



British Canoeing Quality Mark Guidelines

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British Canoeing Quality Mark Guidelines

Introduction

British Canoeing is the umbrella organisation for the four Home Nation Governing Bodies of Paddlesport in the UK (British Canoeing, Scottish Canoe Association, Canoe Association of Northern Ireland and Canoe Wales). As such the British Canoeing has responsibility to ensure those participating in the sport know exactly what qualifications; safety procedures and standards of competence are expected from British Canoeing and from those Providers providing paddlesport activity. To this end British Canoeing has a scheme of registration for Providers, who are offering paddlesport activity.

The British Canoeing Activity Quality Mark is a UK wide scheme delivered and administered by the Home Nation Associations.

The British Canoeing assumes the integrity of the management of those performing in the field and wishes to offer its support to Providers, which operate within accepted good practice.

Who Should Apply?

The Activity Quality Mark approval process is open to both public sector and private sector activity providers. Providers are generally perceived to work in five main ways including:

- **Activity Holiday Companies** – typically providing one off introductory sessions on very sheltered water.
- **Local Education Authority Centres** – the emphasis (but not entire end purpose) being the canoe/kayak as a vehicle for achieving educational personal development.
- **Outdoors Activity Centres** – the emphasis (but not entire end purpose) being on the introduction of candidates to the skills, techniques and understand of the sport and it's practice, to lead them into competent participation.
- **Specialist Paddlesport Providers** – specialist paddlesport activity and coaching course providers.
- **Paddlesport Hire Companies** – commercial event companies and leisure companies who offer paddlesport activities on a supervised or unsupervised basis or on a hire of equipment only basis.

Providers often offer a combination of the above this is acknowledged throughout these guidelines.



Benefits of the British Canoeing Activity Quality Mark

Why should I obtain the British Canoeing Quality Mark?

- Quality assured services to the public
- Expert assessment of safety, operating procedures and customer service on your waters
- Reassurance to the public, schools, local authorities, Navigation Authorities etc of quality and safety
- Support on technical, training and user management issues
- External assessment and endorsement
- British Canoeing staff support who will work with you to develop and support activities

You will also get: -

- Web site feature promoting your business/centre (within Canoe near you map)
- Use of the British Canoeing Quality Mark logo on your promotional material
- British Canoeing certificate and Quality Mark flag (issued after first visit)
- 10% Discounts on Paddlepower resources
- Discounts on Waterways Licenses for your boats
- Access to Go Canoeing team support, which includes: Promotion of Starter Sessions and Guided tours, access to Starter Session resource packs, promotion of any activities and events you are running during National Go Canoeing Week and seasonal campaigns, use of Go Canoeing logo
- Free use of the basic British Canoeing Event Promotion service Staff qualification checks (where coaches are required)
- Bespoke British Canoeing Centre Forum

Duration of the Quality Mark

The British Canoeing Quality Mark is 12 months, from 1st January to 31st December. New applicants to the Quality Mark will run from the date of a successful visit until 31st December of the current year.

Application and Inspection Process

Quality Mark Application Form

Please apply to your Home Nation Association for a Quality Mark application form. If you are in England or Wales the application form is on www.britishcanoeing.org.uk under Guidance & Resources. For Scotland, please see www.canoescotland.org/join-us/centres-and-providers . For Providers in Northern Ireland please contact www.cani.org.uk . Overseas Providers should apply to www.britishcanoeing.org.uk

Please complete and return your application form along with your fee.

Quality Mark Officer Visit and Notice of Inspection

The visit can be carried out at any time during the 12 month Quality Mark period. Quality Mark centres will be contacted directly by the Quality Mark Officer carrying out the inspection and will be asked to advise on suitable dates and times. Quality Mark Officers will try to facilitate the needs of the provider, but it is not always possible to arrange a suitable day for each operation in a given geographical area.

Access

By virtue of participating in the Quality Mark programme, Providers agree to allow the Quality Mark Officers access to all activity facilities; including stores, drying rooms, repair shops, pools and outdoor locations used in Paddlesport activities.

Permission to speak to individual members of staff may be requested but usually Quality Mark Officers will not wish to distract coaches who are engaged with their groups.

Documents Required

In addition to the application form, the visiting Quality Mark Officer will require a copy of the relevant sections of the Standard Operating Procedures, proof of public liability insurance, staffing qualifications and an equipment inventory.

British Canoeing Provider Declaration

On successful completion of the British Canoeing Quality Mark process, Providers will be required to complete a copy of the British Canoeing Provider Declaration and agreed to an in principal spot check.

