star Leader Training.

All 4 and 5 Star Training Courses must be recorded on the appropriate 4/5 Star Course Schedule, and candidates issued with an appropriate post course action plan.

- 2.7 **4 and 5 Star Leader Assessment** - All 4 and 5 Star Assessment courses need to be notified and authorised as per 1.4.

Candidates are required to register with their Home Nation Association prior to 4 or 5 Star Leader assessment; using the BCU Leadership Registration (LR) Form. This registration process ensures candidates hold the necessary assessment prerequisites and have signed an appropriate declaration including statement of physical competence and first aid.

All 4 and 5 Star Assessments must be recorded on the appropriate 4/5 Star Course Schedule, returned with an LR form for each successful candidate to the Directors Home Nation. The Course Directors Report must also be returned to the Home Nation with the course paperwork. The Candidates will then be issued with the award certificate.

In addition to confirming receipt of an LR Form, Assessors of the 4 and 5 Star Leader Award should ensure that assessment candidates hold the previous experience prerequisite requirements prior to an assessment. This is detailed in the course syllabi.

BCU 4 and 5 Star Leader assessments must include the leading of a suitably sized group, ideally this will include the use of 'real' students rather than other assessment candidates. Assessors should do their utmost to organise a group of real students who require leadership support in the discipline specific moderate water (4 Star), or advanced water (5 Star) environments. Only in exceptional circumstances should the group being led be made up of the other assessment candidates. It is at the Assessors discretion to choose if they use 'real' students for one or both days of the assessment programme.

## SECTION 3 – ASSESSOR REQUIREMENTS

This section summarises the entry requirements for coaches to register, or start working towards, becoming an assessor/provider of the BCU Star Awards. It is a brief summary, further details are available in the stated documents or from the HN associations.

### 3.1 **Paddlesport Start**

Any updated BCU Coach can register with their HN as a Paddlesport Start Assessor.

### 3.2 **1 Star Assessors**

Any updated BCU Level 2 Coach can register with their HN as a 1 Star Assessor.

BCU (UKCC) Level 1 Coaches can achieve 1 Star Assessor status following the completion of the appropriate assessor logbook.

### 3.3 **2 Star Assessors**

Updated BCU Level 2 Coaches, who also hold BCU 2 Star Award (Canoe & kayak) can register with their HN as a 2 Star Assessor.

Updated BCU Level 2 Placid Water Coaches can register with their HN as a 2 Star Assessor.

Updated BCU Level 2 Competition Coaches who qualified prior to the launch of the current scheme can assess the BCU 2 Star, following the observation of at least one 2 Star assessment and an assessed delivery of a 2 Star assessment by a BCU Level 3 Coach who is registered to assess the BCU 2 Star. Evidence is then submitted to the HN.

### 3.4 **3 Star Assessors**

Updated BCU Level 3 Coaches can register with their HN as a 3 Star Assessor for the discipline in which they are qualified.

Updated Coaches with the BCU Moderate Water endorsement can achieve 3 Star Assessor status (in their discipline) following the completion of the appropriate assessor logbook.

Updated Level 3 Coaches with a canoe and a kayak 4 Star can register with their HN as a 3 Star Touring Assessor.

Competent freestyle paddlers who are also updated WW qualified coaches (i.e. Inland Kayak Level 3, WW MWE, or UKCC Level 3 WW) can register as a 3 Star Freestyle Assessor, following completion of an orientation day.

Updated WW qualified coaches (i.e. Inland Kayak Level 3, WW MWE, or UKCC Level 3 WW), with 4 Star Freestyle can achieve 3 Star Freestyle Assessor status following the completion of the appropriate assessor logbook.

### 3.5 **4 Star Leader Assessors**

**Canoe, Sea, Surf and White Water;** Updated BCU Level 3 Coaches (or BCU UKCC Level 2 held for 3 years) with 5 Star in the relevant discipline can work towards becoming a 4 Star Assessors. This includes attendance at orientation and a logbook process. Full details are available in the document 'Becoming a 4 Star Assessor'.

**Freestyle;** Updated WW qualified coaches (i.e. Inland Kayak Level 3, WW MWE, or UKCC Level 3 WW), with 4 Star Assessor status in another discipline can achieve 4 Star Freestyle Assessor status following the completion of the appropriate orientation.

**Touring;** Updated Level 3 or MWE Coaches, who are qualified in Canoe and Kayak (at either Level 3, MWE or 4 Star Leader), with 4 Star Assessor status in another discipline can achieve 4 Star Touring Assessor status following the completion of the appropriate orientation.

### 3.6 **5 Star Assessors**

Updated BCU Level 5 Coaches with 4 Star Assessor Status in the relevant discipline can work become a 5 Star Assessor following the completion of the appropriate assessor logbook. Full details are available in the document 'Becoming a 5 Star Assessor'.

