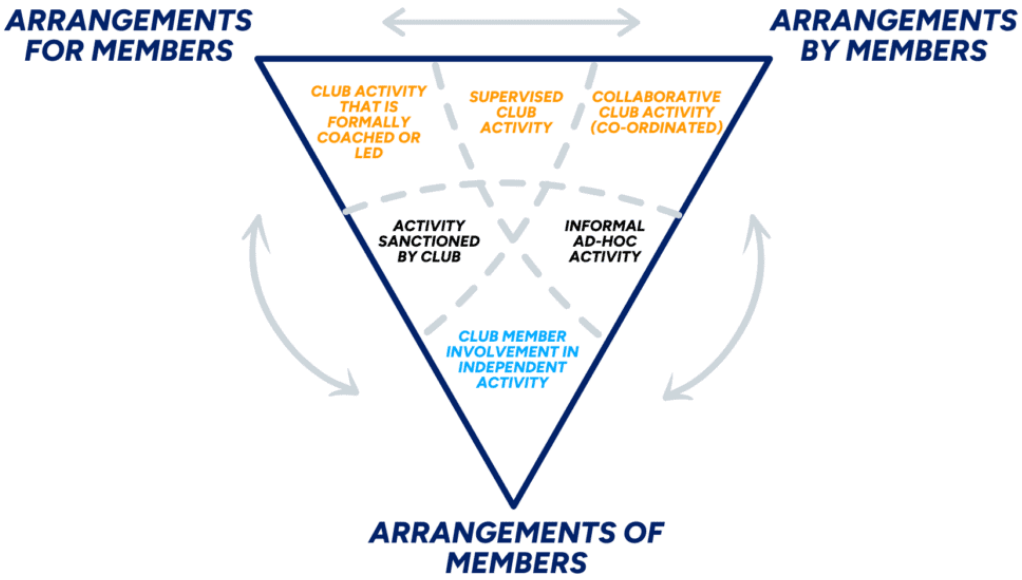
OPEN CANOE SAILING GROUP

Assessment of canoe sailing competence

1. Context

1.1. Paddle UK has introduced Standards for Deployment which are mandatory for all affiliated clubs. We have agreed with Paddle UK that buddy group sailing as practised at OCSG Meets is what Paddle UK defines as 'Collaborative Activity', as illustrated below. This is activity where there is no designated 'person in charge' and participants are ALL responsible for managing safety, enforcing / following rules and making informed decisions in response to changing conditions or emergencies. This is the least formal type of activity that would be insured under the OCSG affiliation to Paddle UK.



Paddle UK's Club Activity triangle, from Understanding Your Clubs Activity

1.2. Paddle UK guidance is clear that only those aged 18 or over may participate in Collaborative Activity and that it is insured within the Club's affiliation only if participants have been assessed by the Club Committee as being capable to be independent within the scope of the activity. To operate in this way the OCSG therefore must have a robust mechanism to assess the competence of participants to take part in canoe sailing activity within defined environments and conditions. The OCSG also runs club events (not open to non-members) where the achievement of a particular Competence Level is a pre-requisite to participation. This also requires a credible assessment framework.

1.3. Paddle UK recognises that the OCSG Competence Levels are a suitable framework to use for this assessment and this document sets out how the OCSG will use them to assess the canoe sailing competence of members. The Competence Levels are at Annex A for reference.

2. Assessment framework

2.1. The level of competence required to participate in each OCSG Meet, and where necessary also specific activities within a Meet, will be clearly indicated to Members on the Meet Calendar and through OCSG communication channels including emails from Meet

organisers. These communications will also make clear which Meets will provide an opportunity for competence assessment.

2.2. The OCSG Committee will manage a list recording the assessed canoe sailing competence level of each Member. This will be shared with Meet Organisers and Safety Advisors and used to determine eligibility to participate in buddy group sailing at Meets, and club events. The outcome of competence assessments conducted by an appropriate assessor (as per paras 2.3 to 2.5 below) will be provided to the Committee by the assessor within 2 weeks of the assessment to maintain currency of the list. The list will be reviewed annually by the Committee to identify where Member's competence may have declined or no longer be clear, for example through a lack of participation in Meets or evidence of other informal (ad hoc) canoe sailing. When the Committee deems appropriate, a Member's recorded competence level will be reduced, pending practical re-assessment.

2.3. The OCSG Committee will also manage a list of Members whom they have agreed may conduct competence assessments. This will also be reviewed annually to maintain currency. Person(s) conducting assessment of canoe sailing competence must be able to demonstrate technical proficiency and an understanding of how to conduct an effective assessment. Assessors must be full ('On The Water' or 'Coastal') members of Paddle UK. This aligns canoe sailing with other paddle sport disciplines and has the benefit of providing the Assessor with Paddle UK's professional indemnity insurance cover. Assessors must also complete the BCAB 'Introduction to Safeguarding' and 'Risk Management and Risk Assessment' eLearning courses.

