



**Paddlesport Instructor Award
Course Guide**

British Canoeing Awarding Body

Paddlesport Instructor Course Guide

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Introduction

Welcome to the Paddlesport Instructor Course Guide. This guide introduces you to the qualification content and structure.

Why choose a British Canoeing Awarding Body Qualification or Award?

- our qualifications and awards give hands-on knowledge and competence to deliver paddlesport sessions;
- British Canoeing Awarding Body has over 40 years' experience running coaching and instructor qualifications;
- we aim to give you support whatever your experience, skills or specific needs;
- our qualifications and awards have been accepted as the industry standard for over 35 years;
- our qualifications are included in the Register of Regulated Qualifications;
- we aim to provide fit-for-purpose qualifications and awards through a quality assured, cost effective service;
- we are the only Awarding Body offering the Paddlesport Instructor qualification.

We are recognised and regulated by the Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation (Ofqual), the Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA), and Qualifications Wales (QiW). This means you can have every confidence in the robustness and procedures that underpin the qualification's design and delivery.

The British Canoeing Awarding Body Paddlesport Instructor qualification is on the Ofqual Register of Regulated Qualifications at Level 1.

Our customer services statement is available on our website:

www.britishcanoeingawarding.org.uk

Paddlesport Instructor courses are delivered via 'Delivery Centres' externally verified by the British Canoeing Awarding Body. The Delivery Centres are responsible for internal verification and provider recruitment to maintain standards and consistency.

British Canoeing Awarding Body Educational Philosophy

British Canoeing Awarding Body believes in a participant-led approach when creating and enabling experience from which people will enjoy, learn and develop through paddlesport. The Paddlesport Instructor course is designed to support instructors to deliver safe, engaging, empowering and enjoyable paddlesport sessions with the paddler at the heart of the process; whilst also fostering a sense of a paddling community and supporting the inherent social aspects of the sport. We hope, through this approach, that paddlers will achieve and celebrate success (this success being focused on the journey and not the destination).

The instructor's experience through the qualification pathway should also be safe, engaging and enjoyable; with the instructor being able to guide their own learning and development. Our course tutors should deliver the programme using a supportive and empowering approach to instil an active passion for both paddlesport and instructing. Whilst meeting individual needs, fostering a sense of a paddling community, and developing understanding and respect for the environment in which paddlesport takes place.

British Canoeing Awarding Body Paddlesport Instructor

Introduction

The Paddlesport Instructor qualification is designed for instructors running paddlesport taster/starter sessions within the safety management systems of clubs, centres or other organisations in:

- **‘Very Sheltered Water’ environments;**
- **craft deemed suitable for a first time experience.**

The primary role of the Paddlesport Instructor is to deliver safe and enjoyable taster/starter sessions based on their group’s needs and aspirations. The qualification will support the instructor with practical skills such as kitting up a group and getting afloat, initial familiarisation activities, games and activities to support learning and how to use mini journeys to support learning, inspire adventure and exploration. This will be enhanced with support on how these sessions can be delivered in a way that is enjoyable, safe and rewarding.

We anticipate that the qualification is likely to be used by instructors in clubs, centres, schools, Duke of Edinburgh, Youth Groups, Uniformed Groups, etc. Instructors who are involved in running taster/starter sessions for:

- **children and young people as part of a wider educational experience;**
- **people as part of a leisure, activity, social or holiday experience;**
- **people wanting ‘to have a go’ at the sport; maybe as a potential new regular participant.**

The process of completing the qualification aims to help prepare candidates for their first paddlesport instructing role; ‘primed and ready’.

The qualification is designed such that the instructor can choose the craft from which they work (one of: kayak, open canoe, sit on top, **or** stand up paddleboard); and can look after others in a range of stable craft (kayaks, open canoes, sit on tops, and stand up paddleboards); as both single craft and mixed craft sessions.

Further guidance for deployment can be found in the [‘After the Course’](#) section.

