

# Paddlesport Leader Assessment Guidance

## Introduction

This document provides specific guidance for providers, trainers, assessors, deployers and aspirant leaders on the assessment criteria and standards expected. The assessment criteria are summarised in the 'Skills Checklist' and further expanded upon here in the 'Assessment Guidance'. It is the guidance within this document that is used to inform assessment decisions.

This Assessment Guidance should be read in conjunction with:

- British Canoeing Paddlesport Leader Course Guide
- British Canoeing Paddlesport Leader Skills Checklist
- British Canoeing Paddlesport Leader Provider Notes

The 'Course Guide' provides details of the award and its general requirements. Whilst the accompanying 'Provider Notes' expand on the organisational matters relating to training and assessment.

The following documents are also relevant for providers:

- Paddlesport Leader Provider Requirements
- Paddlesport Leader Sample Programmes and Lesson Plans
- British Canoeing Staffing Ratios and Requirements
- British Canoeing Coaching and Leadership Registration Prerequisites.

These are all available to download from the Home Nation Association websites.

## Assessment Format

Please note this section provides a summary of the assessment format. For full details please see the Paddlesport Leader Provider Notes.

Assessments must include the leading of a suitably sized group (3-6 group members). All assessments will include the use of 'real' students rather than other assessment candidates. 'Real' students are required for candidates to lead in BOTH assessment venues (wind affected and slow moving water). Genuine students who require leadership support in the sheltered water environments should be sourced. In organising the group for the leader to lead, they must be in a mixed fleet (with at least two different genres of craft (i.e. touring kayaks, open canoes, suitable sit-on-tops, general purpose kayaks, stand-up-paddleboards, racing craft or crew boats).

The Paddlesport Leader Assessment will normally run over 1 or 2-days. This will depend on the course ratios and logistics relating to access to suitable environments. British Canoeing has provided sample programmes for 1-day and 2-day assessment courses that providers can use if they wish.

## Assessment Criteria

In order to achieve the qualification, leaders need to demonstrate competence in:

### A. Participant Focused Leadership Skills

The leader can support group members' enjoyment, safety and performance through:

1. safe and benign venue selection appropriate to the group members
2. the design and implementation of effective safety frameworks
3. being a positive role model and inspiration to others
4. empathetic social support in a positive atmosphere
5. supporting appropriately challenging experiences
6. leadership styles and behaviours that meet participant needs, the task and environment
7. effective judgement and decision-making
8. selection and use of suitable personal, group and safety equipment
9. avoiding negative impact on the environment, local communities and other water users.

### B. Personal Paddling Skills

Efficient, effective personal skills are used to facilitate safe, quality, enjoyable trips. The leader can:

10. effectively and efficiently control their boat in a range of sheltered water conditions
11. skilfully apply tactics to accomplish safe and enjoyable paddlesport journeys
12. select appropriate craft from which to lead
13. use skills beyond the paddle to compliment the effective undertaking of the journey
14. apply effective navigation skills
15. respond to, and manage, the physical demands of undertaking and leading journeys
16. respond to, and manage, the psychological demands of undertaking and leading journeys
17. manage themselves within appropriate safety frameworks.

### C. Rescue Skills

The leader can deal with a range of rescue situations relevant to role. The leader can:

18. demonstrate competence in a range of specific rescue scenarios
19. deal with problems and accidents following the correct procedures
20. carry out emergency procedures when necessary.

### D. Underpinning Background Knowledge, Understanding and Experience

Practical leadership, personal paddling and rescue skills are underpinned by:

- the ability to explain and justify leadership decisions
- an extensive base of background knowledge and understanding
- relevant and adequate experience to support the decision making process
- understanding of deployment matters and leadership responsibilities
- a commitment to reflective practice and the ability to learn from experience.

This applies to a range of scenarios relating to leading mixed fleets in the sheltered water environment and not just those experienced on the day of assessment.

## A. Participant Focused Leadership Skills

During assessment, the leader needs to show that they have ability to lead safe, enjoyable, quality mixed-fleet journeys based on the group's needs, abilities and aspirations. They will need to demonstrate skilful application of leadership principles and strategies, judgement and decision making, safety awareness and risk management, group management, navigation, and the control and management of outcomes within the stated environments. This will include both wind affected open water and slow moving water at the upper end of the definitions provided (see Course Guide page 6).

All leaders must show competence as described in this assessment guidance.

Leaders can present for assessment **in any craft** that is safe and suitable for the remit of the award and the assessment tasks. This may include for example; touring kayaks, open canoes, suitable sit-on-tops, general purpose kayaks, stand-up-paddleboards, crew boats, or racing craft. The leader is required to demonstrate the ability, judgement and decision making to select appropriate craft from which to lead, matched to their personal competence, experience and the leadership demands.

In addition to this, practical leadership must be underpinned by:

- the ability to explain and justify leadership decisions
- an extensive base of background knowledge and understanding
- relevant and adequate experience to support the decision making process
- understanding of deployment matters and leadership responsibilities
- a commitment to reflective practice and the ability to learn from experience.

