Technical Syllabus

Please note - the provider should use their discretion on elements of the syllabi when due to the craft being paddled, the syllabi request something inappropriate. For example; high kneeling sprint canoe paddlers are not set up to perform skills on both sides; paddlers using composite boats should be allowed reasonable adjustments to rescues to allow them to complete the task without damaging their craft.

Part A – Personal Paddling Skills

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

It is expected that paddlers are able to perform all skills on both sides, in all environments.

If the boat is fitted with a rudder, the provider must be satisfied that the paddler has the ability to get to safety if the rudder fails.

It is required that boats are fitted with buoyancy (e.g. bulkheads/airbags) sufficient to ensure that the boat stays at the surface and supports equipment in the event of a capsize.

A.1 Lifting, carrying, launching and landing

Paddlers should demonstrate good, safe, lifting and carrying techniques appropriate to moving a kayak from a vehicle, trailer, or boat rack to the launch site, using teamwork where necessary to limit the risk of accident and injury. The paddler should understand and be able to demonstrate safe lifting and carrying techniques. The paddler should be able to launch and land safely and efficiently from any simple launch/landing site with the boat afloat. The paddler should be aware of their impact on the environment and seek ways to minimise the risks.

A.2 Efficient forward paddling

Paddlers will be able to show the key points of good forward paddling technique and understand the importance of engaging the larger muscle groups of the body, not just relying on the arms.

Paddlers should demonstrate an effective range of forward paddling techniques including:

- Good trunk rotation, high paddling action with reasonably extended front arm.
- Good catch and power phase with early exit of the blade.
- Emphasis on the fundamentals; basic principles of forward paddling and connections.

The paddler will be observed throughout the assessment and should show good technique at cruising speed with sufficient power in the stroke to paddle against the prevailing conditions.

Acceleration: Paddlers should demonstrate the ability to accelerate the boat whilst on the move within 3 or 4 strokes.

Cruising: Paddlers should have an efficient and effective forward paddling stroke. They will be required to demonstrate this over a distance of about 500m (throughout the assessment), showing good speed and control.

Trim: Paddlers will have an appreciation of wind speed and direction and how it affects their boat. They will understand and show appropriate boat trim, paddling side and use of wind during their performance.

A.3 Efficient reverse paddling, stopping and accelerating

Paddlers should understand the key points of good reverse paddling technique and the importance of engaging the larger muscle groups of the body, not relying just on the arms.

Stopping and acceleration: Paddlers should demonstrate the ability to stop the kayak and then accelerate in reverse within 1-2 boat lengths. This is an essential skill should the paddler wish to descend rivers where they may need to check their speed and set the boat up for a reverse ferry glide.

Steering in reverse with a rudder: Paddlers should have the ability to steer in reverse with their rudder if it is fixed and cannot be raised. If the rudder can be raised then the paddler can raise it if required.

A.4 Turning whilst on the move

Paddlers should be able to turn the kayak 360 degrees in both directions by using alternate forward and reverse sweep strokes, in conjunction with edging to assist the manoeuvre.

The following should be in evidence in both directions:

Tight turns/open turns: Paddlers will have an appreciation of how to carry or lose speed during a turn. They will understand the effect that speed, boat edge and hull shape will have on the shape of their turn. In addition they should be able to use appropriate strokes to assist in tightening a turn up or opening it out.

Areas the paddler should be aware of and apply:

- Paddle blade covered, arm extension, elbow slightly bent. Blade placement and length of stroke.
- Turning the kayak through 90 degrees using both inside and outside edge, vertical and horizontal paddle positions.

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

Paddlers should demonstrate an efficient sideways movement, without the kayak turning, using a variety of techniques (with the body well rotated, paddle shaft upright, blade submerged).

Sculling draw: The aim is for the body to be well rotated, the paddle shaft vertical and the blade deep in the water. Paddlers should demonstrate an efficient sideways movement, without the kayak turning. Sideways displacement should be over approximately 5m and shown on both sides. The paddler will have an understanding of the need to avoid aerating the water by keeping a long slow fluid movement.

Draw on the move/hanging draw: The aim is for the kayak, whilst moving forward, to be pulled sideways from its course without turning. This should be at least a boat's width for the draw stroke and 2-3 metres for a hanging draw. Forward paddling should be maintained after the draw stoke.

This should be performed with the paddler paddling towards a buoy or gate so that accurate performance can be measured and co-ordination skills can be demonstrated by the paddler.

Both skills need to be performed on both sides.

A.6 Supporting

Paddlers should possess a range of support techniques in order to maintain balance in varied circumstances. These should include

- Low and high recovery strokes, stationary and on the move and on both sides. The kayak should be off balance and the paddler should keep their actions within their 'safety box'.
- The ability to keep the boat moving via forward paddling and maintain balance while the kayak is on edge.

A.7 The ability to deal with environmental concerns (i.e. wind, current, wash hanging and trim)

Wash hanging: Paddlers should be able to surf the bow wave of a lead boat. They should have an understanding of how wash hanging can help cover larger distances.

Paddlers will be able to demonstrate their ability to wash hang while journeying.

