



BCU Star Award Guidance Notes February 2009

Introduction:

2007 saw the introduction of the new BCU Performance Awards; Paddlepower and the Star Awards. This update provides guidance on a range of 'Star Award' questions and issues to help candidates and particularly assessors appreciate the wider administrative implications that we will encounter over the transition period and on into the future.

While we appreciate that the list of issues covered here is not exhaustive we have tried to cover the more obvious, or likely questions. We will continue to update this document as required and see it ultimately becoming an important element of any 'new' 'coaching directory'.

Should you have a question not covered here or elsewhere please contact the BCU office in Nottingham, email coaching@bcu.org.uk, or contact your Home Nation Coaching Department. Candidates and Assessors are advised to check the currency of the document used for reference.

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Supporting Documents:

Star Awards Syllabi, Trainer Notes, and Assessor Notes – All available www.bcu.org.uk

SECTION 1 - INTRODUCTORY NOTES

GENERAL NOTES

- 1.1 The Paddlesport Start Award is designed to provide a framework for a paddler's first session. It is very much an encouragement award and can be used by coaches who offer taster sessions, or that first session of a series. It is an adult version of Paddlepower Start

The One and Two Star Awards are generic 'any boat' awards. The Three Star award is discipline specific and the Four and Five Star Awards are discipline specific 'Leadership' awards.

- 1.2 The details of each award are described in the Star Award Syllabi, Trainer and Assessor Notes available on the BCU Website.

Three, Four and Five Star Awards are currently available in White Water Kayak, Canoe, Sea and Surf. Paddlers of decked canoes or white water canoes equipped with saddles and air bags should follow the White Water Kayak syllabus with the assessors making sensible allowances. The Three Star Touring Award is also available.

- 1.3 1 and 2 Star courses can be run either individually or as a group based activity (a series of evenings or over weekends where group size is manageable) and do not need notification.

At 3, 4 and 5 Star assessment course organisers are required to notify and hold a course authorisation number for each course they plan to run.

Course authorisation is obtained by direct contact (phone or preferably email) with your Home Nation Coaching Department. Please note Course Authorisation needs to be in place at least two weeks prior to the planned Assessment.

- 1.4 The STAR AWARD PASS SLIPS should be used by assessors to record the candidates completion of an assessment. They are available free from Home Nation Administration Offices. Forms should be clearly endorsed as per the assessment requirement.
- 1.5 CERTIFICATES will be issued, appropriate to the award taken, on payment by the candidate of the correct fee. There is NO FEE for a fail.

- 1.6 There are a number of ways of obtaining certificates:
- i) The Paddlesport Start Certificates are purchased by assessors in bulk and issued directly to candidates. Contact your Home Nation Association Office for details.
 - ii) Candidates assessed for 1 – 2 Star must be issued with a Star Award Pass Slip. If forms are submitted by assessors correct assessment fees should be included. Copies of forms are available from Home Nation Administrators.
 - iii) With 3 Star assessment assessors must use the 3 Star course schedule and collect the appropriate fee(s) returning them to their Home Nation Association Office.
 - iv) With 4 and 5 Star assessment assessors must use the 4 / 5 Star course schedule and collect the appropriate fee(s) returning them to their Home Nation Association Office
- 1.7 Candidates should be encouraged to apply for BCU Membership. Membership details are available on the BCU Website and BCU Directory.
- 1.8 Candidates with a disability can achieve a Star Award even if their disability stops them from completing part of the award. For full details please refer to the BCU Coaching Directory / BCU leaflet: 'Policy of the BCU on Tests and Awards as they apply to people with Disabilities'

PRACTICAL NOTES

- 1.9 Normally paddlers should be able to swim 50 metres in light clothing. Discretion may be exercised, however, in accordance with a coach's training and experience, where special circumstances exist.
- 1.10 These awards are designed for performance in the craft(s) and conditions as described in the syllabi in question. Due allowance should be made / postponement considered if conditions are in excess of or not at the standard stated.
- 1.11 Candidate prerequisites and assessment conditions are clearly described within the award syllabi.
- 1.12 The knowledge necessary to pass these awards is contained in the BCU Canoe and Kayak Handbook. The sample questions are intended to demonstrate the 'level' and should not be used ad nauseam. Theory should relate to the paddlers experience.

ENVIRONMENT

- 1.13 Canoeing is an exciting, adventurous, competitive and recreational activity from which much of the enjoyment and adventure comes from the natural environment around you. Every paddler must remember to respect all wildlife and take care not to damage or destroy the environment by observing the Canoeist's Code of Conduct and the recommendations in the BCU leaflet 'Earning a Welcome'.

