

RIVER (CLOSED COCKPIT) KAYAK STAR TESTS

INTRODUCTORY NOTES

Test Certificates

1. These tests are for closed cockpit kayaks - ie, kayaks designed for use on white water where a significant element in controlling the kayak is gained through gripping the deck and sides with knees and thighs.

Open canoe star tests are described in CT.006, and open cockpit kayak (PlacidWater) star tests are described in leaflet CT.011. Paddlers of decked canoes or white water canoes equipped with saddles and air bags should also follow the Kayak syllabus with the assessors making sensible allowances.

2. The STAR TEST ENTRY FORM books are to be used by assessors. They are available free from BCU Office at Adbolton Lane, West Bridgford, Nottingham NG2 5AS, or from your National Association. Forms should be clearly endorsed 'KAYAK TEST' by the assessor.

3. There is a free poster which outlines the tests. This can be used on a school or club notice board.

4. CERTIFICATES and CLOTH BADGES will be issued, appropriate to the test taken, on payment by the candidate of the correct fee. There is NO FEE for a fail.

5. There are three ways of obtaining certificates and badges:

i) 1 and 2 Star certificates can be purchased in advance by coaches at the appropriate level from BCU HQ at a reduced rate.

ii) The appropriate fee can be collected from each candidate and submitted, together with a list of FULL

NAMES, GRADE OF TEST PASSED, and a SINGLE ADDRESS for the badges and certificates to be returned en bloc for presentation.

iii) The candidate can be issued with a Star Test Entry Form from the Star Test Entry Form Book which he or she forwards to HQ together with the appropriate fee. Details on how to operate the book of Entry Forms is printed on the cover. BCU Office does NOT require a file copy.

It is recommended that the candidates are given a Star Test Entry Form in every case to enable them, if they wish, to obtain a further badge or certificate. The Coach need then only sign the form and mark the test passed, leaving the candidate(s) to complete name and address sections etc.(please do this clearly)

6. Candidates should be encouraged to apply for BCU Membership on the Star Test Entry Form. It is up to the assessor to give the candidate information about the fees. These are contained in the BCU Members' Yearbook.

7. Candidates can be awarded a Star Test even if their disability stops them from completing part of the award. For full details please refer to leaflet CA466: 'Policy of the BCU on Tests and Awards as they apply to people with Disabilities'

ASSESSING STANDARDS

8. In order to achieve uniformity of assessment standards, careful attention should be paid to the sample questions, and to the definitions in the practical performance sections of the tests.

9. More than one grade can be taken at a time, but grades must NOT be skipped. Where a candidate does not hold the lower grade(s) a cross-section of the requirements of the lower test(s) should be incorporated at the assessor's discretion. Candidates need purchase only the highest rated badge and certificate however.

10. Level 1 Coaches (Placid Water Teachers) may test for 1 Star in the discipline related to their award. Level 2 Coaches (Competition Coaches) may examine for any 1 Star Test provided that the assessor holds 2 Star in the discipline being assessed. Level 2 Coaches and above may examine 2 Star in the discipline related to their award, and 2 Star in any other discipline for which they hold the 3 Star. Level 3 Coaches and above may assess 3 Star in the discipline related to their award and also assess 2 Star in alternative disciplines for which they hold the 3 Star and any 1 Star. It is necessary to be a Level 3 Coach in the discipline concerned to test for 4 Star.

PRACTICAL NOTES

11. Normally canoeists should be able to swim 50 metres in light clothing. Discretion may be exercised, however, in accordance with a coach's training and experience, where special circumstances exist.

12. These tests are designed for performance in closed cockpit kayaks in moderate conditions. Due allowance should be made if conditions are in excess of those stated.

13. Help is recommended with emptying and carrying the kayak.

14. The knowledge necessary to pass these tests is contained in the BCU Canoeing Handbook. The sample questions are intended to demonstrate the 'level' and should not be used ad nauseam. Theory should relate to the paddler's experience.

15. All the kayak 'Star' awards are to be taken as a solo paddler.

ENVIRONMENT

16. Canoeing is an exciting, adventurous, competitive and recreational activity from which much of the enjoyment and adventure comes from the natural environment around you. Every canoeist must remember to respect all wildlife and take care not to damage or destroy the environment by observing the Canoeist's Code of Conduct and the recommendations in the BCU leaflet 'Earning a Welcome'.

POLLUTION WARNING

17. All tests should be taken out of doors, but please note that some waterways are subject to serious pollution. Where there is reason to believe that the level of pollution is such as to render capsized drill potentially hazardous, alternative safer methods/locations

(including swimming pools) may be used for those aspects of performance tests that require deliberate immersion.

SOME DEFINITIONS

18. The term 'drive face' indicates the face of the blade that would pull against the water if the paddle were being used for normal forward propulsion. The other face of the blade is referred to as the 'back face'.

MANUAL HANDLING

19. All Canoeists need to raise their awareness of Manual Handling and that damage can occur to joints and muscles, particularly when they are moving or lifting people or any equipment related to the sport of Canoeing. This could, of course, include a body, especially when performing rescues. In addition, Risk Assessments of how to prevent harm and injury to paddlers should be undertaken as a matter of routine.

