



**Leadership and Raft Guide Awards  
Stand Up Paddleboard Inland  
Open Water Leader  
Assessment Guidance**

## **Stand Up Paddleboard (SUP) Inland Open Water 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 the:

- British Canoeing Leadership and Raft Guide Course Guide
- British Canoeing SUP Inland Open Water Leader Skills Checklist
- British Canoeing Leadership and Raft Guide Provider Notes
- British Canoeing Participant Focused Leadership Guidance
- British Canoeing Leadership and Raft Guide Sample Programme

The 'Leadership and Raft Guide Course Guide' provides details of the award and its general requirements. The 'Leadership and Raft Guide Provider Notes' expand on the organisational matters relating to training and assessment. The accompanying 'Participant Focused Leadership Guidance' provides clarity on the expected leadership principles and approaches. The 'Leadership and Raft Guide Sample Programme' provides examples of a 1 day and 2 day assessment outlines, as well as a 2 day Leadership training course programme.

### **Assessment Format**

Assessments must include the leading of a suitably sized group (minimum of 3).

The British Canoeing SUP Inland Open Water Leader qualification is appropriate for leading others on journeys on inland open water. This includes large areas of open water that exceed the sheltered water definition, where the paddlers are no more than 500 metres offshore and in wind strengths that do not exceed Beaufort force 4. It also includes moving water environments up to, but not including, grade 2 rivers (**not** involving shooting of, or playing on weirs or running rapids).

**Note:** The British Canoeing SUP Inland Open Water Leader would be deemed appropriate to operate in inland tidal water, which includes defined beaches where the group could easily land, slow moving estuaries (less than 0.5 Knots) and in winds not above Beaufort force 4 (force 3 if wind direction is offshore).

The group of students organised for assessment should reflect this demand whilst remaining within the Assessor's own risk management requirements.

Assessment venues chosen by Leadership Providers must include a reasonable range of options for the Leader to choose from.

The SUP Inland Open Water Leader Assessment will normally run over 1-2 days. This will depend on the course ratios and logistics relating to access of suitable environments. The Leader will be working from their suitably chosen SUP craft, which may include iSUPs and hardboards of an appropriate length and will be assessed leading a group of 3 to 6 paddlers.

Any equipment borrowed at the time for the purpose of the assessment will be treated as the Leader's own.

### **Assessment Methods**

Each Leader must be seen **leading a group (minimum of 3, maximum of 6)** in conditions at the top end of the environment.

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 sessions in both inland open and moving water environments, not just those experienced during the practical assessment.

## **Assessment Criteria**

### **A. Participant Focused Leadership Skills**

Leaders should understand and skilfully apply the [British Canoeing Leadership Model Principles](#) within the context of the award and environment that they operate. For further guidance and examples, refer to the 'British Canoeing Participant Focused Leadership Guidance' document.

#### **Judgement and Decision making**

A competent Leader uses effective judgement and decision making. Decision making is an essential skill for Leaders. Both slow-time decisions and in-the-moment, real-time and potentially pressured decisions will have a significant impact on the safety, enjoyment and performance of the group members.

#### **Venue Selection**

The Leader is required to select venues based on the needs of their participants. It is expected that their repertoire should include all environments stated in the environmental definitions.

#### **Safety**

The Leader designs and implements effective safety frameworks by undertaking sound risk assessments throughout, hazard awareness, pitching activities to suit both the group's aspirations and challenge. The Leader positions themselves within the group to cover safety and allow freedom. They will implement an effective

communication strategy, involving and engaging their group to enable a safe and enjoyable day that meets the group's aims and objectives.

### **Vision**

The Leader is a positive role model and aims to inspire others, showing both passion and enthusiasm for paddlesport consistent with the British Canoeing core values (e.g. access, environment, educational philosophy, equality).

### **Support and Challenge**

The Leader provides empathetic social support in a positive atmosphere, recognising individual needs, differences, strengths and abilities. The Leader creates a supportive climate to encourage teamwork. At times, the Leader supports appropriately challenging experiences, aligning the level inherent in the activity to motivate individuals, agreeing goals, helping others to set appropriate levels of challenge throughout.

