

## Working Document

# Student Sport Ireland Adventure Sports Guidance



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Draft 23 January 2024



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While Student Sport Ireland and the National Governing Bodies identified in this document made a reasonable effort to include accurate and up-to-date information, neither SSI nor the NGBs assume responsibility or liability for any errors or omissions in the content of this document.

## Introduction

The following document presents Student Sports Ireland's (SSI) interpretation of NGB documentation as an initial approach to supporting Sports Officers in third-level institutions overseeing safe and quality adventure sports/outdoor recreation<sup>1</sup> experiences in student clubs. This process has emerged from an awareness of the power and value of these adventure sports for our member organisation's students and the risk factors around these sports.

SSI acknowledges the considerable expertise and support available from the National Governing Bodies of these adventure sports that we have engaged with to date<sup>2</sup>. We remain committed to the strong partnership between the National Governing Bodies, the clubs, and our member Sports Officers. We also acknowledge that this document can only give an overview and a snapshot in time. These structures, qualifications guidelines and so on are continually evolving and will, in time, make this document obsolete. Hence, you are advised to also consult with the relevant NGB supporting materials identified in this document, and detailed queries and requests for clarity should be addressed to the appropriate NGB contact.

SSI recognises that the ultimate responsibility for safely delivering adventure sports rests locally. This local responsibility is vested in the third-level institution's Sports Officers and the individual clubs.

The following document provides a framework to support Sports Officers in forming an overview<sup>3</sup> of the appropriate safety oversight structures and supports at this local level. Specifically, this document addresses five related questions:

1. What is Student Sport Ireland's role?
2. What are the fundamental adventure sports issues that Sports Officers need to be aware of
3. How can a Sports Officer support risk management within an adventure sports club?
4. What are the National Governing Body recommendations regarding Third Level adventure sports clubs?
5. What are the practical club member qualification/competence pathways?

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<sup>1</sup> Adventure sports/outdoor recreation includes 'activities that take place in the natural environment, such as walking, canoeing, mountain biking, orienteering and wild swimming.' Ref Embracing Ireland's Outdoors National Outdoor Recreation Strategy 2023-2027.

<sup>2</sup> This is a working document, and it is anticipated that additional adventure sports will be included in this process over time.

<sup>3</sup> Detailed awareness regarding these safety oversights and supports, is best sourced and monitored via the relevant NGB personnel and online materials, see contact details on page 8.

## 1. Student Sport Ireland's Role

SSI recognises that adventure sports contribute to third-level students' personal, interpersonal and academic development. We also appreciate the accumulated knowledge and expertise of the National Governing Bodies (NGB) in stewarding their sport's safe and quality delivery. These NGBs provide extensive support for developing and operating their sport's participants and clubs, including club development advice, qualification frameworks and training courses.

We acknowledge that the local oversight of adventure sports in third-level academic settings can be challenging as adventure sports clubs:

- engage in sports that have a higher level of objective risk compared to most other sports;
- typically have high influxes of new members into these clubs at the start of each academic year and this brings capacity and safety management challenges;
- members are transient; typically, they will have limited experience of the sport or the roles of responsibility for that sport. Hence, the collective knowledge and experience around the safe operation of a club can also be limited and transient;
- despite their best intentions, club members can find it challenging to acquire the relevant instructor or proficiency qualifications within their academic timescale;
- clubs sometimes use challenging sports locations in Ireland and overseas.

To support these adventure sports' safe and quality experience, SSI is committed to facilitating a solid partnership between the National Governing Bodies, the clubs, and our member Sports Officers. As part of our engagement with NGBs on this, we note that due to the nature of their sports and their policies, NGB's requirements around quality and safety can include the following categories:

- **Qualifications:** Third-level club participants in the sport should have an appropriate leadership or proficiency award from the NGB to instruct or lead a group.
- **Third Party:** Third-level club participants in the sport should operate within a third-party NGB-accredited club or an NGB-accredited commercial provider setting. This accredited third party is responsible for the activity's safe quality delivery.
- **Local Solutions:** Some NGBs are considering and may support local leadership, proficiency training, and recognition. For example, bespoke training and acknowledging the leadership competence of individual club members for a specific location or participation level/environment.

These and other categories are expanded and visually presented in the subsequent matrix on page 12.

SSI is thankful for the ongoing engagement and support of the adventure sports NGBs in this process. Given the unique circumstances of the student sports environment, we welcome the creative approaches emerging from NGBs to further integrate the value of these adventure sports activities.

We recognise that sports are continually developing, as are the NGB support materials, which are the core reference documents for the safe quality operation of these sports. Hence, regular cross-checking with these NGB materials (see links on pages 8 and 9 of this document) is strongly recommended.

## 2. The Fundamental Adventure Sports Issues

SSI has consulted with and interpreted the NGB guidance to support our member Sports Officer's oversight of the fundamental issues related to adventure sports' safety and quality. While not addressing every case, the following questions will assist the Sports Officer in understanding the fundamentals around the structures, requirements and best practices of adventure sports. The following assumes that all sports participants are adults (aged 18 or older).

### **What is the strategic structure of adventure sports in Ireland?**

Like most other sports, the stewardship of each adventure sport is via a National Governing Body that is, in turn, accredited in this role by Sports Ireland. A list of these NGBs and their contact details is included on the following page.

### **What level of engagement with the NGB should a third-level education club have?**

The club should ideally be affiliated with the NGB or be in the process of doing so. In any event, the club must engage with, be aware of and follow the NGB's best practice guidelines around safety.

In limited cases, a club may operate outside of an NGB-affiliated position because:

- It is not possible to affiliate as a student sports club, for example, Irish Surfing.
- The club does not have the resources (qualifications, equipment, etc) to become affiliated. This may be because the club is only recently established, has a fluctuating membership or does not meet the requirements of the NGB.

### **How might a non-NGB affiliated club operate?**

A non-NGB club can provide activities exclusively through an accredited third party. This third party must be a suitably qualified individual or organisation (club or commercial) recognised and accredited by the NGB. This third party can provide the activity for the club and take on responsibility for the activities' safe delivery and quality experience.

### **Can an NGB-affiliated club operate independently?**

In most cases, yes, assuming the club has leaders with NGB-approved/certified levels of competence, for example, hillwalking and kayaking. However, some NGBs require that affiliated clubs only operate within an accredited Training Centre setting, for example, sailing.

### **What about the day-to-day safety issues in a club?**

The club should have formally identified the typical hazards, associated risks and the control measures for their activities and venues. This safety statement must be a live document that is updated and available to the Sports Officer (SO).

Venues frequently used by the club should have a separate activity plan and a risk management profile updated at least annually.

New venues or exceptional activities/locations should have a separate activity plan and risk management profile generated and made available to the SO at the earliest point in the planning stage of this activity.