In Civil Law there is a 'Duty of Care' towards your students and others who paddle. This includes, loss, harm, damage and injury. Coaches are charged with the care of paddlers, and as such, Coaches need to identify where there is a risk of the 'duty' being neglected or abused. The BCU has prepared an information leaflet which gives a brief outline of procedures to assess and evaluate Manual Handling operations. In addition, a one day Injury Prevention Course has been developed which should ensure that information in respect of lifting and carrying and all Manual Handling issues are being disseminated throughout the Coaching Service. (see section 5)

ONE STAR TEST CLOSED COCKPIT KAYAK

AIM:

A basic assessment of ability at the end of an introductory course. An encouragement award. The test itself should encourage safe practice, regard for the equipment, and fun.

PRE-REQUISITES:

None.

VENUE:

Sheltered water (not a swimming pool) but see paragraph 17 of the Introductory Notes.

ASSESSOR:

Level 1 Kayak Coach or Level 2 Kayak Trainee Coach or above Level 2 Coaches or higher in alternative disciplines, who hold the Kayak 2 Star Test or higher, may also assess this award.

THEORY:

- a question or two of a similar level should be asked under each heading

Equipment

Sample questions:

What fittings should a kayak always have?

What fitting should a spray deck always have?

How long should your paddle be?

Safety

Sample questions:

What should you never do if you capsize a kayak?

Why should you not paddle alone?

Why should you keep a straight back when lifting a kayak?

Hypothermia/first aid

Sample questions:

What could make a mild day seem cold to a kayaker?

Why is a waterproof cag or anorak important to a kayaker?

Environment and access

Sample questions:

If you found litter on the bank or shore, or floating in the water, what should you do ?

What sort of things make a kayak trip on a quiet river or canal an enjoyable experience ?

General

Sample questions

What are the main differences between a canoe and a kayak ?

Who are the famous users of kayaks for hunting ?

Who are the famous users of canoes ?

PRACTICAL 'A'

1. Lifting, carrying and launching the kayak. The candidate must demonstrate good safe lifting and carrying principles using legs rather than the back. Assistance is recommended. The boat must be afloat. Balance must be maintained. The paddle must remain within reach or can be used to assist in embarking.

2. Forward paddling over a 100m course. Candidates must show evidence that they are able to control the kayak in a straight line over a distance of 100 metres. Some directional instability is likely to occur but this should not include complete loss of forward movement or a continuous careering from side to side.

3. Stopping. This should be demonstrated in both directions. Opposite motion should be in evidence within four strokes.

4. Rotate 360 degrees on the spot. Spinning in a clockwise and anti-clockwise rotation using the appropriate combination of forward sweeps and reverse sweeps. Some body rotation to be in evidence.

5. Reverse paddling. The kayak should travel a distance of 25 metres. Turning the trunk and looking over one or both shoulders must be in evidence.

6. Paddle a figure-of-8 course. The candidate should paddle a prescribed figure-of-8 course using a combination of forward strokes and sweeps to demonstrate a basic level of steering control.

7. Return to bank and disembark. Correct approach to the bank, relative to wind, current and type of bank or shore. Control must be maintained whilst exiting the boat. Exit without damaging the kayak or the bank.

PRACTICAL 'B'

1. Capsize, swim ashore and empty. If a spraydeck is worn, this may be released before capsizing. The candidate should remain calm and quickly regain, and maintain contact with the kayak. The paddle should be retained, or collected by swimming the kayak to the paddle. Swim not more than 10 metres and empty the boat on the shore. Help can be asked for, so long as the candidate remains in charge of emptying.

Demonstrate satisfactory beginnings in:

1. Moving sideways. Some body rotation towards the paddling side should be in evidence. Blade to be well immersed. Paddle shaft probably not upright at this stage. Recovery of the blade through the air or sliced in the water is acceptable. Clear evidence of sideways movement should be in evidence - some bow or stern swing is acceptable.

2. Rudder. With forward movement of the kayak, the paddle should be inserted to one side of the boat. Blade should be almost covered, front arm relaxed over stomach, shaft parallel to side of boat. The kayak should be kept running in a straight line with the paddle remaining on the one side.

3. Preventing a capsize. The kayak should be edged sufficiently to be nearly off balance. Low recovery strokes should be demonstrated on both sides.

TWO STAR TEST CLOSED COCKPIT KAYAK

AIM

An improvement award that covers the basic flat water skills.

The emphasis is on creating the desired movement of the boat through developing an understanding of cause and effect rather than concentrating on rigidly defined strokes. 2 Star level is required for attending a course for the qualification of Level 1 Coach.

PREREQUISITES

BCU 1 Star Test. Where a candidate does not hold this award a small cross-section of 1 Star techniques should be incorporated at the assessor's discretion.

VENUE

Sheltered water, (not a swimming pool) but see paragraph 17 of the Introductory Notes.

ASSESSOR

Level 2 Kayak Coach or higher.

Level 2 Coaches in alternative disciplines, who hold the Kayak 3 Star Test or higher, may also assess this award.

THEORY

- a question or two of a similar level should be asked under each heading

Equipment

Sample questions:

What is an asymmetric paddle blade?

What is the advantage of an asymmetric paddle blade?

Why is a racing boat faster than a touring or short white water boat?

Safety

Sample questions:

Why can it be dangerous to kayak on open water before you are sufficiently experienced?

Why should you wear a buoyancy aid even if you are a good swimmer?