### Assessment Methods

Each leader must be seen **leading a group of real students** in conditions at the top end of both environments for some of the time (providing it is appropriate for the participants on the day). Please see page 6 of the Course Guide and page 8-12 of the Provider Notes for more details about the environmental conditions that frame the Paddlesport Leader qualification. It is important that venues reflect these definitions. It is not appropriate to undergo British Canoeing Paddlesport Leader assessments in conditions above the stated requirements.

Observation of practical leadership will be supplemented with questioning, discussion and specific tasks as required. Assessors need to gather sufficient evidence of competence in a range of scenarios relating to leading mixed fleets in the sheltered water environment, not just those experienced during the practical assessment.

In organising the group for the leader to lead, they must be in a mixed fleet (with at least two different genres of craft (i.e. touring kayaks, open canoes, suitable sit-on-tops, general purpose kayaks, stand-up-paddleboards, racing craft or crew boats).

British Canoeing guidance suggests that the Paddlesport Leader qualification is appropriate for leading a group of up to 8 boats (reduced to 6 with open canoes), with no more than 12 people when using tandem/crew boats. The group of real students organised for assessment should reflect this demand whilst remaining within the assessor's own risk management requirements. Genuine students who require leadership support in the sheltered water environments should be sourced; a group size of 3-6 students is expected.

## Assessment Criteria

### 1. Venue Selection - The leader selects safe, benign venues appropriate to the group members

Within the planning and execution of the trip, the leader matches the trip/location/conditions, etc. to the group's aims, aspirations, enjoyment and safety. To find the right balance leaders should consider the influencing factors. For example:

- the goals, aspirations and expectations of the group members
- the abilities and past experiences of the group members
- how to align the activity to individual motivations
- an appropriate level of challenge (difficulty, distance, speed of travel, freedom, choice, etc.)
- the weather, conditions, seriousness
- which craft to use
- explicitly agreeing group goals (where to go, how far, how difficult, how fast to travel..... )
- risk-benefit analysis (finding a position in which the benefits balance and justify the risks)
- ensuring that the level of risk (challenge) does not exceed group members' expectations.

The leader must remain within scope of the remit and their skills/experience. This requires:

- frequent and regular landings easily and quickly accessible by all group members as required (200m from an easy landing is considered to be the maximum distance appropriate)
- frequent and regular escape options for the group to evacuate the water
- the leader to accurately assess that the group has the ability to avoid hazards present (e.g. other water users, or being swept/blown out of the safe working area)
- the leader to accurately assess that the conditions (e.g. wind, weather, temperature, water level, tide, visibility, mud-flats, drying heights, sand-banks, water-quality, etc.) do not hinder the group's ability to land or avoid hazards
- the leader to accurately assess the group's ability to remain in the safe working area at all times (particularly in the event of a capsize or a paddler becoming incapacitated)
- the leader to accurately assess, and operate within the scope of, their own skills and experience; demonstrating good judgement and an appropriate attitude to risk.

### 2. Safety - The leader designs and implements effective safety frameworks:

For example, the leader:

- undertakes sound risk assessment prior to and during trips
- accurately identifies hazards and takes effective actions to avoid them
- has a good awareness of the typical hazards found within the remit of the award
- finds a position in which the benefits balance and justify the risks (risk-benefit analysis)
- pitches the difficulty of activities appropriately for the group's ability (aims and aspirations)
- ensures that the level of risk (challenge) does not exceed group members' expectations
- involves group members in the decision making process and explains decisions made
- ensures equipment used supports safe practice
- uses appropriate physical and psychological warm-ups when required
- selects activities and leadership style appropriate for the given weather/water conditions

- supports the group to take adequate rest, food and hydration
- follows any organisational procedures (e.g. risk assessment, operating procedures, venue/equipment/activity specifics)
- uses and promotes safe manual lifting and handling techniques at all times (e.g. launching, landing, during rescues, portaging, loading, etc.)
- the leader knows where they are at all times, has an awareness of their speed of travel and is able to evacuate the water if/when necessary.

### **3. Vision - The leader is a positive role model and aims to inspire others:**

For example, the leader:

- leads by example; behaves like they want the group members to behave (e.g. cares about and respects the environment, the group, the sport, fair play, other people, equipment....)
- shows passion and enthusiasm for paddlesport, for the activity, for the task at hand and for what others can/have achieved
- articulates and acts on a personally held value system
- is consistent with the British Canoeing core values (e.g. access, environment, educational philosophy, equality)
- articulates, supports and develops the individuals'/group's vision
- develops a strong team attitude and spirit
- gets the group to work together towards shared goals
- sees the best in people.... thinks the best of people
- stimulates the trust and respect of others
- shows optimism and enthusiasm about what others can achieve
- is cheerful and a pleasure to be around.

