4 Star Open Canoe Syllabus

The 4 Star Award is a leadership award and not a coaching award. It is not suitable for introducing beginners to the sport.

Aim
Successful performance at this level indicates that a candidate has the personal skill level and leadership ability required to lead a group of up to 4 competent paddlers (not including themselves), on river trips of grade 2 and on open water with winds up to force 4. The emphasis is on the application of strokes to achieve suitable techniques for moving water, and exposed open water, requiring the paddler to perform appropriate and effective manoeuvres real situations.

(Competent = Paddlers who do not require coaching to be in/on that environment)

Open Canoe Three Star standard is the appropriate level of performance for paddlers to begin working towards the Open Canoe Four Star.

Pre-requisites

- First aid award (minimum 8hrs training including CPR)
- Previous experience:
  - Provide evidence of 12 trips (minimum four hours duration) that includes at least:
  - 3 different grade 2 river trips and 3 different open water journeys with winds up to force 4 (minimum 4 hours duration), as a member of a group
  - 3 different grade 1-2 river trips, and 3 different open water journeys with winds up to force 3, (minimum 4 hours duration), as an assistant leader
  - The above journeys should involve some overnight camps.
- BCU 3 Star Award or be comfortably at 3* standard
- 4 Star Training:
- BCU White Water Safety and Rescue Training Course
- At least two days logged experience of formal training in personal skills, and leadership prior to assessment (see trainers notes). Whilst two days is seen as the minimum requirement, three, four or even five days may be more appropriate.
- Candidates must be 16 or over at the time of assessment.
- Candidates under the age of 18 can take the award, but cannot be deemed responsible for leadership by law until they turn 18, and must hold a current first aid award and have BCU coaching membership or private insurance.

Craft
A traditional open canoe suitable for the remit of the award and the assessment tasks, paddled solo or tandem. The candidate is expected to perform all paddle skills on both sides. Where the test is undertaking as part of a tandem crew then each paddler needs to demonstrate the ability to operate in both bow and stern.

Equipment
Personal and group equipment appropriate for the remit of the award and relevant to the assessment environment

Assessment Venue
The conditions for the assessment must include:

- Open water with winds not above force 4
- Moving water with sections of grade 2

Assessor

Current BCU A4 Canoe Assessor / BCU Level 3 Canoe Coach with 5 star and appropriate training or
New BCU (UKCC endorsed) Level 4 Canoe Coach

Ratio 1:4

Part A – Personal Paddling Skills
A.1 Lifting, carrying and launching/landing
A.2 Efficient and effective grade 2 river running skills

- Upstream manoeuvres (ferries & S-turns)
- Checking, setting and reverse ferry gliding
- Eddy turns both into and out of the current
- Supporting

A.3 Efficient and effective open water skills

- Paddle effectively up, down and across a force 3-4 wind
- Sailing

A.4 Lining
A.5 Poling
A.6 Navigation

Part B – Rescue Skills
B.1 Demonstrate skilful application of appropriate boat and bank-based safety and rescue skills:

- Open water self rescue
- Open water deepwater rescue
- Open water towing
- Moving water throw line rescue
- Moving water rescue of capsized paddler and equipment

B.3 Incident management and first aid in the 4 star environment
B.4 Effective team leader and team member in rescue / incidents

Part C – Safety, Leadership & Group Skills
C.1 Skilful application of leadership - e.g. CLAP principles
C.2 Appropriate leadership strategies, judgement and decision-making
C.3 Safety awareness and risk management

C.4 Group control and management
C.5 Equipment

Part D – Theory
D.1 Equipment
D.2 Safety
D.3 Weather
D.4 Hypothermia/First aid
D.5 Access
D.6 Environment
D.7 Planning
D.8 Group Awareness and Management
D.9 Navigation
D.10 Etiquette
D.11 General
D.12 Leadership Responsibilities
D.13 Water Features / Hazards

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