Why are weirs dangerous ?

What is Leptospirosis, and what precautions can you take against it?

Hypothermia/first aid

Sample questions:

What (in simple terms) is meant by 'hypothermia'?

How is hypothermia avoided?

Why should you cover cuts and grazes with a waterproof dressing?

Access

Sample questions:

Can you paddle your kayak on just any river or canal?

What would you do if someone told you that you had no right to be canoeing where you are?

Environment

Sample questions:

What is the most beautiful place in which you have been with your kayak?

What is the best wildlife encounter you have had while canoeing?

What is the principle you should apply when you leave a picnic or camping site?

Planning

Sample questions:

What should you take with you to ensure your comfort on a short trip?

How far do you think you could paddle in a day without becoming too tired and fed up?

General

Sample questions:

Name three different types of kayaking competition?

What is meant by 'white water' kayaking?

Group awareness

Sample questions:

How could you help someone who was having difficulty in keeping up on a trip?

Why is it important to keep together as a group when journeying?

PRACTICAL 'A'

1. **Lifting, carrying and launching the kayak.** Candidate to demonstrate good and safe lifting and carrying principles. Boat to be afloat and entry into it without any aid from the paddle, though the paddle must be close ie within reach.
2. **Efficient forward paddling.** To paddle a distance of about 200 metres. Posture upright but natural. Continuous natural rhythmic paddling, some trunk rotation in evidence. A reasonable degree of steering accuracy to be achieved including 50 metres at a good cruising speed.
3. **Reverse paddling and stopping.** Candidates should demonstrate controlled and reasonably accurate reverse paddling over a distance of 25m towards a point defined by the assessor. When reversing, looking over one shoulder and unwinding the trunk to produce power must be in evidence. Back (nondrive) face of the paddle presented to the water. For stopping, the canoe should be travelling at a good cruising speed and motion in the opposite direction should be evident within 4 strokes.
4. **Moving the kayak sideways.** Move boat sideways 5m retaining directional stability. Blade to remain submerged throughout stroke. Top arm no lower than shoulder height. Body rotation. Lower arm extends fully at start of stroke, top hand acts as pivot.
5. **Preventing a capsize.** Show an efficient low recovery stroke with the boat off balance. A good firm push, with associated hip rotation, should be evident. For high recovery stroke the boat must be off balance with water up to the paddlers waist. Repeated on both sides.
6. **Ruddering.** The kayak to be paddled up to a good speed, then kept running in a straight line through a narrow gap by the use of a trailing paddle.
7. **Turning.** The kayak to be turned whilst on the move using firstly a series of sweep strokes, secondly a low brace turn. For the low brace turn, the turn is to be induced by a short effective sweep on the opposite side followed by a good edge into the turn; the paddle should be in the low brace position, level or just in front of hip, shaft as parallel to surface of water as boat will allow, back of the blade on the water. The boat carves a slow, stable turn.
8. **Disembarking.** Correct approach to the bank, exit kayak without use of the paddle. Balance and control of the boat to be maintained. Exit without damaging the kayak or the bank.
9. **Securing.** The candidate must understand the concept of securing boats at the end of the session, either by tying down or putting onto purpose-made racks, using ropes with a secure knot.

PRACTICAL 'B'

- 1 **Deep Water Rescue.** Take charge of a deep water rescue which should be carried out with assistance, then act as the victim.

Demonstrate satisfactory beginnings in

- 1 **Sculling draw.** Body turned towards gunwale. Paddle shaft fairly upright, drive face towards the kayak and deep in the water. Kayak edged slightly to avoid water going onto deck.
- 2 **Sculling support.** Kayak edged so that it is just off balance. Paddle shaft horizontal, drive face on the water, leading edge of blade raised on each slow scull. Arms flexed in a natural position. (For the purpose of this test, the assessor should regard sculling as a balancing and paddle-control exercise, not as a means of survival in a stopper.)
- 3 **Eskimo rescue.** Recovery with lower body rotation from an upside down position whilst maintaining a hold on the rescuer's bow. May be preceded with practice until recovering from an upside down position.

Candidate to act both as rescuer and as victim.

- 4 **Edging** Candidate to paddle a circle with inside and outside edging being evident. The direction of the turn which is induced is not significant.

Journeying

1 Provide evidence of at least 1 journey of about 2 hours (6 km) duration.

THREE STAR TEST CLOSED COCKPIT KAYAK

AIM

Successful performance at this level indicates that candidates can consider themselves as intermediate canoeists rather than beginners.

3 Star level is required for attending a course for the qualification of Level 2 Coach.

PRE-REQUISITES

BCU 2 Star Test. Where a candidate does not hold this award a small cross-section of the 1 Star and 2 Star techniques should be incorporated at the assessor's discretion.

VENUE

Sheltered water (not a swimming pool) but see paragraph 17 of the Introductory Notes.

ASSESSOR

Level 3 Kayak Coach or higher, in the appropriate discipline.

THEORY

- a question or two of a similar level should be asked under each heading

Equipment

Sample questions:

What materials are most modern 'general purpose' boats made from?

What advantage does a spray deck made from neoprene give?

What is the main difference between a 'dry cag' and a 'wet suit top'?

Safety

Sample questions:

What would you pay special attention to if you were going out kayaking in the winter ?