### **4. Support - The leader provides empathetic social support in a positive atmosphere:**

For example, the leader:

- recognises and pays attention to individual needs, differences, strengths and abilities
- treats each team member as an individual, use individuals' names
- aims to make everyone feel welcome and at ease
- helps people develop their strengths and to solve their problems
- creates an atmosphere where mistakes are seen as learning opportunities
- seeks/praises positives from unsuccessful outcomes
- provides encouragement and support to help recover from mistakes
- is clear about any ground rules (what should/should not be done)
- helps group members get on well together, promote the sense of 'team'
- cares about the group members' personal welfare/well-being
- shows interest in the things the group members care about
- displays acts of kindness
- openly compliments things done well
- praises improvements in performance

- rewards hard work, effort, good decisions, problem solving, coping strategies, error recovery
- praises mainly outcomes that are the result of hard work and effort
- recognises achievements, visibly celebrate success..... whoop, clap, thumbs up
- recognises and thanks individuals for their influence in the success of the group/others
- passes on positive feedback to others.

**5. Challenge - The leader supports appropriately challenging experiences:**

For example, the leader:

- aligns the level of challenge inherent in the activity to individual motivations (e.g. how, and how much, they want to be challenged)
- agrees group goals (e.g. where to go, how far, how difficult, how fast to travel)
- helps individuals set appropriate levels of challenge
- encourages paddlers to solve their own problems
- actively involves paddlers in the decision making process
- uses appropriate leadership styles to control/give freedom to the levels of challenge.

**6. Leadership Style and Behaviours – The leadership style and behaviours meet participant needs, the task and environment:**

The amount of control that the leader chooses to maintain/hand-over within their leadership style is a critical element to be considered. Different leadership styles give the leader/participants varying levels of control within the decision making process. The choice should be based on the main influences (i.e. the situation and environment, the group members, and the leader’s own characteristics) and by paying attention to the effects (i.e. the group’s enjoyment and performance).

The level of control can be considered on a spectrum:



Research suggests that non-controlling leadership behaviours result in improved performance and psychological well-being. This empowering and supportive style ensures that the group members are central to, and actively involved in, the process. If controlling behaviours are felt necessary for safety reasons or because they are the preferred leadership style of the group members, leaders should check to ensure they haven’t set the challenge too high. Can the level of challenge be manipulated in order more control can be handed over to the group members? Can individuals be challenged through the use of non-controlling behaviours rather than stretching their skills through higher risk activities? Can the leader find an appropriate balance?



Typical controlling/non-controlling behaviour:

Controlling ←	→ Non-controlling
Leader has control over decisions with little input from group.	Members participate in the decision making process.
<p>Typical Behaviour:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• prescriptive</li> <li>• makes independent decisions without group members' involvement</li> <li>• doesn't explain actions</li> <li>• little compromise</li> <li>• speaks and presents ideas with authority</li> <li>• expects compliance</li> <li>• indifferent to people's feelings or level of enjoyment</li> <li>• attempts to control group members' behaviour and activity</li> <li>• a 'follow me' approach to route choice.</li> </ul>	<p>Typical Behaviour:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• asks for group member opinions</li> <li>• gets group approval on important matters</li> <li>• lets group members make own decisions/share in the decision making process</li> <li>• encourages group members to make suggestions</li> <li>• lets group set own goals</li> <li>• gives group members space to try their own way</li> <li>• allows group members to work at own speed</li> <li>• sees the merits of others' ideas when they differ from the Leader's</li> <li>• encourages people to find their own solutions</li> <li>• encourages people to find their own learning from mistakes</li> <li>• includes group members in the risk management decisions.</li> </ul>

Communication – The leader communicates clearly and effectively:

For example, the leader:

- communicates clearly and is understood by the group
- made sure group members had necessary information prior to the trip/activities
- uses language that is appropriate to the group members
- uses concise simple instructions and explanations
- uses clear signals and visual communication methods when required
- uses introductions, demonstrations and explanations to help participants understand tasks
- uses effective listening skills.

Group Management – the leader has effective group management strategies to suit the required leadership style:

For example, the leader:

- used techniques to manage line of sight
- used strategies to support the management of the group whilst on the move
- used positioning to be of most use to the group and to able to prevent/deal with the most likely scenarios

- is able to gather the group into a non-dynamic environment when/if it becomes necessary
- the leader is able to intervene to affect safety, enjoyment and quality outcomes.

### **7. Judgement and Decision Making – The leader uses effective judgement and decision making:**

Decision making is an essential skill for Paddlesport Leaders. Both slow-time decisions and in-the-moment time pressured decisions have significant impact on the safety, enjoyment and performance of the group members.

The leader gathers accurate and comprehensive information to inform their decisions, for example:

- weather/water conditions
- venue/s planned to be used
- goals of the group
- nature of task/activity (length, seriousness)
- group/individuals' personalities, aspirations, motivations, expectations
- group/individuals' abilities and past experiences.

The leader plans a safe, enjoyable, quality trip. The journey is planned (venue, difficulty, length, etc.) taking into account:

- the group's needs, abilities and aspirations
- effective analysis of information gathered
- the balance between the level of challenge and the level of control
- alternatives to deal with predictable/changeable factors that may compromise participants' safety, enjoyment or learning (e.g. alternative venues, activities or leadership style).

The ability to access and interpret a range of weather forecasts (e.g. wind, temperature, visibility, and rainfall), information on river levels, tidal information (e.g. height, flow) is critical to the leader's skill set. Accurate interpretation of this information is required to plan where to go and what to take, it will also provide foresight into what should be expected and will have a significant impact on the overall enjoyment, safety and quality of the trip.

