BCU Three Star Touring Award - Guidance Notes

Certification:
The 3 Star Touring award is certificated as either

- 3 Star Touring (Canoe)

- 3 Star Touring (Kayak)

Depending on the craft used. Candidates can use any canoe or kayak that is safe and fit for the remit of the award and the assessment tasks. Assessors need to clearly mark the course schedule as either 3 Star Touring (Canoe), or 3 Star Touring (Kayak), and always use separate course schedules for each.

Course Authorisation:
Course authorisation is required for the 3 Star Touring Award. Assessors do not need to state whether they will be assessing candidates in canoe/kayak. Two course authorisation numbers will automatically be given out, with two course schedules.

Assessment Venue:
There will be two different assessments; students can take either or both assessments.

1) The assessment will take place during a suitable journey on open water or estuary with winds up to and including force 2-3

OR 2) The assessment will take place on a section of river with a discernable green flow

Candidates/Assessors can choose the most appropriate venue/s based on the local availability/candidate motivations. The certificate will not differentiate between the two. Assessors may choose to include both venues, or just one, whichever best suits the situation.

Part A - Personal Paddling Skills

The candidate will demonstrate their ability to skilfully control their craft in the prescribed conditions through blending their body, boat, and blade positions. This will incorporate the application of the various practical techniques listed below. The candidate should keep their actions within the “safety box” and perform strokes on both sides.

If the boat is fitted with a rudder, the assessor must be satisfied that the candidate has the ability to get to safety if the rudder fails.

It is required that boats are fitted with buoyancy (e.g. bulkheads/airbags)

A.1 Lifting, carrying and launching / landing

Demonstrate good, safe, lifting and carrying techniques appropriate to moving a kayak or canoe from a vehicle, trailer, or boat rack to the launch site, using teamwork where necessary to limit the risk of accident and injury. The candidate should understand, and be able to demonstrate safe lifting and carrying techniques. The candidate should be able to launch safely and efficiently from any simple launch site with the boat afloat. The candidate should be aware of their impact on the environment and seek ways to minimise the risks.

A.2 Efficient forward paddling

For Kayak:

Understand the key points of good forward paddling technique and the importance of engaging the larger muscle groups of the body not just relying on the arms.

Effective range of forward paddling technique including:

- Good trunk rotation, high paddling action with reasonably extended front arm
- Good catch and power phase with early exit of the blade
- Emphasize the fundamentals, basic principles of forward paddling and connections
- The candidate will be observed throughout the test and should show good technique at cruising speed with sufficient power in the stroke to paddle against the prevailing conditions
- Acceleration – The candidate should demonstrate the ability to accelerate the boat whilst on the move within 3 or 4 strokes
- Cruising – An efficient and effective forward paddling stroke should be evident. The demonstration will be over a distance of about 500m (throughout the test) and will show good speed and control
- Trim – Develop an appreciation of wind speed and direction and how it affects their boat. The candidate should also understand how boat trim, paddling side, wind speed and direction affect performance. Experience a range of techniques to enable them to adjust their trim and optimise their performance e.g. their seating position, carrying a load etc. This awareness should include experience of winds of up to force 3. A triangular course may be of use when developing this awareness of trim. Trim should be a key underpinning point throughout their training.

For Canoe:

Understand the key points of good forward paddling technique and the importance of engaging the larger muscle groups of the body not just relying on the arms.