Why can a rapid or fast moving water be dangerous ?

Hypothermia/first aid

Sample questions:

What are the signs that someone is becoming hypothermic?

What are the most important things to do if someone suffers a bad injury?

Access

Sample questions:

What is an 'access agreement'?

What sort of behaviour is most likely to upset an access agreement?

What is meant by 'a navigation'?

Environment

What is the most distressing/disturbing wildlife encounter you have had whilst canoeing?

Who would you contact if you came across signs of serious pollution - eg oil, sewage, foul smells, dead fish and birds?

Planning

Sample questions:

What average speed do you think you can travel at over a 4-hour journey in your kayak without any current or strong wind to help or hinder you?

What questions would you ask the leader if, as a 3 Star paddler, you were invited to take part in a day tour travelling about 12 miles down river?

General

Sample questions:

Name two manufacturers of kayaks in Britain?

How does joining the British Canoe Union help you and help canoeing generally?

Have you heard of Rob Roy MacGregor?

Group Awareness

Sample questions:

On which side of a navigable river or canal should you paddle?

How would you raise the alarm if you were paddling at the back of a group and the person ahead of you capsized?

Map and compass

Sample questions:

Why is it important to have a compass with you when on a journey?

What sort of map is the best one to have with you for a journey on a river or canal?

PRACTICAL 'A'

1. **Lifting, carrying and launching.** Demonstrate good safe lifting and carrying techniques appropriate to getting a kayak from or to a car roof rack or a trailer, with assistance if available. The candidate should be able to launch safely and efficiently from any reasonable launching spot. e.g. pier, steps, high river bank.

2. **Efficient forward paddling.** Evidence of efficient forward paddling. Good trunk rotation, extended front arm, reasonably high paddling action (dependent on boat). Are the knees/legs cycling? The demonstration will be over a distance of about 500m (throughout the test) and will show good speed and control.

3. **Reverse over a figure-of-8 course.** Accurate and efficient backward paddling over a prescribed figure of - 8 course.

4. **Turning whilst on the move.** Turn the kayak quickly with the minimum loss of forward speed by means of a low brace turn, and by a bow rudder.

Low brace turn. The turn to be induced by applying a sweep stroke on the opposite side to the turn, followed by a confident edge into the turn. Back of paddle blade trailing on surface ready for support. Perform both left and right.

Bow rudder. The intention is to indicate that the kayak can be pivoted around the paddle. The turn to be induced by applying a sweep stroke on the opposite side to the turn. The blade should

then be planted in the water at a comfortable distance from the gunwale, about level with the knees, with the drive face towards the boat but the leading edge angled away from the bow. Trunk rotation should be in evidence, the top arm across the top of the forehead. The boat is driven around the paddle by use of the opposite knee.

5. **Moving sideways, both static and on the move.** Move the kayak sideways in both directions by means of sculling draw, draw on the move and hanging draw.

Sculling draw . Body well rotated. Paddle shaft vertical, blade deep in the water. An effective sideways movement must be in evidence without the kayak turning.

Draw on the move. The kayak, whilst moving forward, is to be pulled sideways from its course without turning (as if to avoid an obstacle) using a draw stroke.

Hanging draw. The kayak to be moved sideways over a greater distance than that of a draw stroke on the move. With the kayak moving forward at a good speed, the paddle should be placed out to the side, level with or just behind hip, The kayak should move sideways without the paddle moving in relation to the boat, or the kayak turning. (It may be necessary for the bow to be held at a slight angle away from the paddle.)

6. **Supporting.** Candidates should possess a range of support techniques in order to maintain balance in varied circumstances. Demonstrations should include low and high recovery strokes as well as low and high sculling for support on both sides.

Sculling for support. The paddle to be kept low, nearly horizontal, with evidence of confident committal to the paddle.

Recovery strokes. Both high and low recovery strokes be demonstrated with the kayak well off balance. To be performed on the move, and forward paddling to be maintained thereafter.

7. **Securing.** Secure the kayak to trailer, canoe rack or roof rack using a rope. Any practical system is acceptable but must use an efficient, recognised knot.

8. **Tilting to assist turning.** Exercise to be set showing good edging control that assists turning.

PRACTICAL 'B'

1. **Deep water rescue.** An effective rescue of another canoeist, returning him or her to their kayak in deep water. The capsized paddler may assist as instructed by the candidate. It is recommended that boats should be equipped with total buoyancy (eg, airbags)

Towing and use of tow line. Candidate to show a knowledge of a way to tow a kayak using a line without assistance. The tow must be released as for an emergency. The candidate must indicate that he or she is aware of the inherent dangers of towing.

3. **Eskimo rescue.** A confident capsize and banging on the hull, with the rescuer moving in from 5 metres distance. A first time recovery must follow, but two attempts may be made. Candidate to act as both rescuer and victim. Both styles of Eskimo rescue to be shown i.e. bow presentation and paddle presentation. The rescuer must not approach at right angles to where the hands or body are located.

Demonstrate satisfactory beginnings in:

1. **Rolling** The candidate should come up within three attempts, during each of which the assessor may guide or hold the blade of the paddle, but not touch the boat or paddler. A half roll is acceptable (i.e. down and up on the same side).

