

British Canoeing Advanced Sea Kayak Leader Assessment Essential Information for Candidates

Please read these notes carefully - if you have any questions, contact Nick at:
info@kayakessentials.co.uk

Sections highlighted in green indicate required tasks prior to assessment date.
Sections highlighted in red indicate likely tasks during the assessment.

British Canoeing advanced sea kayak leader assessment info can be found here:
www.britishcanoeing.org.uk/courses/advanced-sea-kayak-leader

First Evening - Start of Assessment

We will meet at an agreed location on the eve of the first full assessment day - for example:
If the advertised assessment dates are 5-6 November, we will meet at 18:00 on 4 November.

We will email details of the meeting place, 2-3 days before the assessment date.

Please tell us your accommodation option - where possible, we will arrange a meeting point convenient for all involved. Weather factors will probably dictate where we will meet each day.

Nick Cunliffe is the assessment director and will meet you at 18:00 on the eve of the first day.

We will begin with assessment paperwork, Q&A, preparations for the day, etc.

Please bring with you:

- Evidence of British Canoeing registration / check-in
- 1st Aid certificate evidence
- Advanced Sea Kayak Leader training completed evidence
- Open Water Navigation certificate
- Evidence of current British Canoeing membership

Sea Kayaking Experience

Please also bring a brief written record of your sea kayaking experience to date:
independent trips, trips with assistant or leader responsibilities, exposure to suitable conditions.

British Canoeing guidelines detail the sea kayaking experience required for this award.

Chart work exercise:

On the first evening you will also complete a trip planning / chart work exercise.

We will provide the assessment task, which will comprise a chart work planning exercise involving a 4-6 hour passage across tidal waters, from / to specific departure / arrival points.

We will provide a relevant chart section for each candidate, a tidal stream atlas, relevant tide tables and other information.

We anticipate that the exercise will take approximately 60 minutes to complete - and will allow up to 90 minutes for its completion.

There will be an opportunity at the start of the chart work assessment to discuss the exercise, and for questions and answers. Please bring any planning materials you would typically use, i.e. paper and pencil, compass, plotting instrument, dividers etc.

First Full Day:

Weather conditions may require a flexible approach, and a possible departure from this assessment plan - we will communicate our plans at the start of the assessment, and will be constantly available for questions and clarification.

We will meet at an agreed venue at 09:00

There will be a brief planning session before departing to an agreed paddling area. It is likely that we will select an overall paddling area for the day, rather than a specific route choice - to allow flexibility of decision-making during the day.

We will depart for a journey of 6-8 hours duration, suitable for a group of paddlers capable in advanced remit conditions.

We will indicate the extent of the Anglesey coastline at which we will plan to operate. For example: between Cemaes Bay (N Coast) & Church Bay (Holyhead Bay) including Skerries.

Travel to / from paddling venues - you will need to arrange your own travel from our meeting point to each paddling venue. If you want to car-share, please arrange this with other candidates.

Please be familiar with:

- Launch / landing points - expected conditions afloat
- Key tidal considerations - directions, speed, timing
- Effect of wind / weather on chosen route - please use available weather / tide resources

Be prepared to lead a range of journey options, with up to date weather forecast, tidal picture, navigation info etc.

Please ensure you have an overall picture of the weather / tidal / sea conditions situation for the entire Anglesey coastline, on each day of the assessment.

There will be a brief period of time to plan a paddling location at the start of each day - but we recommend that you do the foundation work beforehand.

Assessed skills during this day will include: planning & environmental understanding (tides, weather, sea conditions), leadership legs & group management, safety / rescue skills & incident management, navigation.

We will also undertake a night navigation exercise towards the end of the first assessment day afloat. Ideally, this will take place as a continuation of the paddling day, and will commence as soon as darkness / visibility permits. It is likely that we will be afloat for around two hours of darkness, during which time we will assess navigation and group management skills.

In certain weather conditions, we may be obliged to move paddling locations to another section of the island of Anglesey after the first paddling session afloat - **please be prepared for such a move. Please ensure that you are adequately equipped with suitable navigation equipment (compass, torch, map / chart, watch, other lighting aids).**

During the first day afloat we do not plan to include additional 'group members' to lead - paddling groups will comprise candidates and assessors. **When undertaking leadership legs, therefore, you will be responsible for leading fellow candidates and assessors.**

Maximum group sizes will be 4 candidates per assessor.

We will work afloat independently in small groups of this size.

It is likely that we will be afloat by around 11:00 on the first day - allowing for a night navigation exercise, we are likely to be ashore at the end of the day by 20:00.

Second Full Day

Weather conditions may require a flexible approach, and a possible departure from this assessment plan - we will communicate our plans at the start of the assessment, and will be constantly available for questions and clarification.

We will meet at an agreed venue at 08.30, for a brief planning session before departing to an agreed paddling area.

On this day you will have other group members for candidates to lead - these group members will be at or near trainee advanced sea kayak leader standard, to allow us to paddle in remit conditions during the day.

Maximum group sizes will be 2-3 candidates, with 2-4 group members to lead, plus an assessor. A list of group members will be provided at the start of assessment weekend, with a summary of experience / ability of the led paddlers on the second assessment day afloat.

The group members will arrive by 09:00 - **there will be time to meet and discuss experience / ability with group members at the start of day two.** We will depart for the agreed paddling venue by 09:30.

Travel to / from paddling venues - **you will need to arrange your own travel from our meeting point to each paddling venue. If you want to car-share, please arrange this with other candidates.**

Maximum group sizes will be 2 candidates per assessor.

We will work afloat independently in small groups of this size.

Assessed skills on this day will include: leadership, group management, problem-solving and navigation.