British Canoeing Standards of Quality

The following standards are the minimum requirements considered necessary by the British Canoeing Quality Mark for Providers involved in the organisation of Paddlesport activity. The Quality Mark process is broken down into the following 9 key areas:

1. Insurance

Quality Mark applicants should show the following levels of current insurance:

	Minimum level of insurance cover	Recommended level of insurance cover
Public Liability cover should include bodily injury claims following bad advice or failure to advise/coaching	£5m limit of indemnity	£10m limit of indemnity
Employers Liability	£10m limit of indemnity	£10m limit of indemnity

Our insurance Brokers advice is that if your Public Liability cover has not been extended to cover bodily injury claims arising out of your advice/coaching/instruction, then a Professional Indemnity

Policy should be in place to provide you with adequate protection for this risk. In terms of the Limit of Indemnity they recommend a minimum of £1,000,000 for this type of insurance cover.

Please note: the provider remains liable for all risks and liability arising from insurance claims.

2. Management

Staff Qualifications

The senior person in charge of canoeing should normally hold a British Canoeing qualification appropriate to the level of activity provided (usually a minimum of British Canoeing UKCC Level 2 or British Canoeing Level 3). All full time members of staff carrying out paddlesport activity must hold relative coaching qualification for the environment (please refer to the British Canoeing Terms of Reference document). Their status should be “updated” and they should hold an up to date first aid certificate (see British Canoeing First Aid Policy) and have current British Canoeing Home Nation membership.

Technical Advisor

Where a provider does not employ a staff member with the required qualifications, a technical advisor with appropriate qualifications may be appointed to review operational procedures, guidelines and provide specialist advice.

Staff Induction

A formal induction process should take place for all staff employed by the provider (full time, part time, freelance or volunteer), all operational staff are required to read the Standard Operating Procedures and where appropriate sign a declaration confirming they have read and understood and abide by their content.

Safety Policy

A Provider will allow Quality Mark Officers to inspect the Provider’s Safety Policy. While Officers have no legal function in this matter, the drawing up and possession of such a policy is taken as an indication that a Provider has given proper thought and planning to the general safety of the operation. It is expected that the Safety Statement will comply with the requirements of the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act, 1989.

Risk Assessments

The Provider must have a robust and up to date method of recording risk for the venue and the activities undertaken. Risks present in a Providers operation should be identified and appropriately managed.

Providers would be expected to have the following documentation in place:

- Risk Assessments
- Incident Reporting Procedures
- Standard Operating Procedures
- Emergency Procedures
- Parental Consent Forms

- Medical Declaration Forms

Standard Operating Procedures

The Quality Mark Officer will review the Standard Operating Procedures Manual. The Manual will cover the safety and general welfare of clients whilst engaged in paddlesport activities. It will also contain details of operating procedures for each paddlesport activity. It will lay out the Providers required procedures for the conduct of activity sessions. A precise format for this manual is not always feasible since they may fail to cover every significant aspect of all eventualities. The procedures will deal comprehensively with such things as:

- Likely hazards and necessary precautions
- Client/ instructor ratios relative to the type of activity and venue
- Appropriate coach qualifications; bearing in mind the conditions and level of skill required
- Geographical Limits
- Procedures relating to obtaining information on, and dealing with, adverse weather and other variable conditions
- Where appropriate, the management of Child Protections and Vulnerable Adult matters
- The provision of an emergency action plan
- Cross staff/ inter provider communications
- Parental consent forms

Each Provider will have their own local conditions and hazards and should approach the preparation of the procedures with this in mind. Ideally, a coach new to a provider should obtain in the manual all the necessary information to enable them, while conducting a coaching session, to remain within the safety parameters set by the provider. Where there is a shared venue (centre/Club/other user) it is expected that the provider will hold all of the relevant operating procedures for other users, if different from those of the provider itself.

Effective Communication

Providers should demonstrate they have effective internal and external methods of communication. Where appropriate this should include morning staff meetings, full staff meetings, centre leaflets, newsletters, web pages and other promotional materials. Where appropriate, consideration should have been made for the needs of people with a disability.

3. Activities and Venues

Activities

This is based upon activities, locations, levels, staff qualifications, staff/student ratios. The person holding autonomy for the selection of sites must have the appropriate qualifications where require, for the deployment of session staff.

Activities will be run in accordance with best practise principles and overall group safety in mind. British Canoeing Provider's guidelines to assist you as a term of reference documents

Adequate Staffing

The Quality Mark Officer will need to ascertain client/ Staff ratios. It is therefore strongly recommended that a staff rota be kept or some other means of recording staff ratios and total client numbers should be readily available. The British Canoeing provides a Terms of Reference document to assist in the planning of this.