2.4. **Technical proficiency**. A person conducting a practical assessment of canoe sailing competence must themselves currently be at least a Level 3 canoe sailor as determined by the OCSG Committee. Practical assessment of Level 4 competence may only be done by an assessor who is themselves a current Level 4 canoe sailor.

2.5. **Assessment proficiency**. To ensure that assessors have an appropriate understanding of how to conduct an assessment they must have successfully completed one (or more) of the following training courses and be able to provide a certificate or similar evidence:

- Open Water Leader or Coach (BCAB)
- Assessing Competence in the Paddlesport Environment (BCAB)
- Dinghy Instructor or Dinghy Senior Instructor (RYA)
- Level 3 Award in Assessing Vocational Related Achievement (QCF)
- Level 3 Award in Assessing Vocational Achievement (QCF)
- Level 3 Award in Assessing Competence in the Work Environment (QCF)
- Conduct the Assessment Process PDA (SCQF, L&D9)
- Assess Workplace Competence Using Direct Methods (SCQF, L&D9D)
- Assess Workplace Competence Using Direct and Indirect Methods (SCQF, L&D9DI)
- NVQ A1 Assessor Award
- NVQ D32/D33 Assessor Award
- A teaching qualification such as Cert Ed, PGCE, PTTLS etc

Where the qualification or certification is time limited or requires continuous professional development to maintain it, it must be in date.

2.6. **Assurance**. Award of canoe sailing Competence Levels will be endorsed by a sub-committee of the OCSG committee appointed for that purpose. The OCSG committee will nominate, and if necessary co-opt, a Member with responsibility for overseeing the assessments. That person will hold a BCAB qualification in coaching or leading and/or a RYA Dinghy Instructor qualification and/or a formal qualification in teaching or workplace assessment. They will convene a meeting of the OCSG members authorised to conduct assessments of canoe sailing competence at least once per year to provide consistency of assessment decisions, ongoing quality assurance, and periodic review of whether the framework remains appropriate. Every assessor will be expected to attend this at least once every two years to maintain their currency as an assessor.

2.7. **Safeguarding**. Assessors are required to follow the OCSG Safeguarding Policy at all times. Assessment of under 18 year olds will not take place as they are not permitted to be members of the OCSG and Paddle UK's guidelines state that persons under 18 years old are not eligible to take part in Collaborative Activity without supervision.

Annex A – OCSG Competence Levels.

Annex A

OCSG COMPETENCE LEVELS

Competence Levels – Purpose

- to guide and promote the development of canoe-sailing skills to suit the location and conditions.
- to provide an understanding of the capabilities required to undertake various canoe-sailing activities in differing conditions and over a wide range of challenge and adventure, including OCSG meets.

The OCSG competence levels detail some of the key skills and techniques required for sailing and paddling a sailing canoe, but are not intended as an exhaustive test of everything you might need to know or be capable of. Before going on the water particular attention should be paid to general planning and preparation for your canoe, equipment and clothing etc. Advice about these issues is available at OCSG meets as well as from this OCSG website, but at other times canoe-sailors will need to use caution and judgment to deal with the likely risks. OCSG members wishing to extend their skills and experience should consider the relevant Paddle UK paddling and RYA sailing courses. [see footnote A]

The OCSG encourages canoe-sailing activities in the company of others for mutual support; this forms an important part of OCSG meet procedures, for the increased safety it offers. Nevertheless canoe-sailors should aim to be self-reliant, developing their own experience and judgment as well as important skills such as self-rescue.

For those taking part in OCSG meets it is useful to know both your own and other's capabilities, to help understand what activities are appropriate in the conditions at that location. These Levels provide a way of doing this.

Level 1 – Basic

Intended for those starting out with a sailing canoe, achievable after a handful of sessions on inland waters in light winds, F1-2. Shows competence to sail a canoe up to half a mile from the launch point, in light-wind conditions on simple waters with no current, supervised by a Level 2 (or higher) canoe-sailor.

In Light Breeze conditions (4>7 mph, F2)

1. Sail upwind half a mile, including tacking several times. Then return, gybing at least twice.

2. Sail away from launch site for a few hundred yards, drop or furl sail and paddle back. [see footnote B]

3. Reef afloat and continue sailing.

4. After the canoe has been fully swamped, recover the situation by baling it out (in a couple of feet of water near the beach) [see footnote C]

5. Be rescued by another canoe-sailor following a practice capsize.

Level 2 – Intermediate

Intended for those taking part in a round trip of about 5 miles on inland waters in a Gentle to Moderate breeze, F3-4, as part of a small group taking responsibility for their own safety as well as looking out for others in the group.

