

BCU Star Award Guidance Notes February 2014

1. Introduction

These notes aim to provide guidance on a range of BCU Star Award matters to help candidates, trainers, and assessors. The guidance aims to cover the obvious and common matters, however further advice can be gained, if required, by contacting the Home Nation Association/s.

The specific Star Award Syllabi, and the accompanying Training and Assessment Notes should be read in conjunction with this guidance. The syllabi cover issues such as;

- Award aim
- Prerequisites
- Craft and equipment
- Who can assess the award
- The remit of the award
- Details of the assessment venue
- Course length
- The technical syllabus content (summary)

The accompanying Training and Assessment notes expand on the technical syllabus, providing details of the techniques and skills to be covered, and the standards expected at assessment.

2. Supporting Documents

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

- BCU Star Award Syllabi
- BCU Star Award Training Notes
- BCU Star Award Assessment Notes
- Becoming a BCU Star Award Provider
- BCU Staffing Ratios & Requirements
- BCU Coaching and Leadership Registration Prerequisites

All available to download from the Home Nation Association websites.

Contents

3. General Matters	3
Environmental awareness	3
Manual Handling	3
Membership	3
Link to BCU Coaching Awards	3
4. Course Administration	4
Staffing Ratios	4
Provider Roles	4
Courses in Multiple Disciplines	4
Provider Responsibilities	4
Remaining Current as a Star Award Provider	5
Course Authorisation	5
Course Director Report	5
Recruitment and Special Needs	5
Candidate Prerequisites	5
Candidate Registration (Required prior to BCU 4 and 5 Star Leader Assessment)	6
End of Course Paperwork	6
End of Course Feedback	7
5. Supporting Policies	7
Appeals and Complaints	7
Equal Opportunities Policy	7
Reporting Malpractice	7
Reasonable Adjustments Policy	8
Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL)	8
Running BCU Star Awards Overseas	8
Quality Assurance (QA) and Internal Verification (IV)	8
6. Facility and Resource Requirements	8
General	8
Pollution	9
Venues and Environmental Conditions	9
7. Guidance for Training and Assessment	10
Paddlesport Start	10
BCU 1, 2 and 3 Star Awards	10
BCU 4 and 5 Star Leader Training	11
BCU 4 and 5 Star Leader Assessment	11
Lone Working	11
Assessing Family, Friends, Colleagues etc.	12
Assessor Responsibilities	12
Main competencies expected of assessors	13
8. BCU Star Award Development	14

3. General Matters

Environmental awareness

Canoeing is an exciting, adventurous, competitive and recreational activity from which much of the enjoyment and adventure comes from the natural environment. Every paddler must remember to respect all wildlife and take care not to damage or destroy the environment by observing the good practice guidelines published by the Home Nations. See;

CE:	<i>'You, Your Canoe and the Environment'</i>
CW:	<i>'Waterside Code'</i>
SCA:	<i>'Paddlers Access Code'</i>
CANI:	CANI are official partners of Leave no Trace, and adapt their recommendations

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 in relation to paddlesport. 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.

Membership

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.

Link to BCU Coaching Awards

Potential Coaches wishing to attend BCU Coaching Qualification Courses are often required to hold specific BCU Star Awards. These are detailed in the document 'BCU Coaching and Leadership Registration Prerequisites' available from the Home Nations.

4. Course Administration

Staffing Ratios

The document 'BCU Staffing Requirements and Ratios' states the required ratios for running BCU Star Award Courses. Please refer to the latest version of this document, available from the Home Nation websites. Providers must obtain permission from their Home Nation if they wish to work outside these ratios.

Provider Roles

Only providers with the required role are eligible to run BCU Star Award Assessments and the formal BCU 4 and 5 Star Leader Training. These roles are named in the specific Star Award Syllabus, and details of how to become a provider are detailed in the document 'Becoming a BCU Star Award Provider'. Anyone found to be delivering BCU Star Award Assessments (or formal BCU 4/5 Star Training) who do not hold the required role will be disciplined.