Trim: Paddlers will show an appreciation of wind speed and direction and how it affects their boat. Paddlers should also understand how boat trim, paddling side, wind speed and direction affect performance. Paddlers will have a range of techniques to enable them to adjust their trim and optimise their performance e.g. their seating position, carrying a load etc. They will be able to utilise areas such as winds of up to force 3, and understand that different types of kayaks behave differently.

A.8 Beyond the paddle - sailing and ropes

Sailing: Paddlers should be able to produce or improvise a sail to move downwind.

Ropes: Paddlers will be able to demonstrate the use of ropes tied onto the kayaks as a means to move the boat around.

Examples:

- Headlands.
- Up or down moving water.
- Rafting boats together.
- Tethering the kayak to the bank or storage rack.

A.9 Securing

Paddlers will have a number of methods to secure boats; this securing may be temporary such as a pier, jetty, riverbank, or shoreline, as well as for storage or transport (boat racks, roof racks and trailers). Any system is acceptable, but if rope is used it must be an efficient recognised knot.

Part B - Rescue Skills

The emphasis for paddlers is that they can be an effective member of a group. This includes being able to look after themselves and others. Paddlers should act as the rescuer, and be rescued during this element of the assessment.

B.1 Deep water rescue

Paddlers will be able to perform a safe, timely, and appropriate deep water rescue of a capsized paddler in the same type of craft as them, using of appropriate dialogue with the person whilst maintaining control of the rescue.

In performing any rescue paddlers should be aware of the importance of safe lifting techniques and how to best use the person in the water to assist in their own rescue.

B.2 Towing

Paddler must demonstrate a push or pull contact tow.

The paddler will also demonstrate a simple tow using a towline/tow system and demonstrate an emergency release. The paddler must indicate that they are aware of the inherent dangers of towing.

Paddlers must be able to move a ‘tired paddler’ across a short distance of approximately 50m on flat or very gently moving water.

B.3 Capsize, swim and self-rescue

Paddlers should be confident in being able to sort themselves out after capsizing 25m from shore

Paddlers should to swim back to shore with craft and paddle; climbing back in with assistance or climbing back on and reaching the bank to empty and recover are all acceptable.

Part C - Safety & Group Skills

During the assessment paddlers should show they have the ability to contribute to a successful trip/tour. These skills will be blended throughout the assessment. These skills will include:

C.1 Personal risk management

Paddlers will show they can apply the theory from Part D.

Paddlers should show ability in identifying hazards and choosing suitable lines.

C.2 Awareness of others

Awareness is important here; both of what is happening to the individual paddler and to others around them. Paddlers do not need to be responsible for others, beyond a normal duty of care, but they should work together and help each other through communication and physically moving out of the way to allow others to perform manoeuvres.

C.3 Paddling as part of a led group

Paddlers should understand their role within the group while on the water. This is should include the following areas:

- Communication: how the group are going to keep in touch with everyone. This is specifically important when dealing with an incident.
- Line of sight.
- Avoidance: how the group are going to avoid issues. This could include areas such as safety equipment, communication strategies, areas that are paddled, weather, etc.
- Positioning within the group: where group members need to position themselves so they can be of help in the following incidents: getting in and out of the water, during an incident, travelling down the river, going around a headland.

Part D – Theory

The emphasis of the assessment is that the paddler can show the required knowledge of an intermediate paddler. This should be blended throughout the assessment.

D.1 Equipment

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.

Sample subject areas:

- Choice of different types of paddle.
- Spare equipment required.
- Towing systems.

D.2 Safety

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

Sample subject areas:

- Choice of clothing.
- Water features on river and open water.

D.3 Weather

Paddlers should be able to understand and interpret weather forecast information from a variety of sources.

Sample subject areas:

- Where to gain up-to-date weather information.
- Important elements of a forecast for touring.

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.

Sample subject areas:

- Prevention, signs and treatment of hypothermia and hyperthermia.
- Importance of first aid for touring.
- Choice of first aid courses.

D.5 Access

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

Sample subject areas:

- Current access situation around the UK.
- Paddlers' rights & responsibilities.

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.

Sample subject areas:

- The paddlers' role in protecting the environment.
- Leave No Trace principles.

D.7 Planning

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

Sample subject areas:

- Where to find information on touring trips available.
- Using and interpreting guidebooks.

D.8 Group awareness

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

Sample subject areas:

- Navigation along rivers and canals.
- Communication within a group paddling.

D.9 General knowledge

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

Sample subject areas:

- Understanding of looking after equipment.
- Spares required.
- Other 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 and escape routes overland

Sample subject areas:

- Use of maps and compass.
- Understanding of water features/hazards and weather on their journey.

D.11 Etiquette

Paddlers should be encouraged to promote a positive image for paddlesports with other river users and local residents.

Sample subject areas:

- Understanding river etiquette and/or other users.
- General awareness of others coming into eddies and the paddler's own positioning.

D.12 Personal paddling skills

Paddlers should have knowledge of the personal paddling skills in Part A.

Sample subject areas:

Understanding of key concepts such as:

- Correct shape and form.
- Future water.
- Fundamental Paddlesport Skills (posture, connectivity, power transfer, feel).