Once on the water, the leader:

- pays attention to the member's response to the activity; the social environment, the physical environment, the leadership style
- monitors and pays attention to the triggers that help them read the group members' response to the situation and their performance (e.g. technical, tactical, physiological, psychological)
- keeps a vigilant and watchful eye on the conditions and group response
- adapts their level of control to suit the situation
- matches the level of challenge to the level of the group members
- alters plans due to unforeseen events
- responds appropriately when outcomes are not as desired.

Off the water:

- reflects to inform future decisions.



## **8. Equipment – The leader ensures that personal, group and safety equipment is suitable**

For example, the leader:

- checks group members have the required clothing and equipment for the planned trip
- ensures participants' equipment is appropriate for their size, ability and the activity
- ensures clothing and equipment is correctly worn, sized and fitted
- has safety equipment to match the risk management strategies, including:
  - things to manage paddlers' basic comfort, e.g. spare clothes, drink, food, shelter
  - things to manage accidents, e.g. first aid kit, repair kit, towline
- ensures safety critical equipment is in good condition and appropriate to the trip
- uses personal equipment suitable for their safety, comfort and leadership responsibilities.

## **9. Environmental Impact - The leader manages themselves and the group to reduce any negative impact on the environment, local communities and other water users**

The appropriate Home Nation Codes of Conduct must be followed, for example:

*On land:*

- stay away from houses and private gardens
- change discreetly
- drive sensibly
- park considerately
- ensure your kit does not cause obstruction when loading
- leave gates and property as you find them
- avoid damage to fences and walls
- never miss an opportunity to use a public toilet; if you need to 'go' in the outdoors, do so discreetly and without risk of pollution or distress to other people.

*On the water:*

- follow the general rules of navigation, local bye-laws, waterway authority notices
- respect and do not obstruct other water users
- take early proactive action to avoid collision or risk of collision
- keep the numbers in your group... impact on surroundings
- show consideration to other water users
- follow etiquette appropriate to the situation.

*In respect of anglers:*

- look out for anglers
- co-operate to avoid lines, nets and swims
- if it is unclear where to pass, quietly attract the attention of the angler and agree a route
- when an angler is playing a fish, stop some way off and await acknowledgement to proceed
- do not linger in pools or swims occupied by an angler.

*Invasive non-native species – stop the spread:*

Check, Clean, Dry boats and wet equipment after use. Always take biosecurity measures to minimise the risk or prevent the spread and environmental damage from invasive, non-native aquatic species and diseases:

- check your equipment and clothing for live organisms, plant fragments, etc.
- clean and wash all equipment, footwear and clothing thoroughly
- if you come across any organisms, leave them at the water body where you found them
- dry all equipment and clothing, some organisms survive weeks in moist conditions
- make sure you don't transfer water elsewhere.

*Caring for the environment:*

- find out about the area before you go, noting sensitive places, protected areas, species and breeding seasons
- take your litter home, leave no trace of your visit
- when clearing litter left by others, handle it with care
- leave the environment as you find it
- keep noise to a minimum
- float your craft when launching and landing; do not seal launch or drag boats to avoid wearing away natural banks
- where possible, keep to designated paths or launching points
- constantly assess wildlife, if you see signs of disturbance move away quickly
- avoid paddling over gravel banks on rivers in low conditions, they may contain fish spawn
- on marine waters take care on shingle beaches; they may be nesting grounds, avoid dragging boats through inter-tidal areas, through sand-dunes and their grasses
- don't damage plants and other habitats that animals depend upon
- keep a safe distance away from wildlife to avoid causing disturbance and stress; if animals change their behaviour in reaction to your presence, move away without causing further disturbance
- report pollution, incidents, damage and invasive species to the relevant authorities.

## **B. Personal Paddling Skills**

Leaders need efficient and effective personal skills to facilitate safe, quality, enjoyable **mixed fleet** trips in a sheltered water environment. They will need to show the application of technical and tactical skills, the underpinning physiological attributes, psychological skills and the judgement and decision making to perform safely and in control within the stated environments. This will include both wind affected open water and slow moving water at the upper end of the definitions provided (see Course Guide page 6).

All leaders must show competence as described in this assessment guidance.

Leaders can present for assessment **in any craft** that is safe and suitable for the remit of the award and the assessment tasks. This may include for example; touring kayaks, open canoes, suitable sit-on-tops, general purpose kayaks, stand-up-paddleboards, crew boats, or racing craft. The leader is required to demonstrate the ability, judgement and decision making to select appropriate craft from which to lead, matched to their personal competence, experience and the leadership demands.

In addition to this, assessors should explore, through questioning, which craft the leader deems they are competent to lead/lead from; the assessor will sample (practically and through questioning) as much of the range as possible throughout the duration of the assessment.

If the award is taken as part of a crewed boat, the paddler must show they are taking ultimate control and responsibility. If the kayak is fitted with a rudder, they must be able to demonstrate that they can paddle to safety if the rudder fails.

