

LEVEL 3 COACH ASSESSMENT

Inland / Sea / Canoe

GUIDANCE NOTES

These notes are for the guidance of candidates and assessors involved in the assessment of Level 3 candidates. Their function is to provide an aide memoir for course organisation, to clarify the minimum levels which candidates should achieve in the different sections and to give guidelines on assessment methods. All members of the assessment team should familiarise themselves with the notes and at least one set should be made available for easy reference throughout the period of an assessment.

The notes have been compiled and approved by the National Coaching Committee under the guidance of the Director of Coaching and they represent the official statement of the BCU Coaching Service.

The Coaching Service is committed to preserving parity of standards throughout the regions and these guidance notes take into account the practices and views currently put into operation by qualified assessors in all parts of Britain. Please study them carefully and try to ensure that your assessing methods and decisions are consistent with them.

Manual Handling

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)

WHAT LEVEL 3 COACH MEANS

As an assessor it is important for you to have an overall impression of what a Level 3 Coach is as well as being clear about the individual detailed requirements for the award. The following definitive statements about what, in broad terms, a Level 3 Coach should be able to do should help you to form this overall impression:

LEVEL 3 KAYAK COACH. Minimum age 18. Level 3 Coach is the correct grade for a person to be in charge of kayaking activities for a club or school which includes expeditioning and/or white water Grade II. Testing for Star Tests is as outlined within the personal performance awards section of the Awards Coaching Directory.

LEVEL 3 CANOE COACH Minimum age 18. Level 3 Canoe Coach is the correct grade for a person to be in charge of canoeing activities for a club or school which includes expeditioning and/or white water Grade II. Testing for Star Tests is as outlined within the personal performance awards section of the Awards Coaching Directory.

LEVEL 3 SEA COACH. Minimum age 18. Level 3 Sea Coach is the correct grade for a person to be in charge of canoeing activities for a club or school which includes expeditioning on the open sea (including surfing). Testing for Star Tests is as outlined within the personal performance awards section of the Awards Coaching Directory. Coaches wishing to run specific Surf Coaching sessions need to be qualified to Level 3 surf standard. Level 3 Sea Coaches are judged to be qualified to run launching and landing in surf condition sessions only.

Personal qualities

The personal qualities and capabilities which are essential for a person to work effectively as a Level 3 Coach are:

- 1 Have a thorough knowledge and understanding of boat handling skills, including the basic strokes and the techniques specific to the specified discipline (white water, sea, surf, canoe).
- 2 Enjoy coaching canoeing, at any level, and have developed his/her coaching skills ie communication, analysis, observation.





- 3 Have a responsible attitude towards danger and risk-taking in canoeing and be capable of making decisions as a leader which make the safety of the group the highest priority.
- 4 Have sufficient experience as both a canoeist and a canoeing leader to be able to anticipate difficulties.
- 5 Have sufficient breadth of knowledge of canoeing to be able to give advice, and to help newcomers into the type of canoeing best suited to them.
- 6 Be an 'ambassador' for the sport of canoeing by acting responsibly and decently over matters such as access in which the outcome of events might have lasting, long-term effects.

THE PURPOSE OF THE LEVEL 3 COACH ASSESSMENT

The Level 3 Coach assessment process has two main functions:

- 1 To evaluate a candidate's knowledge, ability and competence against the stated requirements for the Level 3 Coach Award.
- 2 To enable the candidate to clearly identify his/her strengths and weaknesses with respect to specific aspects listed in the syllabus of the Level 3 Coach Award.

The assessment of a candidate should therefore involve a flow of information in several directions. These are:

Candidate -	Assessor -	background training experience competence knowledge
Assessor -	Candidate -	minimum level of performance and competence required for Level 3 Coach. Strong, adequate and poor points identified throughout the assessment final recommendation/action plan
Assessor -	BCU Office -	final result

THE ORGANISATION OF AN ASSESSMENT COURSE

The organisation of an assessment course must begin at least several months in advance of the proposed date. The following list shows the main areas which must be given consideration in the running of an assessment:

- Establish a site for the course
- Organise staffing
- Pre-course administration
- Domestic arrangements and programming
- The assessment process itself
- Final administration.

The site for an assessment course

- * The site should have a base, probably a building, which forms a focal point and meeting place for candidates and assessors.
- * The site base should offer accommodation or camping facilities.
- * It should be in a location which requires the minimum of travelling to appropriate water on which the practical sessions will take place. Travelling to the water is one of the biggest time-wasters on assessments.
- * The base must offer some form of 'classroom' facility. This should be warm, dry and sufficiently spacious to accommodate the whole course in comfort. Seating should be available for all candidates and there should be at least provision for a black/white board and overhead projector. Where written papers are to be completed by candidates, tables must be provided.
- * The locations chosen for practical on-the-water sessions must be appropriate to the level of the award.

Kayak and Canoe Assessment

A flat water site is required for the basic strokes work and other aspects. Moving water coaching and expedition leadership should take place on a river section of Grade II white water, Level 3 Coach candidates should not be examined on Grade III or above, neither should they be only tested in a river where there is nothing more than a swift flow. Grade II water is characterised by a flow which creates small waves; where the route through is easy to see and is uncomplicated. Eddies and tongues of faster moving water exist between obstacles such as boulders or reefs.