- Cruising – Appreciate how variation within a J-stroke affects its performance. Develop an efficient and effective forward paddling stroke that is predominantly a J-stroke. Be aware of the effect the length of a stroke has on its performance as well as how corrections made using the gunnel and without touching the gunnel affect outcome. An awareness of how boat trim and tilt can enhance this stroke is also crucial. An awareness of switching should be introduced and developed.
- Trim – Develop an appreciation of wind speed and direction and how it affects their boat. They should also understand how boat trim, paddling side, wind speed and direction affect performance. Experience a range of techniques to enable them to adjust their trim and optimise their performance, e.g. their seating position, carrying a load, etc. This awareness should include experience of winds of up to force 3 as well as paddling a range of types of canoe and whilst paddling solo and tandem. A triangular course may be of use when developing this awareness of trim. Trim should be a key underpinning point throughout their training.
- Knifed Strokes – Develop both paddle finesse and an awareness of how to use the recovery phase of a stroke to help maintain boat control.
- Acceleration – Demonstrate the ability to accelerate the canoe whilst on the move within 3-4 strokes. The need for a vertical paddle shaft should be appreciated as well as a short, sharp correction to keep the boat on course. Paddling tandem, the technique of switching should be introduced and developed.

A.3 Efficient reverse paddling

For Kayak:

Understand the key points of good reverse paddling technique and the importance of engaging the larger muscle groups of the body and not relying just on the arms.

- Stopping and Acceleration – The candidate should demonstrate the ability to stop the kayak and then accelerate in reverse within 1-2 boat lengths. This is an essential skill should the candidate wish to descend rivers where they may need to check their speed and set the boat up for a reverse ferry glide.
- Control over a figure-of-eight course – The candidate should be able to reverse the kayak straight as well as turn to the right and left around the

markers of a prescribed figure-of-eight course. (The course should be around buoys about 8 to 10m apart.) The boat should maintain a reasonable cruising speed throughout this task and there should be no loss of control.

- Steering in reverse with a rudder – The candidate should have an ability to steer in reverse with their rudder if it is fixed and cannot be raised. If the rudder can be raised then the candidate can raise it if required.

For Canoe:

Understand the key points of good reverse paddling technique and the importance of engaging the larger muscle groups of the body and not relying just on the arms.

- Trim – Develop an appreciation of wind speed and direction and how it affects the boat. Understand how boat trim, paddling side, wind speed and direction affects performance. Experience a range of techniques to enable them to adjust their trim and optimise their performance, e.g. their seating position, carrying a load, etc. This awareness should include experience of winds of up to force 2 as well as paddling a range of types of canoe and whilst paddling solo and tandem. A triangular course may be of use when developing this awareness of trim. Trim should be a key underpinning point throughout their training.
- Stopping and Acceleration – Demonstrate the ability to stop the canoe and then accelerate in reverse within 1-2 boat lengths. This is an essential skill should the candidate wish to descend rivers where they may need to check their speed and set the boat up for a reverse ferry glide. A vertical paddle shaft and effective cross-deck correction stroke play key roles in this manoeuvre.
- Control over a figure-of-eight course – Develop a range of reverse paddling strokes and techniques, paddle a reverse figure-of-eight course. Be introduced to a wide variety of strokes and techniques such as reverse J-stroke and the cross-deck backwater strokes. Wind awareness and boat trim will again play an important underpinning role in a skilful performance.

A.4 Turning on the move

Turning the kayak 360 degrees in both directions by using alternate forward and reverse sweep strokes, in conjunction with edging to assist the manoeuvre.

For Kayak:

The following should be in evidence in both directions:

- Tight turns / open turns – Develop an appreciation of how to carry or lose speed during a turn. Understand the effect that speed, boat tilt and hull shape will have on the shape of their turn. In addition, they should be able to use appropriate strokes to assist in tightening a turn up or opening it out.

Areas the candidate should be aware of and apply:

- Paddle blade covered, arm extension, elbow slightly bent. Blade placement and length of stroke.
- Turning the kayak through 90 degrees using both inside and outside edge, vertical and horizontal paddle positions.

For Canoe:

The following moves must be performed on both the on and off sides of the boat:

- Tight turns / open turns – Develop an appreciation of how to carry or lose speed during a turn. Understand the effect that speed, boat tilt and hull shape will have on the shape of their turn. In addition, they should be able to use appropriate strokes to assist in tightening a turn up or opening it out.