### **Should the club inform the Sports Officer about their activities in advance?**

Yes. It is a good idea that the club, at the start of each academic year, identifies their anticipated activity timetable for that year. This will typically include their regular training locations and events, exceptional events, competitions and anticipated peer-to-peer activities. There should be sufficient detail in this activity timetable to give comfort that appropriate safety guidelines are being adhered to. There should also be a backup plan (cancellation, alternative venue, etc) if the original activity is no longer appropriate.

### **What categories of activities might a club provide?**

Clubs tend to provide activities across three categories:

- Peer to peer activities: The activity is operated on the basis that all of the participants are at a similar level of competent skill, hence, no one person has responsibility for the safety or welfare of the group.
- Led activities: One or more people have a more advanced level of skill than others and these have a role in leading/facilitating an activity that might otherwise be outside of the capability of the rest of the participants. There is no explicit intention to deliver, coach or instruct new skills during the activity.
- Training activities: The activity is being run with the intention of delivering, coaching or instructing new skills/knowledge during the activity.

### **Tell me more about peer-to-peer activity?**

The sharing of knowledge between peers or club members is a healthy culture in clubs, and an ethos of shared responsibility is desirable. Indeed, most non-adventure sports occur at a peer-to-peer level where a group of friends of similar ability play the sport together without needing a coach or an instructor. Due to the higher levels of inherent risk and the dynamic environment of adventure sports, it is important that individuals taking part in adventure sports have sufficient competence to safely do so.

Most adventure sports NGBs have proficiency qualifications for different challenge levels of peer-to-peer activity. Where an individual is taking part in a peer-to-peer activity and they are not at an equivalent level of proficiency, to the other members in the group, and the activity requires this higher level of proficiency, this individual is now being led or instructed. Hence, this is no longer a peer-to-peer group.

### **Can someone lead a group with a proficiency qualification?**

No. Proficiency qualifications are not leadership or instructor qualifications, and they only relate to personal competence. Some proficiency qualifications may form part of a leadership or instructor qualification; however, on their own, they do not attest to leadership competence.

### **Does every activity have to be led by competent individuals?**

Yes. This is because of the higher levels of objective risk and the dynamic environment in these sports. Most NGBs measure or quantify competence based on the formal training and qualifications that an individual has. Some NGBs may accredit competence based on an individual's accumulated experience.

However, where an activity takes place in a setting and at a level like that engaged with by the general public, for example, walking on formal and signposted trails in a Coillte forest<sup>4</sup>, this activity may not require qualified leaders.

### **What if a club members plan an activity that appears to be outside of this guidance?**

The desired outcome is that all activities take place within a safe and quality club setting. However, the Sport Officer having evaluated the intended club activity concludes that this activity does not adhere to NGB or the third-level organisation's requirements, be this as a peer-to-peer group, a led group or as part of a training process, then this is deemed to be a non-club activity. This non-club activity status must be clear in any form of communications or promotion.

These participants, if they take part in this activity outside of the club setting, should still adhere to best practice for these activities, as defined by the relevant NGB.

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<sup>4</sup> Exiting this 'general public' trail onto alongside moorland or hillside will require an NGB defined competent leader.

**What about the weather?**

Unlike other sports where wind, rain, visibility or the cold can be an inconvenience, in adventure sports, the weather can fundamentally undermine the safe provision of an activity. For example, more challenging river levels, increased risk of hypothermia or extreme winds, disturbed sea/lake states and offshore winds. The proposed activity plan must only proceed if the proposed activity has been evaluated with an up-to-date weather forecast by a suitably competent individual within 24 hours of the activity.

**Is prior planning enough?**

Yes and no. The best-laid plans can be upset due to a participant becoming unwell, an unanticipated weather change, difficult underfoot conditions, fallen trees in rivers, etc. The leader of any group must continue to dynamically assess safety throughout the activity. Given that these activities often take place in remote situations, continual anticipating and preventing incidents is more critical than subsequently having to manage them.

**What about the safety of ancillary sports activities?**

Securely loading trailers, driving to activity venues, and the safe manual handling of equipment can also include hazards. The club must identify these relevant ancillary hazards and their control measures in their safety statement.

**What about related social activities?**

While an instructor or leader has a duty of care to those in their group during an activity, this duty does not extend to participant's social lives on the fringes of these sports activities. However, the club must consider any likely associated social activities and take reasonable care to ensure these will be safe.

### NGB Contact Details

SSI recognises the importance, expertise and support available from the various adventure sports NGBs. We also acknowledge that this document can only give an overview. These structures, qualifications guidelines and so on are continually evolving and will make this document obsolete. Hence, you are advised to also consult with the relevant NGB supporting materials identified below, and detailed queries and requests for clarity should be addressed to the appropriate NGB contact.

Sport and National Governing Body	Contact Details	Online Supports
Caving.  Speleological Union of Ireland	Eszter Kalóczkai (they/them) Training Officer Email: <a href="mailto:training@caving.ie">training@caving.ie</a>  Website: <a href="http://www.caving.ie">www.caving.ie</a>	Classifications and Training Awards <a href="https://www.caving.ie/training/">https://www.caving.ie/training/</a>  <a href="https://caving.ie/wp-content/uploads/SUI-Training-Framework-2018.pdf">https://caving.ie/wp-content/uploads/SUI-Training-Framework-2018.pdf</a>  <a href="https://www.caving.ie/training/">https://www.caving.ie/training/</a> <a href="https://british-caving.org.uk/our-work/training/">https://british-caving.org.uk/our-work/training/</a>
Kayaking, Sit on tops, Stand Up Paddle Boarding.  Canoeing Ireland	Steve Fahy, Development Officer Phone Number: 086-0410547 Email: <a href="mailto:development@canoe.ie">development@canoe.ie</a> Website: <a href="http://www.canoeing.ie">www.canoeing.ie</a>	Personal Canoe Skills Awards: <a href="https://www.canoe.ie/paddle-skills-awards/">https://www.canoe.ie/paddle-skills-awards/</a>  Instructor Awards: <a href="https://www.canoe.ie/awards-instructor-coach/">https://www.canoe.ie/awards-instructor-coach/</a>
Mountain biking.  Cycling Ireland	Tom Causer, Coach Education Manager  Phone: 086 7802937 Email: <a href="mailto:tom.causer@cyclingireland.ie">tom.causer@cyclingireland.ie</a>  Website: <a href="https://www.cyclingireland.ie/">https://www.cyclingireland.ie/</a>	Club Management <a href="https://www.cyclingireland.ie/clubs/running-your-club/">https://www.cyclingireland.ie/clubs/running-your-club/</a>  Skills Videos <a href="https://www.cyclingireland.ie/education-courses/resources/coaches/">https://www.cyclingireland.ie/education-courses/resources/coaches/</a>
Orienteering Ireland	Dermot O'Sullivan, Controller of Technical Standards Phone: 087 4158313 email: <a href="mailto:technical@orienteering.ie">technical@orienteering.ie</a>	<a href="https://www.orienteering.ie/resources/event-organisers-page/">https://www.orienteering.ie/resources/event-organisers-page/</a>  <a href="https://www.orienteering.ie/orienteering-education-for-beginners/">https://www.orienteering.ie/orienteering-education-for-beginners/</a>  <a href="https://www.orienteering.ie/video-3/">https://www.orienteering.ie/video-3/</a>  <a href="https://www.orienteering.ie/maprun/">https://www.orienteering.ie/maprun/</a>



