Paddle

Paddle Explore Award

Award Description

Your Explore Award gives you ownership; allowing you to choose where you move next in the world of paddlesport. Working with a coach you will be able to develop a programme that suits what you need. Learning to make confident choices with this individualised approach. Recognising your ability to independently paddle your chosen craft in a sheltered water environment.

Award Content

1. **Getting Ready**

   Before getting to the water you must choose kit and equipment suitable to the purpose of your chosen activity and have the correct knowledge to use it. Planning ahead can increase your time spent on the water. Key points you may consider are:

   What will I wear?

   What are the clothing options available to me? How might my chosen activity affect which clothing I choose? How might my clothing choices make me more or less vulnerable to external factors? Am I confident in my fitting and the use of my chosen personal safety equipment?

   What will I use?

   What are the different equipment options available and why might I choose one over the other? How do I use my equipment? What adjustments can I make to my craft and equipment to make me more comfortable and effective? What do I do if there is a problem with it?

Have a think about what additional equipment might be useful to have access to on the bank.

What else might I need?

Does the water I am paddling on require a licence and how would I acquire that? How much fluid and calories will I need to consume during my chosen activity?

2. At the Venue

When heading to the water you should have an understanding of your chosen location and how you will access it. Key factors to consider include the type of water, the weather and features of the location you choose.

You can take each of these factors into consideration and ask yourself some questions to ensure the correct decisions are made.

Factor: Type of water

I may need to know: Am I on moving or still water? What are the current water levels? What difference will this make to my session? Where can I go and are there restricted areas? Why might those limits be in place?

Factor: Weather

What I might observe: What is the weather forecast for the time I am on the water? How might the wind speed and direction affect me? Can I use the weather to my advantage during my session?

Factor: Accessing the water

I may need to know: Where are the best access points to the water and what makes them suitable? How I can minimise damage to the bank when getting on? What are the best techniques to lift and carry my chosen craft? Are any aids available to help me get it on and off the water? How can I secure my craft safely to a vehicle or trailer?

3. On the Water

When on the water you should be in control and aware of your surroundings and other users. Key skills to achieve control include you staying relaxed and understanding how to move your craft.

Consideration: Other users

I may need to know: What is the skill level of other members of my group? Who or what else will be on the water? What is the etiquette around fellow water users?

Consideration: The environment

I may need to know: How might our activities have an effect on the environment? What can I do to minimise that effect? How can I minimise disturbance to wildlife?

Skill: Controlling the direction of my craft

I may need to know: Which are the most effective and efficient strokes I can use to move forward and steer my craft? How can I stop my craft and return to my start point? What corrective strokes might I use? What is the most effective and efficient posture when paddling my chosen craft? How will this posture affect its performance?

Consideration: Safety and rescue

I may need to consider: Am I confident in my ability to get myself or others back to shore or into the craft? What potential injuries might occur during my session?

4. After the Session

Every time on the water is an opportunity for learning and improving. You can create a positive impact on your future experiences by performing a good post-activity assessment.

Watching what others do: It might be useful to spend some time watching any others on the water. What skills are they using? Are they doing things differently? Why might that be?

Consider your experience: What have you learnt today? What went well? What could you have done differently? How did your choice of equipment affect the experience? What skills would you like to focus on next time? Are you happy with your chosen activity or would you like to explore other options?

5. Future Development

Each day you spend on the water further expands your skills and knowledge, creating a more enjoyable experience on the water. With no two experiences on the water ever the same, you never stop learning.

Continually evaluating the choices you make creates a natural evolution of decision making ability. When you reach a certain point in this, it may be worth considering if you want to specialise in a craft and environment, developing further skills using British Canoeing Awards.