### **Applied Technical and Tactical Skills**

**10. The leader demonstrates technical competence, being able to effectively and efficiently control their boat in a range of sheltered water conditions.**

**11. The leader skilfully applies tactics to accomplish safe and enjoyable paddlesport journeys.**

The emphasis is on the ability to effectively and efficiently control the boat in real situations, with consistency left and right and in both wind affected open water and the slow moving water environment. Skills should be assessed holistically throughout the duration of the assessment; with manoeuvres and actions applied tactically in the given environment and framed within the context of being able to fulfil the given leadership responsibilities.

Leaders need to show consistently in their ability to achieve a desired outcome. It is expected that they can control/manoeuvre their boat without having to think too much about it, by using effective and efficient actions to achieve the outcome. While technical correctness is not emphasised, poor practice that puts the body at risk of injury is not acceptable.

Throughout the duration of assessment, leaders should have the opportunity to apply their skills in situations that require:

- strong foundations
- launching and landing
- forward paddling
- steering, turning and manoeuvring
- recovery from being off balance.

### *Strong foundations*

The leader's personal paddling is underpinned by strong foundations, including:

Active Posture – the leader;

- uses appropriate sitting, kneeling, standing position
- uses muscle tension and 'readiness' throughout the key muscles, with a basic level of tension and efficient and economical movements
- is balanced, supple and controlled in the movement of the body, paddles and boat.

Connectivity– the leader;

- uses the points of the body that are in contact with the boat and a basic level of muscle tension through the core, to 'connect' the boat and the body.

Power transfer – the leader;

- can efficiently transfer power from the body and water to create movement of the boat
- uses the muscles from the feet through the torso to the upper body for co-ordinated and efficient strokes
- applies power to move up to the paddle, beyond it, or around it (minimising energy leaks)
- is balanced and stable when applying power to strokes.

Feel – the leader;

- works together with the water/wind/conditions rather than fighting it
- can feel and anticipate external influences that are affecting the boat and paddles
- can anticipate and react to environmental challenges, with well-timed boat and paddle placement/loading.

*Launching and landing – leaders consistently show:*

- correct set-up of the craft (e.g. seat, footrest, backrest, airbags, painters, spray deck, paddle leash, etc.)
- safe lifting and carrying techniques to move a boat between a vehicle/trailer/storage and the launch site (assistance is recommended)
- safe and efficient launching and landing from a range of reasonable access/egress points with the boat afloat (e.g. pier, steps, rocky shoreline, beach) without the use of the paddle or an assistant.

*Forward paddling – leaders consistently show:*

- efficient, fluent and adaptive forward paddling technique to cope with the environmental demands and to facilitate effective group management.

Guidance notes: Canoe paddlers may switch sides to generate initial momentum and should then be able to proceed with power strokes and steering on one side only.

*Steering, turning and manoeuvring – leaders consistently show:*

- the ability to accurately and effectively steer, turn and manoeuvre their craft.

For example, the ability to:

- paddle a course that is reasonably straight, with occasional gentle turns
- keep the boat straight through a narrow gap by using a trailing paddle or rudder
- stop and accelerate in reverse within 1-2 boat lengths
- stop in a controlled manner within a minimum number of strokes (approx. 4)
- make effective tight turns around a point, followed by acceleration in the new direction
- make effective open turns with momentum maintained throughout an arc
- tighten a turn up or open it out, and carry or lose speed during a turn
- control over a figure-of-8 course
- effective edging strategies to control and manoeuvre the boat whilst on the move
- use of the wind/trim/flow to help turn their craft (as appropriate to the craft used)
- accurately reverse to manoeuvre the boat into a new position
- move their boat sideways (approx. 5m) from a stationary position in both directions
- sideslip at least a boat width in each direction to avoid an obstacle, starting from a good cruising speed and maintaining forward speed.

*Recovery from being off balance – leaders:*

- can safely recover from a sudden tilt (with the boat off balance) from a static position and whilst on the move.

## **12. The leader selects an appropriate craft from which to lead**

The leader demonstrates the ability, judgement and decision making to select appropriate craft from which to lead, matched to their personal competence, experience and the leadership demands.

This may be influenced, for example, by:

- group needs/trip aims (e.g. speed of travel, support, inspiration)
- craft speed v stability, the range of craft used within the group
- weather/water conditions
- leadership style (level of control)
- ability to perform rescues (linked to size/ability of group members and the craft used)
- ability to provide safety cover (can they get to where they need to?)
- group management requirements.

## **Journeying Skills**

### **13. The leader uses skills beyond the paddle to compliment the effective undertaking of the journey**

This will depend on the environments, craft and trip specifics, but may include use of ropes, portaging skills, sailing or rafting.

**14. The leader applies effective and simple navigation skills within trip planning, whilst undertaking a journey, and in relation to situations that may require a change of plan or evacuation**

For example, the leader:

- uses effective planning to identify an appropriate journey for the group
- can navigate effectively whilst on the water
- can make effective decisions around route choice
- works within the boundaries of access rights and responsibilities
- can use a map and compass to support their navigation
- can evaluate how environmental conditions and group abilities influence speed of travel
- can manage a group while portaging around a headland or weir
- can identify and navigate to access, egress, shelter and evacuation points.

**15. The leader demonstrates the ability to respond to, and manage, the physical demands associated with undertaking and leading a journey**

For example, the leader is aware of their individual capacities and can apply techniques and tactics to fulfil their leadership responsibilities within their physical limitations.

