

5 Star Sea Kayak Leader Syllabus

Aim

Successful performance at this level indicates that a candidate has the personal skill level, leadership ability and judgment to lead paddlers with a range of experience, up to and including advanced tidal water.

The British Canoeing 5 Star Leader has the skills and judgment to select appropriate environments for paddlers with a range of experience. The British Canoeing 5 Star Leader Award is a leadership award and not a coaching award.

Candidates are assessed to a verifiable common level, regional and climatic variations notwithstanding.

This award is intended for paddlers who journey on the sea in areas where tidal races, headlands, open crossings, swell and challenging coastlines will be encountered. The award should be accessible to all those people who journey on the sea on a regular basis and should not be seen as the preserve of a few elite performers. It is envisaged that a committed club paddler, sea kayaking regularly in a suitable range of situations, sea areas and conditions should be able to obtain this award within a period of 3 years.

Following assessment British Canoeing 5 Star Leaders must have in place civil liability insurance (included in comprehensive Home Nation membership), knowledge of Child Protection guidelines and good practice including checks where necessary and maintain evidence of currency.

NB: Wind scales and sea states used here are as advised by the Met Office.

Advanced Tidal Water/Sea Definition

Any journey on the sea where tidal races, overfalls or open crossings may be encountered, which cannot be avoided; sections of coastline where landings may not be possible or difficult; difficult sea states and/or stronger winds (Beaufort Force 4 or above); launching and landing through surf (up to 1.5 metres trough to crest height).

(Extracted from Terms of Reference)

Training and Assessment Courses

To achieve British Canoeing 5 Star Sea Kayak Leader candidates are required to attend British Canoeing 5 Star Sea Kayak Leader Training. This involves at least 2 days of formal training in personal skills, leadership, and safety and rescue (including night paddle/s). Some training courses also include the prerequisite British Canoeing Open Water Navigation and Tidal Planning course (extending the programme by an additional day). Training is valid for 3 years, during this time, and upon completion of the assessment prerequisites, candidates can then put themselves forward for assessment. Assessments are normally run over 2 days, including 2 evening exercises.

It is also strongly recommended that further training be undertaken based on the candidate's action plan in different sea areas and a variety of environmental conditions.

Related British Canoeing Policies

See 'Reasonable Adjustments for Paddlesports Awards and Coaching' for details about how providers can make adjustments for paddlers with specific disabilities

See 'British Canoeing Appeals Procedure' for details of how candidates can go about making an appeal or complaint about the conduct of a British Canoeing Star Award

Accredited Prior Learning (APL)

See 'APL Guidance Notes' for details of how to apply for accredited prior learning. APL is mainly used to allow individuals access to a British Canoeing qualification where they do not hold the specific prerequisite for that award, but have equitable prior learning.

APL may be appropriate for candidates with relevant and extensive paddling and leadership experience who wish to request exemption from the requirement to hold the relevant British Canoeing 4 Star Leader Award or British Canoeing Level 3 Coach before being able to access British Canoeing 5 Star Leader Training.

Useful Information

Please refer to the British Canoeing 5 Star Sea Leader Training and Assessment Notes and the British Canoeing Star Award Guidance Notes for further information.

Training Prerequisites

- British Canoeing 4 Star Sea Kayak Leader or British Canoeing Level 3 Sea Coach (see note above regarding APL)
- British Canoeing Open Water Navigation and Tidal Planning course or similar RYA course (for acceptable RYA alternatives see 'Using RYA Awards to APL British Canoeing Navigation and Tidal Planning Courses' available on the Home Nation websites)

Assessment Prerequisites

- Home Nation British Canoeing 5 Star Sea Leadership Registration (LR)
- Valid (within 3 years) British Canoeing recognised 2 day first aid award
- Previous experience: the candidate must provide documentary evidence of a minimum of 30 varied, quality, advanced sea kayak days in 3 non-adjacent sea areas (see British Canoeing 5 Star Sea Kayak Assessment Notes for more guidance)
- British Canoeing 5 Star Sea Kayak Leader Training (within last 3 years)
- Candidates must be 18 or over at the time of assessment

VHF Radio Requirements

All candidates are required to carry a VHF radio. The provider will assess radio protocol and that UK residents are aware of licencing requirements.

Craft

The British Canoeing 5 Star Sea Kayak Leader Award is designed for sea kayakers and the award must be undertaken in a sea kayak. A modern sea kayak could be described as a directionally stable closed cockpit kayak that is designed for the demands of open sea conditions, with internal buoyancy created by watertight bulkheads accessed through waterproof hatches.

If the kayak is fitted with a rudder, it must be disabled for the duration of the assessment.

Equipment

Personal and group equipment appropriate for the remit of the award and relevant to the assessment environment.

Trainer and Assessor

British Canoeing 5 Star Sea Leader Provider.

Assessment Venue

The choice of venue should give the opportunity for journeying in tidal areas with tide races, no landing zones, rocky coastlines, periods of no less than Beaufort Force 5, and launching and landing in surf (up to 1.5 metres trough to crest height).

If during assessment conditions are not suitable the process may be postponed.

Technical Syllabus

Part A – Personal Paddling Skills

The candidate is required to perform all skills in advanced water conditions, on both sides (unless otherwise stated):

- A.1 Launching and landing
- A.2 Efficient and effective forward and reverse paddling
- A.3 Efficient and effective manoeuvring and control
- A.4 Navigation on the water and in poor visibility
- A.5 Roll in rough water (the candidate is required to capsize on both sides, but a roll is only required on one side)

Part B – Rescue Skills

- B.1 Have knowledge of, and demonstrate skilful application of, appropriate rescue skills
- B.2 Self-rescue
- B.3 Be conversant with different methods of towing

Part C – Safety, Leadership & Group Skills

- C.1 Skilful application of leadership principles
- C.2 Appropriate leadership strategies, judgment and decision-making
- C.3 Safety awareness and risk management
- C.4 Exercise appropriate group control and management and show concern for the general welfare of other group members
- C.5 Demonstrate the capability to manage a range of incidents
- C.6 Provide guidance through top tips and handy hints

Part D – Theory

- D.1 Equipment and design
- D.2 Safety (includes Coastguard and rescue services)
- D.3 Weather
- D.4 Wellbeing, health and first aid
- D.5 Access
- D.6 Environment
- D.7 Planning
- D.8 Group awareness and management
- D.9 General knowledge
- D.10 Navigation
- D.11 Collision regulations and signals
- D.12 Leadership responsibilities
- D.13 Water features and hazards