

British Canoeing

Paddlesport Leader

Course Guide

British Canoeing Paddlesport Leader Course Guide

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Introduction

Welcome to the British Canoeing Paddlesport Leader Course Guide. This guide introduces you to the qualification content and structure.

Why choose a British Canoeing Qualification?

- Our qualifications give hands on knowledge and competence to lead paddlesport activity
- British Canoeing has over 40 years' experience providing paddlesport qualifications
- We aim to give you support and impartial advice whatever your experience, skills or specific needs
- Our qualifications have been accepted as the industry standard for over 35 years
- We aim to provide fit for purpose qualifications through a quality assured and cost effective service
- We are the only Governing Body in the UK offering the Paddlesport Leader Award.

British Canoeing Paddlesport Leader courses are delivered via the British Canoeing and the Home Nation Associations. There are systems of internal and external verification to maintain standards and consistency.

British Canoeing Educational Philosophy

British Canoeing believes in a participant led approach when creating and enabling experience from which people will enjoy, learn and develop through paddlesport. The Paddlesport Leader Award is designed to support Leaders to run safe, quality, enjoyable trips based on their group's needs and aspirations; in a way that is both supportive and empowering to the paddler. We hope through this approach that paddlers will achieve success, this success being focused on the journey and not the destination.

As an aspirant Paddlesport Leader, your training/assessment experience should also be safe, engaging and enjoyable, with you guiding your own learning and development. Our course providers should deliver the programme using a supportive and empowering approach to instil an active passion for both paddlesport and leading. Whilst meeting your individual needs, fostering a sense of a paddling community and developing understanding and respect for the environment in which paddlesport takes place.

The British Canoeing Paddlesport Leader

The Paddlesport Leader qualification is suitable for people taking on formal leadership responsibilities in sheltered water.

The Role of the Paddlesport Leader

The primary role of the Paddlesport Leader is to lead, to supervise, or facilitate safe, quality, enjoyable trips based on their group's needs and aspirations. Safety, quality and enjoyment will primarily be achieved through choice of venue, equipment and leadership strategies that match the group's specific needs. The award does not include progressive coaching of technical skills but focuses on learning through experience.

The purpose of the trips/journeys may be wide ranging. For example:

- to support an educational experience; e.g. school or outdoor education activity
- to support a social experience; e.g. club activity, social celebrations
- for travel/exploration; e.g. to access or visit special places
- to support an opportunity to practice or train; e.g. staff training or club activity
- to support unstructured participation; e.g. free play
- to provide the opportunity to try a new activity; e.g. guided trips

We anticipate that the qualification is likely to be used by:

- Leaders in clubs
- Leaders for providers/centres who offer paddlesport activity
- Commercial paddlesport guides
- Leaders within schools, Duke of Edinburgh, Youth Groups, Uniform groups etc.

One of the main responsibilities of a Paddlesport Leader is to use their skills and judgement to select appropriate trips/journeys for the paddlers they work with. These decisions will be based on their own abilities and skills, and the profiling of their group's needs and aspirations.

The qualification is designed such that the Leader can choose the craft from which they work, and can look after others in both single discipline and mixed fleets. This may include for example; touring kayaks, open canoes, suitable sit-on-tops, general purpose kayaks, stand-up-paddleboards, crew boats, or racing craft.

Further guidance for deployment can be found on page 13.

Further information

The 'Paddlesport Leader Assessment Guidance' provides further information regarding the award assessment criteria. This is available to download from the Home Nation Association Websites (contact details are available on page 16).

Remit - Where can the Paddlesport Leader Operate?

The overall ethos is that the Paddlesport Leader is operating in benign conditions. As a Paddlesport Leader, you will be responsible for selecting suitable trips where the conditions (physical and environmental) match the group's needs and your own skills and abilities. It is important that:

- there are frequent and regular landings that can be easily and quickly accessed by all group members (200 metres from an easy landing is considered the maximum distance appropriate)
- within the landings there are frequent and regular escape options possible for the group to evacuate the water
- the Leader is confident that the paddlers in the group have the ability to avoid hazards present (e.g. other water users, or being swept/blown out of the safe working area)
- the Leader is confident that the conditions (e.g. wind, weather, temperature, water level, tide, visibility, mud-flats, drying heights, sand-banks etc.) will not hinder the group's ability to land or avoid hazards
- the Leader is confident that the group has the ability to remain in the safe working area at all times (particularly in the event of a capsize or a paddler becoming incapacitated)