**16. The leader demonstrates the ability to respond to, and manage, the psychological demands associated with undertaking and leading a journey**

For example, the leader is able to perceive, understand and manage their emotions and arousal levels appropriately.

**17. The leader can manage themselves within appropriate safety frameworks**

For example, an appropriate attitude to risk and personal hydration, nutrition, warmth.

## C. Rescue Skills

To ensure the leader's own safety and the safety of others, they need to show they can deal with a range of rescue situations relevant to the craft used (inc. mixed fleet) and the sheltered water environments.

Leaders can present for assessment **in any craft** that is safe and suitable for the remit of the award and the assessment tasks. This may include for example; touring kayaks, open canoes, suitable sit-on-tops, general purpose kayaks, stand-up-paddleboards, crew boats, or racing craft. The leader is required to demonstrate the ability, judgement and decision making to select appropriate craft from which to lead, matched to their personal competence, experience and the leadership demands.

In addition to this, assessors should explore, through questioning, which craft the leader deems they are competent to lead/lead from; the assessor will sample (practically and through questioning) as much of the range as possible throughout the duration of the assessment.

Specific guidance is provided within each rescue regarding the minimum craft requirements. In addition to this, assessors should explore through questioning which craft the leader deems they are competent to lead/lead from; the assessor will sample (practically and through questioning) as much of the range as possible throughout the duration of the assessment.

The emphasis for the leader is that they have accurate judgement of personal skills and can be an effective team leader, so they can look after themselves and others while paddling in the environments as stated.

**Throwlines:** Bank-based throwline swimmer rescues have not been included within the syllabus as boat-based rescue techniques are more widely applicable to the remit of the Paddlesport Leader. The Paddlesport Leader should avoid scenarios where a throwline might be considered necessary. Throwline rescues in the moving water environment require specific skills, with potential risk to life if used poorly. A throwline can still be a useful resource for leaders to use within their wider leadership equipment, such as managing a portage or recovery of equipment.

Assessment session/s must be planned for the leaders to perform the necessary rescues. Realistic scenarios should be set-up to assess the leader's ability to assess the situation, make appropriate decisions throughout the rescue, and maintain their leadership responsibilities. It is likely the assessment of criteria 18-20 are blended together through a range of practical scenarios and questioning.

**Scenarios:** The overall ethos is that the Paddlesport Leader is operating in benign conditions, suitable for the group members' personal abilities (see Course Guide, page 6, for full remit). With this in mind, it is the leader's safety management and leadership skills that are the main priority to ensure that life threatening scenarios are not at all likely. (Safety management and leadership skills are covered within the Leadership element of assessment). Examples of typical scenarios that may be used are provided for each rescue, these should reflect the typical incidents that the leader is likely to have to deal with, whilst operating within the scope of their remit.

## Assessment Criteria

### 18. The leader demonstrates competence in a range of specific rescue scenarios

This must include the following:

- recover a capsized paddler and their equipment from both deep and slow moving water
- recover an upright, incapacitated paddler to the shore in both deep and slow moving water
- rescue an unconscious paddler from deep-water
- rescue an upright, entrapped paddler from slow moving water
- perform an effective self-rescue in both deep and slow moving water
- recover a paddler in a swamped craft in both deep and slow moving water.

The minimum times for the completion of each rescue given aim to provide guidance to leaders and assessors regarding reasonable expectations. They are not intended to be used as a race against the clock, the leader is required to remain calm and in control, balancing the need for the rescue to be done in a timely fashion but not forgetting the self-team-victim-equipment protocol.

Specific details for each rescue are provided on pages 18 – 22).

### 19. The leader deals with problems and accidents following the correct procedures

The leader must demonstrate application of appropriate underpinning principles, knowledge and understanding to inform effective actions during a rescue scenario; this includes:

- accurate assessment of the situation
- appropriate choice of rescue, appropriate tactics used
- effective execution of rescue (inc. safe, effective emptying of water, management of equipment/people and recovery of the swimmer)
- effective recovery of casualty (and equipment) to a stable environment
- application of shout-reach-throw-row-go principles
- application of self-team-victim-equipment protocol
- appropriate selection/use of rescue equipment
- avoidance of hypothermia
- appropriate first-aid response
- understanding of water features and hazards
- understanding the effect of weather conditions
- appropriate personal safety precautions taken (inc. safe moving and handling)
- appropriate manner (calm and in control)
- appropriate support for the person being rescued and the other group members
- maintaining group management responsibilities.



**20. The leader can carry out emergency procedures when necessary**

This will include, for example:

- following organisational procedures
- assess – consider options – raise alarm – stabilise – execute plan
- being able to evacuate from the water
- knowing when to take an individual out of a session
- having knowledge of nearest phone, help, vehicle
- calling for qualified assistance where required; understand who to call and with what information they may need
- giving accurate information when calling for qualified assistance
- understanding how to deal with being late-back or caught out overnight.