Courses in Multiple Disciplines

Providers may choose to run the following BCU Star Award courses with candidates pursuing the different awards;

- BCU 3 Star Freestyle Kayak & Freestyle Canoe
- BCU 3 Star Sea Kayak & Sea Sit-on-Top
- BCU 3 Star Touring Canoe & Touring Kayak
- BCU 3 Star White Water Kayak & White Water OC1*
- BCU 4 Star Leader Freestyle Kayak & Freestyle Canoe
- BCU 4 Star Leader White Water Kayak & White Water OC1*
- BCU 5 Star Leader White Water Kayak & White Water OC1*

For example; a BCU 3 Star Freestyle Assessment may have 4 candidates in freestyle kayak, and 2 candidates in freestyle canoe. The provider must hold the necessary provider roles, maintain appropriate ratio's, and have sought course authorisation for both awards prior to the course. Separate course schedules will also need to be returned. Candidates taking part in multi-discipline assessment or training are not expected to be fully conversant with the other craft involved.

* For combined White Water Kayak and White Water OC1 3, 4, and 5 Star Assessments (and 4 and 5 Star Training) the course Director must hold provider roles in both WW OC1 and Kayak. However, the second provider only needs to hold the role that is relevant to the majority of candidates (i.e. WW OC1 or Kayak).

Provider Responsibilities

For all assessment courses (and formal BCU 4 and 5 Star Leader Training) the provider must take on the role of course director and is responsible for ensuring all requirements as outlined in these guidance notes, the syllabus, and training and assessment notes are fulfilled. On larger courses, additional staff maybe deployed (as per the stated ratios), these too must be appropriately qualified and registered Providers. In these cases one provider would normally take the lead as course director. The course director would be responsible for setting the course up, ensuring the staff team deliver the required quality, at the appropriate level, and that all staff follow the necessary procedures.

Remaining Current as a Star Award Provider

Providers are required to maintain their Home Nation Association Coach Update requirements in order to retain their Star Award Provider Role. They are also expected to;

- Remain active coaching in the relevant discipline/environment
- Remain up-to-date with current best practice in all aspects of the relevant Star Award syllabus
- Be able to demonstrate personal paddling competence in the relevant discipline/environment

Providers are entrusted with doing whatever it takes to maintain their currency; the Home Nation Associations are at liberty to request evidence of this currency, and if necessary remove provider role or specify individual actions in order to maintain the provider role. The Home Nations may also run compulsory or voluntary moderation or training to support providers, as they see fit.

In addition, providers of the 4 and 5 Star Leader awards must work a minimum of 1 training and 1 assessment course in each 3-year cycle. Providers who do not meet the minimum requirements can put a case forward to keep their role if active (coaching and leading) in the specific environment, or active running relevant Star Awards in other disciplines. These will be considered by the Home Nation on a case-by-case basis.

Course Authorisation

Course authorisation is required for all BCU 3, 4 and 5 Star Assessments, and formal BCU 4 and 5 Star Leader Training. The provider applies for course authorisation through their Home Nation Association (normally via email). Please note course authorisation needs to be in place at least two weeks prior to the planned course. When approved providers will be informed of a specific course authorisation number, and provided with the required Course Schedule for recording candidate outcomes.

Course Director Report

At BCU 4 and 5 Star Leader Training and Assessment course directors are required to return an accurately and honestly completed Course Director Report. This form will be provided by the Home Nation along with confirmation of the Course Authorisation number.

Recruitment and Special Needs

The course director plays a vital role in ensuring the right candidates book onto the course, hold the prerequisites, and complete registration (required for BCU 4 and 5 Star Leader Assessment). Providers also need to identify prior to the course if candidates have any special requirements so they can appropriately cater for them during the course.

Candidate Prerequisites

The relevant course prerequisites are detailed in the specific Star Award Syllabus. Providers are required to check candidates hold all of the prerequisites prior to making the recommendation that they achieve the award. This involves checking, for example, original certificates, validity (e.g. first aid), age, and logbook evidence. Providers should also make the prerequisite evidence requirements clear to candidates in the pre-course information.