Sea Assessment

A section of coastline is required where tidal movement of at least 1 - 2 knots may be felt at some point. A varied coastline is preferred, where candidates can be tested on dealing with a range of landing and launching situations.

Staffing for an assessment course

Every assessment must be overseen by a **Course Director**. In many cases this individual will also be the Course Provider. The Director should be the most experienced assessor on the assessment team, besides probably organising the administration. As well as being involved in specific assessment tasks the Director should remain in touch with the *whole* assessment group, both candidates and assessors, helping each to perform to their full potential. The Director is responsible for monitoring the assessment methods and practices to ensure that they are effective, safe and in keeping with national standards.

* The minimum staffing ratios are:

No of candidates	No of qualified assessors
2-8	2 x A4

PRE-COURSE ADMINISTRATION

The main steps are:

- 1 Obtain clearance from the Regional Coaching Organiser to run the assessment course. A Course Authorisation Form must be obtained from the RCO or the BCU Coaching Office.
- 2 Advertise the course in the BCU Yearbook. The Coaching Service does not support the running of 'closed' courses unless specific approval has been granted by the Regional Coaching Organiser.
The term 'closed' means any centre, organisation or club assessing its own staff with an assessment team drawn entirely from that organisation.
- 3 Produce an information sheet giving details of: precise assessment title; cost details; location; name of Course Director or course provider. A booking form may also be required to help with domestic arrangements.
- 4 Send a candidate's pack to each respondent, containing the following:
 - * Information sheet and booking form
 - * A lecturette briefing sheet (containing information on the candidates own specific presentation).
 - * A letter requesting the early return of the completed application form and C1 and stating clearly the arrangements for the written exam.
- 5 At the commencement of the course, check each candidate's documents for:
 - * A stamped C1 authorising assessment and a blank C2
 - * Current comprehensive membership of the BCU
 - * Training course completion and date
 - * Current First Aid Certificate (8 hours minimum)
 - * Minimum of 30 hours relevant coaching since Level 3 Training course.

Domestic arrangements at an assessment course

- * Keeping the cost of a course down is important but experience has shown that residential assessments which make use of catering staff are much more time-efficient than those which rely on self-catering. This is especially the case with larger groups.
- * Candidates should be given a thorough briefing on the whole domestic situation at the start of the course. This should include a clear timetable for meals, session starting times, site base facilities which will be in use throughout the assessment and any duties which are expected of course members.

The assessment programme

This should include an introductory briefing covering:

- * Checking of documents
- * Roll call
- * Collection of outstanding fees
- * Collection of log books
- * Introduction of staff
- * An outline of the course programme and domestic arrangements
- * Some reassuring comments encouraging candidates to relax and to ask for clarification at any stage.
- * Make sure that candidates know when a session has begun and when it has ended
- * Try to stick to the timetable as closely as possible. It is very difficult to recover once you start to slip behind your schedule.





- * Candidates should receive a concise and clear briefing at the start of every session which lets them know the precise task you wish them to take on; the timings involved and other relevant information such as the role which the other candidates will play etc.
- * Major changes to the stated programme should only be made if they are unavoidable. In these circumstances try to give candidates as much advance warning as possible.

End-of-course administration

- * On the completion of the course, form C2, should be completed and signed by the assessor and candidates handed their copy.
- * Candidates who have passed and failed the assessment should have the result endorsed clearly in their logbooks with an Assessor's signature.
- * The course schedule together with the course authorisation form, the C1s and the assessment fees, should be despatched to Coaching headquarters immediately. Please do not delay on this - it is good for candidates to receive confirmation from the Coaching office as soon as possible after the course.
- * Successful candidates will receive a Certificate from BCU Coaching Office. They will continue to receive CoDe and may receive local information from time to time. The onus is on the Level 3 Coach to contact the LCO if he or she needs help, or wishes to offer their services.

Please make it clear that some LCOs maintain regular contact with their panels, while others do not. There is always room for a volunteer who feels that more should be done! In particular, anyone willing to act as a District Coaching Organiser, calling all coaching service members together in his or her own particular locality, will be welcomed and given the necessary information and support.

THE PARTS OF ASSESSMENT

These are:

- Practical Coaching
- Personal Canoeing Ability
- Expedition Leadership
- Lecturette
- Written Examination
- Oral Interview
- General Attitude and Approach
- Lifesaving and first aid

These elements represent the channels through which we ask the question 'Does this candidate have the knowledge, experience and abilities to function safely and effectively as a Level 3 Coach?' They are merely a convenient way to split up the assessment process - and to help us organise our thoughts. There is likely to be a great deal of overlap between the parts. The minimum levels of achievement and performance for Level 3 Coach are listed below together with guidelines on assessment procedures.

PRACTICAL COACHING

What are you looking for

- 1 Enjoyment and satisfaction in helping people to learn
- 2 Understanding of the relevant skills and techniques of canoeing
- 3 Evidence of effectiveness in improving the technique of the people being taught
- 4 Experience in altering the coaching 'style' or approach in order to suit different age ranges and types of learners.
- 5 Awareness of hazards and problems which threaten the safety or reasonable comfort of the group.
- 6 Evidence of planning in the coaching process.

What the candidate should know and be able to do

The list which follows identifies the aspects of coaching which should be present in any Level 3 Coach's practical coaching session. Of course some of what a Level 3 Coach coaches does not take place on the water (expedition planning, navigation etc), but even in these cases good coaching technique still applies.