Within the scope of the Paddlesport Leader Award, this is restricted to the following Sheltered Inland Water:

- Canals
- Ungraded sections of slow moving rivers where the group could paddle upstream against the flow (not involving the shooting of, or playing on, weirs or running rapids)
- Areas of open water (e.g. lakes and lochs) not more than 200m offshore and in wind strengths that do not exceed Beaufort force 3 (Beaufort force 2 if wind direction is offshore)

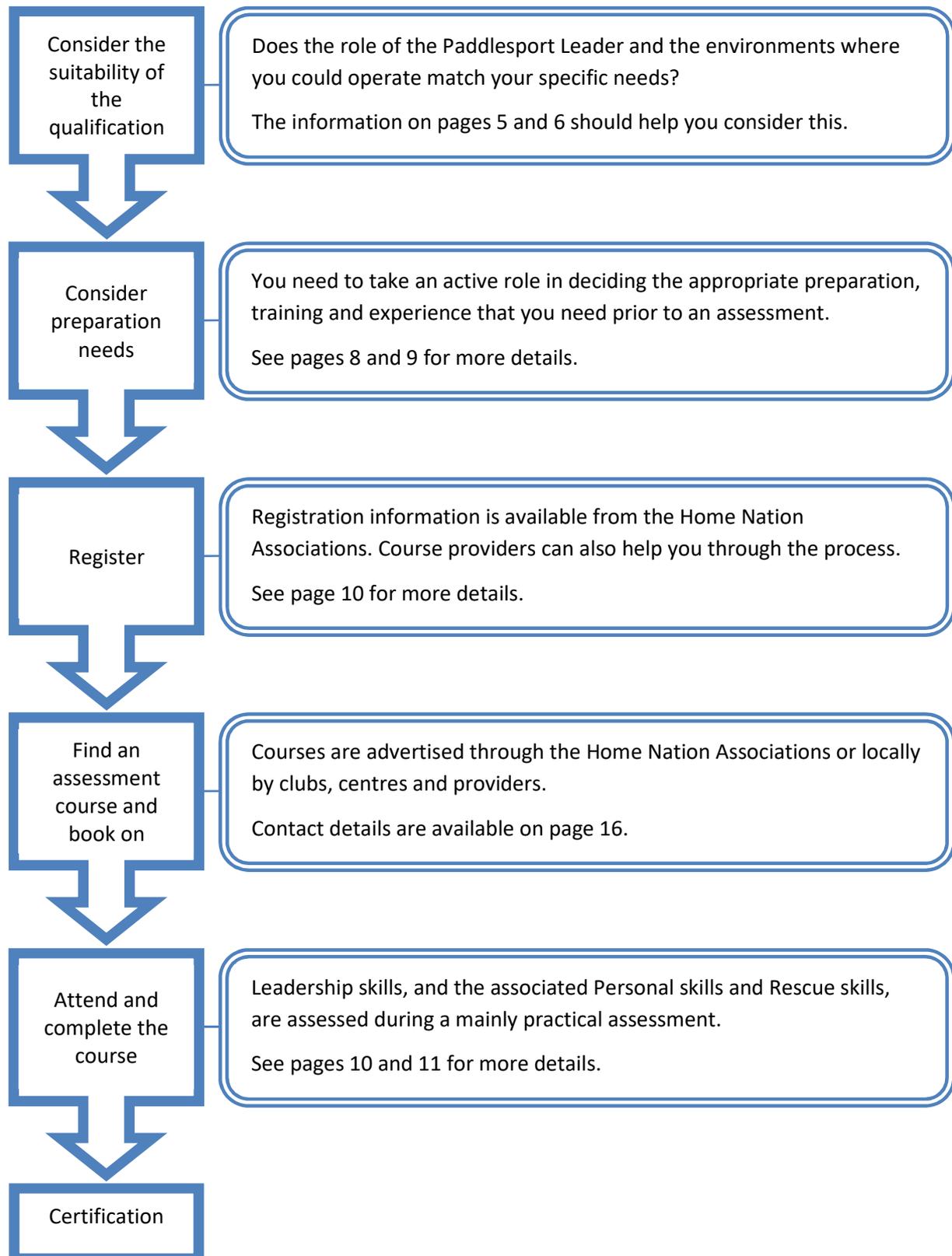
And the following Sheltered Tidal Water:

- Small enclosed bays or enclosed harbours
- Defined beaches where the group could easily and quickly land at all times
- Slow moving estuaries (less than 0.5 Knots)
- Winds not above Beaufort force 3 (Beaufort force 2 if wind direction is offshore)

When considering the use of any Open Water (Coastal or Inland) it must be noted that the risk of being blown/swept off shore has significant consequences that must be appropriately managed.