Journeying

1. Provide evidence of at least 3 journeys of 10km (about 3 hours duration each).

FOUR STAR TEST CLOSED COCKPIT KAYAK

AIM

The test is designed to indicate that the candidate has sufficient proficiency to undertake a journey as a member of a group being led on grade 2 water.

Holding the 4 Star Test is a requirement for attending a training course for the qualification of Level 3 Coach

PRE-REQUISITES

BCU 3 Star Test. Where a candidate does not hold this award a small cross-section of the 1 to 3 Star tests techniques should be incorporated at the assessor's discretion.

ASSESSMENT AND VENUE

The emphasis is now on skills suitable for moving water and exposed open water, requiring the paddler to perform appropriate and effective manoeuvres rather than to be able to perform a set repertoire of strokes.

A perfect performance is not required, more importantly the candidate should satisfy the assessor that he or she is competent to handle the kayak safely as a member of a group being led on a one day trip down grade 2 water. Assessment should ideally take place over a day trip on a river containing grade 2 sections or sites of equivalent difficulty.

ASSESSOR

Level 3 Kayak Coach or higher with A1* Assessor status

THEORY

- a question or two of a similar level should be asked under each heading

Equipment

Show a good knowledge of kayak, paddle and personal equipment

Safety

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.

Hypothermia/first aid

Show a good understanding of immersion hypothermia, its causes and symptoms. Be able to deal with basic first aid incidents - eg, a cut forehead or hand - or hold a first aid certificate.

Access

Be aware of the difficulties of paddling on British waters, and how to gain information on access to rivers and lakes. Be aware of the problems of canoeing on private waters and how great sensitivity needs to be shown when launching and landing: ie, towards residents, land owners, farmers, anglers.

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.

Planning

Show an understanding of what is involved in planning a trip down a river, such as access and egress, equipment requirements, significance of a weather forecast, shuttle procedures, lunch stops, contingency plans.

General

The candidate 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.

Group awareness

The candidate to show that he or she has an understanding of the importance of self control when travelling with a group on grade II or open water, and the problems which could occur without positive group discipline.

Map and compass

The candidate should be able to align a map, work out the distance between two points, and identify any particular features which would indicate position, comprehend compass 'variation', and have an understanding of how to use a transit when paddling on open water.

CANDIDATE'S KAYAK AND EQUIPMENT

Each candidate will present him or herself suitably equipped for the test. All equipment should be both suitable and serviceable, and 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. If the open water work and river work are tested on different days, full equipment should be presented on both occasions.

The following items of equipment should be presented for inspection:

1. **Kayak and paddle.** The kayak MUST be fitted with a minimum of 6.5Kg (60N) securely fixed buoyancy at each end of the kayak, but it is recommended that boats are fitted with total buoyancy (eg inherent buoyancy supplemented with air bags). End grabs must be provided and be suitable for carrying out rescues without trapping the hand. Where safety lines are used they must be taut and not capable of coming loose accidentally, or fouling the cockpit area.
2. **Personal clothing.** Personal clothing should be appropriate to the expected conditions, and should include windproof and waterproof clothing.
3. **Buoyancy aid, helmet and spray cover.** 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 provide adequate protection for the head and be securely fastened. The spray cover must be fitted with an efficient release strap.
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 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 bivvy 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 (bivvy) 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 capsized.

PRACTICAL ON FLAT WATER

1. **Rolling.** Where the kayak is of appropriate design the candidate should be able to demonstrate a roll. It is permissible to allow the candidate to set him or herself up before capsizing. A roll on one side only is required. Provided the rest of the candidate's performance is sound, an inability to roll is not a fail factor in itself.

2. **Rescue and tow as for white water.** The candidate to rescue a capsized canoeist by competently towing him or her a distance of 10m. A tow line is not required. At least two forms of carry should be shown and the candidate should show a knowledge of the advantages and disadvantages of both.

PRACTICAL ON GRADE 2 WATER

1. **Forward paddling.** A competent demonstration of forward paddling throughout the day trip, using strokes which should be polished, fluent and adaptive.

Throughout the test the candidate should demonstrate the elements of good paddling technique. A committed catch, good rotation, leg drive, upright comfortable posture at a fast cruising pace whilst maintaining accurate control of the kayak. Common sense should be applied when judging paddling technique taking into account variation in physique and personal style.

2. **Stopping and reverse ferry gliding.** Stopping and reverse ferry gliding should be used to alter the candidate's position on the river with a view to selecting a suitable line down a rapid and also for avoiding obstacles. The candidate's demonstration should also include the safe negotiation of bends where the main current sets under trees.

Whilst demonstrating reverse ferry gliding, it is not envisaged that the candidate need enter and leave the main current, but rather that they should be able to perform the manoeuvres whilst in the main current.

3. **Breaking out.** Breaking out of the main current into eddies should demonstrate anticipation and early positioning, and the use of appropriate strokes throughout the manoeuvre. The candidate should also demonstrate the correct speed and angle of approach, together with a positive and early grip of the stationary water in the eddy. The kayak should come to rest high up the eddy, just inside the eddy line and parallel to it.

4. **Breaking in.** This manoeuvre will be achieved by resolving such factors as speed of current, size of eddy, tilt and the desired position in the river after the break in. Initial positioning in the eddy and the angle of exit. Initial positioning in the eddy and the angle of exit allied to the correct speed and degree of edging should be evident and appropriate for the particular eddy. Be aware of a charge out that ends with either a stall in mid-current or an inadvertent entry into an eddy on the opposite bank.

