

5 Star White Water Kayak Leader Assessment Notes

Technical Syllabus

The emphasis is on the application of strokes to achieve suitable techniques and boat control in real situations. The paddler will be required to show the ability to deal with a range of paddling conditions and have tactics to deal with the variety of paddling scenarios on advanced white water.

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.

Paddlers will be required to show all skills on both sides, and on grade 4 water.

A.1 Efficient and effective on-sight (without inspection) grade 4 river running skills

That will enable the paddler to lead up to 20km in one day

Paddlers will be aware of the variety of strategies available to them so that they could paddle 20km at this grade with a group. This is in essence about their swift decision-making process as well as their ability to use the group to good effect.

Providers will be looking for paddlers to use a variety of strategies that enable them to be swift in their decision-making.

Making a variety of different types of eddies

At this level paddlers should be able to show competence in attaining many different types of eddies that are found on advanced water. Paddlers should be able to adapt their paddling so that they can make these eddies with ease and flow in their paddling. Providers will be focusing in on forward paddling, positioning, use of speed and blend of strokes.

Positioning within the flow that allows paddlers to maintain and change direction as required

Paddlers should be able to hold their kayak on its course as well as move to a different course as they see fit. They will be able to do this in areas of clean flow as well as disturbed flow.

Providers will be looking for the paddlers' efficient forward paddling at all times.

Running slides, drops and waterfalls

Features such as slides and drops are commonly found on advanced white water and therefore paddlers need to have strategies for paddling and leading on them. Paddlers will demonstrate how to boof, and will demonstrate core principles such as posture, maintaining shape and core stability. The importance of timing in the manoeuvres as well as good forward paddling and the appreciation of 'where next' will be high on the agenda.

Using, or avoiding, features to aid descent (including waves, stoppers, diagonals and towbacks)

Paddlers should understand the use of hydrology and how to read the water in such a way that allows them to use the river to their advantage. This should then allow them to know what features and therefore what skills should be blended, to enable them to move around on the river in control and with a sense of flow.

A.2 Tactical understanding

Advanced white water kayaking is all about the appropriate blend of tactics to aid the descent of the river.

The importance of understanding river features and the hydrology as well as the range of options available will be in evidence in the paddlers' white water kayaking.

A.3 White water roll

Rolling is vital in the repertoire of skills that the advanced white water kayaker will have. Paddlers need to be able to roll in control, have an awareness of where they are in the rapid and get back on line.

Part B – Rescue Skills

The emphasis for the paddler is that they can be an effective member of a group. This would include being able to look after themselves and others while paddling on advanced white water.

B.1 Demonstrate skilful application of appropriate boat and bank-based safety and rescue skills

Paddlers will be aware of situations where it would be appropriate to be on the bank and understand the limitations as well as advantages of this. They will be able to be skilful in their application and selection of strategies required.

Paddlers will understand their role in looking after the group as well as themselves during portaging. They will be able to show strategies for looking after themselves and others.

Paddlers will be aware of situations where it would be appropriate to be in a boat to aid the safety for the team. They will be able to be skilful in the selection of boat based rescue strategies.

B.2 Incident management and first aid in the advanced white water environment

Paddlers will be able to manage incidents and administer first aid in the advanced white water environment.

They will be able to move/look after the casualty for an extended time as well as gaining outside help.

B.3 Effective group leader and group member in rescues and incidents

Paddlers will be an effective group leader/member throughout the assessment.

Part C – Safety, Leadership & Group Skills

During the assessment paddlers should show they have the ability to lead others on the successful descent of advanced white water. These skills will be blended throughout the assessment and take place on rivers up to and including grade 4(5). The following skills will be in evidence for use with both experienced and inexperienced advanced environment paddlers:

C.1 Skilful application of leadership principles (e.g. CLAP)

C.2 Appropriate leadership strategies, judgement and decision-making

C.3 Safety awareness and risk management

C.4 Group control and management

Paddlers will have a range of leadership strategies that allow them to make the appropriate decisions for the route down the river. They should be able to adapt these decisions and show good judgement as required. Paddlers will be able to use the CLAP model as a basis to work from so that they have varied and adaptable leadership tools available to use.

Paddlers will show a clear use of:

- Identifying suitable lines down complex rapids.
- How to use their team on the day to affect a positive outcome.
- Prompt and suitable decision-making.
- Sound leadership strategies for the advanced water environment.
- Skilful boat control to aid positioning on the river.

C.5 Intervening strategies

Paddlers will be able to show that they have a range of options to intervene at the appropriate time to ensure that potential problems don't escalate.

These may include:

- The skilful application of leadership strategies.
- The decision to rest/scout or portage.
- The decision to change tactics or techniques.
- The use of goal setting.
- Managing paddlers' arousal levels.
- The decision to change the pace and nature of the descent.

C.6 Controlling and managing outcomes

Paddlers will be able to show that they have options to manage the outcome successfully during the trip to ensure the safety of all concerned.

These may include:

- Route planning and trip choice.
- Change of route plan.
- Use of emergency action plans.
- Use of safety briefs.
- Managing expectations from the team.
- Change of leadership strategies.

Part D – Theory

The emphasis of the assessment is that the paddler can show the required knowledge of an advanced white water kayaker. This should be blended throughout the assessment.

D.1 Equipment

Paddlers should understand fully the equipment required for operating at this level and in the advanced water environment. Paddlers should understand what they are carrying and why they carry the required equipment.

D.2 Safety

Paddlers should have the knowledge of up-to-date safety requirements for the advanced white water environment. Paddlers should be aware of the need to dynamic risk assess the advanced white water environment and understand how to evaluate these risks.

D.3 Weather

Paddlers will be able to gain an up-to-date weather forecast and show how the forecast affects the decision-making process.

D.4 Wellbeing, health and first aid

Paddlers will be able to ensure that they have the right level of first aid training and will understand how to apply this training to the advanced white water environment.

D.5 Access

Paddlers should understand the range of access issues that exist throughout the UK and where they can find additional information. They should have the understanding as to how this will apply to them as a river leader.

D.6 Environment

An appreciation of the environment we paddle in is a key underpinning principle for many in paddlesport. Paddlers will show they understand their duty in maintaining and protecting the environment.

D.7 Planning

Paddlers will be able to plan successful descents of rivers. This should include the full range of skills including contingency and emergency action plans.

D.8 Group awareness and management

Paddlers need to be aware of what constitutes being a productive member of a group. They will need to be aware of what questions to ask of themselves and others, and show that they understand fully the roles required when organising a group on/around and off the water.

D.9 Water features and hazards

Paddlers will be able to perform dynamic risk assessments, and will have an understanding of hydrology and how to use this while river leading.

D.10 Navigation

Vital skills for river leaders include the ability to use a guidebook, the ability to find where they are on a map, and being able to direct outside agencies to their location. Paddlers will have a clear understanding of this.

D.11 Etiquette

Paddlers should be aware of the British Canoeing Code of Conduct.

- Paddlers should have an understanding of river etiquette and/or other users.
- Paddlers should have a general awareness of others coming into eddies and their own positioning.

D.12 General knowledge

Paddlers will have an understanding of the types of paddlesport that they are involved in as well as the range of options available to those that they will be leading.

D.13 Leadership responsibilities

Paddlers should understand their roles and responsibilities as a river leader.

D.14 Personal paddling skills

Paddlers should have an understanding of the skills required and why they need to keep them up-to-date.