Paddlers intending on working through the BCU Star Awards are advised to keep a record of their experience. While it is not essential for paddlers to record their paddlesport experience as part of their

progression up to 3 Star, it may prove useful 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 an electronic format logbook available on request, or paddlers can of course produce their own.

Candidate Registration (Required prior to BCU 4 and 5 Star Leader Assessment)

Candidates are required to register with the relevant Home Nation Association prior to attending BCU 4 or 5 Star Leader assessment, using a 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. Registration forms (LR Forms) and the associated guidance notes are available from the BCU Home Nations. Providers should ensure they are fully familiar with the LR Guidance Notes and the associated process to ensure they can support and advise candidates appropriately. BCU 4 and 5 Star Leader registration fees are £12 for members, £25 for non-members

Candidates need to register with the relevant BCU Home Nation Association a minimum of 2 weeks prior to attending a BCU 4, or 5 Star Leader Assessment, and must receive the authorised form back, to take with them to the course.

Course directors must be seen to do everything they can to ensure that candidates turn up with BCU Registration and their authorised LR Form. It would be prudent to request a copy of the LR Form at the time of booking to avoid problems. Course directors must return the course schedule and candidate LR forms to their Home Nation within 7-days of their course. If Providers are able to accommodate candidates who do not have their LR Form and still achieve the 7-day deadline this is acceptable. Candidates must be made aware that if they are not able to provide their LR Form within this time their attendance on the course may not be recognised. Course directors should contact their Home Nation at the earliest opportunity should problems with registration arise.

End of Course Paperwork

Paddlesport Start - Certificates are purchased by providers in bulk from their Home Nation Association Office. Certificates are issued directly to candidates by the provider. Paddlesport Start Certificates are £1 each, bulk order rates are available to BCU Affiliated Clubs and Approved Centres.

BCU 1 and 2 Star - Candidates who successfully complete the BCU 1 Star assessment, are issued with a Star Award Pass Slip by the provider. These are available for providers free from their Home Nation Association. Completed Pass Slips are returned (by the candidate or provider) to the Home Nation, along with the required fee (£6 for members, £7 for non-members). The Home Nation will then issue the certificate to the candidate. There is no fee for a fail.

BCU 3 Star - The course director is required to return a completed **Course Schedule** to their Home Nation Within 7-days of the course, including candidate fees. Fees are £12 for members and £25 for non-members (there is no fee for a fail). The Course Schedule must be completed in full, with course number, names of all providers, date, etc.

BCU 4 and 5 Star Leader Training - The course director is required to return a completed **Course Schedule** and **Course Director Report** to their Home Nation Within 7-days of the course. There are no fees at this stage. The Course Schedule must clearly identify candidate outcomes, and be completed in full, with course number, names of all providers, date, etc.

BCU 4 and 5 Star Leader Assessment - The course director is required to return a completed **Course Schedule** and **Course Director Report** to their Home Nation Within 7-days of the course, **LR Forms** for each candidate recommended for the award must also be returned. This must have been stamped by the Home Nation Association in the 'Registered' box, and signed and dated by the course director in the 'assessment' box. Once this paperwork is returned to the Home Nation Office, it will be verified to ensure that all aspects of the course details and candidate registration are in order. Successful candidates will then be certificated as appropriate. (There are no fees required at this stage). Providers also need to return the LR Form, for unsuccessful candidates. This will have the validity amended, and be returned to the candidate to present at a future assessment if they wish to proceed.

End of Course Feedback

Course directors are required to gather, and act on, feedback from participants on the quality of assessment and/or training.

5. Supporting Policies

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. Course providers must inform candidates of the existence of the BCU Appeals Procedure, and how to access it.

Equal Opportunities Policy

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.