5. **Upstream (forward) ferry gliding.** The candidate should aim to cross a consistent and moderate grade 2 flow that is 10m wide without any loss of height, or a 20m wide flow with no more than a kayak length loss. Allowance needs to be made for the specific water conditions. It is important that the ferry angle is appropriate and maintained through the manoeuvre.

6. **Use of throwag.** Demonstrate throwing a throw bag to rescue a swimmer descending a grade 2 rapid, 10m from the bank. It is not envisaged that anyone should need to swim down the river (e.g. a twig could be used as the target) but the assessor should be satisfied that the rope would land over the swimmer, and that the rescuer would not be pulled off balance.

The candidate should be able to demonstrate a basic waist/shoulder belay for accepting a load.

7. **Surf small waves.** The candidate should show an ability to cross the current using a small wave (a 30cm or 1 foot wave is more than adequate).

8. ***Paddle into and out of small stoppers.*** It is crucial that the candidate (and the assessor) can recognise 'friendly' stoppers. Having identified such a stopper the candidate should be able to paddle into it and then leave it. An upright body position with a smooth but lightly held brace is important, the boat having a small but steady downstream edge. The brace should be active i.e. supporting and paddling the candidate either forward or backward towards the end or the break in the stopper. The candidate's ability to recognise friendly or difficult stoppers (particularly in weirs) is more important than the ability to be able to perform well in them.

Journeying

1. Provide evidence of at least 3 self contained journeys of at least 4 hours travelling time (equivalent to about 20km paddling under normal touring conditions). At least two different rivers must be involved, one of which must contain grade 2 sections. Different sections of a river may be counted as different rivers so long as there is no overlap. Where lakes are included as suitable trips then at least one of the journeys must have been on a grade 2 river.
2. Demonstrate a basic ability to follow a compass bearing and locate the position on an OS map.

FOUR STAR TEST SEA KAYAK

AIM

The purpose of this test is to ensure that the candidate has sufficient knowledge and skill to enable him or her to take a kayak safely to sea in moderate conditions under a competent leader.

Holding the 4 Star Test is a requirement for attending a training course for the qualification of Level 3 Coach - Sea.

PRE-REQUISITES

BCU 3-Star test. Where a candidate does not hold this test a cross-section of the requirements of the 1-3 Star tests should be incorporated at the assessor's discretion.

The candidate must have taken part in at least three one day expeditions at sea. To rate as a qualifying expedition, the journey must have been on open water (i.e. where it is *possible* to be three miles from land in any direction).

The journey may, however, be inshore close to a simple coastline not involving overfalls, tidal races, difficult landings or open crossings. Winds not exceeding Force 4. Not more than one trip shall be carried out on an estuary. The journey must have involved four hours travelling, with a lunch break in which the candidate was self-sufficient for food and drink. At least one journey must be on an entirely different stretch of coast to the other two.

ASSESSMENT AND VENUE

The test must be taken at sea, under moderate conditions (wind or sea state 2-4) ideally during a day trip. Allowance will be made by the assessor if conditions are rough, but the kayak skills must be performed in a competent manner. For reasons of safety three kayakers will participate. The test will not be taken in a flat calm.

ASSESSOR

Level 3 Sea Coach or higher, who is an A1* Assessor

THEORY

The candidate should be able to answer questions on the following:

Equipment

Show a good knowledge of kayak, paddle and personal equipment.

Safety

Be aware of: Safety precautions applying particularly to the kayak at sea

The general effects of tide, current and wind

National Coastguard organisation and rescue services

Local waters and conditions

Potential hazards,(especially busy estuaries and water ways)

Basic collision regulations and sound signals

Hypothermia / First Aid

Show a good understanding of immersion hypothermia, its causes and symptoms. Be able to deal with basic first aid incidents - eg a cut forehead or hand - or hold a first aid certificate.

Access

Be aware of our basic freedom to paddle on the sea, but also of the need not to bring the sport into disrepute through irresponsible behaviour.

Be aware that some harbour authorities have the right to charge canoeists, and do so.

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 rock pools.

Planning

Be able to determine from a chart:

Depths and drying heights

Simple recognition of hazards - i.e. tide races, overfalls

Basic recognition of main buoyage

Simple tidal predictions by the tidal constant method

Demonstrate an ability to use a simple compass to follow an escape route.

Weather

Be aware of the sources of weather forecasts and the effect of the weather on the sea environment.

General

The candidate 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.

Group awareness

Show group awareness and self-control consistent with a 4 Star standard journey on the sea.

The candidate should be able to align a map, work out the distance between two points, and identify any particular features which would indicate position, comprehend compass variation, and have an understanding of how to use a transit when paddling on open water.

CANDIDATE'S KAYAK AND EQUIPMENT

Each candidate will present him or herself suitably equipped, for the test. Borrowed equipment will be judged as though it was the candidate's own.