Venues

Venues should be appropriate to the level of activity of the participants and reflect the operating environment of the coach delivering the session, Venues used should also be appropriate for the qualification/ experience of the staff being deployed to run sessions. Definitions for canoeing environments can be found within the British Canoeing Terms of Reference document.

Sessions Delivery

The observation of a Paddlesport session is an integral part of the Quality Mark process. It allows the Quality Mark Officer to measure the quality of Paddlesport provision and check again the robustness of the management systems in a real environment.

It may be necessary to speak to the person delivering the session, however officers will not wish to distract coaches who are engaged with their groups.

Swimming Ability

Normally all students taking part in Paddlesport activities should be able to swim, however discretion may be exercised here. In accordance with the coaches training and experience, as non-swimmers may in fact, be introduced safety to canoeing by trained coaches in controlled environments as a means of introducing water confidence.

4. Facilities

Where physical facilities are an integral part of the Paddlesport provision the following criteria apply:

- Toilet facilities, with soap and water for washing hands, should be located within reasonable walking distance. Clients should not be expected to pay for the use of a public facility.
- Safe and clean, changing and shower facilities with hot water, should be available and must be provided where the water is subject to blue/green algae or at risk of Weils disease or general pollution.
- Where appropriate, suitable classroom facilities and teaching aid should be available.
- Providers must provide a safe and appropriate operating environment that complies with relevant health and safety legislation.

5. Booking Systems

Providers should have a clear and robust booking system that fits both the needs of the Provider and the client. Clear Terms and Conditions being available to clients are a key part of this, as is a focus on the customer journey.

6. Safety

Adequate Staffing

The Quality Mark Officer will need to ascertain client/ Staff ratios. It is therefore strongly recommended that a staff rota be kept or some other means of recording staff ratios and total client numbers should be readily available. The British Canoeing provides a Terms of Reference document to assist in the planning of this.

Use of Powered Safety Boats

The use of safety boats does not extend the normal operating remits of the member of staff and his or her own qualification recommended operational remit. Safety boats are therefore seen as an added safety element to an activity and not a means of placing coaches and groups outside of their normal recommended standard operational remit. The British Canoeing Quality Mark would not be granted if this were the case.

7. Equipment

Where a Paddlesport Provider provides equipment to participants, any such equipment must be fit for purpose and meet recognised industry standards. Additionally the following requirements are required as appropriate:

Equipment Inventory

Because equipment may be in use in scattered locations it is not always possible for a Quality Mark Officer to see the entire stock of a provider's equipment. An inventory of the entire stock should therefore be available for inspection; preferably with the year of purchase of the various items, repair record and in the case of such items, dates of required checks.

Buoyancy Aids

All students undertaking Paddlesport activities outside of swimming pools should normally wear a buoyancy aid or a lifejacket, the fitting of which should be checked by a suitably qualified coach, leader or guide, who has given instruction on application and use.

Any relaxation of this requirement would be subject to the appropriateness of not doing so from the point of view of safe practice or specific training goals and circumstances. In such instances any decision not to wear a buoyancy aid or lifejacket would be deemed to be the responsibility of the coach, leader or guide as advised or authorised via the Provider Operating Procedures. Examples of when such relaxation of the wearing of buoyancy aids may be appropriate: Race training in a specific craft, developing forward paddling technique, practicing climbing back into boats.

The British Canoeing recommendation with regard to personal buoyancy is: buoyancy aids must comply with either the European Standard "EN 393 or 395" www.cen.eu or the International Standard "ISO 12402" www.iso.org

Buoyancy aids should have a purchase/ in service and usage record showing regular visual shell checks as well as visual checks on issue to ensure their continued integrity.

Helmets

British Canoeing does not promote the use of helmets on flat water, unless needed for specific activities or environments. However helmets are strongly advised at all other times including: -

- Paddling water grade 2 (in closed cockpit boats and subject to local risk assessment) and for all paddling activity above grade 2
- Surfing
- Paddling among rocks or in sea caves
- During rescue practice

Passenger Vehicles

All vehicles should be taxed, have a valid MOT and be insured for purpose they are being used. Provider should have Risk Assessments relating to travelling and/or operating procedures for travelling and transporting passengers

Participants

Buoyancy Aids or lifejackets must be correctly fitting and must be checked by the staff before going afloat. For spray decks, there must be a release system which ensures immediate disengagement from the front of the cockpit rim. When helmets need to be worn, they must be correctly adjusted and checked by the instructor, coach or guide. Clothing must be appropriate, taking into account the following factors: Water temperature, air temperature, wind chill factor, the ability of the group, the type of activity, the length of the session and the location (i.e. availability of support). Suitable foot protection must be worn to prevent cuts due to hazards on the craft.