1. Show effective sailing in a ‘Gentle Breeze’ (7>12 mph, F3) by following a Level 3 canoe sailor for a 1 mile beat in no more than 150% of their time. [see footnote D]

2. Sail away from launch site, drop or furl sail and paddle a half-mile round-trip in 15 minutes in a ‘Light Breeze’ (4>7 mph, F2). [see footnote B]

3. Reef afloat in a ‘Gentle Breeze’ (7>12 mph, F3) and continue sailing.

4. ‘Heave to’ for 5 minutes in a stable and controlled manner in a ‘Gentle Breeze’ (7>12 mph, F3). [see footnote E]

5. Following a practice capsize, recover and re-enter the canoe in ‘Light Breeze’ conditions (4>7 mph, F2). [NB see footnotes F/G/H/I for trimarans and outrigger float issues].

6. Take charge of a two person rescue of someone from the water in ‘Light Breeze’ conditions (4>7 mph, F2). [NB see footnote J for physical requirements and footnote F for rescue by trimaran].

Level 3 - Advanced
Intended for those taking part in more adventurous outings on larger inland waters, in stronger wind conditions (maximum 24 mph, F5) and larger waves, as part of a small group taking responsibility for their own safety as well as looking out for others in the group.

1. Show effective sailing in a ‘Moderate Breeze’ (12>18 mph, F4) by following a Level 4 canoe sailor upwind for 1 mile in no more than 125% of their time. [see footnote D]

2. Sail away from launch site, drop or furl sail and paddle a half-mile round-trip in 15 minutes in a ‘Gentle Breeze’ (7>12 mph, F3). [see footnote B]

3. Reef afloat in a ‘Moderate Breeze’ (12>18 mph, F4) and continue sailing.

4. Recover from a capsize, and re-enter the canoe alone, in a ‘Moderate Breeze’ (12>18 mph, F4). (For a trimaran, show re-entry following a ‘Man Overboard’ situation).

5. Rescue another capsized canoe-sailor alone, in a ‘Moderate Breeze’ (12>18 mph, F4).

6. Following demonstration of the above skills, complete a real journey of at least 8 miles round trip on inland waters with a Level 3 buddy, showing understanding of basic passage planning:

Outline a plan – Weather, Where to, Who is my rescue partner, Return plan & time, Contingency plan, Told Someone ashore?
Canoe – Boat, Rig, Foils, Fittings all OK for conditions?
Skipper – Able to cope with likely Conditions and possible Emergencies?
Gear – Buoyancy Aid, Whistle, Paddle, Bailer, Additional Kit (calling for help, navigation or other)?

Level 4 – Coastal

Intended for those taking part in serious adventures on exposed coastal waters, where higher wind and wave conditions are routinely expected, as part of a small group taking responsibility for their own safety as well as looking out for others in the group.

1. Show ability on all points of sail in a Fresh Breeze (18-24 mph winds, F5) with resulting wave conditions for a 5 mile fetch.

2. Complete an outing of 10 miles round trip on coastal waters with a Level 4 buddy. A passage plan for the outing should be prepared.

3. Gain experience of at least 5 other outings of at least 10 miles on a variety of coastal waters.

Footnotes:

A. In order to learn more about coastal sailing some canoe-sailors may choose to complete an RYA 'Essential Navigation and Seamanship' course, or an RYA 'Day Skipper Theory' course or Paddle UK 'Coastal Navigation and Tidal Planning' or some equivalent course – but any of these will need to be complemented with significant experience of sailing and paddling a canoe on the sea.

B. For paddling skills requirements by those with physical disabilities, the use of an alternative power source such as an outboard motor may be appropriate.

C. Anyone sailing a canoe should consider both how it will behave in the event of complete swamping and how they will deal with such a situation. The key issues are how stable the boat is when swamped and whether it can be bailed out; both factors are affected by the amount and location of the buoyancy installed, as well as how effectively that buoyancy is attached to the canoe. Testing both the canoe and the user's ability to deal with such circumstances is an essential prerequisite before going sailing in a canoe.

D. 'Effective sailing' requirements should be undertaken using a similar size sail to the canoe being followed (minimum size 25 sq ft – reefing of either sail may be required to achieve this).

E. 'Heaving to' is a useful skill to bring the boat to a near stop, in order to bail or attend to some incident etc.

F. For those using a trimaran, rescue requirements for Level 2 can be adjusted so that capsize recovery is not expected, favouring the importance of effectively dealing with someone in the water, such as supporting and taking them to shore, either inside or outside the boat.

G. Trimarans can be defined as craft with outriggers, where each float is large enough to fully support the canoe-sailor above the water, when sitting on it.

H. Canoe-sailors undertaking Level 2 who always use small outrigger floats are strongly recommended to develop their capsize recovery skills. Small outrigger floats can be defined as of a size that can be readily submerged by the canoe-sailor during a capsize recovery, but each one must be big enough to support the canoe-sailor when sitting on the gunwale of the canoe, without the canoe swamping.

I. Canoe-sailors who sometimes but not always use small outriggers are strongly encouraged to experience the required skills both with and without outriggers fitted – particularly the rescue-related techniques.

J. 'Taking charge' of a rescue means making decisions and instructing others in what to do, but not necessarily doing all the strenuous lifting.