The following items, which must be both suitable and serviceable, must be presented for inspection:

1. ***Kayak and paddle.** Kayaks must be provided with end grabs suitable for carrying out rescues without trapping the hand. Safety lines and/or painters (if fitted) must be taut and not capable of becoming loose accidentally, or fouling the cockpit area. Fitted buoyancy must be securely fixed and fill all available space apart from cockpit in suitably customised general purpose kayaks. Sealed bulkheads are regarded as sufficient in themselves for sea kayaks.
 2. **Personal clothing.** Personal clothing should be appropriate to the expected conditions, and should include windproof and water-proof outer garments.
 3. **Buoyancy aid, appropriate headgear and spray deck.** 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. A brightly coloured helmet or woolly or other hat is recommended. The spray deck must be fitted with an efficient release strap.
 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 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 bivvy 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: simple compass; emergency food; whistle; exposure (bivvy) bag of minimum size 1.8m x 0.9m (6' by 3'); torch; matches or lighter; flares or other suitable means of pinpointing position if in the water.
 8. **Waterproof kit bag(s).** Spare equipment must be stored in appropriately secured, waterproof kit carriers and must remain dry even after a capsize.
- * The award may be taken in any kayak, provided it is suitably fitted out and the candidate can meet the requirements of the test.**

PRACTICAL ON FLAT WATER

1. **Rolling.** Where the kayak is of appropriate design the candidate should be able to demonstrate a roll. It is permissible to allow the candidate to set him or herself up before capsizing. A roll on one side only is required.

Provided the rest of the candidate's performance is sound, an inability to roll is not a fail factor in itself.

PRACTICAL ON OPEN WATER

1. *Launching* The candidate should demonstrate launching techniques appropriate for the conditions

2. *Efficient paddling technique, forwards and backwards.* The assessor will look for: correct dynamic seating position; correct entry and exit of the blade; ability to keep the boat straight; sufficient power in the stroke to paddle against wind or current; trunk rotation; correct width of paddle grip.

3. *Turning the kayak 360 degrees.* In both directions by using alternate forward and reverse sweep strokes.

Paddle blade just covered, reaching out to full arm extension, elbow slightly bent. Paddle drawing well into the stern with the forward arm pushing across the body. Body turning to place the paddle in the water at the stern of the kayak. If the kayak is fitted with a rudder, it must be turned again in both directions, this time steering with the rudder only.

4. *Emergency stops.* Forwards and backwards. Reverse direction should be in evidence within 4 strokes.

5. *Drawing the kayak sideways in both directions.* Top arm high, blade deep. The boat must keep a straight line sideways through the water in both directions.

6. *High and low recovery strokes.* To be performed on both sides. For high braces the water must reach the paddler's waist, with a strong pull and associated hip flick to recover.

7. *Paddle brace.* High and low on the left and right. Where wave conditions are not suitable the candidate must paddle hard forwards then glide with the blade flat on the surface at right angles to the kayak.

For a high brace, the water must reach the paddler's waist at the onset of the stroke.

8. *Stern Rudder.* The paddle blade should be placed in the water upright, well back to the stern. Candidate should be able to keep the kayak running straight, downwind on small waves, with the paddle kept on one side of the boat.

9. *Landing* Bring the kayak into a beach forwards, sideways and backwards (forwards only if kayak is fitted with rudder). This is controlled, not a surf landing. Holding position in order to allow for the waves.

10. *Capsize and rescue.* Perform capsize drill, followed by a deep water rescue with partners. Take charge of a rescue and then act as a capsized victim. Any sign at all of fear or panic, and failure to retain the kayak during the drill will automatically result in failure of the test. The capsize must be accidental with spray deck in place - either whilst paddling or in an attempted recovery stroke or sculling for support.

11. *Handling waves.* Demonstrate an ability to paddle into a head sea, with a following sea and in a beam sea.

12. *Negotiate moderate surf.* Demonstrate an ability to handle moderate surf (maximum 1m/ 3ft) in order to safely commence a journey or achieve a landing.

13. Knots. Tie the following knots: Bowline, Figure of eight, Round turn and two half hitches, Clove hitch and demonstrate and explain their uses..

Journeying

1. Provide evidence of having taken part in at least 3 one-day expeditions at sea as stated under *Pre-requisites*.

FIVE STAR TEST - SEA KAYAK

AIM

The purpose of this test is to ensure that the successful candidate has sufficient knowledge and skill to lead others of adequate ability on sea journeys, up to and including advanced level, with safety, in British conditions. When used with the relevant coaching award it shows that the candidate has sufficient expertise to coach and lead groups in more demanding situations.

This award is intended for paddlers who journey on the sea in areas where tidal races, headlands, open crossings, swell and challenging coastlines may be encountered. The award should be accessible to all those people who journey on the sea on a regular basis and should not be seen as the preserve of a few elite performers. It is envisaged that the average club member canoeing regularly, should be able to obtain this award within three years of starting to paddle regularly on the sea.

PRE-REQUISITES

Due to the nature of this test and its remit for leadership it is necessary that candidates should show three days logged experience of formal training in leadership, safety and rescue, prior to assessment. Such experience may be gained on advertised courses, or from endorsement by a level 5 coach. The candidate will have documented a minimum of six journeys on the open sea. These will have involved a variety of different conditions including:

A journey of a minimum distance of 20 nautical miles. (see journeying)

An open crossing of at least 5 nautical miles.

Navigation in poor visibility and darkness.

Winds reaching at least force 4.

Exposure to no landing zones.

Tide races and overfalls.

Camping from a kayak.

Tidal streams of at least 3 knots.