POLLUTION WARNING

- 1.15 All awards should be taken in the appropriate environment (see syllabi). Please note that some waterways are subject to serious pollution. Assessors are reminded that where there is reason to believe that the level of pollution is such as to render capsizing drill potentially hazardous, alternative safer methods/locations may be used for those aspects of performance Awards that require deliberate immersion.

MANUAL HANDLING

- 1.16 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.

Coaches and assessors are charged through the training and assessments they provide with a 'duty of care' for paddlers and should ensure they make an appropriate risk assessment of activities provided.

It is recommended that candidates seek help when emptying and carrying their craft.

Cost

- 1.17 The cost of the Paddlesport Start certificates is £1. Bulk order rates are available to BCU Affiliated Clubs and Approved Centres.

	Members	Non-Members
1 Star	£5	£5
2 Star	£5	£5
3 Star	£10	£20

	Members	Non-Members
4 Star	£10	£20
5 Star	£10	£20

SECTION 2 – ASSESSOR MATTERS

ASSESSING STANDARDS

- 2.1 In order to achieve uniformity of assessment standards, careful attention should be paid to the definitions in both the practical performance and theoretical sections of the awards.
- 2.2 Who can deliver the 'new' Star awards? The following coaches can register (see 2.3) to assess the 'new' Star Awards:

Award Required	Coaching Level	Additional Requirements
Paddlesport Start	BCU Level 1 coach & above	
One Star	BCU Level 2 coach & above	
Two Star	BCU Level 2 Coach & above	Kayak Two Star + Canoe Two Star (or 'new' 2 Star)
Three Star	BCU Level 3 Coach & above	Limited to relevant discipline
Four Star	A4 Assessor *	Limited to relevant discipline
Five Star	A5 Assessor ‡	Limited to relevant discipline

*Current Level 3 coaches with 5 Star will be able to access BCU training to deliver 4 Star in their respective discipline (see section 4).

‡ 'new' 4 Star Assessors who are also Level 5 Coaches will be able to access BCU training to deliver 5 Star in their respective discipline (see section 4).

Optional training will be available through the coach update series to help eligible coaches assess the Star Awards.

- 2.3 Assessor Registration - All coaches wishing to assess any of the 'new' Star Awards are required to register their intention to do so, listing the awards they wish to assess. On completion of Star Award Registration their assessor portfolio will be confirmed.

Coaches who have registered to assess the 'new' Star Awards and who gain 'new' qualifications will have their Star Award Assessor information updated accordingly on completion of a 'new' Star Award Registration Form.

2.4 1 and 2 Star Assessing

Assessment for 1 and 2 Star Awards need not be course based and can be via individual application with assessors. Recording completion of assessment should be via the appropriate 1 / 2 Star Pass slip, (available via Home Nation Association Office).

Assessors of the 'new' 1 and 2 Star should endeavour to refrain from assessing close family or friends.

2.5 3 Star Training

3 Star Training courses are not subject to notification / authorisation. Training can be delivered via a series of sessions or via a specifically calendared training course(s). The training programme while needing to cover all aspects of the 3 Star Assessment syllabi needn't be restricted to these areas and should reflect a wide range of boat handling and experiential opportunities.

2.6 3 Star Assessing

All 3 Star Assessments need to be notified and authorised as per note 1.3. Please note that Course Authorisation needs to be in place at least two weeks prior to the planned Assessment.

Assessors of the 3 Star Award should ensure that candidates have a suitable background to support them taking the assessment and where a candidate does not hold the lower grade(s) a cross section of the requirements may be incorporated and assessors should be satisfied that the candidate has proven 2 Star logbook experience in both kayak and Canoe activity.

Assessors and Candidates are reminded that while not necessarily needing to have completed the 2 Star Award prior to a 3 Star Assessment candidates wishing to enter the Coaching scheme will need to hold the 2 Star Award as a prerequisite.

All 3 Star Assessments must be recorded on the appropriate 3 Star Group Schedule. Assessors of the 'new' 3 Star Award cannot assess close friends or family and should avoid, where practical, assessing candidates they have themselves trained.

2.7 4 and 5 Star Training

4 and 5 Star Training courses are not subject to notification / authorisation. Training can be delivered via a series of sessions or via a specifically calendared training course(s). The training programme while needing to cover all aspects of the 4 / 5 Star training course (see syllabi) needn't be restricted to these areas and should reflect a wide range of boat handling and experiential opportunities.