Reporting Malpractice

Any suspected malpractice, on the part of candidates, providers, or any others involved in providing the BCU Qualifications must be reported to the relevant Home Nation Association. See the Home Nation Policies for more details.

Reasonable Adjustments Policy

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.

Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL)

Candidates who have covered any of the training or assessment prerequisites through alternative/equitable means can apply to the BCU for Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL) in order to be granted entry to the training or assessment course. A specific avenue to support appropriately experienced candidates wishing to access BCU 5 Star Leader Training, without first completing the required BCU 4 Star Leader prerequisite is in place. See BCU APL Guidance for further advice.

Running BCU Star Awards Overseas

Providers who live abroad, or 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.

Quality Assurance (QA) and Internal Verification (IV)

The BCU and Home Nation Associations monitor the quality of course delivery and assessment to ensure appropriate standards are maintained. As part of the Quality Assurance and Internal Verification requirements directors must provide access to all premises, records, information, candidates, and staff (specifically in relation to the delivery of BCU courses) to Home Nation QA/IV Officers or BCU External Verifiers when requested.

6. Facility and Resource Requirements

General

- Providers must provide a safe and appropriate operating environment for all elements of the training or assessment programme that complies with relevant health and safety legislation
- Providers must have appropriate leadership equipment to look after paddlers in their care during all training and assessment activities
- Candidates need to be made aware of the expectations on them to ensure safe practice and an effective learning and/or assessment environment
- Risk assessments must be in place and appropriate risk management strategies engaged throughout all training and assessment activities

- All physical resources used to support the delivery of the learning programme and assessment should be of industry standard, and relevant to the individual candidates
- All staff must be fully familiar with current best practice and standards as appropriate to coaching in the specific environment
- An appropriate space is required for the course introduction, scene setting, and debriefs
- Toilet, changing, and showering arrangements should be communicated to candidates
- Providers must ensure that candidates wear appropriate clothing and equipment on all practical activities as identified by the specific risk assessment, and in line with current best practice
- Providers should ensure candidates have access to appropriate resources to support training against all elements of the syllabus

Pollution

All BCU Star awards should be taken in the appropriate environment as defined in the syllabi. Providers are advised that where there is reason to believe that the level of pollution is such as to render capsizes as potentially hazardous, alternative safer methods/locations may be used for those aspects of performance Awards that require deliberate immersion.

Venues and Environmental Conditions

Assessment - The star award syllabi clearly define the required venues and conditions for undertaking BCU Star Award assessments. Courses must only go ahead where the defined conditions are present for at least 50% of the assessment course.

BCU 4 and 5 Star Training courses must be planned at appropriate venues and time of year to provide the best chance of having conditions as required for assessment. Providers are responsible for providing robust training against the course syllabus, and will need to apply their professional judgement in using the conditions to maximise learning for participants. Assessment conditions should be experienced for at least some of the training course. The decision to use conditions below that of assessment requirements may be deemed appropriate for the candidates given ability level, or due to the weather/water conditions. In all cases candidates must leave with a clear understanding of the standard expected at assessment, and an appropriate and individualised action plan covering all relevant environments.

If the integrity of a training or assessment course will be compromised, it should of course be cancelled, this may be necessary prior to, or during the course. At BCU 4 and 5 Star Leader Training and Assessment, providers may reschedule one (or more) days of the course, if conditions are not as required. Candidates must be warned that courses will be cancelled if conditions are not appropriate and the course cancellation policy must be clearly communicated.

It is not appropriate to undergo BCU Star Award assessments (or formal BCU 4/5 Star Training) in conditions above the stated requirements. Providers will need to abort training/assessment if such conditions come upon them, whilst obviously maintaining their leadership responsibility.

7. Guidance for Training and Assessment

Paddlesport Start

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 the first session of a series. The assessment style should be very relaxed, with candidates achieving the award if all aspects of the syllabus are covered within the session.