Equipment Stores and Repair Shop

Equipment for paddlesport activities is to be stored neatly. Such gear will not be at risk of physical damage from trampling, mishandling or sharp edges.

Equipment will not be stored in close proximity to corrosives, chemicals, fuels or paints, which could cause damage.

A clear procedure will be in place for the removal from service of damaged, defective or unsuitable equipment. Such defective or unsuitable equipment will be clearly marked for repair or destruction and precautions taken to prevent its use, deliberately or in error.

In examining equipment the Quality Mark Officer will not usually carry out a comprehensive check on every item, but will select a few of each type at random.

Due consideration should be taken for manual handling and equipment storage.

8. Equity and Safeguarding

British Canoeing believes that all young people should be able to take part in Paddlesport safely.

Where applicable, Providers, Centres, employers etc are required to operate a policy to ensure that young people and vulnerable groups in their care can paddle safely. British Canoeing Quality Mark Providers are required to ensure that their Codes of Practice reflects best practice in this respect and where appropriate have a Child Protection Policy, a Staff Induction Policy and a disclosure procedure relevant to the legislation of the Home Nation. There is support for Safeguarding and Equity on the British Canoeing website.

9. Programme

Providers can promote continued participation in the sport through promoting opportunities to develop and progress or to engage in repeat visits. These can be through your centre's participation/development programme, linking participants/group with canoe clubs/other providers or by offering repeat visits.

British Canoeing would like to help providers create ongoing relationships with participants; there is support for this available from your regional Canoeing Development Officer.

Qualification Courses

Providers offering British Canoeing training or qualification courses should ensure that staff are registered as required and up to date courses are appropriately authorised.

Quality Mark Outcomes

Report Form

During the visit the Quality Mark Officer will, using the evidence provided against the providers application form and the overall approval criteria, use the following rating scheme to mark each area/criteria inspected.

Ratings of 1 – require no further comment but constructive recommendations are welcome.

Ratings of 2 – require specific comment, evidence and recommendations

Ratings of 3 – require detailed specific comment, evidence and recommendations

After the visit the Quality Mark Officer will write up their findings and give ratings on each section. The report will then be emailed to the provider, at this point the provider is given the opportunity to check the report and make any adjustments. Once the Provider is happy with the report they would forward their report via email to British Canoeing as confirmation.

The British Canoeing Quality Mark Officer will give one of three recommendations: Inspection Incomplete, Quality Mark Not Granted or Quality Mark Granted.

Inspection Incomplete

The Quality Mark will not be given until the Provider has satisfied British Canoeing via the Quality Mark Officer that the conditions laid down in the action plan have been implemented.

Quality Mark Not Granted

This is used when the Quality Mark Officer believes that the Provide does not match the standards as laid down by British Canoeing. The Quality Mark Officer may assist in developing an action plan with the Provide and give ongoing support to allow the centre to meet these requirements if he/she deems that the Provide will, if given time, be able to meet the requirements. An appropriate financial arrangement would need to be agreed by the centre and British Canoeing.

Quality Mark Granted

When a Paddlesport Provider has successfully complete the Quality Mark process for the first time, a certificate to this effect is issued after the visit. The Provider will display this certificate in a public place, where clients and members of the public can readily see it; Quality Mark Officers will check this is done. In subsequent years, a new certificate will be issued at the start of each new year pending the outcome of that years Quality Mark visit.

Quality Mark Activity Recognition

Quality Mark will be granted and stated on your Quality Mark certificate, for all Paddlesport activity undertaken, which will include the following areas of operation:

- Starter Sessions
- Tuition
- Groups and School Activities
- Hire
- Activity Holidays
- Guided and Journeying Activities
- Paddle-Ability

Appeals Procedure

The appeals process is designed to allow appellants to complete the process as soon as possible after the Quality Mark visit. The Provider has four weeks in which to appeal the Quality Mark Officer's recommendation. This must be received in writing and addressed to British Canoeing.

If the British Canoeing decides not to grant the Quality Mark, written notice of this decision will be sent to a Provider within 30 working days.

Notification of intention to appeal should be received at British Canoeing. A fee of £50.00, which will cover the administration of the appeal, must accompany notification of intent to appeal. Should the appeal be successful, this fee will be returned in full. The appeal itself must be received at the British Canoeing office at least 14 days after the date of the decision letter from the Director of Coaching and should state in writing the grounds on the appeal is being made.