- 1 Introduce and give technical information relating to strokes etc in a concise and effective way, and be receptive to the learners' understanding of the material.
- 2 Give a clear demonstration, which will be an effective model for learners' to relate to, of every stroke and technique which the Level 3 Coach in that discipline is required to coach. The candidate should have complete boat control and be able to show the action at slightly slower than 'real' speed.
- 3 Organise practices and activities which are appropriate and challenging to the group.
- 4 Observe learners' technique and identify corrections. This should be done in a way that shows that the candidate has an awareness of the underlying mechanics of boat control as well as of the different rates at which people learn skills.



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- 5 Be aware that there is always more than one way to learn (and therefore coach) any technique and use this to advantage in his/her coaching, for example with learners experiencing persistent difficulties.
- 6 Use encouragement and praise in a sensitive and effective way.
- 7 Ensure that a high level of paddling activity is enjoyed by learners during the practical coaching sessions and keep coaching talk to a minimum.
- 8 Control and contain the movements of a group in a chosen coaching location and be aware of a range of methods for doing this.
- 9 Direct coaching comments to individuals as well as issuing main instructions to the whole group.
- 10 Having met an unfamiliar group, draw up an appropriate set of coaching activities which will help them to develop their skills.
- 11 Plan projected coaching programmes for different levels of paddling groups over varied time scales eg Beginners' weekend course, one days proficiency test training, 6 x 1 day rolling course.

All Level 3 Coaches must be able to:

- * Introduce the basic strokes, as defined in the CANOEING HANDBOOK to beginners.
- * Coach a group of 'improvers' who have some basic boat handling skills helping them to be more effective and efficient with the basic strokes.
- * Coach the relevant boat-handling techniques applicable to the chosen discipline as listed below.

Inland kayak

- Forward and reverse ferry glide
- Breaking out of the current into an eddy
- Breaking into the current from an eddy
- Crossing a narrow jet of fast current
- Downstream bracing combined with raising the upstream edge (as would be used in a stopper or against an obstruction)
- An eskimo roll

Sea

- Paddle brace in a surf wave
- Steering while the boat is running down wind or down a wave
- Paddling in a cross-wind
- An eskimo roll

Canoe

- Forward and reverse ferry glide
- Breaking out of the current into an eddy
- Breaking into the current from an eddy
- Downstream brace

Methods of assessment

- * At least one major assessment session must be devoted to the coaching of boat handling skills.
- * Giving candidates enough 'coaching time' is always a problem. Some ways of increasing this are:
 - * Make sure that each candidate knows what you want to see coaching
 - * Agree specific coaching tasks with each candidate and make the time available for these absolutely clear. Don't be vague.
 - * Leave candidates to work uninterrupted, unless you feel they have misinterpreted your briefing
 - * There are many opportunities during the course to let the candidates do short coaching tasks. Examples are: tying boats onto a trailer; knots; putting on a neoprene spray deck; getting into a boat in knee-deep water; securing a buoyancy aid. These brief topics require virtually no preparation, are relevant (since they have to be done anyway) and yet offer ideal opportunity to demonstrate good coaching.
- * Providing 'real' learners, as opposed to actors, for a coaching session seems to bring out the best in the candidates. Try to organise this for at least one of the technique-coaching sessions.
- * Candidates coaching their fellow candidates does have value:
 - * Everyone including Level 3 Coach candidates has something to learn and anyway, the process of seeing someone else's coaching is thought/discussion provoking.
 - * Assessors get a good insight into the candidates' boat-handling technique since they are constantly 'demonstrating' named techniques.
 - * These sessions are very time-economic. Changeovers are quick and cold, fatigue and boredom are much less of a hindrance than they might be if beginners are used.
 - * The ethical concern of possibly exposing learners to the incorrect coaching of a poor candidate eliminated.



- * In discussion and de-brief avoid asking candidates to pass comment on each other's coaching:
 - * Limited method - *John, what did you think of Jean's coaching?*
 - * Better method - *John, how would you have tackled this one?*
- * Provide for coaching opportunities throughout the whole assessment
- * Remember that **talking** does not necessarily mean **coaching** - **Listening** does not automatically imply **learning**.
- * Try to give some useful feedback to a candidate immediately after you have seen them run a session. Mention something you enjoyed or liked about the session - maybe the introduction, or the way they gave the demonstrations. Follow this with any points which were especially weak. Try to avoid prolonged discussion or argument with the candidate - give your observations in a caring manner and it will almost always be very gratefully accepted.

PERSONAL CANOEING ABILITY

What you are looking for ?

- 1 Competence
- 2 Confidence
- 3 Control
- 4 Good technique

A candidate must be in sufficient control of his/her boat that he/she will never be prevented from controlling, assisting and coaching the paddlers in his/her care.

The candidate's paddling technique should be safe, efficient and effective. There should be nothing in the technique which might cause a learner imitating it to incur injury or fail to progress.

What the candidate should be able to do ?

A Level 3 Coach is required to be able to do all that she/he coaches. This however does not imply that learners should never out-perform her/him.