The Qualification Pathway

The following diagram illustrates the different components of the instructor's pathway:



Before the Course

Prior to enrolling on a Paddlesport Instructor course, it is **important** that you:

1. ensure the Paddlesport Instructor suits the role you are aspiring to undertake;
2. achieve the prerequisites.

There are a number of resources to help you do this:

Websites

The British Canoeing Awarding Body and Delivery Centre websites provide outline information about the range of qualifications and awards on offer to help you choose the appropriate course and entry point. We recommend that you discuss your options with your Delivery Centre or course tutor to help you make an informed decision.

BCAB Instructor eLearning

This eLearning package covers a range of relevant syllabus topics. It provides information on content that will be covered on the course and provides additional content to support instructors in the field. It is open access and gives a flavour of some of the content you are likely to cover on the course. It is accessed through the British Canoeing Awarding Body website.

What are the Prerequisites?

The candidate entry requirements are as follows:

- Full National Association Membership;
- Delivery Centre registration;
- British Canoeing Awarding Body Paddlesport Safety and Rescue course or Foundation Safety and Rescue Training
- Personal paddling and rescue competence;
- 14 years of age, or older.

Candidates under 18 years of age should check the suitability of the course with a tutor before attendance.

Membership and Registration

Further details on membership and registration are available directly from the Delivery Centres, [contact details](#) below. Registration triggers access to relevant support materials and assists background administrative processes.

Prerequisite Personal Paddling and Rescue Competence

Prior to attending the Paddlesport Instructor course you are expected to have developed personal paddling and rescue competence in your preferred craft. Candidates choose to paddle **one** type of craft for the personal paddling and rescue skills assessment; kayak, open canoe, sit on top, **or** stand up paddleboard. These skills are assessed during the course (but not trained).

You should speak to your course provider if you are unsure about your skill level. The [Skills Checklist](#) can be used as an aide memoire, and the 'Paddlesport Instructor Assessment Guidance' provides further, detailed information regarding the assessment standards required.

The Paddlesport Instructor Course

To achieve the Paddlesport Instructor qualification, you need to complete a face-to-face combined training and assessment course that introduces the content that is relevant to all instructors delivering taster/starter sessions.

The course is a minimum of two days and includes at least 15 hours' teaching/learning contact time. Courses can be run over a longer duration to include additional time to focus on personal skills, rescue skills, or the development of instructing skills.

Course Content

The syllabus is based on the knowledge, understanding and skills that the instructor needs to ensure the participants in their care are appropriately provided for. This includes:

Practical skills (training focus):

- the ability to effectively prepare a group for an activity (e.g. kitting up and getting afloat);
- a repertoire of activities to engage the group (e.g. games, tasks and journeys);
- a range of motivating activities and games that support learning;
- a range of strategies for utilising mini journeys to inspire adventure and exploration;
- how to help participants learn some basic skills;
- top tips and quick fixes for common challenges to accelerate learning when required;
- selection of suitable equipment for participants;
- how to maintain participants' safety;
- understanding of deployment matters.

Engagement and relationship building skills (training focus):

- the ability to quickly build relationships with group members; caring, friendly, approachable;

- the ability to motivate and inspire the group;
- effective decision making to deliver (and adapt) sessions that are both safe and enjoyable;
- communication skills.

Professional standards (formative assessment):

- professional behaviour;
- working as part of a team;
- clear and effective communication;
- minimising negative impact on the environment and other users;
- an active engagement in personal learning and development.

Personal paddling and rescue skills (assessed):

Please see the checklist in Appendix 1; this is based on the assessment requirements.

Further information

The 'Paddlesport Instructor Assessment Guidance' provides further information regarding the award assessment criteria. This is available to download from www.britishcanoeingawarding.org.uk.

After the Course

After you have finished your qualification we hope you get out and enjoy using and continuing to develop your skills. The qualification should support you in delivering taster/starter sessions in suitable paid or voluntary roles.