Sport and National Governing Body	Contact Details	Online Supports
Sailing, Windsurfing.  Irish Sailing	Dave Garvey Training Development Officer Phone: 087-9584150 Email <a href="mailto:dave@sailing.ie">dave@sailing.ie</a>	<a href="#">Training Centre Recognition Requirements. Irish Sailing &gt; Training &gt; Instructors &gt; Get Qualified Guidelines (sailing.ie)</a> <a href="#">Irish Sailing Safety Resource Pack for Coaching Final June 2018.pdf</a>  <a href="#">Go Windsurfing Instructor handbook 02.07.07.pub (sailing.ie)</a>
Scuba Diving, snorkelling, freediving.  Diving Ireland	National Dive Officer Email: <a href="mailto:info@diving.ie">info@diving.ie</a> Website: <a href="https://diving.ie/">https://diving.ie/</a>	Diving Ireland Training and Standards Manual 2021 (Accessible online at <a href="https://diving.ie/">https://diving.ie/</a> to members only)
Surfing, Irish Surfing	Gavin Mc Crea, Technical Co-ordinator/Development officer Phone Number 087 1234217  Email: <a href="mailto:gavinmccrea@irishsurfing.ie">gavinmccrea@irishsurfing.ie</a> Website: <a href="https://www.irishsurfing.ie/">https://www.irishsurfing.ie/</a>	Training Outline <a href="https://www.irishsurfing.ie/training-and-courses?category=Training%20Courses">https://www.irishsurfing.ie/training-and-courses?category=Training%20Courses</a>

### 3. Supporting Risk Management in an Adventure Sports Club

The following is a suggested structure<sup>5</sup> for an adventure sports club activity preparation and to aid a Sports Officer's oversight and decision-making regarding these activities.

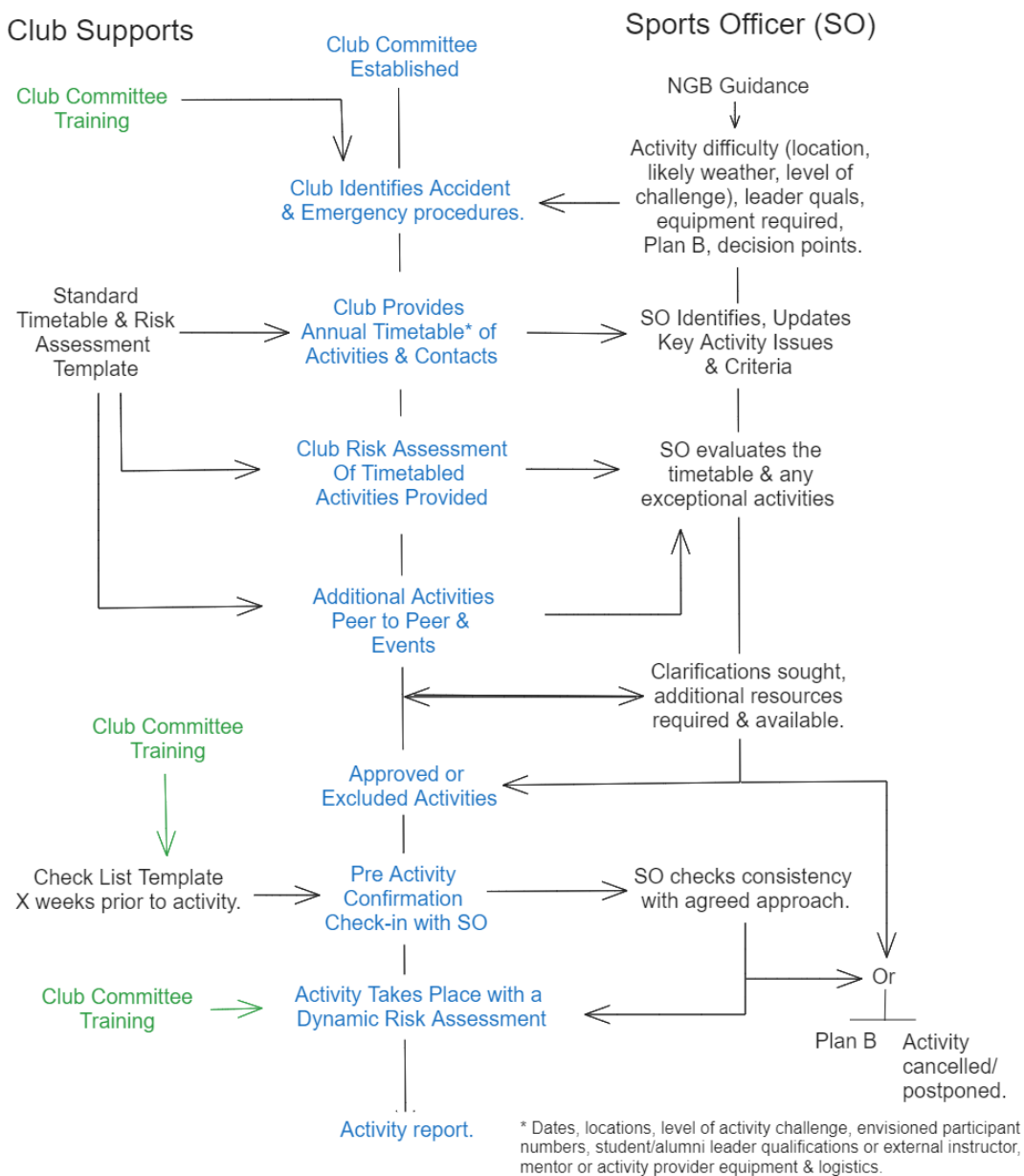


Figure 1: Example of a Club Risk Management Structure.

#### Dynamic Risk Assessment

SSI recognises that the risk assessment of most sports is appropriate at the planning and preparation stages and that in adventure sports, there is a need for an ongoing or dynamic risk assessment. A dynamic risk assessment is a continuous process of identifying hazards, assessing risk, taking action to eliminate or reduce risk, and monitoring and reviewing the rapidly changing circumstances of an operational incident<sup>6</sup>.

<sup>5</sup> Informed by the Queen's University Belfast Higher Risk Sports Clubs Review.

<sup>6</sup> UK Home Office Dynamic Management of Risk at Operational Incidents.