The Provider will be entitled to make written and/or verbal submissions to the appeal as will the Quality Mark Officer.

The appellant have then four weeks in which to implement such actions as are required by the Appeal and to furnish, at the provider's expense, such proof of implementation as is requested. Failure to do so will result in withholding of the Quality Mark.

Should the Provider continue to offer professional instruction in the activity or activities for which the Quality Mark has been refused, British Canoeing will decide on further action in consultation with various interested bodies.

Additional Accreditation Options

In addition to the British Canoeing Quality Mark, there is also the option to achieve the following accreditations:

Option 1 – Adventuremark & Learning Outside the Classroom

If you offer activities other than canoeing, you may want to consider this option.

British Canoeing is an Adventure Activity Industry Advisory Committee (AAIAC) approved provider who can offer Adventuremark and Learning Outside the Classroom accreditation. This is undertaken as an additional service to recognise other activities as well as canoeing. Learning Outside the Classroom accredits the learning experience and the Adventuremark accredits all activities offered not solely canoeing.

Learning Outside the Classroom

Learning Outside the Classroom (LOtC) is the first national accreditation for schools which recognises and supports the development of learning outside the classroom across all subject areas. Learning Outside the Classroom is intended not only to recognise existing exemplary provision but also to assist and support schools in development their LOtC offer to enable all children to have access to meaningful learning outside the classroom experiences. You can find more information on the LOtC website www.adventurelotc.com



Adventuremark

The Adventuremark is a non-statutory safety scheme devised by the Adventure Activity Industry Advisory Committee (AAIAC) for providers of adventurous activities that are outside the scope of the Adventure Activity Licensing regulations. AAIAC, have appointed Adventure Activity Associates Ltd as the Supervising Body responsible for operating Adventuremark. Adventuremark allows providers to demonstrate to their customers of users that the provider's arrangements for managing the potential risks of adventure activities have been inspected and found to meet the necessary standards of good practice in the adventure activity industry. For more information please see the Adventuremark website www.adventuremark.co.uk



What do I get?

- An enhanced inspection that includes the British Canoeing Quality Mark and Learning Outside the Classroom and/or Adventuremark in one visit
- Use of the LOtC and/or Adventuremark logos
- Listing on the LOtC and/or Adventuremark websites

Inspection is undertaken as part of the British Canoeing Quality Mark visit. You may choose to opt for the LOtC badge and the Adventuremark or just the Adventuremark on its own however the fees remain the same.

If the Provider fails to meet the standards specified in either Adventure Mark or LOtC, they will have a period of 6 weeks in which to address the issues and to satisfy the Quality Mark Officer that they have met the required standard.

Unfortunately failure to meet the standards will not result in a refund or rollover of the application fee.

Option 2 – Paddle-Ability

This accreditation recognises activity providers who offer high quality opportunities and provide a positive experience for disabled people, their friends, family and carers.

Why Add the Paddle-Ability Accreditation?

Like all individuals disabled people want to be able to make an informed choice about where they can find the best opportunities and activities for them. To do this they want to have as much information as possible about a provider so they know they will feel comfortable and welcomed.

What are the criteria?

Many operators already fulfil the criteria for Paddle-Ability without knowing it. We understand that organisations offer a range of activities, in varying locations and formats. Paddle-Ability accreditation offers criteria that is flexible and allows for both inclusive and specific activity for disabled people.

Organisations who are awarded Paddle-Ability status will:

- Provide an inclusive coaching/activity programme
- Have an appointed Paddle-Ability lead
- Having and maintaining a Paddle-Ability action plan
- Maintaining strong relationships with local disability groups and organisations
- Run at least one Paddle-Ability event, tour, starter session or completion per year
- Offers opportunities to take part in a range of activities and award schemes
- Uses appropriate equipment to allow for disabled paddlers needs
- Have one coach that has attended the Foundation Paddle-Ability Module or other appropriate disability training within the last 3 years. At least one person should be action planned to attend so there are eventually at least 2 members of staff trained in this area
- Have completed the British Canoeing Access Checklist

What's in it for us?

- Easily identifiable in providing high quality activity for disabled people
- Provide the opportunity to grow footfall.
- British Canoeing will identify your centre as a priority for support to develop your programme and will work with you to promote your activities to disabled people.
- Recognition in providing activities for disabled people will also help you in applying for funding for the provision of equipment and facilities

What is the process?

We accredit organisations with Paddle-Ability status at the same time as your Quality Mark visit; this is done by a Quality Mark Officer.

If you would like to know more about the Paddle-Ability accreditation, please contact your local Canoeing Development Officer.