Certification

Successful completion of the course and the assessment tasks will result in a recommendation for you to be awarded the Paddlesport Instructor qualification. The course tutor will send your paperwork to their Delivery Centre for verification, it is then sent to British Canoeing Awarding Body for certification.

If, at the end of your course, you have not yet reached the standard required, your tutor/s 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.

Your Remit

British Canoeing Awarding Body recommends the Paddlesport Instructor is the right qualification for instructors delivering taster/starter sessions in **'Very Sheltered Water'** within the safety management systems of clubs, centres or other organisations. The overall ethos is that the Paddlesport Instructor is operating in safe and benign conditions.

After the qualification has been achieved and once some experience has been acquired, we would anticipate Paddlesport Instructors could be deployed to run taster/starter sessions on their own.

The 'British Canoeing Awarding Body Environmental Definitions and Guidance for Deployers, Instructors, Coaches and Leaders' provides further guidance on the deployment of British Canoeing Awarding Body qualified coaches and instructors.

'Very Sheltered Water' Definition

The very sheltered water definition includes:

- quiet canals with easy bankside access and egress;
- small lakes, which are not large enough, and do not have difficult landing areas for problems to occur if there is a sudden change in conditions;
- specified sites on gentle, slow moving rivers;
- enclosed swimming pools.

The definition implies normal conditions where weather conditions that are not in themselves likely to cause problems. Care is advised when water temperatures are low. At any point the paddler should not be more than 50 metres from the bank.

Extending craft beyond those assessed

We would normally expect candidates to operate from the type of craft identified on their certificate unless they have further experience or training to suggest otherwise.

Deployers may wish to use British Canoeing Awarding Body Personal Performance Awards as an indication of competence in craft not stated on the candidate's Paddlesport Instructor Certificate. The following awards are recommended (a relevant 3 Star Award can also be used):

Craft	Award Title
Canoe	Canoe Award, Touring Award
Kayak or Sit on Top	White Water Award, Touring Award, Sea Kayak Award, Surf Kayak Award
Stand Up Paddleboard	Stand Up Paddleboard (Sheltered Water) Award, Touring Award

After the Personal Performance Award has been achieved, it is advised that the deployer checks the paddler's skill and competence; British Canoeing Awarding Body would anticipate Paddlesport Instructors could then be deployed in the alternative craft.

Minimum Standards of Deployment

It is the deployer's responsibility to ensure instructors have the skills, knowledge and understanding to support the role/s offered. British Canoeing Awarding Body recommends the following as appropriate minimum standards of deployment for instructors:

- current and relevant first aid training;
- liability insurance;
- current and relevant safeguarding training;
- commitment to continual professional development;
- maintenance of currency in personal skills, safety/rescue skills, instructing skills;
- are of an appropriate age.

It must be noted that a young person cannot be deemed responsible for leadership by law until they turn 18 years of age.

Update Scheme

British Canoeing Awarding Body offers an Update Scheme through the Delivery Centres to provide assurance that the instructor meets minimum standards for deployment. If you want to get this recognition, you need to meet set criteria. Further details of how your Delivery Centre can support you in these areas is available through their websites. The Paddlesport Instructor course is recognised by the Delivery Centres as valid Continuous Personal Development evidence for the Update Scheme.

Continual Professional Development

We encourage you to look to continue to develop your learning and knowledge of the sport by working with more experienced instructors and through further training. Opportunities are often available through Delivery Centre programmes, or you can access alternative coaching or leader related courses. You might also want to consider repeating the Paddlesport Instructor course to support your ongoing learning and development.

Environmental considerations

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.

Furthering your Qualifications and Awards

When you have gained some experience, or if you wish to take on different roles, you may choose to work through other British Canoeing Awarding Body qualifications and awards or training modules. Further details of these courses are available on the British Canoeing Awarding Body website.