#### 4. National Governing Body Recommendations

The graphic overleaf outlines SSI's understanding of the various NGBs recommended approaches to the operation of adventure sports clubs in third-level education settings as they relate to:

- Instructed or led activities: introducing or developing a group of club participants in a sport.
- Peer-to-peer participation: a group of individuals in a club of similar and competent ability participating in a sports activity as equals.

For example, in canoeing/kayaking, the NGB, Canoeing Ireland, recommends that any canoeing/kayaking-related activities are only delivered by individuals qualified or approved<sup>7</sup> to the appropriate level by Canoeing Ireland for that specific activity. Canoeing Ireland also recognises the valuable role of Canoeing Ireland qualified alum/past students to mentor and directly instruct on a club's programme of activities.

In contrast, Surfing Ireland identifies the central role of its accredited clubs or surf schools as the most appropriate route for college student participation. It does not recommend the route of qualifying the club members as instructors.

Irish Sailing strongly recommends that all sail training activities take place within an Irish Sailing accredited Training Centre environment, and ideally, sailing participation and peer-to-peer activities should also take place within such an accredited Training Centre environment. At a minimum, any led or peer-to-peer activities should take place with the involvement and direction of an Irish Sailing qualified Sailing Instructor.




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<sup>7</sup> Other Country qualifications may be appropriate however this is evaluated on a case-by-case basis by Canoeing Ireland.

Indicative NGB Approach

	Qualified Members / Alumni	Competent Members / Alumni	External Mentor / Instructor	External Provider	Site/Level Specific
Caving	Green	Green	Green	Green	MC
Kayaking Canoeing	Green	Red	Yellow	Yellow	Potentially
Mountain Biking	Green	Red	Green	Green	Potentially
Orienteering	Green	Green	Green	Red	RTG
Sailing	In ATC Only	Red	In ATC Only	Green	Red
Scuba Diving	Green	Red	Green	Red	Red
Surfing	Red	Red	Yellow	Green	Red
Windsurfing	In ATC Only	Red	In ATC Only	Green	Red

Ideal	Acceptable	Not Recommended	
			

ATC: Accredited Training Centre.  
 MC: Mentor clearance from NGB  
 RTG: Ready to Go Award.

Qualified Members or Alumni: Club members or alumni leading an activity who hold an appropriate leadership award.

Competent Members or Alumni: Club members or alumni who lack a specific qualification or award, who have an approved level of training, skills, experience and knowledge and the ability to apply these as a leader.

External Mentor: an individual or other NGB-affiliated club with the appropriate leadership awards.

External Provider: the activity is provided via a formal NGB-approved setting (commercial or club-based).

Site Specific: a specific site can be used by club members who have been trained and who satisfied the NGB that they are capable of leading activities at that site only. Or individuals who have been trained and are capable of leading at a particular challenge level of the activity.

Figure 2: Indicative NGB Approaches.

## **Club Member Qualification/Competence Pathways.**

The following are Student Sport Ireland's interpretations<sup>8</sup> of the most achievable training qualification pathways for members of student sports clubs. These pathways consider the typically limited lifecycle of club members (3 – 4 years), the training and assessment availability, the challenge of attaining these qualifications and the typical time required to become qualified. Hence, these qualification pathways do not include all the available training qualification levels the NGB provides; instead, they represent the most appropriate or achievable elements.

Most leadership qualifications enable the holder to independently lead others in this activity within certain limitations. For example, there typically is a limit in the ratio of participants to the leader, or some NGBs, as illustrated in the document, may require all activities to take place within a formal training centre setting regardless of club members' personal qualifications.

Proficiency awards indicate the level of technical sports ability of the holder, but they do not confer a leadership or instructor status.

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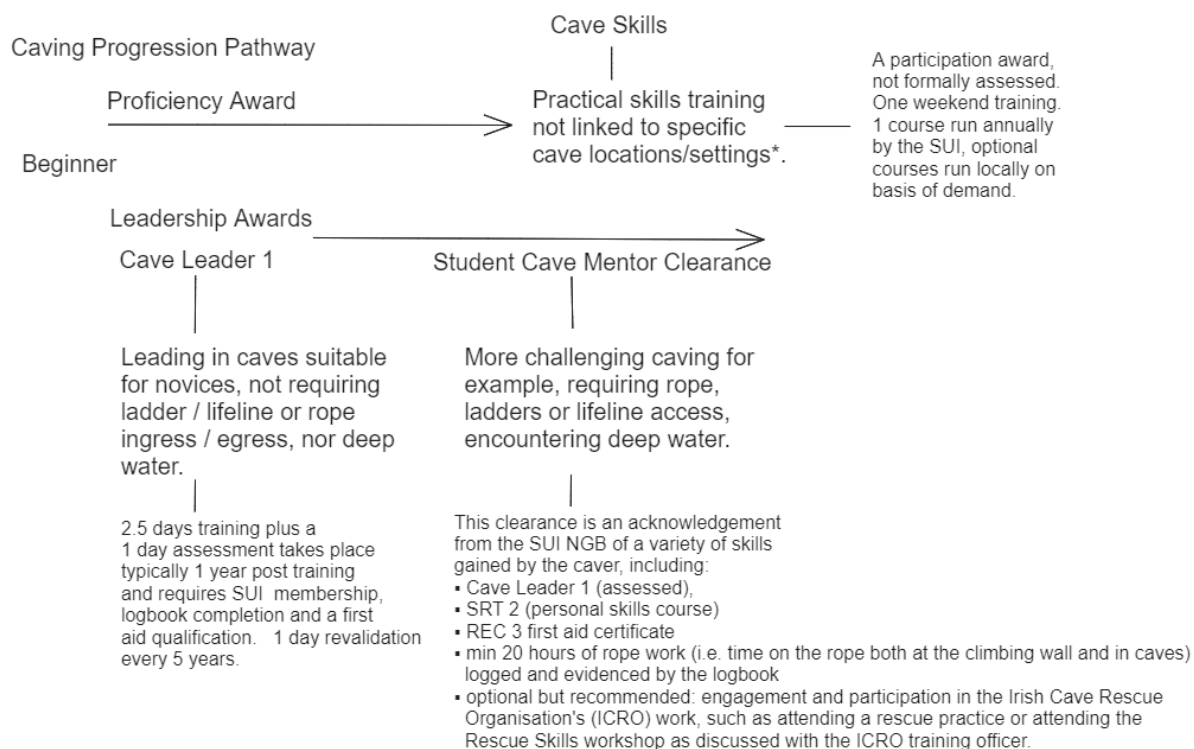
<sup>8</sup> Based on feedback from NGB representatives.

### Caving Competence Progression (The Speleological Union of Ireland)

The Speleological Union of Ireland emphasises personal experience and competency and only requires formal qualifications where the caving activity is being delivered to youth groups or novices, including third-level club settings. The NGB recommends that student clubs refer to the SUI training materials and undertake dynamic risk assessment according to their group, cave weather and other conditions.