Areas the candidate should be aware of and apply:

- Paddle blade covered, arm extension, elbow slightly bent. Blade placement and length of stroke.
- Turning the canoe using edge control and with different paddle positions i.e. vertical and horizontal shaft.

A.5 Moving sideways, both static and on the move

For Kayak:

An efficient sideways movement must be evident without the kayak turning, using a variety of techniques, (with the body well rotated, paddle shaft upright, blade submerged):

- Sculling draw – Body well rotated, paddle shaft vertical, blade deep in the water. An efficient sideways movement must be in evidence without the kayak turning. Sideways displacement should be over approx 5m and shown on both sides. Understanding of the need to avoid aerating the water by keeping a long slow fluid movement.

- Draw on the move / hanging draw – The kayak, whilst moving forward, is to be pulled sideways from its course without turning, at least a boat's width for the draw stroke and 2-3 metres for a hanging draw. Forward paddling should be maintained after the draw stoke.

To be performed with the candidate paddling towards a buoy or gate so that accurate performance can be measured and co-ordination skills can be demonstrated by the candidate.

Both skills need to be performed on both sides.

For Canoe:

Be able to move the canoe sideways both toward and away from the paddle. A balanced application of the stroke is required in order to avoid the canoe rolling or yawing. A range of strokes including draw, sculling, and pry strokes should be covered. The upper body should be rotated toward the paddling side, with the blade deep for maximum efficiency.

Additionally, when on the move fine adjustments of blade angle and its position should be made to maintain the sideways movement.

A.6 Supporting

For Kayak:

Candidates should possess a range of support techniques in order to maintain balance in varied circumstances. Demonstration to include

- Low and high recovery strokes, stationary and on the move and on both sides. The kayak should be off balance and the candidate should keep their actions within their 'safety box'.
- The ability to keep the boat moving via forward paddling and maintain balance while the kayak is on edge.

For Canoe:

Develop an understanding of a good brace position, loose hips, firm blade placement, and upper body movement back inside the boat.

A.7 The ability to deal with environmental concerns

Poles and Ropes

Poles (canoe only) – Demonstrate the use of the pole in either shallow or deep water to propel the canoe over 25m as well as turning to the left and right.

Ropes (canoe or kayak) – Demonstrate the use of ropes tied onto the canoe or kayak as a means to move the boat around.

Examples:

- Headlands
- Up or down moving water
- Rafting boats together
- Tethering the canoe or kayak to the bank or storage rack

Wash hanging

The ability to surf the bow wave of a lead boat. Candidates to have an understanding of how wash hanging can help cover larger distances.

Trim (Canoe and Kayak)

Develop an appreciation of wind speed and direction and how it affects their boat. Candidates should also understand how boat trim, paddling side, wind speed and direction affect performance. Experience a range of techniques to enable them to adjust their trim and optimise their performance, e.g. their seating position, carrying a load, etc. This awareness should include experience of winds of up to force 3 as well as the understanding that different types of canoes and kayaks behave differently. For canoe solo and tandem should be explored and if applicable tandem to be explored in kayaks as well. A triangular course may be of use when developing this awareness of trim. Trim should be a key underpinning point throughout their training.

A.8 Securing

Have a number of methods used to secure boats – this securing may be temporary such as a pier, jetty, riverbank, or shoreline, as well as for storage or transport (boat racks, roof racks and trailers). Any system is acceptable, but if rope is used it must be an efficient recognised knot.

Part B - Rescue Skills

B.1 Deep-water rescue (rescue, and be rescued)

Perform a safe, timely, and appropriate deep-water rescue of a capsized candidate, use of appropriate dialogue with the person whilst maintaining control of the rescue. Act as both rescuer and victim.

In performing any rescue be aware of the importance of safe lifting techniques and how to best use the person in the water to assist in their own rescue.

B.2 Towing

Candidate must demonstrate a push or pull contact tow.

The candidate will also demonstrate a simple tow using a towline / tow system and demonstrate an emergency release. The candidate must indicate that they are aware of the inherent dangers of towing.

