

Paddlesport Leader - Frequently Asked Questions

A section of frequently asked questions are included here. Most of this information (and more) is in the *Paddlesport Leader Course Guide*. The *Paddlesport Leader Provider Notes* also offer further details for potential providers. Both of these are available to download from the British Canoeing website.

When is the new award being launched?

April 2017. Details will be available on the Home Nation Association websites.

Where can the Paddlesport Leader operate?

We recommend that the Paddlesport Leader is an appropriate qualification for taking on formal leadership responsibilities in benign, sheltered water. The overall ethos is that the group will be able to quickly and easily land, avoid hazards present and stay within the chosen safe working area. This may include trips on canals, ungraded sections of slow moving rivers, open water (e.g. lakes and lochs), small enclosed bays or harbours, defined beaches or slow moving estuaries, in conditions that are appropriate for the group but not more than 200m off-shore or in wind strengths exceeding Beaufort force 3.

What craft can the Paddlesport Leader *paddle*? What craft can they *lead*?

The qualification is designed such that the Leader can choose the craft from which they work and can look after others in both single discipline and mixed fleets. This may include, for example; racing craft, touring kayaks, open canoes, suitable sit-on-tops, general purpose kayaks, stand-up-paddleboards or crew boats.

We would normally expect a Paddlesport Leader to operate from the type of craft they used at assessment, unless they have further experience or training to suggest otherwise. As a guide, we consider the 3 Star standard (in the chosen craft) to be a suitable measure of personal competence for the Paddlesport Leader when they wish to operate from different craft.

What is the Paddlesport Leader qualified to do?

Lead, supervise, or facilitate safe, quality, enjoyable trips (in benign, sheltered water environments – see above), based on their group's needs and aspirations. This may include:

- Leading club trips
- Leading journeys that are part of a school or outdoor education experience
- Leading social paddling trips
- Taking people to visit or explore new places
- Looking after groups who wish to practice their skills (staff/club training trips)
- Supporting a Duke of Edinburgh group on a journey

The award does not include progressive coaching of technical skills but focuses on learning through experience.

British Canoeing recommends that the Paddlesport Leader could work with groups of up to 8 boats (reduced to 6 with open canoes), and no more than 12 people when using tandem/crew boats. Actual group size will depend on the specific group needs.

Could the award be used as a craft specific qualification?

Yes. Some people will only want to work with groups all using the same type of boat.

Boats designed for journeying are seen as appropriate. For example; touring kayaks, open canoes, suitable sit-on-tops, general purpose kayaks, stand-up-paddleboards, crew boats or stable racing craft.

At assessment, candidates will need to demonstrate the skills to look after a mixed fleet. We opted for the mixed fleet assessment in order not to restrict the Leader to any given craft. We believe that a large majority of paddlesport activity that takes place in these benign environments is not craft specific.

What formal training is required?

None. Direct entry to assessment is available to those aged 16 or over who have valid first aid training (1-day) and Home Nation Association Membership. Candidates will be responsible for making decisions about what preparation they need prior to assessment. Optional British Canoeing Paddlesport Leader Training courses will be available for those who wish to access them.

How will it be assessed?

Candidates' leadership, personal and safety and rescue skills will be assessed in both wind affected open water and slow moving water; this could involve rivers, inland open water and/or tidal waters. Each candidate will be seen leading a group of real students, paddling a mixed fleet, in both environments.

Assessment courses will normally run over 1 or 2 days. This will depend on the course ratios and logistics relating to access to suitable environments. 1:1 or 1:2 assessments may take 1 day, whilst 2-day assessments can run at a 1:4 ratio.

How does the Paddlesport Leader link to the Level 1 Coach Award?

The Paddlesport Leader qualification may be a great addition for Level 1 Coaches; a Coach/Leader who holds both of these qualifications is well placed to fulfil their coaching duties with more autonomy. The Paddlesport Leader Award requires a higher level of personal skills and safety/rescue skills than the Level 1 Coach Award; providing further assurance that they have the skills to make and fulfil sound leadership decisions whilst out coaching on the water.

How does the Paddlesport Leader link to the Level 2 Coach Award?

The Paddlesport Leader and Level 2 Coach can operate in the same environments. The Paddlesport Leader is focused around providing an experience, based on a trip or journey. The Level 2 Coach is focused on coaching paddlers to develop their technical or tactical skills.

What standard of personal skills is required?

Candidates need to demonstrate efficient and effective personal skills in both wind affected open water and on slow moving water. As a guide, this is pitched at 3 Star standard (in the chosen craft).

Does the Leader need to be able to roll?

No. All candidates will need to have an effective method of self-rescue; a roll and other alternative solutions are acceptable. We do believe that a roll is important for leaders who work in closed-cockpit kayaks and encourage these paddlers to spend time practicing this skill as part of their general development.

What safety and rescue skills are required?

To ensure your own safety and the safety of others, you need to show that you can deal with a range of rescue situations relevant to the craft used and the sheltered water environments. These include:

- Accurate judgement
- Boat based rescues
- Self-rescue in deep water
- Incident management and first aid
- Effective team leader in rescues and incidents

As the qualification is designed such that the Leader can choose the craft from which they work, and can look after others in both single discipline and mixed fleets, the Leader will need to demonstrate the rescue of different craft through a problem solving approach. Both the assessor and candidate need to take a realistic perspective on what is reasonable.

What leadership skills are required?

During assessment, candidates will need to show that they have the ability to lead a safe, enjoyable, quality journey based on the group's needs, abilities and aspirations, and within the stated environments. This will include skilful application of leadership principles and strategies, judgement and decision making, safety awareness and risk management, group management, navigation and the control and management of outcomes.

How does the Paddlesport Leader compare to the 4 Star Touring Award?

British Canoeing is removing the 4 Star Touring Leadership Award from the suite of qualifications; as it has a significant amount of cross-over/duplication with the new Paddlesport Leader Award. Paddlers who have already achieved the 4 Star Touring Award will still be able to use it. It has a similar operating remit to the Paddlesport Leader but the 4 Star Touring Leader is able to work further away from the shore and in stronger wind conditions.

Can under 18s access the Paddlesport Leader training or assessment?

Yes. The minimum age for assessment is 16. There are no formal age requirements on Paddlesport Leader training; but it will be up to the individual provider if they choose to accept under 18s on their courses. Note that Leaders cannot be deemed responsible by law until they turn 18 years of age.

What are the requirements to becoming a provider of the assessment/training?

Please see 'Paddlesport Leader Provider Requirements' for further information. Coaches wishing to run Paddlesport Leader endorsed Training or Assessment will be required to apply to their Home Nation Association and are advised to contact them directly for details of the recruitment process and timeline; the first wave of providers will be recruited in autumn 2016.