

3 Star White Water Kayak Assessment Notes

Technical Syllabus

Part A – Personal Paddling Skills

The emphasis for the paddler is that they will have a holistic approach to running the river. The manoeuvres and strokes should be blended as appropriate. The assessment should not be seen as a tick box of skills.

It is expected that paddlers will be able to perform all skills on both sides and on moving water.

A.1 Lifting, carrying, launching and landing

Paddlers will show appropriate lifting and carrying techniques, using others as required.

Paddlers will be able to demonstrate launching and landing from a range of reasonable access/egress points.

A.2 Efficient forward paddling

Throughout the assessment paddlers will show that they have an efficient forward paddling technique. They should be able to accelerate their kayak as required for the river or skill.

A.3 Moving sideways on the move

Paddlers will be required to be able to move sideways while under momentum for a variety of tasks on the river e.g. avoiding rocks or positioning.

At this level a continuous fluid movement should be evident.

Providers will be looking for the stroke to be incorporated into forward paddling. This should be co-ordinated and smooth, with a clear movement of the kayak sideways and yet the kayak should continue moving forward on its new path with little loss of forward speed.

A.4 Supporting

The key here is the range of skills. Paddlers will need to understand why they would choose one skill over another.

Paddlers should be able to maintain their balance and recover this by using their positive contact points, and should understand how the paddle can aid this.

When engaging the paddle in the water the paddlers should be aware of the need to keep shape and form.

A.5 Rolling

The ability to roll is a key river skill. Paddlers need to be able to roll up following a capsized to both the left and right. A confident, consistent, and repeatable roll is required.

A.6 Breaking in and out

Paddlers will be able to choose a suitable technique to get into and out of eddies successfully. Providers will be looking at positioning on the river and the paddlers' choice of where to cross the eddy line. The importance of using the appropriate speed, angle, edge, trim, timing, dynamic balance and good body rotation should be evidenced throughout. The concept of using and reading the water with the idea of looking for 'future water' should be understood and evident.

A.7 Ferry gliding

Paddlers will be able to cross a consistent grade 2 flow without any major loss of momentum, maintaining the appropriate ferry angle and making adjustments as required.

The importance of being able to read the water and use it their advantage should be evidenced throughout.

A.8 S-turns

Often the eddies are not opposite each other and therefore the white water kayaker needs to link different turns together and complete an 'S-turn'.

Paddlers will be able to open up a ferry angle to allow the kayak to move across and down the river to gain the new eddy.

As with ferry gliding the importance of reading and using the water to aid the manoeuvre should be evidenced throughout.

Providers will be looking to blend the river skills throughout the assessment; blending breaking in/out, ferry gliding and S-turns will allow the paddler to appreciate the flow and rhythm required in white water kayaking.

A.9 Maintaining direction

Paddlers will have a range of ways to maintain their direction while travelling on the river. Paddlers will be able to show various options for this including: use of linked strokes, use of the edge & timing the use of these to stay on line.

A.10 Changing direction

Paddlers will have a range of ways to change their direction while travelling on the river. Paddlers will be able to show various options including: use of linked strokes, use of the edge & timing the use of these to stay on line. The concept of using and reading the water with the idea of looking for 'future water' should be understood and evident.

A.11 Reverse paddling and stopping

Paddlers will be able to stop or reverse their kayak. This should be done within context of being able to stop forward direction and move away from hazard.

A.12 Surfing

Surfing a wave is a fun but essential skill that enables paddlers to manoeuvre their kayak around on the river. Paddlers should be able to surf a wave, and this should be done within the context of using the wave to cross or manoeuvre around on the river. Paddlers will be able to leave eddies to establish a surf as well as catching them from above.

Part B – Rescue Skills

The emphasis for the paddler is that they can be an effective member of a team. This includes being able to look after themselves and others while paddling white water. During this element paddlers should act as the rescuer and also be rescued.

B.1 Use of tape and karabiner

An essential piece of equipment for any white water kayaker is a length of tape and karabiner. These can be used in many ways to look after paddlers and equipment.

Providers will be looking for the paddler to show:

- Knots to create a sling
- Storage of equipment
- When/how to use them for rescuing equipment

B.2 Eskimo rescue

Paddlers will be able to use both bow and paddle presentation and be able to give examples of when and where each of these may be used.