Paddling in swell and waves.

The candidate must already hold the BCU 4 Star test (or be recommended for exemption by a current level 5 Sea Coach).

The candidate must hold an appropriate, and current, first aid award (e.g.BCU Lifeguards Aquatic First Aid - 8 hour course). Any of the nationally recognised standard

first aid certificates, or any H&SE approved, are acceptable provided they involve a minimum of 8 hours training and include CPR and EAV.

ASSESSOR

An A5 Sea Assessors as per student ratio supported by an A4 Sea assessor

SYLLABUS

Theory

Navigation; Weather; Equipment; Environment; History; First Aid

Practical

Show an efficient and effective forward paddling technique.

Demonstrate an ability to manoeuvre and control a kayak in a variety of different situations.

Launch and land in a variety of situations.

Perform a range of rescues.

Roll in rough water

Be conversant with different methods of towing.

Show the ability to navigate on the water.

Exercise group control and show concern for the general welfare of other group members.

Demonstrate the capability to handle a range of incidents.

Journeying

Have experience of a minimum of six journeys on the open sea. These will have involved a variety of different conditions.

Two of the journeys must have taken place in a different sea area.

At least one journey must have involved an overnight camp or bivvy.

METHOD OF ASSESSMENT

Theory

As well as oral questions over the course of the assessment it is envisaged that there will be two written examinations. The first will take the form of a written paper which is sent out in advance and for which the candidate will be able to utilise all the resources which are at their disposal to answer the questions. The second will be a navigation exercise, which will usually be undertaken on the first evening of the assessment course. The candidate should have produced sufficient work for the assessors to make a judgement as to their competence within two hours.

Navigation

Plan a two day journey in an unfamiliar area which includes an open crossing.

Weather

Know where to obtain relevant shipping and weather forecasts. Understand the probable sequence of weather which occurs during the passage of a depression.

Have an understanding of the following:

The formation of fog, onshore and offshore winds, the effect of relief, line squalls.

The relationship between the pattern of isobars on a synoptic chart and the probable resultant wind speed and direction.

Be able to relate physical signs to the actual forecast.

Equipment

Show an understanding of the variety of equipment which is available including radio and navigation aids.

Environment

Candidates should be aware of the environmental factors that affect the sea. These will include the effect of wind, tidal movement, swell and physical factors. The candidate should also show a basic knowledge of the wildlife which is likely to be encountered on the sea and be aware of times and areas when special consideration should be given. The candidate should show a personal responsibility for the environment.

History

Show a knowledge of past and present developments in the sport of sea kayaking.

Coastguard

Have a knowledge of the role and responsibilities of the Coastguard Service.

PRACTICAL

The assessment course will normally be run over a weekend or similar time span. The first evening will be spent on the navigation exercise and course administration, followed by two days and a night undertaking a journey of the appropriate level. It is anticipated that an overnight bivvy or camp will be involved.

Forward Paddling

The candidate should be able to demonstrate efficient and effective forward paddling technique in different wind and sea conditions. This should include a following sea and a beam wind.

Manoeuvre and Control

The candidate should show manoeuvring skills in relation to static and moving objects and demonstrate good control in moving and broken water. Where a rudder or skeg is fitted the candidate should demonstrate reasonable control in the event of a failure.

Launching and Landing

The candidate should show the ability to launch and land themselves and the members of their group in a variety of conditions. This may involve beaches, rocky inlets, headlands and surf. They should also show the ability to land an injured paddler.

Rescues

The candidate should have a good repertoire of rescues and be able to adapt them to a range of conditions.

It is expected that they should be able to rescue a loaded sea kayak without assistance apart from the casualty. In addition, the candidate should have a knowledge of a variety of self rescues and be able to demonstrate one. This part of the test should not take place in calm conditions but it is not necessary to perform it in a tide race.

Rolling

Perform a roll in rough water.

Towing

The candidate should have a towing system and be aware of the need for flexibility and be able to drop and pick up the tow with ease. They should demonstrate single and multiple tows.

Navigation

The candidate must demonstrate the ability to keep a compass course on open water and make good a course using transits. They should be able to fix their position using a combination of bearings and transits. The candidates should be able to navigate in poor visibility or the hours of darkness. They should be able to plan alternative routes whilst afloat which take into account wind and tidal conditions.

They should also be able to identify features from the chart and recognise navigation marks.

Group Control

The candidate should exercise appropriate group control whilst on the water. They should also be concerned for the comfort and welfare of the party throughout the whole journey. The importance of effective group control cannot be over-emphasised.

Incidents

The candidate should carry and have easily accessible suitable means for summoning help in an emergency.

They should have a first aid kit and be familiar with the use of its contents. A repair kit should also be carried. It should be possible to effect a repair on a kayak whilst afloat as well as being able to deal with more substantial problems to the equipment whilst ashore. The candidate should be equipped and prepared to deal with any incidents which could occur during the course of the journey.

Equipment

It is expected that by the time the candidate is ready for assessment they will be aware of what equipment is required for undertaking a multi-day journey. It is reasonable for people to make personal choices as regards equipment but they should be prepared to justify those decisions. It is not essential for candidates to present themselves for assessment in a specialised sea kayak, but due to the fact that they may have to paddle with people in those type of craft they should have some experience of paddling a variety of sea kayaks including singles and doubles.