

3 Star Open Canoe Assessment Notes

Technical Syllabus

The emphasis for the candidate is that they have a holistic approach to paddling their canoe. The manoeuvres and strokes should be blended as appropriate. The assessment should not be seen as a tick box of skills.

Paddlers are expected to be able to paddle solo and as part of a tandem crew. When paddling as part of a tandem crew the paddler is expected to be able to paddle at both bow and stern and it is expected that the other crew member will be of a similar standard.

The essence of the requirement to be able to paddle solo and tandem is that tandem paddlers can cope if their partner becomes incapacitated, falls out, or is needed to join another crew. Whilst a Solo paddler may need to be able to bring another paddler into their craft to help them. Paddlers would normally participate in their 3 Star course as per their normal paddling preference (i.e. solo or tandem), but would be required to spend a short amount of time dealing with 'what if' type incidents.

For example;

- For tandem paddlers, could they solo paddle in the required conditions and recover their swimming partner back into their canoe.
- For solo paddlers, could they carry a passenger and paddle to reunite them with their own craft, or manoeuvre into position to rescue a capsized boat.

Part A – Personal Paddling Skills

It is expected that candidates are able to perform onside strokes on both sides and appropriate cross deck strokes on both sides to effectively manoeuvre their boat in all directions, in both solo and tandem craft.

The majority of on the water manoeuvres are assessed in an open water environment, in winds up to (and including) Beaufort force 3, unless specifically stated. Candidates are required to demonstrate control and efficiency using the appropriate choice of strokes to achieve the stated outcomes.

A.1 Lifting, carrying, and launching and landing

Paddlers should demonstrate the principles of safe lifting and carrying throughout the assessment. They should be able to launch and land in a variety of environments, minimising damage to the bank or boat.

A.2 Efficient forward paddling

Paddlers should demonstrate a fluent and adaptive forward paddling technique throughout the assessment.

Trim: Appropriate trim to the prevailing conditions must be in evidence throughout the assessment. The assessment should include travel in a number of directions relative to the wind in order for the paddler to demonstrate this understanding. Candidates will choose a side to paddle on to complement their trim and the wind direction. Providers may use a triangular course to fulfil this role, however, separate performance of this task may not be necessary if appropriate travel has been incorporated elsewhere in the assessment. The paddler should use a range of appropriate methods to adjust the trim.

Acceleration: Paddlers should demonstrate the ability to accelerate the canoe from a stationary position and whilst on the move within 3-4 strokes. The need for a vertical paddle shaft should be appreciated as well as a short, sharp correction to keep the boat on course.

Cruising: The stern (or solo) paddler should demonstrate a fluent and rhythmic forward paddling stroke that will predominantly be a J-stroke. This can be adapted to deal with the appropriate prevailing conditions. The demonstration should be over a distance of approximately 500m (throughout the assessment) and show good speed and control.

Knifed strokes: Paddlers should predominately demonstrate either a knifed J-stroke or Indian stroke. However, at times the paddler may need to use another stroke or technique in order to keep the boat under control. This is acceptable at this level.

A.3 Reverse paddling

Paddlers should demonstrate adaptive reverse paddling technique and remain in basic control and make way in Force 3 conditions. The paddler should choose the appropriate strokes to achieve the stated outcomes.

Trim: Appropriate trim to the prevailing conditions must be in evidence. The assessment should include travel in a number of directions. Providers may use a triangular course to fulfil this role, however, separate performance of this task may not be necessary if appropriate travel has been incorporated elsewhere in the assessment. Paddlers can use either themselves or any load carried to set the most appropriate trim.

Stopping and acceleration: Paddlers should demonstrate the ability to stop the canoe and then accelerate in reverse within 1-2 boat lengths.

Control over a figure-of-8 course: Paddlers should demonstrate a fluent and rhythmic reverse paddling stroke, the steering element of which will predominantly be a reverse J-stroke. This can be adapted to deal with the appropriate prevailing conditions. The demonstration should:

- Be around markers approximately 25 metres apart.
- Show good basic control while making headway (the use of controlling strokes that maintain momentum are acceptable, but it is expected that the reverse J will be used in the main).

A.4 Turns whilst on the move

Paddlers should demonstrate controlled turns throughout the assessment. The following moves must be performed to both the left and right. Onside strokes should be demonstrated on both sides and where appropriate cross deck strokes should be performed on both sides.

Tight turns: Paddlers should demonstrate tight turns around a point, followed by acceleration in the new direction.

Open turns: Paddlers should demonstrate more open turns where the momentum is maintained throughout the arc, with minimum loss of forward speed and using boat tilt in order to assist turning.