Paddlesport Leader Qualification: An instructor who holds both Paddlesport Leader and Paddlesport Instructor is well placed to fulfil their instructing duties with more autonomy. The Paddlesport Leader qualification involves a higher level of safety, rescue and personal skills assessment and is supported by a wider and deeper range of experience. The Paddlesport Leader qualification can be used to extend the instructor's remit to 'Sheltered Water' environments.

Paddlesport Touring Leader Qualification: An instructor who holds both Paddlesport Touring Leader and Paddlesport Instructor is well placed to fulfil their instructing duties with more autonomy. The Paddlesport Touring Leader qualification involves high levels of safety, rescue and personal skills assessment and is supported by a wider and deeper range of experience. The Paddlesport Touring Leader qualification can be used to extend the instructor's remit to Moderate Inland Water and on rivers that are up to, but not including, grade 2.

Other Leadership Awards: Leadership Awards are available for paddlers who wish to lead journeys in a range of disciplines including Sea Kayak, Surf Kayak, Open Canoe, White Water and SUP. In most cases there are two levels of award; those for use in moderate water conditions, and those for use in advanced water conditions.

Guide Modules: A range of modules are available for instructors who offer guided activity, particularly those working within Adventure Tourism. Topics include subjects such as trip planning/organisation, leadership styles, customer care, and camp craft. Associated with these modules is recognition via the British Canoeing Awarding Body Guide Endorsement.

Stand Up Paddleboard (SUP) Safer: This 4-hour course covers specific Stand Up Paddleboard safety within a sheltered water environment.

Coach Awards: You may wish to pursue a Coach Award 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 Instructor Course: You may wish to repeat the Paddlesport Instructor course. This provides an opportunity for you to refresh and develop your current skills or focus on working from different types of craft. You are advised to speak to the course provider before booking a repeat course to check suitability for your learning needs.

Supporting Policies

Appeals: If you think an assessment decision is incorrect, you have the right to appeal via your Delivery Centre. You should address queries, or register your intention to appeal, 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 Delivery Centre.

Equal Opportunities: We 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 for Access and Fairness in Assessment' is available from the Delivery Centres.

Problems at Assessment: You can apply for special consideration if you miss an assessment session, miss a deadline for the submission of written work, or perform poorly because of suffered temporary illness, injury, or indisposition at the time of assessment. For further details see 'Special Consideration Policy and Practice' available from the Delivery Centres.

Reasonable Adjustments: The British Canoeing Awarding Body Reasonable Adjustments Policy 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 tutor. The tutor will make sure you are assessed in a suitable manner and in line with the policy.

Accredited Prior Learning: If you feel that you have covered the course material through alternative learning opportunities, you can apply to your Delivery Centre for Accredited Prior Experience and Learning (APL). Evidence from study, employment or voluntary work may be used. Candidates with relevant qualifications and experience may want to use Accredited Prior Learning to apply for direct entry to Paddlesport Instructor Assessment. Further details are available from Delivery Centre websites.

Malpractice: Malpractice is not tolerated. Any suspected malpractice on the part of candidates, providers, or any others involved in providing the British Canoeing Awarding Body qualifications and awards must be reported to the relevant Delivery Centre. Anyone who fails to report suspected malpractice will be investigated and may be subject to disciplinary action. Delivery Centres and British Canoeing Awarding Body will conduct 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, as is necessary to maintain the integrity of the relevant qualifications and awards.

Contact Details

Further course details, membership and registration information is available direct from the Delivery Centres:

Paddles Up Training

National Water Sports Centre
Adbolton Lane, Holme Pierrepont
Nottingham NG12 2LU
Tel: 0300 0119 500
coaching@paddlesuptraining.com
www.paddlesuptraining.com

Canoe Wales

National White Water Centre
Frongoch, Bala
Gwynedd LL23 7NU
Tel: 01678 521199
admin@canoewales.com
www.canoewales.com

Paddle Scotland

Grandtully Station Park
Grandtully
Pitlochry PH9 0PL
Tel: 01887 292040
coaching@paddlescotland.org.uk
www.paddlescotland.org.uk

Paddle Northern Ireland

Belfast Boat Club
12 Lockview Road
Belfast BT9 5FJ
Tel: 07526 691171
admin@paddleni.org.uk
www.paddleni.org.uk

Appendix 1: Personal Paddling and Rescue Skills

Prior to attending the Paddlesport Instructor course you need to have developed your personal paddling and rescue competence.