The Level 3 Coach must be able to:

Inland

- 1 Perform all of the Basic strokes (listed in the Canoeing Handbook, Chapter 6) effectively and without hesitation on still, as well as white water Grade II.
- 2 Perform the white water boat-handling techniques listed in the Chapter 6 section, on Grade II water. The candidate should be able to:
 - * remain in control of his/her boat anywhere on the water
 - * predict accurately his/her ability to place the boat and make predetermined moves in the rapid.
 - * give demonstration of all of the above mentioned white water techniques at slower than real speed (for coaching purposes).
 - * provide assistance to a swimmer in the rapid
 - * recover equipment while in the rapid (paddles, boat)
 - * show ability to remain upright in a simple recirculating wave by the use of good boat balancing and paddle bracing.
 - * show an ability to avoid an upstream capsize when his/her boat has made contact with an obstruction. As a practical exercise this must only be carried out in a safe, shallow site with rescue cover in place. Kayaks with less than maximum internal flotation must not be used. Rounded rocks projecting just clear of the surface should be used and not trees or stakes.
- 3 Perform an eskimo roll in deep, flowing water. One roll only is required and candidates must be informed in advance that they will be required to demonstrate a roll. Any type of roll is acceptable providing the candidate is able to resume normal paddling. The loss of a paddle or a swamped boat would both be unacceptable. Losing the spray deck, for example would be unacceptable.

Sea

- 1 Perform all of the basic strokes in calm water and use them effectively and without hesitation where they are appropriate, in moderate conditions at sea.
- 2 Perform the boat-handling techniques listed in the 4 Star Sea notes. The candidate should be able to do the following in moderate conditions (winds force 4) on the open sea:
 - * Land under control through small surf. The kayak should be prevented from nose diving or side surfing.
 - * Paddle a course in a following sea and wind maintaining direction and arriving at a predetermined spot.
 - * Resist capsize by using a paddle brace in small breaking waves.
 - * Assist a paddler who is having difficulty in steering by paddling along side or behind so as to help guide the boat.
 - * Keep a group under observation while leading them in a moderate sea, and be able to go to the assistance of a capsized paddler.



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- 3 Perform an eskimo roll in deep water. **One roll only is required.** The candidate must be informed before leaving shore that a roll will be required. Any type of roll is acceptable providing the candidate is able to resume normal paddling. The loss of a paddle or swamping of a boat through displacement of a spray deck would both be unacceptable.

Methods of assessment

- * This aspect can usually be assessed while candidates are involved in the coaching and expeditioning sessions. Candidates should be informed at the beginning of the assessment that this continuous observation of their paddling performance will be made.
- * Candidates must not be assessed in conditions in excess of those stipulated for the award. An inland candidate may not be asked to perform on Grade III or above, nor can a sea candidate be asked to work in a sea state or wind suited to advanced sea proficiency. In the case of inland assessments where no other suitable site is available, it is acceptable to use a stretch of river which contains a single feature above grade II. This must be portaged or negotiated in a way which will have no bearing on the assessment.
- * A separate session which looks specifically at personal performance may be included where assessors feel it is necessary. In such cases candidates must be given a clear briefing on what is being assessed and what exactly they are required to do. Vague directions such as 'Go and play' or 'Just use the water' are not helpful to candidates. Specific tasks (which can be arrived at in consultation with candidates) are less unsettling for candidates and more time-economic.
- * Candidates past experience must be taken into account in this section. The log book should show that the candidate has had some experience of paddling on Grade III water or above. A depth of experience on different rivers should be aimed at by all potential Level 3 Coaches before going for assessment.

EXPEDITION LEADERSHIP

What you are looking for ?

- 1 Planning and preparation. A candidate should show knowledge of the overall organisation required for a typical inland journey on water not exceeding Grade II.
- 2 Inspiration and imagination. Enjoyment of, and enthusiasm for, travelling and exploring by canoe and kayak. Together with a background in helping others to do the same
- 3 Safety consciousness. Awareness of hazards and dangers; anticipation of problems; experience and ability in dealing with practical problems on route.
- 4 Group control. The capability to guide a group and operate varying levels of control, in accordance with the changing conditions of a journey.

What the candidate should know and be able to do ?

- 1 Working from a hypothetical journey-proposal indicated on a map or chart, produce a written plan giving pre-trip details, timings, escape routes, potential hazards, points of interest on-route, etc.
- 2 List the sources of information available to canoeists wishing to plan a journey in a particular area.
- 3 Interpret main symbols and abbreviations on Ordnance Survey maps (and Admiralty Charts, in the case of sea candidates) and understand distance measurement from these.
- 4 Take charge of a group of less experienced canoeists on a journey or part of a journey and show methods of communication and control.
- 5 Take advantage of a journey to develop a coaching theme.
- 6 Understand how Hypothermia is caused and how it may be resisted and prevented by canoeists. Be aware of the first aid action which should be taken in cases of mild and serious hypothermia.
- 7 During a journey, be able to anticipate potential problem areas and position him/herself suitably to prevent them.

The following are the specific requirements for Sea and Inland candidates:

Inland

- * Carry out a deep water rescue of a fully swamped kayak or canoe
- * Understand how the following equipment affects safety on white water:
 - Internal boat flotation
 - Grab handles and deck lines (where appropriate)
 - Helmet, spray cover, buoyancy aid
 - Insulating clothing
 - Footrest
- * Understand the movement of stoppers and recognise the signs which indicate that a weir is dangerous
- * Go to the assistance of a capsized paddler in a rapid and get him ashore and show methods of recovering paddles and swamped boats from the current
- * Use a throw bag to help recover a swimmer from a rapid
- * Be aware of the kind of river features which might cause entrapment of a kayak or canoe and appreciate the importance of rescuer's safety.