BCU 1, 2 and 3 Star Awards

At BCU 1, 2 and 3 Star providers running assessments should be able to gather sufficient evidence on candidate performance using the following methods;

- Observation of candidates performance in coached or led activities (e.g. personal, safety, leadership, group skills, theory)
- Observation of candidates performance in specific set-up tasks (e.g. rescues)
- Questioning (e.g. theory, safety, leadership, group skills)

It is preferable that performance in all areas of the syllabus is observed in real coached or led activities. Where this is not practical specific tasks maybe set up; this is quite likely for rescue skills if the need for them has not occurred naturally. It is good practice to use appropriate questions to gain additional insight into a candidates knowledge and understanding; these should be integrated throughout the session, and not used as a stand-alone test!

It is not expected that there would be the need for written tests or written work/projects, although providers may choose to set a simple planning exercise to cover this aspect of the 3 Star Syllabus.

Assessments at this level can be run either as part of a wider coaching programme, or as a stand-alone assessment. They can be run for individuals or groups, and through block courses, or a series of evenings/weekends to best suit the coaching needs of the group. It is important that providers try to create an environment in which the assessment is non-threatening and very much focused around candidates learning and development.

Providers are able re-assess specific elements of the syllabus that a candidate may have been unsuccessful in (for a period of up to 3-months from the original assessment). Providers will need to gain a new course authorisation number, and be confident on submission of the course schedule that the candidate meets the required standard in all areas of the syllabus. The provider may choose to re-assess all elements of the syllabus if they judge this to be more appropriate.

There are no formal training requirements for candidates to complete as part of the BCU 1, 2 and 3 Star Awards. Coaches may wish to offer training packages; these 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.

BCU 4 and 5 Star Leader Training

BCU 4 and 5 Leader 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 syllabi does not need to be restricted to these areas and should reflect a wide range of boat handling and experiential opportunities, relevant to paddling/leading in the moderate water environment. Candidates must leave the training course with an appropriate action plan to support their development towards assessment. Candidates should also leave with an understanding of how their current performance relates to the assessment standard.

BCU 4 and 5 Star Leader Assessment

It is expected that BCU 4 and 5 Star Leader providers running assessments should be able to gather sufficient evidence on candidate performance using a combination of the following methods;

- Observation of candidates performance whilst leading others
- Observation of candidates performance in specific set-up/simulation tasks
- Questioning

BCU 4 and 5 Star Leader assessments must include the leading of a suitably sized group, all assessments 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 (BCU 4 Star Leader), or advanced water (BCU 5 Star Leader) 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.

It is preferable that performance in all areas of the syllabus are observed in real applied activities. Where this is not practical specific tasks maybe set up; this is quite likely for rescue skills if the need for them has not occurred naturally. It is good practice to use appropriate questions to gain additional insight into a candidates knowledge and understanding; these should be integrated throughout the assessment and not used as a stand-alone test!

It is not expected that there is a need for written tests or written work/projects, although providers may choose to set an appropriate planning exercise to cover this aspect of the BCU 4 or 5 Star Leader Syllabus.

Candidates must complete all elements required for BCU 4 or 5 Star Leader certification within 3 years of their formal Training. If a candidate is unsuccessful at their first assessment attempt, they have an additional 12-months added to the validity. Candidates are advised to wait a minimum of 3-months before presenting for a re-assessment, although individual advice should be offered following an unsuccessful attempt. Only two attempts are allowed at the assessment, after which the BCU 4/5 Star Leader Training must be repeated. Deferrals for specific aspects of BCU 4 or 5 Star Leader Assessments are not allowed. Unsuccessful candidates must attend a full assessment if they wish to progress.

Lone Working

It must be recognised that assessors are particularly vulnerable when they are working on their own, it is therefore particularly important to keep written evidence of observations of the candidates' performance against the assessment criteria. These may be required later if a decision is questioned.

Assessing Family, Friends, Colleagues etc.

Providers of the BCU Paddlesport Start, 1 and 2 Star Assessments should endeavour to refrain from assessing close family or friends.

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

At BCU 4 and 5 Star Leader Assessment candidates should be assessed by at least one assessor, who did not deliver their BCU 4 (or 5) Star Leader Training.