### **Leadership Style and Behaviours**

The leadership style and behaviours applied will meet the needs of participants, the task and the environment. The Leader will empower their group when appropriate but may also need to be more controlling at times to ensure safety.

### **Equipment**

The Leader ensures that personal, group and safety equipment is suitable for the planned journey including craft choice and outfitting, clothing and supplementary resources to provide a safe and enjoyable trip.

### **Environmental Impact**

The Leader manages themselves and the group to reduce any negative impact on the environment, local communities and other water users.

## B. Personal Paddling Skills

Leaders need efficient and effective personal skills to facilitate safe, quality, enjoyable sessions in both inland open and moving water environments. 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.

### Applied Technical and Tactical Skills

The emphasis is on the ability to effectively and efficiently control their SUP in real situations, with consistency, in the 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 leading responsibilities.

Leaders need to show consistency in their ability to achieve a desired outcome. It is expected that they can control/manoeuvre their SUP 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 demonstrate the following personal skills:

- The Leader should demonstrate safe lifting and carrying techniques to move a board between a vehicle/trailer and the launch site. The Leader should manage the very real risks posed by moving SUPs in windy environments throughout;
- The Leader shows safe and effective set up of their board and equipment appropriate to the environmental conditions;

- The Leader demonstrates efficient and effective launching and landing from a variety of different access/egress points (e.g. beach, slip ways, rocky shore, steeply shelving beach) and is in control at all times;
- The Leader demonstrates an effective and dynamic body, paddle and foot positioning in a range of different water environments (e.g. upwind, downwind, wind generated surf, etc.);
- The Leader has an efficient, effective and adaptive forward paddling technique;
- The Leader understands and can select from a variety of effective and purposeful manoeuvres appropriate to the conditions, applying effective timing, body position and high levels of awareness of different interacting environmental conditions;
- The Leader uses support strokes effectively in a variety of water conditions.

## **Physical and Mental Awareness and Wellbeing**

The Leader demonstrates the ability to respond to, and manage, the physical demands associated with leading a session. For example, the Leader is aware of their individual capabilities and can apply techniques and tactics to fulfil their leadership responsibilities within their physical limitations.

The Leader demonstrates the ability to respond to, and manage, the psychological demands associated with leading a session. For example, the Leader is able to perceive, understand and manage their emotions and arousal levels appropriately.

The Leader can manage themselves within appropriate safety frameworks. For example, an appropriate attitude to risk and personal hydration, nutrition and 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 moderate inland environments. The emphasis for the Leader is that they have accurate judgement of personal skills and can be an effective Leader, so they can look after themselves and others while paddleboarding in the environment.

Assessment session/s must be planned for the Leader 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 responsibilities. It is likely that the assessment of criteria will be blended together through a range of practical scenarios and questioning.

**Scenarios:** 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. Scenarios should reflect the typical incidents that the Leader is likely to have to deal with, whilst operating within the scope of their remit.

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 (including safe, 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 the effect of weather conditions;
- appropriate personal safety precautions taken (including 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.

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.

The Leader should be prepared to demonstrate rescue skills at the top end of the remit for the award. Leaders are required to demonstrate the management of effective rescues and should be informed by an effective decision-making process.

The emphasis for the Leader is that they can be an effective leader of a team. This would include the ability to look after themselves and others while paddling in moderate inland environments of different characters, i.e. long or short fetch winds and associated waves and conditions, as well as different aspects of the wind, i.e. into, across and down wind and it's interactions with any tidal flow.

Throughout all of the rescues, the Leader should be seen in both moving water and inland open water being able to retain all of their own equipment and be able to formulate a plan of what to do next.

