

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.

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 2(3) water.

A.1 Lifting, carrying, launching and landing

Paddlers will show appropriate lifting and carrying techniques, using others as required.

Paddlers will be able to demonstrate launching and landing from a range of reasonable access/egress points. This should include areas of deep water, with the paddler keeping a hold of the kayak and paddle throughout.

A.2 Efficient and effective river running skills

These core white water skills aid the paddler in their competency and confidence on moving water. Paddlers will be efficient and effective in their core river paddling.

Forward paddling

Paddlers will have a good solid forward paddling stroke, as this is the key to successful river running. All other manoeuvres come from having the ability to forward paddle well.

Paddlers will be efficient in a variety of conditions as well as being able to gain momentum during their paddling.

Breaking in and out

Paddlers will be able to choose a suitable technique to get into and out of eddies successfully. Providers will be looking at positioning on the river and the paddlers' choice of where to cross the eddy line. The importance of using the appropriate speed, angle, edge, trim, timing, dynamic balance and good body rotation to be demonstrated throughout. The concept of using and reading the water with the idea of looking for 'future water' should be understood and evident.

Paddlers will be able to show a clear understanding of the varying tactics for different types of eddies.

Ferry gliding

The importance of being able to read the water and use it to their advantage should be demonstrated throughout.

Paddlers will be able to cross a consistent grade 2 flow without any major loss of momentum, maintaining the appropriate ferry angle and making adjustments as required.

They will also show that they have strategies for being able to adapt this and cross grade 3 flows.

S-turns

Often the eddies are not opposite each other and therefore the white water kayaker needs to link different turns together and complete an 'S-turn'.

Paddlers will be able to open up a ferry angle to allow the kayak to move across and down the river to gain the new eddy.

As with ferry gliding then the importance of reading and using the water to aid the manoeuvre should be evidenced throughout. For example, using the back of a stopper.

Providers will be looking to blend the river skills throughout the assessment; blending breaking in/out, ferry gliding and S-turns will allow the paddler to show they have the flow and rhythm required while white water kayaking.

Surf small waves

Paddlers will be able to catch small surf waves from a variety of ways. This will include from the side and above.

Paddlers will be able to show appropriate balance of edge control and trim, as well as strokes that maintain a surf, control a surf and regain a surf.

Providers are looking for paddlers to be smooth and in control throughout.

The importance of using these waves to cross the river should also be understood.

Paddle into and out of small stoppers

Paddlers will be able to identify what a suitable stopper is.

Providers will be looking for paddlers to use a dynamic edge, correct posture and active core, and blade throughout. Paddlers will be relaxed and controlled manner without relying on the blade for constant support.

Moving sideways on the move

Paddlers will be able to blend their strokes so that they can draw their kayak sideways in a variety of locations. The importance of blending forward momentum before and after the draw should be understood.

Supporting

Remaining in balance is an important part of white water kayaking. Therefore paddlers will have a range of ways to remain in balance and then regain balance once it has been lost. A range of tactics for this will be in evidence. These would include how to use their active posture and positive connections with the kayak, as well as a range of ways to use the paddle.

A.3 Rolling

The ability to roll at this level is a vital river skill and one that paddlers need to be able to complete on both sides.

A.4 Tactical understanding

As well as the core technical skills white water kayaking is about the tactics of river running and the ability to select the appropriate skill at the correct time.

Paddlers will have a range of options to position the kayak, that will be in evidence. These include: consideration to choice of strokes, maintaining momentum through the rapid, direction of travel, i.e. lateral momentum, and use of river features.

A.5 Environmental considerations

Paddlers will be able to demonstrate that they are aware of the topography of the river, its character/style, run off (steepness of ground), and gradient of river bed; all considerations that need to be taken into account as a leader, not only in the planning stage and selection of river to suit the individuals but also the approach on the river that is adopted.

A.6 Maintaining direction

Paddlers will have a range of ways to maintain their direction while travelling on the river. Paddlers will be able to show various options for this including: use of linked strokes, use of the edge and timing, and the use of these to stay on line. This will take place while travelling through areas of disturbed water including eddy lines, waves, stoppers and boils.

Providers will be looking at paddlers' forward paddling while maintaining direction.