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- * The candidate should carry the following equipment during an assessment journey:

- First aid kit
- Emergency clothing
- Emergency shelter
- Repair kit
- Torch
- Knife
- Throw bag
- Towing system.

The equipment should be carried in functional, protective containers

Sea

- * Organise a basic surfing session for a group of beginners. This should include:
 - Coaching of bracing, paddling out, steering on a forward run
 - Organisation of beach for safety
 - Briefing the group on: organising runs, avoiding collisions, recall to shore.
- * Coach a simple deep water rescue method to a group of paddlers and organise practice.
- * Deal with the following capsized situations at sea:
 - 1 A sea touring kayak
 - 2 A multiple capsized
 - 3 Assisting a weakened paddler back into his boat
- * Deal with the following
 - 1 Getting a paddler ashore who is unable to paddle
 - 2 Landing a group safely through surf
 - 3 Landing a group safely on a rocky shore
- * Be familiar with modern distress-signalling devices for small boats at sea
- * The candidate should carry the following minimum equipment during the assessment journey:
 - First aid kit
 - Emergency clothing
 - Emergency shelter
 - Repair kit
 - Compass
 - Torch
 - Knife
 - Signalling system including at least one flare
 - Towing system.
 - A spare kayak paddle
 - Spare Food

The equipment should be carried in functional, protective containers

Methods of Assessment

- * Every assessment should include a journey on its programme. Each candidate should be in complete control of a group of canoeists for at least a part of that journey.
- * The 'group' should ideally be composed of less experienced paddlers, (a maximum of six and minimum of three). It is acceptable to work with the members of the assessment group only, providing the total number of people in the party being led is no fewer than four (not including assessors).
- * Make an assessment of each candidate under the following headings:
 - 1 Prior planning and thought
 - 2 Group equipment check
 - 3 Safety and control on the water
 - 4 Success in helping the group to enjoy and benefit from the trip
 - 5 Dealing with problems/emergencies
- * Planning and general preparedness often best shows itself at the candidate's final briefing of the group before the trip. If part of the assessment is to put candidates, in turn, in charge of the group, the following method has been found useful. It deals swiftly, but comprehensively, with the 'briefing', avoiding time-wasting repetition for the group:

As candidates prepare their boats and equipment for the exercise, the assessors split the names among them and then approach their candidates in turn, whilst the general preparation is still under way. The following questions can be put to each candidate:

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- i What instructions will you give the group regarding action to take if someone capsizes?
- ii Are you going to use a system of signals - what are they?
- iii How will you control the speed and spread of the group?

Either give each candidate the opportunity to check the group's gear on land and spend a few minutes discussing the specific points which were being looked for. These should include:

- 1 Buoyancy aids and paddlers' clothing including helmets where appropriate
- 2 Boat flotation
- 3 End grabs and overall boat integrity
- 4 Spray deck integrity

PROBLEM-SOLVING AND EMERGENCIES

The main focus of the assessment should be on the candidates ability to prevent problems from arising. However it is also important to know that he/she can deal with typical incidents which arise with groups on journeys. The re-creation of such incidents can use up a lot of time and offer little in return and so assessors should give careful thought to this aspect.

- * Keep each separate incident simple and self-explanatory
- * Set scenes which have the minimum of imaginary conditions connected to them, ie, avoid statements like: *'imagine the river is six feet higher and it's winter and the far bank is 400 metres away'*.
- * In an initial briefing tell the candidates that you will be creating incidents and asking them to take action. Say that you will expect the leader at the time to take complete charge, that he may enlist help (or not) but should assume no expertise on the part of any helper. Make it clear that you merely want to see simple practical solutions to typical canoeing problems. Stress that you appreciate that there is always more than one answer to any problem.
- * Use an incident to form the base from which to explore candidates' knowledge and experience by the use of questioning. This is easily done in discussion at a convenient moment, eg *'Helen, how would you have reacted if the swimmer had been very cold when you got to him?' .. 'How would you know how serious the hypothermia is?' .. 'OK good. Supposing the swim had been in a much more rocky rapid, is there anything he could do to help himself?' .. 'Yes, that's right. Do you think white water training should involve swimming-training?' .. 'How might you organise that?' .. 'Are there any other exercises you could do at the same time?'*

The basic incident becomes a tool to assist you to get all the information you want - it should not become a saved act upon which a person passes or fails eg Jean finishes a deep water rescue. *'Good Jean. Now can we look at the same rescue but this time he is too weak to raise himself back into the kayak. John would you mind getting back into the water please and being feeble! .. OK Jean, you can use another paddler to help if you wish, but you must give the instructions, .. John, can you suggest any other way that the rescuer might help?'*

LECTURETTE

What you are looking for ?

- 1 Ability to speak coherently to a group in a formal or semi-formal setting
- 2 Planning and preparation of material to be presented which results in the effective communication of information or a message, within the stipulated time.

What the candidate should know and be able to do ?

- 1 Introduce and deliver a presentation on a specific topic within a 10 minute period. An over-run of two minutes is the maximum permissible and the presentation should not fall short by more than two minutes.