2.8 4 and 5 Star Assessing

All 4 and 5 Star Assessments need to be notified and authorised as per 1.3. Please note Course Authorisation needs to be in place at least two weeks prior to the planned Assessment.

Assessors of the 4 and 5 Star Award should ensure that assessment candidates have completed the prerequisite training requirements prior to an assessment.

All 4 and 5 Star Assessments must be recorded on the appropriate 4/5 Star Group Schedule, and candidates issued with an appropriate post course action plan.

Assessors of the 'new' 4 and 5 Star Award cannot assess close friends or family and should avoid, where practical, assessing candidates they have themselves trained.

4 and 5 Star assessments must include the leading of a suitably sized group.

SECTION 3 – BCU STAR AWARD STAFF RATIO'S

At 3, 4, and 5 Star the following Assessment Ratios and Duration are required:

3 Star Assessment:

Assessment Length:	Variable (1 Day, at a ratio of 1:6)
Minimum number of candidates:	1
Minimum number of Staff:	1
Maximum Staff Ratio:	1:6

4 Star Formal Training:

Course Length:	minimum 2 days
Minimum number of candidates:	1
Minimum number of Staff:	1
Maximum Staff Ratio:	1:6
Trainer qualifications:	Same as 4 Star Assessor

5 Star Formal Training:

Course Length:	minimum 2 days
Minimum number of candidates:	1
Minimum number of Staff:	1
Maximum Staff Ratio:	1:4
Training Director Qualifications:	Same as 5 Star Assessor
Second member of Staff:	BCU Level 5

4 Star Assessment:

Assessment Length:	2 Days (with the exception of Open Canoe)
Minimum number of candidates:	1
Minimum number of Staff:	2*
Maximum Staff Ratio:	1:4

5 Star Assessment:

Assessment Length:	2 Days
Minimum number of candidates:	1
Minimum number of Staff:	2*
Maximum Staff Ratio:	1:4

* For courses of 4 or less, two different assessors must assess the candidate. While a different assessor would assess the candidate on each day, both assessors must be present together at the candidates debrief.

SECTION 4 – ASSESSOR TRAINING & ASSESSMENT

4.1 4 Star Assessor Training

Coaches wishing to become a 4 Star Assessor need to attain a 4 Star Assessor Logbook from their Home Nation Association. Once the initial tasks have been completed this is returned to the Home Nation, to register onto a 4 Star Assessor Training Course.

The tasks required, prior to training are:

- Active Level 3 Coach (within specific discipline)
- 5 Star Assessment (within specific discipline)
- Coach Update Status Valid
- Registered 3 Star Assessor (within specific discipline)
- Evidence of running a 3 Star Assessment
- Up-to-date (within 3 years) knowledge of the relevant 4 Star safety pre-requisite (this can be evidenced through a personal attendance certificate, or recognised equivalent as detailed in the specific award syllabi)
- Potential Assessors are expected to be familiar with the 4 Star Syllabi, Trainer Notes, Assessor Notes, and Star Award Guidance Notes prior to attending the 4 Star Assessor Training.

4.2 5 Star Assessor Training

Coaches wishing to become a 5 Star Assessor need to attain a 5 Star Assessor Logbook from their Home Nation Association. Once the initial tasks have been completed this is returned to the Home Nation, to register onto a 5 Star Assessor Training Course.

The tasks required, prior to training are:

- Active Level 5 Coach, and 5 Star (within specific discipline)
- Registered 4 Star Assessor (within specific discipline)
- Evidence of running a 4 Star Assessment
- Coach Update Status Valid
- Up-to-date (within 3 years) knowledge of the relevant 5 Star safety pre-requisite

(this can be evidenced through a personal attendance certificate, or recognised equivalent as detailed in the specific award syllabi)

- Potential Assessors are expected to be familiar with the 5 Star Syllabi, Trainer Notes, Assessor Notes, and Star Award Guidance Notes prior to attending the 5 Star Assessor Training.

4.3 4 and 5 Star Assessor Assessment

After assessor training potential assessors undertake observed or supported delivery to suit their personal needs, completing an action plan established during their assessor training. When they feel they are able to run an assessment course, they return their completed logbook to their Home Nation (with a £39 registration fee). At this stage the Potential Assessor will need to re-evidence the initial prerequisites.

If this is approved, it is returned to the candidate, and they are able to proceed and arrange an assessment with an approved Home Nation Trainer.