- Leaders should demonstrate an efficient and effective self-rescue, getting back on their board with minimal effort in both moving water and inland open water;
- Leaders should recover a SUP paddler and their equipment, in both environments, ready to continue the journey;
- Leaders will demonstrate landing a conscious, but incapacitated, SUP paddler in both moving water and inland open water;
- The Leader has a variety of options to assist a SUP paddler that cannot make progress in both moving water and inland open water;
- Leaders must have an appropriate towing system ready for use at all times, and must show effective strategies for towing a casualty to a point of shelter. They must be aware of the need for flexibility and be able to drop and pick up the tow with ease. They should demonstrate both single and multiple tows;
- Leaders are able to rescue an unconscious paddler from deep water and recover them to a point of safety and initiate simulated emergency evacuation procedures in both moving water and inland open water.

### **Incident Management:**

Leaders are able to show that they have the competence to lead a team of paddlers during rescues and incidents. Scenarios will incorporate incidents that involve people, equipment and/or rescues and may include:

- The process of maintaining an overview of the situation so that the safety and wellbeing of the whole group is never forgotten;
- Various strategies for group control, leadership styles and positioning;
- Moving groups in more challenging situations;

- Ability to judge the conditions and the standard of the group and make appropriate decisions about the planned route along with the need to modify plans as required;
- Incidents that involve people, e.g. medical conditions such as allergic reaction, hypothermia, and physical injuries to group members, etc.;
- Incidents that involve equipment, e.g. punctured iSUP, broken paddle, snapped leash, broken fin, hole in a hardboard, etc.;
- The necessity of carrying, and having easily accessible, a suitable first aid kit, along with familiarity with the use of the first aid kit contents;
- The necessity of carrying appropriate repair kit and ability to make typical on the water repairs, as well as more substantial repairs on land;
- Communicating with external agencies.

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

Leaders should demonstrate that they are aware of potential risks, safety precautions and safety thresholds pertinent to leading groups on moderate environments.

##### **Equipment**

- Leaders will demonstrate knowledge and experience of using a range of equipment, both personal and group safety;
- Leaders will know how to evaluate any equipment they use and the importance of how it should be maintained and carried, or worn, when in use.

##### **Safety**

- Leaders will be able to show they are aware of the risks and potential dangers associated with travelling in both inland open water and moving water environments;

- Leaders will show they have an understanding of simple solutions to common problems that they may encounter, whilst paddling in moderate inland conditions;
- Leaders should demonstrate dynamic risk assessments for themselves and the group;
- Leaders should carry a mobile phone and consider other methods of attracting attention such as Personal Location Beacon, Flares, LED Flares and VHF. Leaders would need to rationalise why they have chosen to carry such equipment.

### **Weather, Planning and Navigation**

- Leaders should demonstrate an awareness of any likely effect and interaction of wind and fetch, as well as wind and flow;
- Leaders can access a variety of sources of weather to be able to interpret such weather forecasts to predict the actual conditions to be encountered;
- Leaders can plan an appropriate safe journey, based on the group's aspirations and ability;
- The Leader will navigate accurately throughout the journey using both a map/compass and a Global Positioning System (GPS);
- The Leader should be able to work out an appropriate escape route using a map and GPS.

### **Access and Environment**

- Leaders can demonstrate that they are aware of the range of access issues and where they can find additional information;
- Leaders demonstrate an appreciation of the environment they paddle and an awareness of how to protect it;
- Leaders have a familiarity with typical flora, fauna and historical aspects expected to be found in the trip environments;
- Leaders should promote a positive image for SUP with other water users and local residents.

## Experience

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

It is expected that the Leader's base of experience supports:

- leading in a variety of moderate inland environments;
- rescues in a range of situations;
- being able to deal with a range of problems;
- working with a range of different clients; for example, known and unknown participants, with different needs and aspirations.

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

## Deployment Matters and Leadership Responsibilities

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

- First Aid training;
- Keeping up-to-date with current best practice;
- Continual Professional Development (CPD);
- Safeguarding training and disclosure;
- Equality;
- Medical declaration, working with injuries, physical competence;
- Duty of Care;
- Code of Conduct;
- Incident reporting;
- Injury prevention and manual handling;
- Insurance;
- Deployer's risk assessment and operating procedures.