- 2 Speak and present in a way that is both audible and comprehensible

- 3 Create and maintain interest in the presentation material by whatever means he/she feels is appropriate

The presentation must be verbal and 'live'. The use of 8 minutes of Video recording with sound, for example, would not be acceptable. Slides may be used but the candidate may not give the whole presentation in 'darkness'.

Methods of Assessment

- * Candidates may be allocated a topic or invited to supply one for the assessor's approval.
- * As well as getting an agreed topic a candidate should receive the following information at least two weeks ahead of the assessment:
 - 1 A description of the audience for the presentation, including age range, number of people, a summary of their canoeing background
 - 2 A description of the location for the lecturette
 - 3 A reminder of the ten minute time limit and the importance of time-adherence in the assessment of



the performance

4 Availability (or lack) of visual aid resources

- * The lecturette audience must consist of a minimum of five people (including assessors).
- * Some lecturette assessments are successfully carried out on the river bank. The semi-formal atmosphere, however is more easily achieved in a dry land 'classroom'.
- * The choice of topic for any candidate needs to be given careful thought. Some topics would be totally inappropriate for young audiences with limited paddling experience. Some of the more traditional topics are uninspiring and would challenge the most accomplished of speakers.

The following types of topic make life unnecessarily difficult for candidates and are best avoided on assessments:

- * Topics involving basic subjects about which everyone in the room is already well informed.
- * Topics which are aimed at those with leadership or organisational experience eg: Group organisation and control
- * Course organisers should make themselves available to candidates in advance of the assessment (by telephone) to discuss any questions they might have about the lecturette.

WRITTEN EXAMINATION

What you are looking for ?

- 1 A wide knowledge of the whole sport of canoeing, with a clear understanding of the activity, organisation and equipment involved in each of the different disciplines.
- 2 Appreciation of the main factors which influence kayak and canoe design.
- 3 An unbiased, open-minded approach to channelling beginners interests in the sport.
- 4 Experience in coaching canoeing to different people at different levels.
- 5 Signs of being in-touch with the current affairs of British canoeing and awareness of BCU coaching scheme structure and activity.

The written exam is a fair and time-economic way to test each candidate's *specific* knowledge

Sea

- * Recognize the chart symbol for: drying heights; tide races and overfalls; types of coast and foreshore, tidal arrows.
- * Measure distance off a chart.
- * Be able to extract and use information from: tidal diamonds and tidal stream atlases.
- * Recognise (by day) IALA system 'A' lateral marks and cardinal marks.
- * Understand the cause and effects of: tides and tidal range (including springs and neaps); tidal frequency; 1/12's rule, hazards caused by tidal streams.
- * Understand the formation of: rip currents; waves on beaches; dumping waves; reflected waves; swell.
- * Name sources of weather forecasts and be able to interpret a BBC shipping forecast. Be aware of his/her sea area and those on either side of it.

Inland

The items listed in **EXPEDITION LEADERSHIP - what the candidate should know** contain the specific information which an Inland candidate should answer questions on.

The specialist section also provides an opportunity to evaluate a candidate's ability to plan ahead. He/she should be able to produce a breakdown for a simple coaching programme of say six sessions. They should also be able to produce a checklist for the planning of a journey.

Examples of suitable questions for all candidates, regardless of discipline:

- 1 In which division does a newcomer to slalom start?
- 2 State the minimum recommended buoyancy for a buoyancy aid
- 3 What do the initials ICF stand for?
- 4 What is the longest distance covered in mens' Olympic kayak and canoe racing
- 5 How many square metres of sail does the International Sailing Canoe carry?
- 6 Name a canoeing book which deals entirely with:
 - (a) Sea Canoeing
 - (b) Canoeing for beginners

The general section of the written paper should be used more as an aid to evaluating a candidates involvement, and experience than as an instrument for deciding on a pass or fail result.

Methods of Assessment

- * A useful format for a written exam is a two part paper:
 - Part i Multiple choice or short answer questions
 - Part ii Questions requiring: a coaching plan; a planning list for a trip



- * The following types of exam questions are useful to assessors.

Questions which ask for:

- 1 relevant facts
- 2 a coaching plan or breakdown of coaching points
- 3 a route card
- 4 a pre-journey check list
- 5 the candidate's opinion

- * Some types of questions are **unsuitable** for written exam papers at Level 3 Coach Assessment, because they strongly favour candidates with academic backgrounds, are difficult to interpret or are an inefficient way to obtain the information about the candidate. The types of question (with examples) are:

- * Setting the scene with words and/or diagram and describing a problem or emergency which arises with a group. The candidate is required to describe his/her actions. It is impossible to provide sufficient information on paper for anyone to make a practical decision about an incident. Such matters are better dealt with in practice on the water. An example of unsuitable questioning is:

A member of your group has dislocated a shoulder in adverse conditions, explain how you would get your student back to safety and what treatment you would administer.

- * Obscure or ambiguous questions,
eg *What are the recommended BCU staffing ratios for courses?*
A reef knot is for tying one boat to another. True/False

- * Questions which involve writing down masses of information. These questions favour the candidate who has 'examination experience' ie can structure the answer so as to make best use of the time available and be reader-friendly. Worthy enough skills but not important in a Level 3 Coach. An example of such a question is:

Give a detailed explanation of all the aspects of surf canoeing

- * Nit-picking factual questions:
Diolene is a surface treated polyester fabric. True/False. Who cares?