## SECTION 4 – SUPPORTING POLICIES

- 4.1 **Appeals and complaints** - If a candidate wishes to appeal or complain about the conduct of a BCU Star Award training or assessment they should in the first instance raise the area of concern with their Trainer or Assessor, in the hope that the matter can be amicably resolved between both parties. Where it is inappropriate that the Trainer/Assessor be confronted with the concern or there is no amicable solution, the candidate should contact the Home Nation Association where the course took place within 28 calendar days of the course. See 'BCU Appeals Procedure' for further details.
- 4.2 **Equal Opportunities** - The BCU is committed to ensuring access to, and fairness in, assessment for all candidates regardless of their race, ethnic or national origin, gender, sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, social class, political or religious beliefs and affiliations, or other personal or professional characteristics which are acknowledged to have no bearing on assessment, whilst also safeguarding the integrity of its qualifications. More details are available in the Home Nation Associations' Equal Opportunities Policies, or contact the Home Nation as above to make a complaint.
- 4.3 **Adjustments for Paddlers with a Disability** - The BCU supports the promotion of canoeing for disabled people and encourages them to take BCU awards. For the BCU Paddlesport Start, 1, 2, and 3 Star Awards an assessor may recommend a candidate for an award, even if a specific disability prevents the candidates from completing all aspects of the syllabi. There are specific details on how Assessors can put this into practice in the 'BCU Reasonable Adjustments for Paddlesport Awards and Coaching'. The BCU 4 and 5 Star Leadership Awards are competence based and candidates' are assessed on their ability to meet all of the specified assessment criteria. A candidate with a disability may be granted reasonable adjustments to meet their needs. For example a candidate with a physical disability may use a piece of adaptive equipment that allows them to complete the assessment. Assessors should in all cases refer to the 'BCU Reasonable Adjustments for Paddlesport Awards and Coaching' for further guidance.
- 4.4 **Accreditation of Prior Experience and Learning (APEL)** - The BCU APEL procedures enable candidates who have covered any course prerequisite through alternative learning opportunities to apply to BCU Awarding for APEL. Evidence may be acquired through additional study, employment or voluntary work that relates to the content of the relevant prerequisite award. This evidence needs to be submitted to the BCU APEL committee for review. Further details are available from your Home Nation.

- 4.5 **BCU Star Awards being run Overseas** – The BCU provide guidance for Coaches when operating abroad. Coaches who live abroad, or Coaches who wish to travel abroad to deliver BCU Star Awards, must refer to the Guidance Notes for BCU Coaches Operating Aboard, available from the HNs or BCU.

## SECTION 5 - FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

- 5.1 **How do course organisers notify the BCU of potential courses?** 1 and 2 Star courses can be run either individually or as a group based activity (a series of evenings or over weekends where group size is manageable) and do not need course authorisation. Course authorisation (required for 3 Star and above) is obtained emailing your Home Nation Association Coaching Department. Please note, course authorisation needs to be in place at least two weeks prior to the planned course.
- 5.2 **What about paperwork?** Pass slips are available for the 1 and 2 Star, Course Schedules for 3, 4, and 5 Star Assessments. A full schedule should be used on all 3 Star Assessment and on 4 and 5 Star training and assessment.
- 5.3 **What about certification?** Certificates are issued for all Star awards.
- 5.4 **What about Star Awards taken prior to October 2007?** All BCU Star Awards taken prior to the implementation of the current scheme (October 2007) continue to be recognised as awards in their own right. However, they often do not equate to the current award of the same level. For example the previous 4 Star award was not a leadership qualification. Some of the prerequisites for BCU Coaching Awards and assessor prerequisites only recognise current Star Awards. See 5.8 for more details.
- 5.5 **What are the Star Award prerequisites?** These are detailed in each syllabi.
- 5.6 **Can I bypass any aspect of the 3, 4 and 5 Star Training or Assessment?** If you feel that you have sufficient experience to bypass any prerequisites of 3, 4, or 5 Star training or assessment you may apply to your Home Nation Association Coaching Officer for an exemption via accredited prior experience or learning (APEL).
- 5.7 **Should I keep a Log Book to record my Star Award Progress?** While it is not essential to record your experiences as part of 1 – 3 Star progression you may find it useful either for yourself or at a later date for portfolio building purposes. At 4 and 5 Star it should be considered an essential aspect of assessment preparation. The BCU has a logbook that you can request in electronic format, or you can of course produce your own.

**5.8 What are the Star Award prerequisites for Boat-Based Coaching Awards?**

BCU (UKCC) Level 1 course:    either    a previous 2 Star in both kayak and canoe  
   or        a current 2 Star  
   or        Paddlepower Discover

BCU (UKCC) Level 2 Training: either    a previous 2 Star in both kayak and canoe  
   or        the current 2 Star  
   or        Paddlepower Discover  
   Plus      a previous or current 3 Star

BCU (UKCC) Level 2 Assessments: As above

BCU (UKCC) Level 3 Training: Current 4 Star Leader

**5.9 What do the Star Award fees cover?** The Star Award fees make a contribution to the Home Nation to help cover the administration support required for the awards, certification/postage, and development costs.