We expect to be ashore by 3.30pm on this day, from where we will rendezvous at an agreed location for assessment reviews, outcomes and 1:1 debriefs.

Candidate Leader Equipment

We will be afloat for much of the two days of the assessment.

We require you to carry at all times suitable sea kayak leader equipment for the prevailing conditions, according to the BCU notes for guidance for the award.

We will not camp from kayaks during the assessment; we will return ashore at the end of day one. Candidates can return to their accommodations, and we will meet again at the start of day two.

Candidates will need to take care of their own dietary / energy needs during days afloat.

The spirit of the British Canoeing advanced sea kayak leader award is such that we should expect to be able to make a forced bivouac in relative comfort, should a paddling journey leg place us on a coastline from which escape is impossible until several hours later.

Candidates should therefore pack clothing and equipment suitable for this eventuality.

We do not intend to create such a situation, but will check candidates' emergency equipment during the assessment.

It is possible at any time during the assessment that candidates will be required to perform tasks involving immersion - with this in mind, please ensure that you are adequately protected, with sufficient spare clothing for your own well-being throughout the assessment.

Paddling Venues

Our paddling areas during the assessment weekend may involve any section of the Anglesey coastline - with this in mind, please ensure that you are adequately prepared with weather, tidal and navigational information throughout each assessment day.

We will make use of any sections of coastline that meet the remit of the British Canoeing advanced sea kayak leader assessment.

On Anglesey, useful map / chart resources include:

- Imray chart publications that include the North Wales coastline
- Admiralty chart publications, e.g. Holyhead to Great Orme's Head & Approaches to Holyhead
- OS map resources include 1: 25 000 maps West & East Anglesey & 1: 50 000 Anglesey sheet

There is also a range of available Pilot books, guides, atlases & other sources of tidal information. Please ensure that you are suitably equipped to adequately plan all sea kayaking activities during the assessment.

Overall Assessment Structure

We will try to follow as closely as possible the assessment program outlined above. Weather conditions / other factors may require us to change the sequence / order of assessment activities. In such cases, we will communicate any required changes as soon as they become clear.

We aim to run a well organised, positive and appropriately-pitched assessment, following the syllabus of the British Canoeing advanced sea kayak leader award.

We will use the most current British Canoeing syllabus and guidance notes:

www.britishcanoeing.org.uk/courses/advanced-sea-kayak-leader

We will conduct the assessment weekend in a positive, supportive atmosphere - it is our job to create an environment in which you are able to display your skills and experience.

During the assessment we will ask questions, e.g. during planning sessions, following leadership legs, within navigation tasks.

Our purpose is to clarify our understanding of any actions taken by you as a candidate, to explore thought processes, and to establish your knowledge in a specific area.

We will avoid leading or ambiguous questions, and will not seek to trip you up in any way. Questioning is simply an element of any assessment process.

We aim to be clear and understandable in our briefings and communications: **don't hesitate to ask us questions for clarification, to check understanding or for any other reason!**

At the end of the assessment the team of assessors will discuss all information gathered throughout the assessment and will reach decisions regarding your performance against the syllabus of the British Canoeing sea kayak leader award. We will then share those conclusions with each candidate and will set aside time for a 1:1 review / discussion.

If a candidate does not reach the required standard of the award, we will provide specific examples of areas in which performance fell short, and will discuss an action plan to help you prepare for a future successful assessment.

Written feedback of an unsuccessful result will be provided within one week of the assessment.

British Canoeing has an appeals / redress process, in the event that any candidate disagrees with the assessment outcome and is unable to reach a resolution with the assessment team.

Details can be found at the British Canoeing website.

[Assessment Postponements / Cancellations](#)

In rare situations it can be necessary to postpone planned British Canoeing sea kayak leader assessments. If conditions do not meet the remit of the award, i.e. if winds are too light to provide adequate sea conditions for the syllabus requirements - or if sea conditions are so rough that it is impossible to commit to any sea kayak journeys on open coastlines - British Canoeing Assessor Guidance Notes require us to postpone or cancel the planned assessment.

In such cases, it is not generally clear that conditions will be unsuitable until within 48 hours of the planned assessment start date.

If weather conditions require a postponement, we will contact all candidates by email 48 hours before the planned assessment with a final decision. Postponements will only happen as a final resort - if conditions clearly will not meet the British Canoeing sea kayak leader remit.

In such a situation, we will refund all course fees paid for the assessment.

We appreciate that candidates will have travel and accommodation commitments, although we are unable to refund these costs.

In the event of a postponement, we advise candidates to discuss refund options with their accommodation / travel providers.

We will also seek to establish an alternative future assessment date that meets the availability of candidates and assessors.

In conclusion, postponements are rare events and we make every effort to run the planned assessment, notwithstanding extreme weather events. Overseas /International Candidates

We understand that candidates traveling from overseas will not be able to fly with prohibited items of leader equipment, e.g. distress flares. **We will require candidates to obtain all other required safety / leader equipment for the duration of the assessment.**

Any borrowed equipment will be assessed as if it were the candidate's own.

Please also read the relevant sections of our Kayak Essentials website for more details re. transport, equipment, accommodation - available at: www.kayakessentials.co.uk

Course Feedback

British Canoeing is committed to developing the quality of its awards, and welcomes feedback from all course participants. You are invited to use the following link to comment on any aspects of our British Canoeing Leader / Coach training / assessment courses.

<https://goo.gl/forms/7pNoLr1NOJ6oJRke2>

Summary

We want you to feel informed and supported in the assessment process for the British Canoeing sea kayak leader award. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any further questions or concerns.

Nick Cunliffe, Course Director
info@kayakessentials.co.uk