A.7 Changing direction

Paddlers will have a range of ways to change their direction while travelling on the river. Paddlers will be able to show various options including: use of linked strokes, use of the edge and timing, and the use of these to stay on line. Providers will be looking at the paddlers' ability to use the river to aid them in changing direction. The concept of using and reading the water with the idea of looking for 'future water' should be understood and evident.

Part B – Rescue Skills

The emphasis for the paddler is that they can be an effective member of a team. This includes being able to look after themselves and others while paddling on grade 2(3) white water.

Paddlers to act as the rescuer, including taking responsibility for the rescue.

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

- Swimming and self-rescue;
- Throwline rescue;
- Rescue a capsized, swimming paddler and their equipment.

These core white water safety skills are key to successful rescues. Paddlers will be assessed on their ability to apply the skills developed in the British Canoeing White Water Safety and Rescue Training course. Paddlers will be able to demonstrate how these apply to them as river leaders.

Paddlers will have a range of tactics for the grade 2(3) environment and will have skills that allow them to lead a group and provide appropriate rescue cover from both boat, river and bank. Skills such as use of equipment and where to stow it, as well as what is appropriate equipment to carry will be part of the assessment.

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

Paddlers will be assessed dealing with first aid incidents within the moderate white water environment. Providers will be looking at paddlers' practical application of first aid skills including what first aid supplies are carried and where these are carried.

B.3 Effective group leader

Being an effective group leader is what the award is all about. Paddlers will be able to show practical skills in leadership tactics both on and off the water.

B.4 Group member in rescue and incidents

Paddlers need to be part of a group during rescues and incidents. They also need to be able to lead a group through a rescue incident. This would include the use of the group, positioning, and knowledge of equipment to solve the incident. This will involve the means to contact and deal with outside agencies.

Part C – Safety, Leadership and Group Skills

During the assessment, the paddlers should show they have the ability to lead others on the successful descent of the grade 2(3) river. These skills will be blended throughout the assessment and include:

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

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

C.3 Safety awareness and risk management

C.4 Group control and management

All of the above are about paddlers being able to effectively lead a group down a grade 2(3) river. Paddlers will be able to:

- Identify hazards;
- Choose suitable lines for the group/individual;
- Be an active member of the team;
- Make prompt and suitable decisions;
- Position themselves effectively during communication and pre-empt any issues;
- Use signals for effective communication.

Paddlers will be able to add to the group dynamic, which enables swift decision-making, clear communications and positive outcomes.

C.5 Intervening strategies

Paddlers will understand their options and how to intervene at the appropriate time to ensure that potential problems don't escalate.

Providers will be looking at how the paddlers adapt:

- The skilful application of the CLAP leadership model;
- The decision to rest/scout or portage;
- The decision to change tactics or techniques;
- The decision to change the pace and nature of the descent.

C.6 Controlling and managing outcomes

Paddlers should understand their options and understand how to manage the outcome successfully during the trip to ensure the safety of all concerned.

Providers will be looking at how the paddlers adapt:

- Route planning and trip choice;
- Change of route plan;
- Use of emergency action plans;
- Use of safety briefs.

Part D – Theory

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

D.1 Equipment

Paddlers should understand fully the equipment required for operating in the moderate water environment. Paddlers should understand what they carry and the reason why they carry the required equipment.

D.2 Safety

Paddlers should have the knowledge of up-to-date safety requirements for the moderate white water environment. Paddlers will be able to dynamic risk assess the moderate 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 know how the forecast affects the decision-making process.

D.4 Wellbeing, health and first aid

Paddlers will have the right level of first aid training and understand how to apply this training to the moderate white water environment.

D.5 Access

Paddlers should understand the range of access issues that can occur on rivers and where they can find additional information. They should understand how this will apply to them as a river leader.

D.6 Environment

Paddlers should demonstrate an appreciation of the environment.

D.7 Planning

Paddlers should understand what is involved in planning a successful descent of a river. This should include the full range of skills from access and egress through to contingency plans and setting up shuttles.

D.8 Group awareness and management

Paddlers should 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 both on and off the water.

D.9 Water features and hazards

Paddlers will understand how to perform a dynamic risk assessment, and will have an understanding of hydrology and how to use this while river leading.

D.10 Navigation

Paddlers should demonstrate the ability to; use a guidebook, find where they are on a map, and be able to direct outside agencies to their location.

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 should understand the types of paddlesport that they are involved in as well as the range of options available to those who 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 ensure that they have an understanding of the skills required and why they need to keep them up-to-date.