Environmental considerations must also be taken into consideration. All paddlers have a responsibility to be sensitive to, and minimise their impact on the physical environment, local communities, and other users in the areas where they are paddling.

The Paddlesport Leader Pathway



Preparation for Assessment

Introduction

Informal learning, experience based learning, and an availability of individualised choices are important to developing skilled leaders. To supplement this, British Canoeing provides quality training opportunities for those that seek them. It is important that you take an active role in deciding the appropriate preparation, training and experience that you need prior to presenting yourself for assessment. Guidance is offered below to help you construct this personalised development journey.

British Canoeing Training

British Canoeing Paddlesport Leader Training courses are available to support you in your development of the required skills. These courses typically cover leadership skills, and the associated personal skills, safety and rescue skills. As this training is delivered by British Canoeing Paddlesport Leader Providers, they will also be able to help you identify an appropriate action plan to support your progress towards a successful assessment. This is the comprehensive option; courses are normally offered as 2-5 day programmes, with longer courses providing more time for you to practice and develop the skills.

You may also wish to consider the following more specific British Canoeing courses for some targeted development (further details on page 15):

- British Canoeing Foundation Safety and Rescue Training
- Personal Skills Training via Personal Coaching or 3 Star Courses
- British Canoeing Coastal Navigation and Tidal Planning Training

The Home Nation Associations advertise these various British Canoeing courses in conjunction with course providers. See Home Nation Association websites for further details (contact details are on page 16).

Other Training Opportunities

You may wish to opt for more bespoke training opportunities. For example, private tuition, in-house training through your work place, working alongside/shadowing other Leaders, or conference/symposium workshops. Many British Canoeing Paddlesport Leader providers are willing to offer bespoke training to individuals or groups of individuals. The benefit of working with a Paddlesport Leader Provider is that they have explicit knowledge of the award requirements. However, there are a great many other experienced Leaders who may be in a position to support your development; the Paddlesport Leader Assessment Guidance (available to download from Home Nation Association website) can be used as a steer as to the skills required.

Experience

Quality experience is critical to support the development of aspiring Paddlesport Leaders. The demands encountered provide significant learning opportunities and the learning gained will inform sound Leadership decisions in the future.

Consider the range of experience that you have in a variety of challenging and changeable environments. Whilst working within appropriate safety management systems, we advise that you have:

- Leading experience in a range of relevant craft, environments and conditions
- Experience leading in both familiar and unfamiliar situations
- Experience where you are acting as the main leader with the associated responsibilities
- Experience working with a range of different people. For example; known and unknown participants with different needs and aspirations
- Been observed leading and received useful feedback and support

As a guide, candidates who are successful at assessment normally have a minimum of the following experience, gathered through a range of different environments:

- 12 trips as an active, capable member of a group (of at least 4 hours' duration)
- 12 trips acting as leader (of at least 4 hours' duration)

Candidates are required to bring a logbook of experience to assessment. This helps the Assessor to understand the experience upon which the decision making is based. A British Canoeing logbook is available from the Home Nation Associations.

Self-Reflection

Experience alone does not necessarily give rise to learning. Aspirant leaders should pay critical attention to their experiences and actions, actively engaging in the process thoughtfully, to learn from and make sense of situations. This is considered to be one of the most important sources of personal development and improvement. Self-reflection involves looking back on past actions and events, taking a conscious look at emotions, experiences, actions and responses and using that information to affect future actions.

You are advised to bring any records of self-reflection to assessment. This provides the assessor with valuable evidence that can support their assessment of your skills.

British Canoeing Journey Planners and Self-Reflection templates are available from the Home Nation Associations.

Final Checks prior to Booking an Assessment

The Paddlesport Leader Assessment Guidance (available to download from the Home Nation Association website) explains in detail the standard required, and provides a useful supplementary resource to help in your preparation. There is also a Skills Checklist that can be used as a self-profiling tool to help you evaluate if you are ready to put yourself forward for assessment. You may also wish to consider asking a third party to check your readiness for assessment; a Paddlesport Leader Provider is well placed to offer this opportunity, and again the Paddlesport Leader

Assessment Guidance and Skills Checklist can be used as a guide. We advise both self-assessment and any third-party advice sought is undertaken at least 3-months prior to assessment, and prior to making any commitment to an assessment. This will allow you the time to address any areas that may require further development.

