4 Star White Water Leaders Award – Assessor's notes

ASSESSMENT
The emphasis is now on a skilful paddler on moving water who can perform appropriate and effective manoeuvres rather than textbook strokes.

The candidate should be entirely comfortable on grade 2 water and show evidence of being able to paddle sections of grade 3 in a competent manner as part of a led group.

Assessment over 2 days, leading on both days. Candidates are expected to demonstrate appropriate paddling ability to full fill their leadership role. **Different assessors each day, assessor is not part of the lead group.**

Each candidate will present themselves suitably equipped for the test. All equipment should be both suitable and serviceable; borrowed equipment will be judged as though it is the candidate's own. Where equipment is found wanting then the candidate should not be assessed.

The following items of equipment should be presented for inspection:

1 **Kayak and paddle.** The Kayak should be fitted with a minimum of 6.5 kg (60N) securely fixed buoyancy and have air bags fitted in at least the rear of the kayak.
2 **Personal clothing.** Personal clothing should be appropriate to the expected conditions, and should include windproof and waterproof clothing.
3 **Buoyancy aid and helmet.** A buoyancy aid of minimum 50N inherent buoyancy should be worn. A lifejacket may be substituted in which case the candidate should know under what conditions it should be inflated, and should demonstrate its inflation and deflation. Helmets must be worn and should be CE approved.
4. **Simple first aid kit and repair kit.** The first aid kit should be appropriate to the level of first aid knowledge required under the Theory section. The repair kit should be appropriate to the type of kayak and ancillary equipment used.
5. **Spare clothing.** Adequate spare clothing should be carried. The clothing should be applicable to the prevailing conditions and suitable for use in a bivi bag to prevent hypothermia.
6. **Packed lunch**. A packed lunch and equipment for providing a hot drink (may be a vacuum flask) should be carried.
7. **Emergency equipment for personal use.** This should include: emergency food; whistle; exposure (bivi) bag of minimum size 1.8m by 0.9m (6' by 3'); torch; matches or lighter.
8. **Waterproof kit bag(**s). Spare equipment must be stored in appropriately secured, waterproof kit bag(s) and must remain dry, even after a capsize.
9. **Sling, Karabiner and an appropriate knife, plus a map**

Assessment will take 2 days and <u>normally</u> Parts A and B would be assessed on the first day with parts C and D on the second.

Part A – Personal Paddling Skills

A.1 Lifting, carrying and launching/landing

Candidates must get themselves to the river and into their boat in a manner which always reflects good manual handling principles. It would be good practise to request help when moving their boat on the land. Though at this level there is nothing new to what has gone before it would be remiss not to include this element. It is not expected to be a separate item from assessment just something the assessor should watch and be aware of at all times.

On grade 2 water.

A.2 Efficient and Effective River running skills

- Forward paddling
  A competent demonstration of effective forward paddling throughout the day, which is fluid and able to change up a gear as required.
- Breaking in/out
  Choosing the right techniques necessary to get into and out of eddies successfully, with effective use of speed, angle, edge, trim, timing, dynamic balance and good body rotation. Candidates should be able to link a set of eddies in a sequence of manoeuvres on a small rapid, demonstrating appropriate techniques for a variety of eddies i.e. those that require short fast turns, or wide slow turns etc.
- Ferry gliding
  Demonstrate forwards and reverse ferry gliding. Candidates should be able to cross a consistent grade 2 flow without any major loss of height, maintaining the ferry angle and also have the ability to make adjustments in ferry angles as required i.e. to cross eddy lines. Allowance needs to be made for specific conditions. It is not necessary to do a reverse break in, prior to a reverse ferry glide, but rather that they should be able to perform the manoeuvres whilst in the main current with reverse strokes.
- Surf small waves
  Candidates should show an ability to surf small waves, use waves to cross and move from eddy to eddy. Using a combination of skills such as stern rudders, low brace strokes, body trim and quick change of edge.
- Paddle into and out of small stoppers
  It is crucial that candidates (and the assessor) can recognise friendly stoppers. Having identified such a stopper candidates should be able to paddle into and then out in a relaxed manner using a constant dynamic edge, correct posture and an active core. The paddler should be able to move forward and backwards in the stopper under control and exit on demand. A combination of strokes may be required at times, but a reliance on sculling strokes or continual capsizing would be a fail.
- Draw stroke on the move
  Candidates should be able to avoid an obstacle i.e. rock while on the river, more than one stroke may be needed.

- Supporting
  Support strokes should be performed with the upper body forward over the cockpit to lower the centre of gravity and not sat back over the stern deck that could lead to the exposure of the shoulder to hyper extension and dislocations,

A.3 Rolling.
Candidates are required to roll and show support strokes on moving water.
A good roll is expected and should be performed competently and with reasonable consistency.