Potential Assessors, will be assessed running all elements of the 4 or 5 Star Assessment. They will be expected to set the course up, administer it, direct the assessment including debriefs, and conclude any paperwork. Candidates will be assessed against a set of specific criteria – these are under development.

(If the individual being assessed (as a 4/5 Star assessor) is poor, the Home Nation Trainer will step in and ensure the candidates receive a fair 4/5 Star assessment).

4.4 Gaining 4 (or 5 Star) Assessor Status in a second discipline

Registered BCU 4 (or 5 Star) Award Assessors in one discipline are able to APL the 4 (or 5) Star Assessor Training in further disciplines (where they hold the prerequisites) and proceed directly to the mentored practice and assessment stages of gaining 4 (or 5) Star Assessor status. Any of these said individuals are welcome to attend the discipline specific part of the training day if they prefer.

Potential Assessors wishing to follow this route need to attain a 4 (or 5) Star Assessor Logbook from their Home Nation Association (this is downloadable from the BCU website). Once the initial tasks have been completed this is returned to the Home Nation, with a request to APL the required 4 (or 5) Star Assessor Training Course. This is returned to Potential Assessors and they develop and complete their own action plan. When they feel they are able to run an assessment course, they return their completed logbook to their Home Nation (with a £39 registration fee). If this is approved, it is

returned to the potential Assessor, and they are able to proceed and arrange an assessment with an approved Home Nation Trainer.

SECTION 5 - FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

5.1 How do course organisers notify the BCU of potential courses?

1 and 2 Star courses can be run either individually or as a group based activity (a series of evenings or over weekends where group size is manageable) and do not need notification.

Course authorisation (required for 3 Star and above) is obtained by direct contact (phone or preferably email) with your Home Nation Association Coaching Department. Please note Course Authorisation needs to be in place at least two weeks prior to the planned Assessment.

5.2 What about Paperwork?

Pass slips are available for the 1 and 2 Star, Course Schedules for 3, 4, and 5 Star Assessments. A full schedule should be used on all 3 Star Assessment and on 4 and 5 Star training and assessment.

5.3 What about Certification?

New style certification is issued for all 'new' awards.

5.4 What about 'old' style awards?

Any 'old' Star Awards will remain valid. However, they will not be transferred into the 'new' scheme. Where a Star Award is a prerequisite for a coaching award see 5.9 and 5.10. Pass slips for 'old' awards will no longer be honoured.

5.5 What about Assessors with A3* Status?

A3* Assessors are:

- i. Eligible to register to assess the 'new' 1 – 3 Star Awards
- ii. Eligible to apply to deliver the 'new' Level 1 and 2 Coach Awards

A3* assessors are required to hold a 5 Star qualification to operate in the more advanced environments of the 'new' 4 Star and Level 3 Awards, and as such:

To assess the 'new' 4 Star, assessors are required to hold either the 'new' or 'old' 5 Star Awards. A3* Assessors who gain their 5 Star award ('new' or 'old') will become eligible to register to assess the 'new' 4 Star.

To run the 'new' Level 3 Coach Award Tutors are required to hold either the 'new' or 'old' 5 Star Awards. A3* Assessors who gain their 5 Star award ('new' or 'old') will become eligible to either apply to deliver the 'new' Level 3 Coach Award, or if they have already had their application processed complete the required training, development and assessment .

5.6 What are the Star Award prerequisites?

These are detailed in each syllabi.

5.7 Can 'old' Level 2 Competition Coaches and above, assess the 'new' 2 Star?

Yes if they have observed 1 'new' 2 Star assessment and been assessed delivering a 'new' 2 Star assessment by a Level 3 Coach who is registered to assess the 'new' BCU 2 Star. Coaches are encouraged to access the Fundamental Paddlesport Skills Workshop and Forward Paddling Workshops run through the coach update scheme.

5.8 What about the Touring 3, 4 (and 5) Star Awards?

3 Star Touring is live, details available on the BCU website. The 4 and 5 Star are under development.

5.12 How Long will 'old' Style Star Awards be Recognised?

All 'old' style Star Awards will continue to be recognised as awards in their own right. However, some of the prerequisites for 'new' Coaching Awards and assessor prerequisites may only recognise the 'new' Star Awards.

5.13 Should I keep a Log Book to record my Star Award Progress?

While it is not essential to record your experiences as part of 1 – 3 Star progression you may find it useful either for yourself or at a later date for portfolio building purposes. At 4 and 5 Star it should be considered an essential aspect of assessment preparation. The BCU has a log book that you can request in electronic format, or you can of course produce your own.