Registration and Prerequisites

Prior to attending a Paddlesport Leader assessment you need to register with your Home Nation Association. Evidence of the following is required:

- Valid (within 3 years) British Canoeing recognised 1-day first aid award
- Full Home Nation Association Membership

You must be aged 16 or over at the time of assessment. Note that you cannot be deemed responsible for leadership by law until you turn 18 years of age.

Assessment

In order to achieve the qualification you need to show competence in the following elements:

- A. Participant focused leadership skills
- B. Personal paddling skills
- C. Rescue skills
- D. Underpinning background knowledge, understanding and experience

A summary of these areas follows below and further expanded upon in the 'Paddlesport Leader Assessment Guidance'.

A. Participant Focused Leadership Skills – During assessment you need to show you have ability to lead safe, enjoyable, quality mixed-fleet journeys based on the group's needs, abilities and aspirations, and within the stated environments. This will include skilful application of leadership principles and strategies, judgement and decision making, safety awareness and risk management, group management, navigation, and the control and management of outcomes leading a group of 3 to 6 real students.

B. Personal Paddling Skills - You need the efficient and effective personal skills to facilitate safe, quality, enjoyable mixed-fleet trips in a sheltered water environment. You will need to show the application of technical and tactical skills, the underpinning physiological attributes (e.g. fitness and mobility), psychological skills, and the judgement and decision making to perform safely and in control within the stated environments. This will include both wind affected open water, and slow moving water at the upper end of the definitions provided on page 6. As a guide, we consider the 3 Star standard (in the chosen craft) to be a suitable measure of personal competence.

C. Rescue Skills – To ensure your own safety and the safety of others, you need to show that you can deal with a range of rescue situations relevant to the craft used (inc. mixed-fleet scenarios) and the sheltered water environments. The emphasis is that you are an effective team leader; being able to look after yourself and others while paddling in the environments as stated.

D. Underpinning Background Knowledge and Understanding – A wide range of background knowledge and understanding is required to fulfil the Paddlesport Leader responsibilities, and to inform your judgements and decision-making. The assessment of this will be blended throughout the assessment programme, with questioning, discussion, specific tasks, and evidenced by the actions you take.

Assessment Venue

The conditions for the assessment will include both wind affected open water and slow moving water; this could involve rivers, inland open water, and/or tidal waters. Each candidate will be seen leading real students in conditions at the top end of both environments (as defined on page 6) for some of the time.

Craft

You can present for assessment in any craft that is safe and suitable for the remit of the award and the assessment tasks. This may include for example; touring kayaks, open canoes, suitable sit-on-tops, general purpose kayaks, stand-up-paddleboards, crew boats, or racing craft.

Equipment

On assessment you are required to have the personal and group equipment to enable you to fulfil your leadership responsibilities.

Assessor

British Canoeing Paddlesport Leader Provider.

Assessment Courses

The Home Nation Associations advertise Paddlesport Leader assessment courses in conjunction with course providers. See Home Nation Association websites for further details (contact details are on page 16). The Paddlesport Leader Assessment will normally run over 1 or 2-days. This will depend on the course ratios and logistics relating to access to suitable environments.

Incomplete Assessment Tasks

If at the end of your assessment you have not yet reached the standard required, your Assessor will help you to try and understand the areas where further development is required, and help you develop a suitable action plan to support your development.

You can present yourself for a future assessment when you feel that you are ready and have completed any action points identified at your previous assessment.

Candidates who are unsuccessful at assessment retain their evidence of registration to present at a future assessment if they wish to proceed. Initial registration is considered valid when accompanied by valid in-date first-aid training and full Home Nation Association membership; it does not otherwise expire.

Certification

Successful completion of the assessment will result in a recommendation for you to get the Paddlesport Leader award. The Course Director will send your paperwork to their Home Nation Association for approval and certification.

Supporting Policies

Appeals: If you think an assessment decision is incorrect, you have the right to appeal via your Home Nation Association. A fee is charged for a formal appeal, this is refunded if the appeal is successful. You should address queries, or register your intention to appeal, with your Home Nation Association, within 30-days of the assessment decision. Extensions to this period are only made in exceptional circumstances.