Practical On Grade 3

Candidates are expected to be able to paddle a short section of grade 3 water competently, as part of a led group. Candidates should be an active member of the group, contributing to the prompt descent of the river. It is important that they add to the group dynamic, which enables swift decision making, clear communications and positive outcomes.

Part B – Rescue Skills

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

- Swimming
  Demonstrate defensive and aggressive swimming on a suitable section of moving water.
- Throw line rescue
  Demonstrate a 10m throw to rescue a swimmer descending a grade 2 rapid.
- Rescue capsized, swimming paddler and equipment
  Candidates are required to rescue a capsized kayaker on a simple piece of moving water, getting the swimmer and kayak to safety over a distance of 15m. At least two forms of rescue should be shown with a knowledge of pro's and con's of both.

B.2 Incident management and first aid in the 4 star environment

A basic first aid incident should be explored with the candidates so that they can put first aid training into the 'real' situation. Perhaps linked with the element below.

B.3 Effective team leader and team member in rescue / incidents

'Effective' here simply means showing that they don't panic, can think clearly and logically with regard to the incident. A full mountain rescue situation is not envisaged where as a minor incident on a river such as dealing with a small cut on the head or loss of a boat/paddle in a semi remote setting is. Each candidate should be given a minor incident to deal with.

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

Candidates must show they have the experience and judgement required to safely lead a small group on grade 2 water, max 4 in group. The ability of the group should be competent paddlers who do not need coaching. Candidates should show ability in identifying hazards and choosing suitable lines. Each candidate will need to lead the group down a section of grade 2 water safely and competently. All candidates need to be active members of the group contributing to the prompt descent of the river, playing a leadership role where required and placing themselves in effective rescue locations when required. It is important that the candidate adds to the group dynamic an enabling swift decision making, clear communications and positive outcomes.
The use of some signals or other communication strategies should be demonstrated. Gear and equipment carried should be looked at but each 'leader' does not need to carry everything, rather it is a 'collective responsibility'.
Candidates should also demonstrate the ability to map read or at least identify where they are on the map and suggest suitable emergency ways off the river using the map.

Each candidate would normally lead the group twice over a section of a grade 2 river.

Part D – Theory
D.1 Equipment
They should show a good knowledge of kayaks, paddles and a range of personal equipment.

D.2 Safety
Candidates should be aware of the dangers and problems associated with paddling on moving water, and the position, which should be adopted if swimming in fast moving water.
Candidates when shown a suitable rock or bridge, should be able to explain how to undertake a rescue if a kayak were jammed against it. The actual jamming of a boat is NOT required. Basic principles only should be described i.e. lift one end and use the power of the water to help.

D.3 Weather
Candidates should have a very basic understanding of weather i.e. low and high pressure and which I likely to bring rain, the influence of mountains on this and wind direction in relation to rain fall and its dangers on open water.

D.4 Hypothermia/First aid

They should show a good understanding of immersion hypothermia, its causes and symptoms. Be able to deal with basic first aid incidents - e.g. a cut forehead or hand - or hold a first aid certificate. It should be evident that they can deal with an incident and see it through to its conclusion, including simple evacuations, dealing with emergency services and group care.

D.5 Access

Candidates should be aware of

- the difficulties of paddling on British waters
- how to gain information on access to rivers and lakes
- the problems of canoeing on private waters
- how great sensitivity needs to be shown when launching and landing: i.e. towards residents, landowners, farmers, and anglers.

D.6 Environment

Be aware of the policy set out in the BCU leaflet *'Earning a Welcome'* and show appreciation of the need to avoid obvious disturbance to wildlife such as playing 'hide and seek' around reed beds.

D.7 Planning

Candidates should show an understanding of what is involved in planning a trip down a river;

- access and egress
- equipment requirements
- significance of a weather forecast
- shuttle procedures
- lunch stops
- contingency plans

D.8 Group Awareness and Management

The candidate should show that they have an understanding of the importance of self control when travelling with a group on grade II water and the problems which could occur without positive group discipline.

D.9 Water Features / Hazards

They should know what constitutes dangerous water features e.g. dangerous stoppers, weirs etc.

D.10 Navigation

Candidates should be able to align a map, work out the distance between two points, and identify any particular features, which would indicate position. They should also be able to use an appropriate guidebook.

D.11 Etiquette

They should know the basic country code and BCU code of conduct.

D.12 General

Candidates should have a good understanding of the types of canoeing in which they are involved, and know something about the range of activities which the sport incorporates, together with an awareness of one or more of the competitive forms of canoeing which have World Championships or Olympic status, and Britain's performance in them

D.13 Leadership Responsibilities

They should have an understanding of the legal and moral responsibilities a leader carries – not in great depth but a realisation of the importance of their responsibility to their group, Club and the BCU.

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