

Paddle

Paddle Start Award

Award Description

Experience your first session on the water; learning useful skills for an enjoyable paddling experience. It aims to provide you with the basic knowledge to enable you to safely get in and out of your boat, make it move and return to your start point. This is your first step into the world of paddling, ensuring you feel safe, confident and ready to progress to the Discover Award.

Award Content

1. Clothing and Equipment

Understanding the clothing and equipment you are using and why it is used is an important part of a first session. You should be warm, comfortable and safe whilst on the water. When being kitted out, some things you can consider are:

Why am I wearing a buoyancy aid? - How can I tell it is fitted correctly?

What clothing have I chosen to wear? - Are there items of clothing not suitable for being on the water?

What type of craft will I be paddling and why is it suitable? - Might other craft be more or less stable? How many people is my craft suitable for? How should I position myself to be comfortable?

What style of paddle have I been given and why? - Is there a blade at each end of my paddle or only one? Why is this? Does being right or left handed affect the paddle I am given?

2. Getting on the Water

Having decided upon equipment for the session you must get it to the water without damage to it, yourself or the environment. Some craft can be heavy and need more than one person to carry them. Once on the water your craft can move around.

I may need to consider:

Getting craft to the water safely and efficiently: What is the best way to lift? Do I need more than one person?

The safest way to get into/onto my craft: How will I use my body to balance the craft? Is the bank slippery?

Where am I getting on the water: Is there a drop from the bank? Why am I getting on here and why might other places not be suitable? How can I minimise damage to the bank when getting on?

3. On the Water

In order to maximise your enjoyment on the water, you need to feel in control of your craft. Key elements of this are getting the craft to go where you want, when you want it to go there. Key considerations are:

What area will I be paddling in and why? - Are there places I should not go? Do I need to be aware of any hazards? Is the water moving or still?

How can I make my boat go forward, change direction and stop?

What do I need to be aware of whilst enjoying my time on the water? - Who or what else is on the water? How can I minimise disturbance to wildlife?

4. After the Session

As you come off the water we hope you are excited and enthused about your experience. Now is the perfect time to think through all you have learned.

Look around: How can I protect both myself and the environment when I leave the water? What did I enjoy on the water? Is there anything I would like to improve? Could I be more comfortable next time? Is there another craft type I would like to try?

Consider what you will take away: What have I enjoyed today? What would be good to learn more about?

5. Future Development

There are a wide range of options for future experiences. Clubs and centres around the country can help you to develop your skills and learn more about the choices available.

If you enjoyed your time on the water and would like to develop your skills, it might be worth considering moving on to the Paddle Discover Award.