Writing effective exam questions is a skilled job. Here are some basic guidelines:

- 1 Build each question by deciding firstly what it is about the candidate that you want to find out.
 - 2 Use a format which involves the minimum of writing for the candidates. This will be easier to mark and lets you get more questions in.
 - 3 Read your questions over to see that they say what you want them to say. Each question usually takes at least two attempts to get right.
 - 4 Check that the questions are relevant and not out of date. (For example the abbreviation BCMA should now be represented by ACT)
 - 5 Get at least *three* other informed individuals to read the completed paper to check for spelling errors, ambiguities, grammatical errors etc.
- * The written exam may be sat during the assessment course but it is preferable that you mail the paper to an invigilator, to be completed by the candidate and returned before the course begins.
 - * The maximum time allocated to an exam paper should be no more than two hours and no less than 30 minutes.
 - * Less conventional methods of carrying out the written exam which have proved very successful and effective are:
 - * The use of slides to provide views of equipment, features, scenes etc, around which questions are asked.
 - * The use of 'Diagnostic Test' structure. Here candidates are given a long list (around 50) of words and statements which they should be able to identify as relating to aspects of canoeing. Not only does this give an overall picture of knowledge but it 'diagnoses' areas which need improving.
 - * Candidates who have a reading or writing impairment (such as Dyslexia) may complete the written assessment paper by means of oral interview with an assessor. This option is always open to a DoA, no special application to Coaching Office is required.

ORAL EXAMINATION

The 'Oral examination' is another means by which assessors may add to their stock of information about a candidate's overall/specific canoeing knowledge (general and specific), local knowledge and background. It may take the form of a casual conversation or a more formal interview and is likely to be useful when the assessment has been running for a while. It is often used at the end of the assessment to help 'complete the picture' by filling in information about a candidate which has not emerged naturally or which is needed in order to make the final pass/fail decision. The candidate's assessment paper answers and log book provide a good starting point for the discussion.

Another approach to the oral examination is to interview candidates at the beginning of the course and discuss with them their answers (and indeed the questions) in the written paper. It is necessary to think through in





advance the questions you want to follow up on and to be alert to areas of weakness which show through during the discussion.

Interviews can eat up large quantities of time if they are not controlled very strictly. Set a time schedule in advance which allocates say 15 minutes to each candidate, and stick rigidly to it.

What the Oral Interview can reveal

- * Information/confirmation of the candidate's log book records of canoeing and coaching experience
- * Knowledge of specific or general aspects of canoeing
- * Information and attitudes relating to the candidate's canoeing and leading equipment
- * Confirmation of life saving and/or first aid knowledge

GENERAL ATTITUDE AND APPROACH

What you are looking for

- 1 Enthusiasm for the sport and a desire to share it with others
- 2 Patience and empathy with learners
- 3 Awareness of the need to set a positive example as a leader in all matters relating to safety in canoeing
- 4 Punctuality

Method of Assessment

There is obviously no single assessment process for evaluating this rather intangible aspect. It is important that assessors take the whole of the assessment performance into account. Only when a candidate's attitude or approach leads to a fail does this aspect lead to problems for the assessors. In these circumstances, when analysing the reason for failure, it is helpful to try to be as specific as possible - trying to identify the areas of weakness. Very often this analysis helps you to see that it is in fact a failing in another aspect. For example a candidate who presents himself shabbily dressed and turns up late for sessions has an attitude problem but also is inadequate as a coach or as a leader. The shabby dress could reveal an ineffective buoyancy aid which directly sets a poor example to learners, and the inability to keep time has many potential safety repercussions.

These specific items must be pointed out to the candidate in a positive way so that he/she sees exactly how and what he/she must change in order to conform to the award standards.

CLOTHING

- * A candidate's clothing should not prevent him/her from coaching and leading groups effectively and safely in the conditions dictated by the assessment.
- * The buoyancy aid should be a minimum CEN 50N able to support 70kg and must be in a serviceable condition. It should fit the paddler correctly and be worn correctly secured.
- * The clothing should be functional and have no attachments which might endanger the candidate as a leader or set an unsafe example or learners.
- * A candidate being assessed for Inland Level 3 Coach must wear a helmet while working on white water of grade II or above.
- * A candidate for Level 3 Sea Coach must wear a helmet while working in surf or while 'rock-dodging'.

LEADER'S EQUIPMENT

- * First Aid Kit. This must contain the means to deal with:
 - Bleeding (wound dressings)
 - Blisters (adhesive dressing, adhesive tape)
 - Support/immobilisation of a joint or limb (crepe bandage and triangular bandage)Plus the following: Pair of scissors; pain relieving tablets; tweezers; Pencil and notepad.
The kit should be contained hygienically in a pack and stored in a way which will prevent it from becoming wet.
- * Repair Kit. This should make possible and effective, temporary repair to a leaking boat. It must work on polyethylene as well as GRP boat shells. Flexible, non-hardening, mastic-impregnated tape is acceptable as the basis of a repair to a boat shell.
- * The minimum acceptable emergency clothing is:
 - long-sleeved top
 - hat capable of keeping the head warm
 - full-length leg covering
- * Emergency Shelter. A 500 gauge polythene survival bag of dimensions 6' x 3' is the minimum acceptable
- * Knife. A folding penknife is acceptable for both inland and sea awards
- * Throw bag. This must contain floating rope capable of reaching 12 metres. The rope must be securely contained when the throw bag is being carried in or out of the canoe.

