

Certification Pathway/Assessment Guidelines

Level 4 Sea Kayak Skills Award

Applying for Assessment

1. Have obtained the Level 3 Sea Kayak Skills award
2. Have completed an Essential Coastal Navigation Course and obtained an ECN Certificate.
3. Have unrestricted access to a fully equipped sea kayak, personal equipment, and additional equipment (see List of equipment in).
4. Be a least 16 years of age.
5. Be a member of Canoeing Ireland.
6. Have unrestricted access to a fully equipped sea kayak, personal equipment, and additional equipment. (See Level 4 Sea Kayak Skills List of Equipment).

Assessment

- The Level 4 Sea Kayak Skills assessment will include a short-written assessment followed by a sea trip of 3-4 hours in duration which must take place in slight seas (Douglas Sea Scale) with up to Force 4 winds.
- The written assessment will include trip planning exercises with specified conditions and group parameters. These trips may be anywhere along the Irish Coast. No conferring is allowed.
- During an assessment, a candidate must explain and demonstrate all techniques and skills at a level higher than that required for the Level 3 Sea Kayak Skills Award. All techniques, skills and rescues must be demonstrated to the required level to achieve this award.
- All strokes should be demonstrated in relevant situations i.e., bracing in surf. Strokes should be demonstrated on both sides of the kayak.
- All rescues must be executed by the candidate acting as both rescuee and rescuer. Generally, required assessment rescues will be kept until the end of the trip.
- While attendance at a course is normally necessary, exceptions to that rule are accepted based on the candidate's presentation of an extensive range of logged sea trips. While it is not compulsory to attend a training course prior to assessment, it is strongly recommended.
- Before assessment, the candidates must present their logged trips (*See details of qualifying trips in Guidelines).

***Qualifying Trips**

- On trips the candidate undertakes, no unnecessary risks should be taken, and all necessary planning and preparations should be seen to have been taken. It is recommended that the candidates seek to gain his/her experience in a measured way and not attempt trips they have not the experience for.
- Details of four qualifying sea trips must be presented, along with an assessment approval by the Canoeing Ireland Training Officer, to the Assessor prior to commencement of assessment. At least one of the qualifying sea trips must be on the Atlantic coastline. The candidate must show active participation in navigation and planning of trips. Qualifying trips should be, at minimum, of three hours paddling duration and should include a lunch stop.

The candidate should seek to include trips in a logbook that includes the following categories:

1. Coastal trips with simple tidal considerations – it being necessary to identify which way the tide is running to plan the trip to take advantage of tides.
2. Coastal trips with a crux i.e., a trip where you wish to be at a specific location at a specific time to benefit from predicted tidal conditions.
3. Open crossings where knowledge of tidal streams is necessary.

Assessment Guidelines

- A Level 4 Sea Kayak Skills Award can only be assessed by a member of the Level 4 Sea Kayak Skills Assessor Panel.
- It is recommended that the award be assessed by an Instructor other than the Instructor who ran the training course leading to assessment.
- The assessment ratio: 1 assessor with a minimum of 2 assesseees and maximum of 3 assesseees.
- Should a candidate fail an assessment, written guidelines should be given as to the areas that they need to improve on.
- No other award may be assessed at the same time as the Level 4 Sea Kayak Skills Award.
- Before setting off on the trip the candidate will be required to produce a route summary for the day based on information gleaned from the chart, tide tables, pilot and weather forecast. No conferring is allowed during this trip planning and it is recommended that each candidate come independently prepared with everything necessary to plan a trip.