

Stand up Paddleboard

SUP Sheltered Water Award

Award Description

This award is designed to develop your understanding of how to plan and paddle a Stand Up Paddleboard (SUP) in sheltered water, using the appropriate abilities and decision making skills to travel safely on your pre-determined route.

Extended Award Description

Your SUP Sheltered Water Award will give you the ability to organise and carry out an enjoyable and safe trip on the water up to 200 metres from shore, up to force 3 in winds. You will be confident in considering how far you can safely travel from the shore, whilst identifying safe exit points, expanding your knowledge of rescue techniques and looking at the external and environmental factors which may affect our journey. You will create proficient skills to anticipate and adapt to problems we may encounter to enable us to have a safe and enjoyable day out stand up paddleboarding. Your award should be seen as a sound basis for building the experience and knowledge associated with SUP White Water Award holders and SUP Surf Paddle Award holders.

Award Content

1. Location

In order to have an enjoyable day out on the SUP we need to make some key decisions to ensure we are in the right place at the right time.

Key factors influencing our decisions are the weather, wind and water conditions. We can take each of these factors into consideration and ask ourselves some questions to ensure the correct decisions are made.

Factor: Weather conditions

We may need to determine: Which direction and how strong is the wind? Is it due to increase or decrease? Is it going to change direction? How will we find this information? How will this information impact on our plans?



Factor: Access and environment

We may need to know: What restrictions might there be on the water we are paddling on? How would we know? How can we reduce our impact on the environment and animals around us? How might objects in the water affect our trip? What is the current water quality? What support is available in case of emergency and how would we direct it to us? What are the different launch sites available to us? What are the advantages and disadvantages of these?

2. Getting Ready

Before getting to the water we must choose suitable kit and equipment and have the correct knowledge to use it. Key points we may consider are:

What will we wear?

What are the clothing options available to us as surfers? Why might we choose one over the other? How might external factors affect which clothing we choose? How can what we wear protect us from potential hazards? What types of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) might we choose from and why? Are we confident in the use of our chosen personal safety equipment?

What will we use?

What are the different equipment options available and why might we choose one over the other? Is our choice appropriate for our ability and the expected conditions? What are the features of our board? How might different features of our board impact our paddling? What types of leash can we choose from and why might we choose one over the other? How might the size of our board impact our paddling? How might the length, size and material of our board impact our paddling? How do external and environmental factors affect SUP differently from other craft?

What will we take?

What additional equipment might we take? What drink and nutrition might we need for our trip? What safety kit and communication equipment would it be useful to have with us or available on the shore?

How else will we prepare?

Are we able to produce a verbal plan for our trip? Can we plan our trip by looking at the area we will be paddling? Are we able to make a navigational plan for our trip using a map? Do we have an Emergency Action Plan for our trip?

3. At the Water

Before we set out on our journey we need to be confident in our ability to deal with the complications it might bring. We must also be aware of other users and consider how we will safely get on the water.

Consideration: We may need to share the water with swimmers, paddlers and fishermen, amongst others.

We may need to observe: Who else is in the area? Are we using a managed or supervised venue? What is the etiquette? Where might we find that out? Where can we park and change considerately to other users? Who else is paddling with us? What is their current ability? Have we an agreed aim and motivation for the trip? Do we have any agreed signals to communicate whilst on the water and are we aware of how to respond to these? What techniques can we use to avoid each other whilst on the water? How might our group size, abilities and the prevailing conditions influence this?

Consideration: Safety and rescue

We may need to know: How best can we evaluate upcoming environmental factors to mitigate the impact they have on us? Are we able to determine which of these are a hazard or a help? Do we have the skills to utilise or avoid these? What would we do if someone we are paddling with gets really cold or overheats? How would we safely get ourselves back to shore? How could we use our board to rescue and retrieve and unconscious casualty? What potential injuries might we need to treat? How might we do this? Have we informed anyone where we are going and when to expect us back? Should we buddy up with a fellow supper? Are we able to implement our emergency action plan if needed? Are the conditions as expected? How can we change our plans if not?