The following diagram suggests that given the training requirements and the time required for the consolidation of that training by the participant, the most attainable qualifications for student club members are:

- Peer to peer: Cave Skills
- Leadership Award: Cave Leader 1.



Note that the Speleological Union of Ireland does not require formal qualifications amongst peer-to-peer cave leaders and peer-to-peer caving, such as in a student club setting, can happen in any cave. Where caving involves leading youth groups or novices caving (for example, in an Outdoor Education and Training Center a college club or commercial activity provider setting), a minimum of a Cave Leader 1 qualification is required.

\* This training course can take place in a variety of cave locations/types however it generally targets entry-level caving.

Note that the Student Cave Mentor Clearance award is included for reference purposes below. This clearance may be held by an Alum or an individual who is an external mentor to the club. It may be possible for a very experienced student club member to achieve this clearance.

## Understanding

SSI's understanding of the mapping between typical sports activities and the NGB's award scheme follows.

### Minimum Qualification Requirements for Caving

- The Cave Skills award is advised for peer-to-peer activities.
- Novices taking part in a cave system where ropes, ladders or lifelines are not required, and deep water is not encountered should have either a Cave Skills award if this is a peer-to-peer activity or a Cave Leader award if leading a group maximum 1 leader per 10 participants.
- The club must complete a risk assessment before the caving activity, and accordingly, the number of groups in a section/route within the cave will be determined.
- Where a led group is subdivided into smaller groups that are caving separately within a single cave setting, the NGB is satisfied that minimum standards are being met if there is one person who is qualified as Cave Leader 1 in **any one** of these subdivided groups.
- More challenging caving, for example, requiring rope, ladders or lifeline access, encountering deep water, can take place where:
  - A led group or one receiving training: maximum one leader per 8 participants. Requires the presence of a leader who has the **Student Cave Mentor clearance**:
  - Peer-to-peer caving can happen, where experienced cavers (min Cave Skills training) of similar ability travel together and negotiate deep water vertical sections if the specifics of this caving trip have been previously sanctioned by the Student Cave Mentor.
- The NGB recommends a minimum of 4 individuals per caving group and advises against solo caving.

In the following table, we have included the training requirements for each award. Note that "consolidation" refers to the experience gained between training and assessment.

Activity Type	Led Group Context and Qualifications	Peer-to-Peer Context and Qualifications
Introductory and caving in simple <sup>9</sup> cave environments for novices.	Cave Leader 1	- All participants with Cave Skills training.
Caving in non-simple <sup>10</sup> cave environments or with an intermediate or advanced group.	Student Cave Mentor clearance	-No formal appraisal or guidelines are in place for this.

<sup>9</sup> Not requiring rope, ladders or lifeline access, encountering deep water.

<sup>10</sup> Requiring rope, ladders or lifeline access, or encountering deep water.

## Caving Scenarios

Ref	Caving Activity	Detail	Suggested Third-Level Club Approach
A	The club offers a caving session to all members.	This will likely include many beginners, many of whom will have little experience in a cave.	At least four participants travelling together within a simple cave setting as a group or in subgroups. Each group or subgroup to have a Cave Leader 1 leader. Maximum ratio of one Cave Leader 1 to 10 participants.
B	A group of progressing club beginners wish to advance their caving experience or skills.	A group of more experienced (progressing or intermediate) cavers investing in the sport.	Bespoke more advanced training sessions. A minimum of four participants travelling together within a simple cave setting as a group or in subgroups. Each group or subgroup is to have a Cave Leader 1 leader. Maximum ratio of one Cave Leader 1 to 10 participants.
C	More advanced club cavers wishing to take part in peer-to-peer caving.	All participants have sufficient skills and experience to safely cave in a simple cave setting.	Cave selection and activity are to be appraised by the club's qualified leader, or Student Cave Mentor Clearance holder at the planning stage and immediately before <sup>11</sup> commencement.  All participants are to have Cave Skills training.
D	Experienced club cavers are travelling with a small group of other less experienced cavers.	The less experienced cavers have progressed beyond beginner status but are not sufficiently independent. The experienced cavers can independently participate in a peer-to-peer activity safely and have a de-facto leadership responsibility for the less experienced.	Cave selection and activity are to be appraised by the club's qualified leader, or Student Cave Mentor Clearance holder at the planning stage and immediately before commencement.  Peer-to-peer caving of a minimum of four experienced participants, each with Cave Skills training, can travel together within a simple cave setting as a group.  The beginner component of the group must travel together as a minimum of four participants within a simple cave setting as a group or in subgroups. Each group or subgroup is to have a Cave Leader 1 leader. Maximum ratio of one Cave Leader 1 to 10 participants.

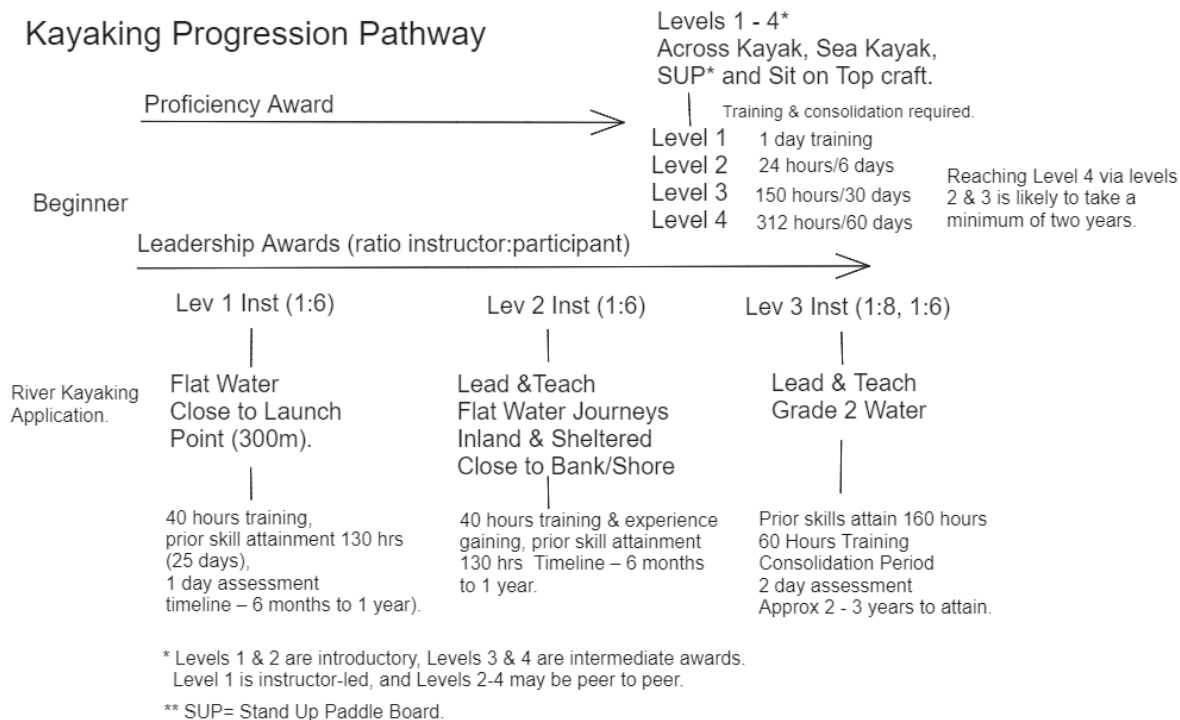
<sup>11</sup> The leader or mentor should be assured that any hazards for example weather/rain conditions, will not undermine the safety of the caving activity.