Whilst there will be the opportunity to paddle a range of craft during the course, you will need to choose your preferred type of craft for the personal paddling and rescue skills assessment. You are able to choose one of:

- kayak (this can be open-cockpit or closed-cockpit);
- open canoe;
- sit on top;
- stand up paddleboard.

The craft used will be identified on your certificate.

Your personal paddling and rescue skills will be assessed during the Paddlesport Instructor course (but not trained). We have provided a checklist overleaf to help you review your skills. This is based on the standard required at assessment. You should speak to your course provider if you are unsure about your skill level.

Note that all candidates need to be able to perform **all** rescues listed overleaf, regardless of the craft they chose to paddle themselves.

The 'Paddlesport Instructor Assessment Guidance' provides further detailed information regarding the assessment standards required

Paddlesport Instructor Skills Checklist			
CRAFT: kayak <input type="checkbox"/> ; open canoe <input type="checkbox"/> ; sit on top <input type="checkbox"/> ; stand up paddleboard <input type="checkbox"/>			
Personal Paddling (a consistent performance is required, for SUP there is an expectation that skills will be performed standing)	1	2	3
The instructor demonstrates:			
appropriate selection and set up of craft (e.g. size, foot/backrest, painters, spray deck, etc.);			
safe lifting and carrying techniques (assistance is recommended);			
safe and efficient launching and landing from a range of reasonable access/egress points with the boat/board afloat (e.g. pier, steps, slipway, beach), without using the paddle or an assistant;			
control in a straight line with little use of braking or correction strokes;			
accurate manoeuvring (turning, steering, accelerating/decelerating, reversing, reversing is not required for SUP);			
that they can manage themselves within self-selected safety frameworks;			
that they can present themselves as a positive role model to follow.			
Personal Paddling (an intermittent performance is accepted, for SUP there is an expectation that skills will be performed standing)	1	2	3
The instructor demonstrates:			
an active posture using the larger muscles of the body (as appropriate to the craft);			
muscle tension and 'readiness' throughout the key muscles, with a basic level of tension and efficient and economical movements;			
balanced, supple and controlled movement of the body, paddles and craft;			
efficient transfer of power from the body and water to create movement of the boat/board;			
co-ordinated and efficient strokes using the feet, legs, torso, upper body (as appropriate to the craft);			
application of power to move up to the paddle, beyond it, or around it (not trying to pull the paddle through the water);			
balance and stability when power is applied to strokes;			

use of trim, tilt and/or edge (use of rails) to aid efficiency;			
ability to move up and down the board efficiently and in balance (SUP).			
Rescue Skills (a consistent and effective performance is required) The instructor can:	1	2	3
recover a capsized canoeist and their equipment from deep water;			
recover a capsized kayaker and their equipment (sit on top, closed or open cockpit) from deep water;			
recover a stand up paddleboarder, and their equipment, who has fallen off their board from deep water;			
recover a swimmer to shore using a boat/board-based rescue;			
recover an upright, incapacitated canoeist to the shore;			
recover an upright, incapacitated kayaker (sit on top, closed or open cockpit) to the shore;			
recover an upright, incapacitated stand up paddleboarder to the shore;			
rescue an unconscious kayaker from an upturned closed cockpit kayak;			
rescue an entrapped paddler from a capsized canoe;			
capsize and perform an effective self-rescue.			

1 = consistently does this well

2 = an intermittent or adequate performance

3 = rarely or with significant shortfalls