Consideration: Getting to the water

We may need to determine: What is the best way to carry, load and secure our craft to protect ourselves or others from injury and prevent unnecessary damage? How will we get our craft and additional equipment to the water? How can we work together to achieve this? How will we safely store our kit during breaks? Are we able to get our board on and off the water from a range of different access environments? Are we able to get on and off our board from a range of different access environments? What techniques can we use to come from prone to standing and back in a balanced and controlled manner?

4. SUP Skills

When SUP paddling we should be in control. Key features of being in control include us staying relaxed, using our balance on our craft to move forwards and manoeuvre, and having a range of skills and knowledge to get us safely through our journey and to be able to deal with any mishaps.

Skill: Body, paddle and foot positioning

We may need to know: Are we able to stand and be balanced and comfortable in parallel and offset positions? When might we use these different positions? How can we use different parts of our body for an efficient forward paddling technique? How would we position ourselves differently when sitting or standing to maintain balance? What are the unique issues with standing in SUP based activities as opposed to other seated paddlesports? How might we practice putting ourselves off balance and learning good recovery methods? Why is it important for us to practice this? What paddle strokes can we use at each point to be as efficient as possible? What support strokes can we utilise? How do these work? How does our foot positioning and movement influence our movement and steering? Are we confident in moving our feet around when on the board? How can we engage different parts of our body to influence our turns? What techniques could we practice or games could we play to improve our balance and control?

Skill: Forward paddling

We may need to consider: Are we able to paddle forwards whilst staying balanced and in control of our board? How can we maintain our forward paddling technique over long periods? Which environmental conditions might have an effect on our forward paddling? How can we adapt our forward paddling technique for different conditions? How can we adapt our paddling style for continual and efficient forward paddling? How can we deliver power to accelerate whilst staying in control in a straight line?

Skill: Manoeuvring

We may need to consider: How can we use timing, paddle movement and strokes to influence our turns? What body positions can we use to get the most from each wave? How can we efficiently change direction whilst staying balanced and in control? Are we able to manoeuvre in a variety of different winds, waves and flow conditions? What different strokes and techniques can we use to help us in these conditions? Are we able to anticipate and adapt to sudden changes in environment?

Skill: Working as a group



We may need to know: How can we monitor and maintain our own well-being and performance and help other people to maintain theirs? How can we respond to this? Are we, and the people we are paddling with, coping with the conditions and expected future conditions? Are we sticking to the agreed plans and aims for our trip? Are we continually evaluating, anticipating and adapting to environmental changes whilst on the water? Are we able to adapt our plans if needed? Are we attending to our needs and the needs of others we are paddling with? Are the methods of communication we set up working effectively?

Skill: Dealing with mishaps

We may need to consider: How would we safely land or dismount our SUP in planned and unplanned situations? What different techniques might we use to get back to land or back on our board if we come off? Do we have the ability to get ourselves back to shore safely with or without our board? How would we rescue an unconscious or incapacitated paddler using our SUP? How would we tow a deflated or damaged SUP? How would we retrieve a lost paddle? How would we deal with our leash breaking? Are we able to release ourselves from our leash in the event of mishap? Do we know of any upcoming hazards and do we have the ability to deal with them?

5. After the Session

Every trip is an opportunity for learning and improving. We can create a positive impact on our future experiences by performing a good post-trip review.

Look around: When we're back on land we can think about our trip. Did anything unexpected happen or did anything change whilst we were out? If so, how and why? Think back to our trip; can we identify what went well and what didn't?

Watching what others do: It might be useful to spend some time watching other paddlers. How are they doing things? Are they using the same tactics and skills as we are? Do they seem to be paddling more effectively than we were? Can we see why?

Consider what you will take away: What have we learnt today? What can we focus on next time? Can we use video analysis to assess and develop our skills?

6. Future Development

Each day we spend SUP paddling we further expand our skills and knowledge. In SUP steady, gradual development is encouraged creating a more enjoyable

experience on the water. With no two experiences ever the same, we never stop learning.

Continually evaluating the choices we make creates a natural evolution of decision making ability and skills. When we reach a certain point, it may be worth considering moving onto the SUP White Water Award, SUP Paddle Surf Award or other discipline specific award pathways.