Providers are entrusted with staffing assessments in order that candidates received a fair and impartial assessment with conflicts of interest minimised where possible.

Assessor Responsibilities

On all BCU Star Award assessments, providers are responsible for;

- Managing the process of assessment, of practical and written evidence, from assessment planning through to making and recording assessment decisions
- Assessing evidence of candidates' knowledge, understanding and competence against the standards specified in the Syllabus and Assessment Notes, and making reliable judgments about candidates' performance
- Ensuring the validity, authenticity and sufficiency of assessment evidence produced by candidates
- Clarifying any shortcomings in the presented assessment evidence and explaining to the candidate how to remedy them
- Remaining as unobtrusive as practicable during assessment, whilst being able to see and hear the candidate at work
- Giving and recording evaluative feedback as soon as possible
- Confirming success to the candidate as soon as they have demonstrated competence against all of the specified outcomes
- Agreeing further action with the candidate where appropriate
- Conducting assessment in the way that upholds the equal opportunities principles specified by BCU; assessors must ensure that it is only the candidates' skills, knowledge, understanding, and competence that have a bearing on assessment results, which should not be influenced by any other factors. No candidate must be either discriminated against or given an unfair advantage
- Maintaining accurate and verifiable assessment records for each candidate
- Fulfilling BCU administration requirements
- Follow the BCU Guidance on Reasonable Adjustments to the Assessment Process where candidates find the assessment methods difficult

In order to achieve uniformity of assessment standards, careful attention should be paid to the definitions in the award Training and Assessment Notes. All trainers and assessors must be fully familiar with the Syllabi and Assessment Notes for the award concerned.

Providers must provide clear guidance to candidates about the assessment process and completion of the various tasks, including;

- What candidates are required to do
- The assessment programme
- The relevant assessment criteria
- The assessment methods
- When candidates will receive feedback

Main competencies expected of assessors

As a minimum, assessors should meet the following requirements;

- Be able to demonstrate technical competence in the discipline concerned
- Be able to demonstrate competence in the assessment of the syllabus
- Be able to use plain language which is free from bias and appropriate to our paddlesport qualifications
- Be committed to equal opportunities in assessment and have the ability to translate this commitment into practice

8. BCU Star Award Development

The current BCU Star Award Scheme was launched in October 2007. In 2011 and 2012 the BCU Coaching Operations Group (COG) managed a review of the BCU Star Awards. This routine review aimed to evaluate the awards following their launch in October 2007. The review was concluded during 2013, and updates made to all syllabi to keep the awards current, with the updated syllabus and supporting guidance launched 31st October 2013.

The review found that the awards were generally fit for purpose, with the aims of each award needing little alteration. The significant updates included;

- The technical content was reviewed and updated to ensure that it accurately reflected the ethos of the awards and current best practice
- The BCU 4 Star Leader Award was developed to be appropriate for leaders who take full responsibility for leading trips, as well as equipping paddlers with the skills to paddle safely with their peers. Along with this came the need to strengthen the syllabus so leaders could look after less experienced paddlers in easier conditions and more experienced paddlers out in the top end of the moderate water definition. The review found that the Award was being used in this way and most providers interpreted the Syllabus as above. However, more clarity was required to ensure that it was clearer to candidates, providers, and deployers.
- The requirements for new providers of the BCU Star Awards, and how existing providers maintain currency were reviewed and updated.

The following new awards were also launched at the same time;

- BCU 3, 4 and 5 Star White Water OC1 awards
- BCU 3 Star Sea Sit-on-Top award

The only change to the BCU Terms of Reference (guidance on deployment of BCU Leaders) is the addition of guidance for leading paddlers in White Water OC1.

All BCU Star Awards taken prior to October 2007 (when the current scheme was launched) 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 BCU 4 Star award was not a leadership qualification. It is also worth noting that some prerequisites for BCU Awards and roles only recognise current Star Awards.