## Kayaking and Canoeing Competence Progression

The following diagram suggests that given the training requirements and the time required for the consolidation of that training by the participant, the most attainable qualifications for student club members are:

- Peer to peer: Level 3 Proficiency Award.
- Leadership Award: Level 2 (1 Leader to 6 participants).



The following is SSI's understanding of the mapping between the typical led activities of this sport and the NGB's award scheme. See also the accompanying table for peer-to-peer qualifications.

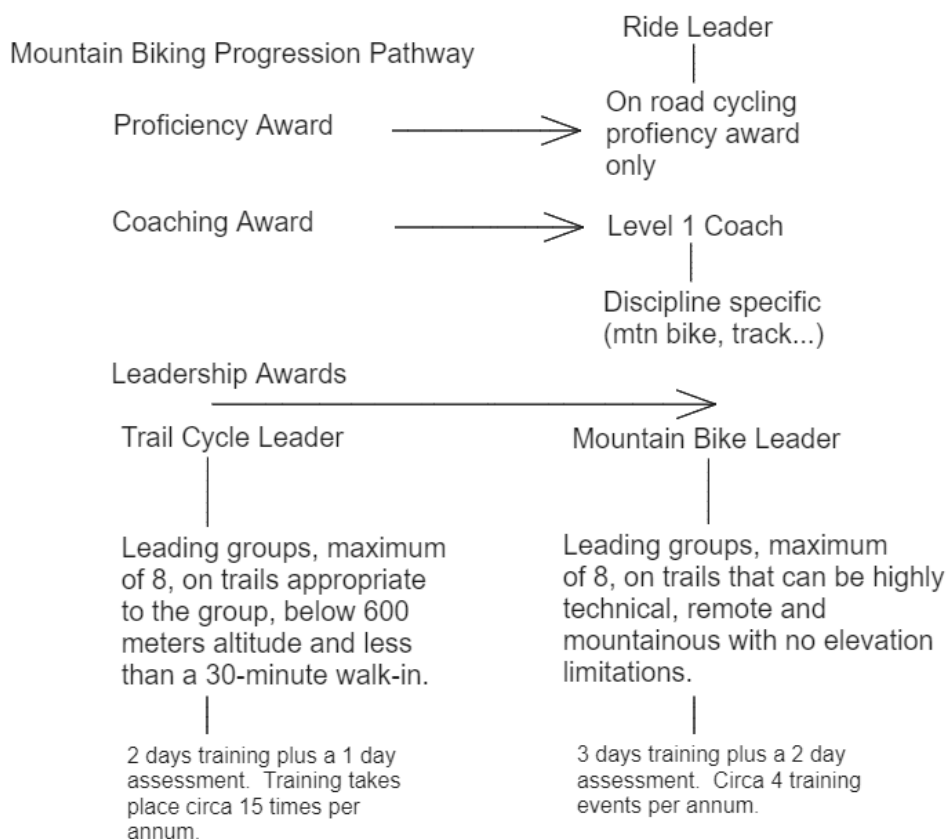
- A group going on a canal or lake, a sheltered coastal area or a very slow-moving river, staying in the same approximate area and exiting from the same entry point, require a Level 1 River Kayak Instructor with a maximum of 6 participants per instructor. If they journey to another location (more than 300 meters), they need a Level 2 instructor with the same ratios. A level 3 Instructor on this type of water can have a ratio of 1:8.
- A group travelling along moving water of grade two at low to moderate river levels, including descending weirs, will require a Level 3 River Kayak Instructor with a ratio of instructor to participants of 1:6 (Grade 2 water).
- A group sea kayaking along the shore in up to force three winds and a moderate sea will require a Level 3 Sea Kayaking instructor with a ratio of 1:6.
- A group travelling along moving water of grade three, including descending weirs at high water flows, will require a Level 4 River Kayak Instructor with a ratio of instructor to participants of 1:4 (Grade 3 water).
- A group travelling along moving water of grade four will require a Level 4 or 5 River Kayak Instructor with a ratio of instructor to participants of 1:4 (Grade 4 water).
- A group sea kayaking in advanced conditions, such as along an exposed coast with few egress points or kayaking offshore to an island, will require a Level 4 Sea Kayak Instructor with a ratio of instructor to participants 1:4.

Activity Type	Location Type	Led Group Qualifications & ratios.	Peer-to-Peer Group Qualifications
Flat water non-journeying session (enter and exit the water from the same location).	Lake, canal, very slow-moving river, sheltered coastal area.	Level 1 Instructor if static	Level 2 Proficiency
Flat water journeying session (enter and exit the water at different locations).	Lake, canal, very slow-moving river (no obstructions), sheltered coastal area.	Level 2 Instructor if journeying.	Level 2 Proficiency
Moving Water Grade 2	Rivers with simple obstructions and water features with a choice of routes. Sea coastal route with moderate wind (F3).	Level 3 Instructor (Kayak, Canoe or Sea Kayak). Ratio 1:8 in Grade 1, 1:6 in Grade 2.	Level 3 Proficiency
Moving Water Grade 3	Fast moving rivers	Level 4 Instructor Kayak, Canoe and Sea Kayak awards. Ratio 1:4 in Grade 3.	Level 4 proficiency to Grade 3 water in canoe or kayak.
Moving Water Grade 4	Advanced white water.	Level 4 - 5 Instructor Kayak, Canoe and Sea Kayak awards. Ratio 1:4 in Grade 4	Level 5 proficiency in grade 4.

### Mountain Biking Competence Progression

The following diagram suggests that given the training requirements and the time required for the consolidation of that training by the participant, the most attainable qualifications for student club members are:

- Peer-to-peer: no relevant awards.
- Leadership Award: Trail Cycle Leader.



Cycling Ireland advises that mountain bike leader in a commercial operation must be qualified, club members are not expected to hold a leadership qualification.

### Understanding

SSI's understanding of the mapping between typical club adventure sports activities and the NGB's award scheme is the following:

- To lead groups on typical formal mountain bike trails, the Trail Cycle Leader is the minimum qualification required. There are no proficiency or peer-to-peer qualifications.