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- * Towing system. Any towing system which works for the candidate and is not inherently dangerous is acceptable. A quick-release method must be incorporated in both body-anchored and in boat-anchored systems. The candidate must be completely familiar with the system he/she carries.
- * Flares (Sea Candidates only) The following red flares are acceptable for work by day; Handheld flare, handheld smoke. parachute. Assessors may use their discretion as to what should be carried during the assessment sessions. Candidates must be able to operate any flare which they carry without looking at instructions. The flare must be capable of use without the paddler leaving his boat.

The Candidate's Boat

The boat which any candidate uses for assessment must be regarded by the assessment team as **that candidate's boat**. Where a candidate uses more than one boat on an assessment, the same conditions must be applied to each.

The candidate's boat must:

- * not interfere with the ability to coach effectively the topics covered in the COACHING section of these notes.
- * have an intact shell free from leaks
- * have no surfaces or projections which might cause injury to a swimmer being rescued
- * make possible a deep water rescue of a paddler in a similar craft (kayak/canoe)
- * have sufficient internal flotation to float the 'swamped' craft horizontally at surface level. This must be secured to the boat.
- * have obvious grab handles or toggles at each end which can be reached by a swimmer when the boat is upright or overturned
- * have a footrest

ASSESSMENT PROCEDURE

Assessment style

- 1 The objective approach
- 2 The subjective approach

In the first, the assessor ticks off the candidate's score against a detailed list of tasks and questions during the assessment. At the end of the course, if the candidate has reached a minimum pass score he/she passes. If not, then the result is a fail. This extremely objective style ensures that all candidates are treated equally, but it makes for a rather formal and often authoritarian atmosphere, which is not popular with candidates.

The subjective style often means a minimum of note-taking, and the assessor forms an overall judgement, based on long experience, which tells him/her who is up to standard and who is not. The danger with the extreme form of this method is that at the end of the course the assessor might be unable to provide a failed candidate with the specific details of his/her weaknesses.

Fortunately, the two approaches are not mutually exclusive, and the secret of fair and sensitive assessing is in combining them. Most people do need to make some brief notes and it is important for candidates to feel that everyone on the assessment course will be tackling at least similar tasks. The assessor should also be prepared to bring to bear his/her years of experience and to recognise that some human qualities cannot be easily measured or even defined, and yet can contribute enormously to the make up of a Level 3 Coach. This 'instinct' if you like, and the conviction to use it, is in itself an indefinable quality and something which is developed with years of assessing and training experience.

General approach of assessors

It is important to remember that many candidates feel considerably anxious at the beginning of and during an assessment. Since such anxiety can only inhibit a person's performance there is no good reason for assessors to preserve or even cultivate it. 'Seeing people under pressure' is an inappropriate and simplistic statement in the context of assessment of Level 3 Coaches. Testing a person's ability to cope with relevant practical problems, and noting the processes by which he/she does this is appropriate.

Here are some suggestions for helping to break down unhelpful tension and anxiety on an assessment:

- * speak and behave in a friendly and approachable manner - at the same time talk directly, without waffle
- * have conversations with individual candidates from time to time
- * be genuinely interested in what candidates have to say to you - listen to them and respect their right to have opinions
- * make sure candidates know what they should be doing at all times, and have an informative programme on which to base their plans
- * make every effort to be approachable by candidates, inviting them to come back to you at briefings, and showing willingness to explain or repeat things which you have said





- * disclose your own reaction and feelings about their work and let them learn about you
- * stick to the programme

There are many situations in canoeing where there is not one clear answer to a problem. Any task may be tackled in an almost infinite number of ways and whilst that which is obviously poor or dangerous needs correcting, a candidate should not be failed because she/he did not do something 'the assessor's way' It is important that statements are avoided which may be misconstrued. *'The Handbook is wrong'* is not helpful to anybody. A better way to approach this would be *'The Handbook says .. but I've found that if you do it this way, you get better results'*.

Avoid making comments about other assessors or trainers, especially derogatory ones. Make your complaints to the Director of Coaching or RCO.

Deciding on the results

The Course Director must lead the assessment team in deciding on the results, Each assessor should be given the opportunity to comment on all candidates. Assessors must be confident about a candidate before giving him/her a pass at Level 3. The decision not to pass someone should never be shied away from.

The decision may be deferred where a candidate has a specific, minor area of weakness which does not have a direct bearing on safety (lecturette or background knowledge, for example). This option is at the discretion of the Course Director only and may be held for a maximum period of six months, inside which time a specific re-assessment of the aspect should be made.

The Course Director should attach an explanatory letter to the course schedule together with the assessment fee for any deferred candidate. The C1 is retained by the Course Director until the re-assessment is complete when it is submitted to BCU HQ.

Final interviews

All candidates must be given a final interview, at which point they should be told if they have passed or not passed the assessment. They must also receive concise information about their strengths and weaknesses as identified by the assessment team. The candidate must be given a copy of the C2, containing the assessors' comments. The other copy is retained by the course organiser.

In case of a failed candidate the words 'cannot pass you at this stage' are more positive than 'failed' and may help to comfort a disappointed candidate.

Finally, please remember that in an assessment you are comparing each candidate against the standard of the award, and not against the other candidates.