Complaints: If you have a complaint about the way the course staff treated you, or the way the course was conducted, contact the relevant Home Nation Association.

Equal Opportunities: British Canoeing and the Home Nation Associations are committed to ensuring access to, and fairness in, assessment for all candidates regardless of their race, ethnic or national origin, gender, sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, social class, political or religious beliefs and affiliations or other personal or professional characteristics which are acknowledged to have no bearing on assessment, while also safeguarding the integrity of its qualifications. The 'Equal Opportunities Policy in relation to Access to, and Fairness in, Assessment' is available from your Home Nation Association.

Reasonable Adjustments: The British Canoeing 'Reasonable Adjustments for Paddlesport Awards and Coaching' describes how assessment can be amended for learners with disabilities and other difficulties. If you are likely to find the assessment methods difficult, you must discuss any concerns with your Course Provider. The Course Provider will make sure you are assessed in a suitable manner in line with the policy. The Course Provider will be familiar with these guidance notes and can help you understand them if necessary.

Malpractice: Malpractice is not tolerated. Any suspected malpractice on the part of candidates, providers, or any others involved in providing the British Canoeing Qualifications, must be reported to the relevant Home Nation Association. Anyone who fails to report suspected malpractice will be investigated and may be subject to disciplinary action. Moreover, there will be a full investigation into all instances of alleged or suspected malpractice whenever they have grounds to doubt the integrity of the assessment process and/or the legitimacy of claims for certification and will take such action, with respect to the candidates and/or centres concerned, as is necessary to maintain the integrity of the relevant qualifications.

Once Qualified

After you have achieved your Paddlesport Leader qualification we hope you get out and enjoy using your skills! The qualification enables you to work in suitable paid or voluntary roles.

British Canoeing recommends that the Paddlesport Leader Award is the appropriate qualification to lead general purpose or discipline specific kayaks and canoes in benign sheltered water conditions (see page 6 for environmental definitions).

The Paddlesport Leader qualification is designed such that the Leader can choose the craft from which they work, and can look after others in both single discipline and mixed fleets. This may include for example; touring kayaks, open canoes, suitable sit-on-tops, general purpose kayaks, stand-up-paddleboards, or crew boats, or racing craft.

Deployment

We recommend that the Paddlesport Leader is an appropriate qualification for Leaders working independently within appropriate safety management systems. If you are working within someone else's safety management systems (e.g. in a Club or Centre), it is important that you are familiar with their operating and risk management procedures as these will impact on how you go about your leadership role. Your own judgement and decision making ability are also critical in providing high quality, safe experiences for your group. One of your main responsibilities is to use your skills and judgement to select appropriate environments/locations for paddlers with a range of experience and in a range of different paddlesport craft; linked to your own abilities and skills.

Paddlesport Leader with 3 Star/s Awards: We would normally expect you to operate from the type of craft that you used at assessment unless you have further experience or training to suggest otherwise. As a guide, we consider the 3 Star standard (in the chosen craft) to be a suitable measure of personal competence for the Paddlesport Leader if you wish to operate with/from different craft.

Paddlesport Leader with a Level 1 Coach Qualification: A Coach/Leader who holds both of these qualifications is well placed to fulfil their coaching duties with more autonomy. The Paddlesport Leader award requires a higher level of personal skills and safety/rescue skills than the Level 1 Coach award; providing further assurance that they have the skills to make, and fulfil, sound leadership decisions whilst out coaching on the water.

Minimum Standards of Deployment

We recommend the following as appropriate minimum standards of deployment for Paddlesport Leaders:

- Current and relevant first aid training
- Liability insurance
- Knowledge of Child Protection guidelines and good practice
- Commitment to continual professional development
- Maintenance of currency in personal skills, safety and rescue skills and leadership skills

The 'British Canoeing Terms of Reference' provides further guidance on the deployment of British Canoeing qualified Coaches and Leaders. If you are ever unsure, please contact your Home Nation Association.

First Aid Training

British Canoeing believes that First Aid is an essential skill for all paddlesport Coaches and Leaders, and that they have a duty to maintain a current first aid award to ensure they can look after paddlers in their care.