In the following tables, we have included the training requirements for each award. Note that the "consolidation" element of training refers to experience gained between training and assessment.

Activity Type	Led Group Qualifications	Peer-to-Peer Group Qualifications
Mountain biking on a formally defined mountain biking trail. (Graded blue, green, red or black <sup>12</sup> )	Trail Cycle Leader	No certified skills training available / required
Mountain biking on a formally defined mountain biking trail. (Graded blue, green, red or black <sup>13</sup> )	Mountain Bike Leader	No certified skills training available / required

#### Trail Grades

- Green/Easy:
- Blue/Moderate
- Red/Difficult
- Black/Severe
- Orange/Extreme

Ref	Mountain bike Activity	Detail	Approach
A	The club offers a mountain biking session to all members on appropriate trails.	Likely to include many beginners, many of whom will have little experience cycling off-road.	All mountain biking activities are provided according to the abilities of the participants via a Cycling Ireland recognised mountain biking provider or with a Trail Cycle Leader accompanying each group of up to 10 participants.
B	A group of progressing club beginners wish to improve their mountain biking skills.	A small group of more advanced but novice mountain bikers investing in the sport.	Bespoke more advanced training sessions provided according to the abilities of the participants via a Cycling Ireland recognised mountain biking provider or with a Trail Cycle Leader accompanying each group of up to 10 participants.
C	More advanced club members wishing to participate in peer-to-peer mountain biking on trails rated Red or Black.	All participants have sufficient skills and experience to be able to competently manage green and blue trails safely.	(a) Bespoke more advanced training sessions within a Cycling Ireland recognised mountain biking provider environment or with a Mountain Biking Leader. Or (b) Participants were previously 'signed off' by a Trail Cycle Leader as competent to ride green, blue, red or black trails independently.

<sup>12</sup> Note that trail colour/difficulty standards in different countries can be inconsistent Qualified leaders must gauge the abilities of their riders and choose trails/sections/features that are suitable and suitably challenging.

<sup>13</sup> Note that trail colour/difficulty standards in different countries can be inconsistent Qualified leaders must gauge the abilities of their riders and choose trails/sections/features that are suitable and suitably challenging.

Ref	Mountain bike Activity	Detail	Approach
D	Experienced club mountain bikers are travelling with a small group of other low-experienced mountain bikers.	The low-experienced mountain bikers have progressed beyond beginner but are not sufficiently independent. The more advanced members have sufficient skills and experience to be able to competently manage green and blue trails safely.	<p>(a) All low-experienced mountain biking activities are provided via bespoke, more advanced training sessions within a Cycling Ireland recognised mountain biking provider environment or with a Trail Cycle Leader.</p> <p>(b) Experienced mountain bikers take part in bespoke, more advanced training sessions within a Cycling Ireland recognised mountain biking provider environment or with a Mountain Biking Leader.</p> <p>Or</p> <p>(c) Experienced participants were previously 'signed off' by a Trail Cycle Leader as being competent to ride green, blue, red or black trails independently.</p>

## Orienteering Award/Qualification Progression (Orienteering Ireland)

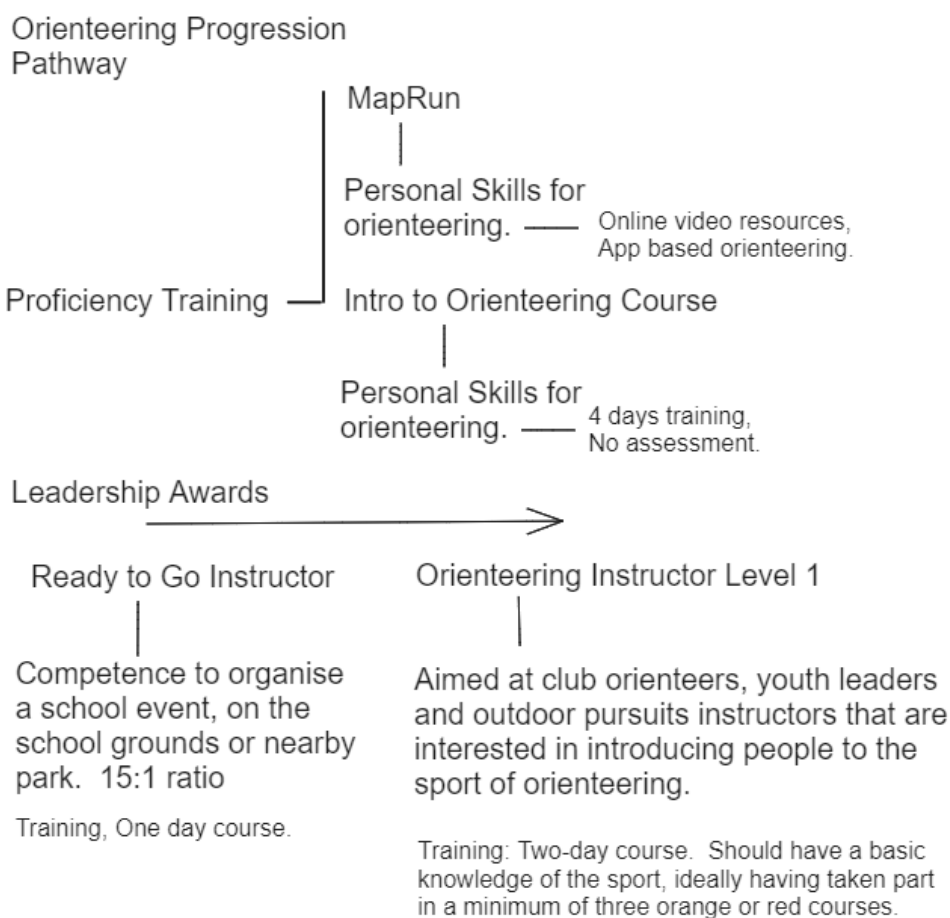
The following diagram illustrates the training requirements and the time required for the consolidation of that training by the participant.

Orienteering Ireland note that orienteers develop in the sport by taking part in events, not by attaining formal qualifications. Clubs generally have a mix of competitive and recreational orienteers. Formal orienteering events/competitions have a mix of longer, technical courses and shorter, less technical ones. Participants can also take part in self-organised orienteering activities at permanent orienteering courses, these are typically in parkland or forestry settings, see [Permanent Orienteering Courses](#) . Also an online digital support for orienteering MapRun can be used locally by participants, see <https://www.orienteering.ie/maprun/> .

Several times a year Orienteering Ireland run a READY TO GO ORIENTEERING programme for teachers, youth leaders and scout leaders, that qualifies them to teach the fundamentals of the sport and to organise orienteering events in their own local settings.

The most attainable qualifications for student club members are:

- Personal proficiency: Intro to Orienteering.
- Peer to peer: MapRun App based courses and online training.
- Leadership Award: Ready to Go instructor training for hosting training and introductory events in college grounds and similar.