Candidate must be able to move a 'tired candidate' across a short distance of approximately 10m on flat or very gently moving water.

B.3 Capsize, swim and self-rescue

Candidate to be confident capsizing, swimming with boat 25m to shore.

If paddling a canoe the ability to climb back into a canoe with someone holding onto the far gunwale.

If paddling a sit-on-top or inflatable then the ability to get back on / in should be demonstrated.

Part C - Safety & Group Skills

C.1 Personal risk management

Practical application of the theory from Part D.

Candidates should show ability in identifying hazards and choosing suitable lines.

C.2 Awareness of others

Awareness is important here; both of what is happening to them and others around them. They do not need to be responsible for others but they should work together and help each other through communication and physically moving out of the way to allow others to perform manoeuvres.

C.3 Paddling as part of a led group

Candidates to understand their role within the group while on the water. This is to include the following areas:

- Communication – how the group are going to keep in touch with everyone. This is specifically important when dealing with an incident.
- Line of sight

- Avoidance – how the group are going to avoid issues. This could include areas such as safety equipment, communication strategies, areas that are paddled, weather, etc.
- Positioning within the group – where group members need to position themselves so they can be of help in the following incidents: getting in and out of the water / during an incident / travelling down the river / going around a headland.

Part D – Theory / Knowledge

The assessor should satisfy themselves that the candidate has a good general knowledge of the open canoe under the following headings:

(A question or two of a similar level should be asked under each heading.)

D.1 Equipment

Have knowledge and experience of using a range of equipment. Know how and why equipment has evolved and how best to use it.

Sample questions:

Can you name two different types of paddle?

What materials are most modern boats made from?

What is the main difference between a 'dry cag' and an ordinary cag?

D.2 Safety

Have a sound safety framework with use of practical, dynamic risk assessments.

Sample questions:

What clothing would you wear if you were going out paddling in the winter?

Why can 'strainers' on fast moving water be dangerous?

D.3 Weather

Know how to understand and interpret weather forecast information from a variety of sources.

Sample questions:

Where can you get weather information from?

What are the important elements of a forecast with regards to safety of a river trip?

D.4 Hypothermia / First Aid

Understand the factors that contribute to hypothermia and have strategies to avoid it. Be able to deal with the most likely paddlesport injuries.

Sample questions:

How do you prevent hypothermia?

What are the signs that someone is becoming hypothermic?

What are the most important things to do if someone is hypothermic?

D.5 Access

Be aware of the range of access issues throughout the UK and where additional information can be found.

Sample questions:

What is an 'access agreement'?

How do you find out whom to ask permission from, when planning a river trip?

What does 'a riparian owner' mean?

D.6 Environment

An appreciation of the environment we paddle in should be a key underpinning principle for candidates. Be aware of our environmental impact and be proactive in minimising this impact.

Sample questions:

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

What role does the Environment Agency play with regards to environmental factors?

D.7 Planning

Know what questions to ask and how to go about organising a day out.

Sample questions:

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

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

D.8 Group awareness

Be a productive member of a paddling group and understand different roles within a group of paddlers on the water.

Sample questions:

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

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

D.9 General

Have a wide general knowledge of all aspects of the sport.

Sample questions:

Name two manufacturers or models of kayak which are sold in Britain?

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

Who is Rob Roy MacGregor?

D.10 Navigation

Be able to use a map and compass to identify obvious features and identify your position.

Sample questions:

On what type of journey may a compass be useful?

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

D.11 Etiquette

Promote a positive image for paddlesports with other river users and local residents.

Sample questions:

Who has right of way when descending a rapid?

What should you do after entering an eddy and you have other paddlers descending the rapid, wanting to enter the same eddy?

D.12 Personal paddling skills

Candidates to have knowledge of the personal paddling skills in Part A.

Sample questions:

How do you use the rudder to help turn?

How should the canoe be trimmed when paddling into a wind?