It is the responsibility of British Canoeing coaches/leaders and/or their deployers to evaluate their likely work and the type of situations that they can reasonably expect to encounter and to maintain current appropriate first aid training. Influencing factors such as remoteness, facilities to hand, other trained first aid provision available etc. will need to be considered. As part of this process it is important to consider the training course content and course length, the competency and experience of the provider.

Please see the British Canoeing First Aid Policy for further information.

Liability Insurance

Any person taking on leadership responsibilities is required to have liability insurance as part of their duty of care to those they are looking after. Liability insurance cover is a benefit of British Canoeing and the Home Nation Association membership and normally applies to; individual members resident in the UK; affiliated clubs and registered members of affiliated clubs resident in the UK. Further details of the insurance cover provided, exclusions, requirements for the insurance to be considered valid, and the types of activities covered are provided by the insurance companies with contact details available on the Home Nation Association Websites.

Knowledge of Child Protection Guidelines and Good Practice

British Canoeing aims to ensure that anyone who is in regular contact with children and young people through paid or voluntary roles within the sport have completed the minimum safeguarding training requirements for their role. It is also the responsibility of an employer/deployer to ensure their staff or volunteers (paid or voluntary) have been appropriately vetted prior to being deployed in their role. Further guidance is available on the Home Nation Association websites.

Continual Professional Development

We encourage you to look to continue to develop your learning and knowledge of the sport by working with more experienced leaders and through further training. Opportunities are often available through Home Nation Association programmes, or you can access alternative coaching or leader related courses.

Furthering your Qualifications

When you have gained some experience or if you wish to take on different roles, you may choose to work through other British Canoeing qualifications or training modules. Further details of these courses are available on the Home Nation Association Websites.

British Canoeing 3 Star Awards: These personal skills awards are available in freestyle, open canoe, sea kayak, sea sit-on-top, surf, touring, and white water. Training courses of varying lengths are offered to suit different starting points, assessments normally run over 1-day.

Other British Canoeing Leadership Awards (previously known as 4 and 5 Star Leadership Awards): Leadership Awards are available for paddlers who wish to lead journeys in Sea Kayak, Surf Kayak, Open Canoe, and White Water. In most cases there are two levels of award; those for use in moderate water conditions, and those for use in advanced water conditions.

British Canoeing Guide Modules: British Canoeing offer a number of modules aimed at Leaders who offer guided activity, particularly those working within Adventure Tourism. Topics include subjects such as trip planning/organisation, leadership styles, customer care, camp craft, minimising impact on communities/environment, and adding value to the customer experience. Associated with these modules is recognition via British Canoeing Guide Endorsement. New in 2017.

British Canoeing Stand-Up Paddleboard Support Module: This module is designed to support British Canoeing Coaches or Leaders who wish to better understand Stand-Up-Paddleboard activity. This is essentially an induction into the craft specific considerations.

British Canoeing Foundation Safety and Rescue Training: This training course aims to develop the necessary skills to help you (and others with you) stay safe, whilst also developing rescue skills that can be used to help yourself and/or others in difficulty.

British Canoeing Coastal Navigation and Tidal Planning: The aim of this training course is to develop effective planning and navigation skills for those working in tidal coastal environments.

British Canoeing White Water Safety and Rescue Training: This safety training is appropriate for all white-water paddlers. The course aims to teach simple and safe skills that can be applied appropriately.

British Canoeing Coaching Awards: There are a number of coaching awards that you may consider if you are interested in helping people develop their paddlesport skills. There are qualifications for those who wish to coach beginners or run introductory sessions and a range of discipline specific awards that cover the wide range of our specialist disciplines.

Paddlesport Leader Training: You may wish to access/repeat Paddlesport Leader training. These courses provide a great opportunity for you to refresh and develop your current skills, especially if you want to work in different environments or with/in different craft.

Working from different craft: We would normally expect you to operate from the type of craft that you used at assessment unless you have further experience or training to suggest otherwise. As a guide, we consider the 3 Star standard (in the chosen craft) to be a suitable measure of personal competence for the Paddlesport Leader if you wish to operate from a different craft.

As a Paddlesport Leader you need to be familiar with the type of craft that you are leading. This will help you make sound leadership decisions, and have the skills to perform appropriate rescues if someone does get into difficulty. Bespoke training by a qualified coach or repeating elements of Paddlesport Leader training are suggested. If you are an active paddler, the 3 Star standard (in the chosen craft) would also provide a suitable measure of knowledge and competence.

Contact Details

Further course details and registration information is available direct from the Home Nation Associations:

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