

Overview of the Canoeing Ireland Sea Kayak Skills Awards Level 1-5.

Welcome to the Canoeing Ireland Sea Kayak Skills Award scheme. The sea kayaking community has designed a scheme that reflects the needs of the modern Irish sea kayaker. Included in each award is a series of specific outcomes that will allow each sea kayaker to take their training at a pace that is sustainable and manageable for them. This also includes how you choose to be assessed with the inclusion of a modularised system of assessment. The Level 1 to 5 naming has been retained with a new “descriptive name” for each level which will help you identify with your progression goals for the future.

Your journey through this exciting scheme will be supported by your “Paddler Profile” Book, in which you will record your progress through the various levels. It will enable you, with the assistance of your Instructors and Assessors to reflect on your progression at all stages. In doing so it is envisioned that you will engage in high quality learning experiences and have an enjoyable journey from the Sea Kayak Level 1 Discovery Award all the way to the Sea Kayak Level 5 Horizon Award.



Sea Kayak Level 1 Discovery Award

Welcome to the sport of sea kayaking. In this award you will discover the fundamentals of the sport across a range of topics such as safe paddling, technical skills and strokes, equipment knowledge, some basic rescues and develop a general feel for the fantastic opportunities ahead for you on your award scheme journey.

‘I can control a kayak safely in L1 conditions. I am ready to join a trip led by a certified leader/instructor. I know the basic safety rules of kayaking. I can demonstrate the fundamental paddle strokes and am aware of kayaking equipment and its purpose. I understand how to leave no trace of my presence on the seashore. I can identify the next step involved in the Canoeing Ireland Sea Kayak Skills Awards.’

Sea Kayak Level 2 Peer Award

Progressing from your Discovery Award it is time to learn the dynamics of team / peer paddling. Once you have completed this award you will be competent enough to plan, prepare and paddle safely in a group on sheltered coastal waters while gaining in confidence.

'I can control a kayak and confidently paddle with peers in Level 2 conditions. I am also capable of joining more experienced kayakers on a trip led by certified leaders or instructors. I can work with others to perform an assisted rescue as a swimmer and as a rescuer. I have a fundamental understanding of weather, tides and have been introduced to basic navigation skills. I know methods for summoning outside rescue assistance. I understand how to reduce my impact on the environment and wildlife while sea kayaking. I can identify the next step involved in the Canoeing Ireland Sea Kayak Skills Awards.'

Sea Kayak Level 3 Explorer Award

The Explorer Award is about continuing your progression. You are now beginning to explore new environments, to undertake your first camping trips and venture into more active conditions where you are experiencing the effects of wind, surf, tide and moving water. This award opens up the possibilities to explore Leadership and/or Instructional qualifications.

'I can join a group of peers on a day-long trip. I can plan a trip incorporating weather, navigation and tidal information. I can assist a suitably qualified sea kayaker in group management and rescues. I have access to the necessary equipment. I have the skills to safely manage my kayak on coastal trips in L3 conditions. I can launch and land in small surf. I can rescue myself unassisted from a capsize in deep water.

I understand the effects of wind, wave, tide and coastal features on the sea kayak. I can summon outside rescue assistance. I understand how to reduce my impact on the environment and wildlife while sea kayaking. I can identify the next step involved in the Canoeing Ireland Sea Kayak Skills Awards.

I am eligible to enter the following:

- *Sea Kayak Club Leader pathway.*
- *Sea Kayak Instructor scheme.*
- *Sea Kayak Level 4 Adventure Award training course.'*



Sea Kayak Level 4 Adventure Award

At this stage you have amassed significant experience. You are competent in advanced open water conditions. You are beginning to undertake longer and more challenging trips / expeditions where your planning and decision making will be critical to the success of your adventure.

'I am an experienced confident paddler, capable of handling my kayak in L4 conditions. I have the necessary equipment. I can assess the sea/weather conditions and plan a trip safely according to the peer group's skills. I am a competent paddler capable of good decision making in L4 conditions. I can confidently kayak roll. I am competent in chartwork and in navigating over open crossings. I am competent in navigating in limited visibility (darkness/fog). I am able to reflect upon my own development as a paddler.

I understand the effects on the sea kayak of wind, wave, tide, and coastal features and can adapt a trip to suit these. I can summon outside rescue assistance. I have an understanding of my own and the group's effect on the environment and wildlife. I can identify the next step involved in the Canoeing Ireland Sea Kayak Skills Awards.'

Sea Kayak Level 5 Horizon Award

PLEASE NOTE: this award is still in development.