Consideration of the location for this to happen should not be forgotten by paddlers.

B.3 Throwline rescue

Paddlers will be able to show that they can rescue a swimmer 10m from the bank in moving water.

Paddlers will show that they are aware of:

- Stance for throwing
- Types of throw
- Holding the load
- How the swimmer will hold the line
- Where the swimmer will end up

B.4 Capsize, swim and self-rescue

Capsizing and swimming is part of learning to white water kayak. Paddlers will be able to effect a self-rescue after a capsize.

Paddlers to show that they are aware of:

- Safe swimming including defensive and aggressive swimming
- Choice of where to swim to
- How to deal with your paddle and kayak including: swimming with your paddle, turning kayak upright & use of swim tails
- When to let go of equipment and swim for safety

B.5 Rescue a capsized, swimming paddler and their equipment

Paddlers will show that they can be part of a team and help another paddler. This will include:

- Picking up swimmers
- Picking up paddles
- Moving kayaks back to bank
- Combination of all three of the above

At this level it should be done at the bottom of rapids and in a pool. Paddlers will show that they are aware of their limitations and options when rescuing another paddler.

Part C – Safety, Leadership & Group Skills

During the assessment paddlers should show they have the ability to contribute to the successful descent of the river. These skills will be blended throughout the assessment. These skills include:

C.1 Personal risk management

Paddlers will be able to show that they have the experience and judgement required to safely operate on moving water up to and including grade 2.

They should be able to understand what they need to do look after themselves and to not put themselves in any danger. This would include:

- Equipment needed for a day on the river
- Hydration and energy required
- Warm-ups
- Manual handling
- Identifying hazards
- Choosing suitable lines to paddle
- River etiquette

C.2 Awareness of others

Paddlers will be aware that there are others around them and that they all contribute to being part of a group on the river. They should be aware of these other paddlers and be responsible for their own actions amongst the group. This may include areas such as: communication, positioning within the team following each other, moving out of the way at eddies or their positioning during rescues.

Providers will be looking at this throughout the assessment period.

C.3 Paddle a section of grade 2 water as part of a led group

Paddlers will be able to be part of a group being led down grade 2 water. Paddlers will be able to demonstrate that they are aware of the different ways to move down the river, from one at a time to all together. This will help them be part of that group, and be aware of different ways to descend the river and their responsibility within those differing ways.

Part D – Theory

The emphasis of the assessment is that the paddler shows the required knowledge of an intermediate white water paddler. This should be blended throughout the assessment.

D.1 Equipment

Sample subject areas:

- Choice of equipment for white water kayaking.
- Where to store throwline, tape and krab.
- Spare equipment required.

D.2 Safety

Sample subject areas:

- Choice of clothing for white water kayaking.
- Hydrology and river features.

D.3 Weather

Sample subject areas:

- Where to gain up to date weather information.
- Important elements of a forecast for white water kayaking.

D.4 Wellbeing, health and first aid

Sample subject areas:

- Prevention, signs and treatment of hypothermia & hyperthermia.
- Importance of first aid for the white water kayaker.
- Choice of first aid courses to recommend for the white water kayaker.

D.5 Access

Sample subject areas:

- Current access situation around the UK.
- Paddler rights & responsibilities.

D.6 Environment

Sample subject areas:

- Our role in protecting the white water environment.
- Leave No Trace principles.

D.7 Planning

Sample subject areas:

- Where to find information on white water kayaking trips available.
- Using and interpreting white water guidebooks.
- Understanding of the international river grade system.

D.8 Group awareness

Sample subject areas:

- Skills required to be part of a team white water kayaking.
- Communication strategies for the river.

D.9 General knowledge

Sample subject areas:

- How to organise shuttles.
- Equipment repairs.
- Spares.

D.10 Navigation

Sample subject areas:

- Use of maps and compass for the white water kayaker.
- Understanding hydrology and how this effects your paddling route.

D.11 Etiquette

Sample subject areas:

- Understanding river etiquette and / or other users.
- General awareness of others coming into eddies and own positioning.

D.12 Personal paddling skills

Sample subject areas:

Understanding of key concepts such as:

- Correct shape and form.
- Future water.
- Fundamental Paddlesport Skills (posture, connectivity, power transfer, feel).