A.5 Moving sideways, both static and on the move

Paddlers should be able to move the canoe sideways both toward and away from the paddle (on both sides), and in a range of directions in relation to the wind. The criteria for this movement will be a balanced application of the stroke by the paddlers to avoid rolling or yawing. From stationary, the canoe should be moved sideways for 10m in each direction. From a good cruising speed the paddlers should be able to sideslip at least a canoe's width in each direction to avoid an obstacle and maintain forward speed.

A.6 Supporting, both static and on the move

Paddlers should be able to recover from a sudden tilt towards the paddle on both sides. Whilst performing this manoeuvre the water should reach the boat's gunwales; allowances will be made for craft variation here. This should be demonstrated either on open water (with winds up to, and including force 3), or on a simple flow.

A.7 Entering, crossing and exiting a simple flow

Paddlers should demonstrate entering, crossing and exiting a simple flow with appropriate angle, speed and boat tilt, and with minimal loss of ground. The paddler will need to show a range of technical skills to achieve this. For example, efficient forward paddling, acceleration, trim, manoeuvring into position etc. Manoeuvres should be performed to both the left and right. Onside strokes should be demonstrated on both sides and where appropriate cross deck strokes should be performed on both sides.

A.8 Poling

Paddlers should demonstrate the use of the pole in either shallow or deep water, to propel the canoe over 25m turning to the left and the right.

A.9 Sailing

Paddlers should be able to improvise and sail a downwind sailing rig for a tandem canoe. It must be evident that the improvised sail is having an effect on the boat's movement. The canoe should remain on a reasonably straight downwind course with the stern paddler steering appropriately.

A.10 Securing

Paddlers should be able to secure the canoe to the bank, pier, trailer, canoe rack or roof rack using appropriate knots, ropes or straps.

A.11 Painter uses (launching, shallows, securing to a jetty etc.)

The canoe should have an appropriate floating line fitted as a painter. Paddlers should use this painter to manoeuvre and secure the boat as appropriate throughout the assessment.

Part B – Rescue Skills

B.1 Capsize, swim and self-rescue

Paddlers should be able to capsize and climb back into the canoe (assistance can be provided by holding the gunwale). They should also be able to recover themselves and their equipment to shore over a distance of 20m in either open or moving water.

B.2 Deep-water rescue

Paddlers should be able to perform a safe and effective rescue of another canoeist and their upturned canoe, returning them to their canoe in either open or moving deep water. The capsized paddler may assist as instructed by the paddler.

B.3 Towing and use of towline

Paddlers should be able to tow a canoe using a line on open water. The tow must be over a distance of at least 25m and be released as for an emergency. Paddlers must be aware of the dangers associated with towing.

Part C – Safety, Leadership & Group Skills

C.1 Personal risk management

Throughout the assessment paddlers must demonstrate dynamic risk assessments.

C.2 Awareness of others

Throughout the assessment all paddlers must show effective observation and communication within their group.

C.3 Paddle a section of open water in wind conditions of Beaufort Force 3 as part of a led group

Part D – Theory

The provider should satisfy themselves that the paddler has a good general knowledge of the open canoe under the following headings:

D.1 Equipment (including paddle selection and injury prevention)

Paddlers should have knowledge and experience of using a range of equipment. They should know how and why equipment has evolved and how best to use it. Paddlers should be aware of the potential long-term damage that can result from prolonged use of inappropriate equipment.

D.2 Safety

Paddlers should have a sound safety framework with use of practical, dynamic risk assessments.

D.3 Weather

Paddlers should know how to understand and interpret weather forecast information from a variety of sources.

D.4 Wellbeing, health and first aid

Paddlers should understand the factors that contribute to hypothermia and have strategies to avoid it. They should be able to deal with the most likely paddlesport injuries.

D.5 Access

Paddlers should be aware of the range of access issues throughout the UK and where additional information can be found.

D.6 Environment

An appreciation of the environment we paddle in should be a key underpinning principle for paddlers. Paddlers should be aware of their environmental impact and be proactive in minimising this.

D.7 Planning

Paddlers should know what questions to ask and how to go about organising a day out.

D.8 Group Awareness

Paddlers should be a productive member of the paddling group and understand the different roles within a group of paddlers on the water.

D.9 General

Paddlers should have a wide general knowledge of all aspects of the sport.

D.10 Navigation

Paddlers should be able to use a map and compass to identify obvious features and identify their position.

D.11 Etiquette

Paddlers should promote a positive image for paddlesport with other river users and local residents.