## Recover a capsized paddler and their equipment from deep/slow moving water

Leaders are required to effectively rescue participants in like with like craft (i.e. the craft paddled by the leader and group member), and at least one other genre of craft (i.e. touring kayak, general purpose kayak, open canoe, suitable sit-on-top, racing craft or stand-up-paddleboard). The rescue of larger crew boats will be required when deemed relevant to the leader's normal working environment.

Assessment scenarios should reflect common situations. This may include swimmer in varying states of calm/anxiety, or situations that may have occurred during the leadership element of assessment. When real rescues performed in the leadership element of assessment occur, they should of course be used as evidence within the rescue skills assessment.

### Minimum requirements:

As a minimum, leaders are required to rescue two genres of craft, demonstrating rescues in both deep and slow moving water. It is most likely that the leader will perform four different rescues; showing the rescue of two different genre of boat (one as like-like, the other a different genre), in two different environments.

The leader should have stabilised situation within 3-minutes of the swimmer capsizing, including;

- the swimmer is out of the water and back in their own/another boat
- the swimmer's boat is under control (e.g. back with the paddler, tethered to another craft/the shore, or on the shore)
- the swimmer's paddle is under control (e.g. back with the paddler, in another craft, with another paddler, or on the shore)
- the leader demonstrates use of two different methods for getting the swimmer back into/onto their craft
- the leader demonstrates use of two different methods for emptying the craft
- The leader deals with problems and accidents following the correct procedures (see page 16).

**Open-Water Specifics:** Leaders are expected to rescue a capsized paddler using deep-water rescue, getting the paddler back in their craft within the deep water environment (i.e. without moving to shore or gaining assistance from shallows). A problem solving approach is required for rescuing different genre of craft using adaptations and the general principles to safely and effectively manage the situation.

**Slow moving-Water Specifics:** Leaders should choose the most appropriate method of rescue for the particular situation. They could choose to bring the swimmer and their equipment to shore, or perform a deep-water rescue.

The leader should be able to recover a boat that is:

- adrift following a capsize
- separated from the paddler (i.e. the boat and paddler are on different banks)
- broached or pinned following a capsize.

Scenarios where success is achieved by pulling in the right direction, with a throwline attached to the pull the boat off. If this is not successful, solutions such as:

- add more people to pull
- secure bank end of line to suitable anchor and hand tension rope
- vector pull at 90 degrees to rope from as near the middle of rope as possible.

The overall ethos is that the Paddlesport Leader is operating in benign conditions, suitable for the group members' personal abilities (see Course Guide, page 6, for full remit). With this in mind, it is the leader's safety management and leadership skills that are the main priority to avoid being in conditions where mechanical advantage is required.

### **Recover an upright, but incapacitated paddler to the shore**

Leaders are required to effectively rescue participants in like with like craft (i.e. the craft paddled by the leader and group member are the same), and at least one other genre of craft (i.e. touring kayak, general purpose kayak, open canoe, suitable sit-on-top, racing craft or stand-up-paddleboard). The rescue of larger crew boats will be required when deemed relevant to the leader's normal working environment.

Leaders are expected to choose from the following rescues covered on the BC Foundation Safety and Rescue Training:

- nudging/pushing the paddler to shore
- bringing the paddler into/onto your own boat
- use of slings, webbing, painters or other improvised systems
- use of purpose made tow lines
- towing from the body, the boat, paired or rafted boats.

Assessment scenarios should reflect common situations. For example, to help someone who is injured, tired, unable to manoeuvre (e.g. skills gap), has lost their paddle, or situations that may have occurred during the leadership element of assessment.

### **Minimum requirements;**

The leader is required to recover an upright, but incapacitated paddler to shore. The leader can choose their preferred system, and must demonstrate it being set-up, used, released and reset in a safe/timely fashion. The leader should have recovered the paddler to shore within 3-minutes from the start of the rescue.

The leader deals with problems and accidents following the correct procedures (see page 16).

It is most likely that the leader will perform four different rescues; showing the rescue of two different genre of boat (one as like-like, the other a different genre), in each of the two different environments.

## **Rescue an unconscious/entrapped paddler**

Leaders are required to effectively rescue participants in like with like craft (i.e. the craft paddled by the leader and group member are the same), and at least one other genre of craft (i.e. touring kayak, general purpose kayak, open canoe, suitable sit-on-top, racing craft or stand-up-paddleboard). Situations involving larger crew boats will be required when deemed relevant to the leader's normal working environment.

Leaders are expected to choose from the following rescues covered on the BC Foundation Safety and Rescue Training:

- rescuer in their boat reaches over and rights the upturned boat
- the rescuer enters the water and reaches over and rights the upturned boat
- the rescuer enters the water to recover the casualty.

See BC FSRT Course Notes for more details on the execution of these rescues.

### **Minimum requirements – rescue an unconscious paddler from deep-water:**

Leaders are required to show one of the three methods listed above in an open/deep-water environment. The leader should have stabilised the situation within 1-minute of the incident, including that an unconscious paddler would have an open airway, and the situation has been stabilised. The leader can describe their actions thereafter.

The leader deals with problems and accidents following the correct procedures (see page 16).

### **Minimum requirements - rescue an upright, entrapped paddler from slow moving water**

Leaders are required to show they can free a paddler who has become stuck, in a low-risk scenario.

Assessment scenarios should reflect common situations. The overall ethos is that the Paddlesport Leader is operating in benign conditions, suitable for the group members' personal abilities (see Course Guide, page 6, for full remit). With this in mind, it is the leader's safety management and leadership skills are the main priority to ensure that life threatening entrapments in moving water environments are not at all likely (this is covered within the Leadership element of assessment). Situations where a group member may have got caught up in a low risk scenario; (e.g. on a shallow bank or upright against an object) should be used to frame this aspect of assessment.

The leader deals with problems and accidents following the correct procedures (see page 16).

## **Perform an effective self-rescue in both deep and slow moving water**

The leader is required to capsize and perform an effective self-rescue in both deep water away from the shore and a slow moving water environment. This should include all craft that the leader has chosen to use at assessment. In addition to this, assessors will sample (practically and through questioning) as much of the full range that the leader has deemed they are competent to lead from.

Leaders are expected to choose an appropriate rescue for the craft they are in. For example:

- roll
- capsize and get back in/on (pump/bail)
- swim to shore.

### **Minimum requirements:**

Leaders must have an effective method of self-rescue following capsize in deep water (without swimming to the shore and without gaining assistance from shallows).

Leaders must have an effective method of self-rescue following a capsize in slow moving water.

The solutions must be effective should the leader capsize whilst in sole charge of a group and be completed to the point where they can continue with their leadership responsibilities.

Leaders may direct group members (assumed to be beginners) to help stabilise/empty their craft.

The leader deals with problems and accidents following the correct procedures (see page 16).

Note: Leaders paddling a closed cockpit craft presenting must be asked to attempt a roll. If unsuccessful, they must continue with an alternative method of self-rescue. The need to develop a consistent roll must be action planned. Leaders must be aware that a roll is deemed a core skill expected of the Paddlesport Leader when paddling closed cockpit craft. Other methods of recovery should be seen as a backup option rather than the norm.

## **Recover a paddler in a swamped craft in both deep and slow moving water**

Leaders are required to effectively rescue participants in like with like craft (i.e. the craft paddled by the leader and group member are the same), and at least one other genre of craft (i.e. touring kayak, general purpose kayak, open canoe, suitable sit-on-top, racing craft or stand-up-paddleboard). The rescue of larger crew boats will be required when deemed relevant to the leader's normal working environment.

Leaders are expected to use a problem solving approach to stabilise the situation. They are likely to utilise skills typically used for rescuing capsized or incapacitated paddlers, e.g. boat emptying methods, towing methods.

Assessment scenarios should reflect common situations; for example, swamped by unexpected waves, swamped whilst playing games, through equipment failure, or situations that may have occurred during the leadership element of assessment.

### **Minimum requirements:**

The leader is required to recover a situation where one or more members of the group have swamped craft. The leader should have recovered the situation within 5-minutes from the start of the rescue.

It is most likely that the leader will perform two different rescues; showing the rescue of two different genre of boat (one as like-like, the other a different genre), in two different environments.

The leader deals with problems and accidents following the correct procedures (see page 16).

## D. Underpinning Background Knowledge, Understanding and Experience

A wide range of background knowledge, understanding and experience is required to fulfil the leader's responsibilities and to inform the leader's judgements and decision-making. The assessment of this will be blended throughout the assessment programme, with questioning, discussion, specific tasks and evidenced by the actions taken.

Practical leadership, personal paddling and rescue skills are underpinned by:

- the ability to explain and justify leadership decisions
- an extensive base of background knowledge and understanding
- relevant and adequate experience to support the decision making process
- understanding of deployment matters and leadership responsibilities
- a commitment to reflective practice and the ability to learn from experience.

This applies to a range of scenarios relating to leading mixed fleets in the sheltered water environment and not just those experienced on the day of assessment.

### Experience

Quality experience is critical to underpin sound leadership decisions. Assessors must be confident that the leader has a relevant and adequate experience base upon which to draw upon and support their decision making process. Examples of evidence include logbook, journey planners and practical assessment, and through discussion and questioning.

It is expected that the leader's base of experience support:

- leading in a range of relevant craft, environments and conditions
- leading in a range of challenging and changeable conditions
- leading in both familiar and unfamiliar situations
- rescues in a range of craft/environments
- being able to deal with a range of problems
- working with a range of different people; for example, known and unknown participants with different needs and aspirations.

This experience may be gained through a variety of different leadership roles within paddlesport and can be supplemented with relevant experience outside of the paddlesport environment.

Within the Course Guide we suggest that candidates who are successful at assessment normally have a minimum of the following experience, gathered through a range of different environments:

- 12 trips as an active, capable member of a group (of at least 4 hours' duration)
- 12 trips acting as leader (of at least 4 hours' duration).

### **Deployment matters and leadership responsibilities**

The leader demonstrates an understanding of deployment matters and their leadership responsibilities. For example:

- first-aid training
- keeping up-to-date with current best practice
- child protection training and disclosure
- equality
- medical declaration, working with injuries, physical competence
- Duty of Care
- Code of Ethics
- incident reporting
- injury prevention and manual handling
- insurance
- deployer's risk assessment and operating procedures.