## Orienteering Participation

As orienteering is primarily a competition-based sport, the significant majority of participation takes place in orienteering events that are hosted by an orienteering club to a set of Orienteering Ireland standards. These events have different challenge levels for example "short" (best for beginners), "medium" and "long" courses. Events may instead be colour coded e.g., "yellow" (easiest – best for beginners), "orange" (also suitable for beginners), "green", "light green", "blue", "brown" (hardest).

Orienteering Activity Levels	Led Group Minimum Qualifications	Peer to Peer Group Qualifications
Absolute beginner sampling the activity	DIY Orienteering <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can download MapRun and experiment locally.</li> <li>• Visit a permanent orienteering course having downloaded and printed the maps previously.</li> <li>• May also download a virtual course from a previous event and attempt to follow the route. No orienteering controls (markers) are in place however.</li> </ul>	
	Ready to Go Instructor can develop a local simple black and white map for the college grounds and introduce participants.	
Beginners and improvers seeking to develop their proficiency	Can attend Orienteering Ireland club events and take part in the easier courses, see grading above and <a href="#">Event Fixture List</a>	
	Orienteering Instructor Level 1	None

## Sailing Competence Progression

Irish Sailing strongly recommends that all sail training activities, take place within an Irish Sailing accredited Training Centre environment. Ideally sailing participation and peer to peer activities should also take place within such an accredited Training Centre environment. However, Irish Sailing recognise that clubs with appropriate equipment, competence and operating procedures may wish to operate in suitable locations without the oversight of a training centre. As a minimum any led or peer-to-peer activities should be delivered by an Irish Sailing qualified sailing instructor and take place with the oversight supervision of an Irish Sailing Senior Instructor.

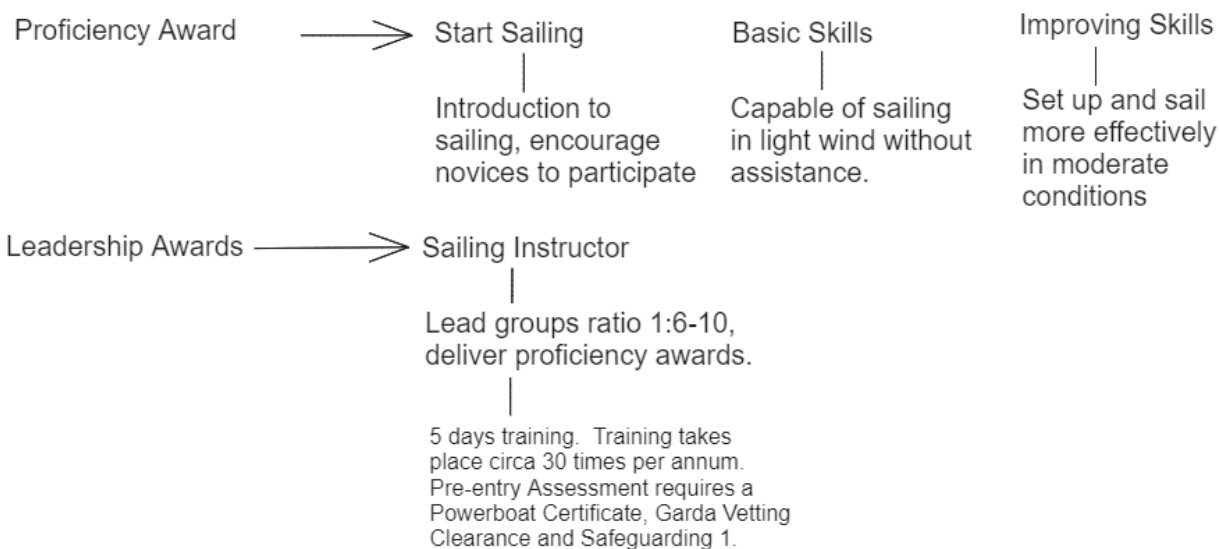
Contact Irish Sailing for additional clarification and to identify if there are individuals or clubs in the area who can provide mentoring support to the student club.

The following awards represent a reasonable progression pathway for an individual.

The most attainable qualifications for student club members are:

- Peer to peer: Improving Skills.
- Leadership Award: Sailing Instructor.

### Sailing Progression Pathway



## Understanding

SSI's understanding of the mapping between typical club adventure sports activities and Irish Sailing's award scheme is that sailing participants should be encouraged to attain proficiency awards and instructor awards where appropriate.

Irish Sailing advise that the information provided in this sailing section, may vary with respect to sail racing / competition areas such as the Intervarsity's or Team racing, Further clarification on this will be provided by Irish Sailing in due course.



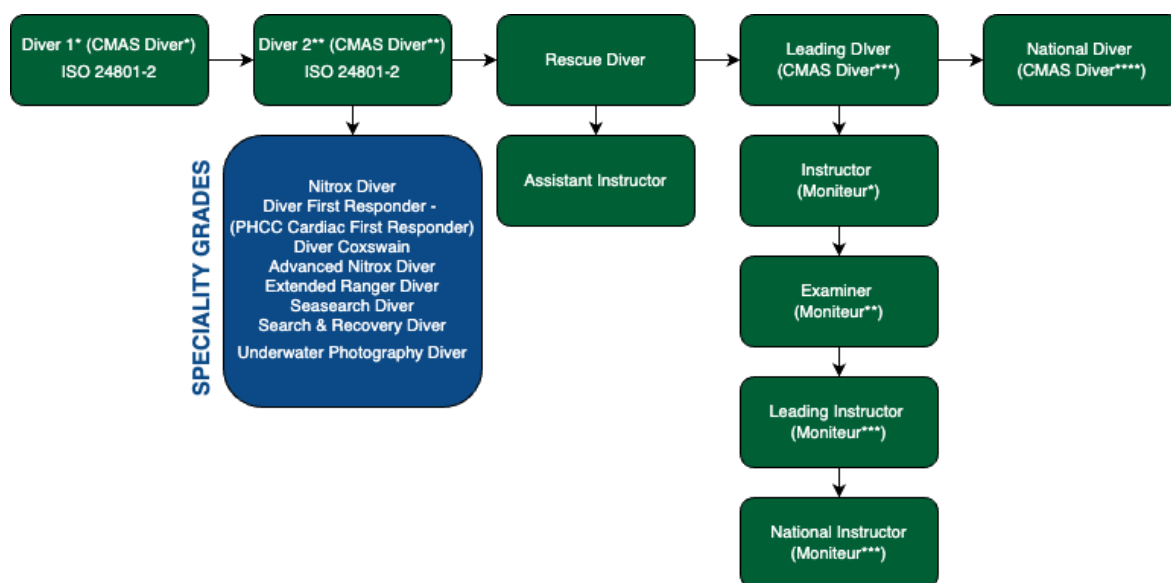
Ref	Mountain bike Activity	Detail	Approach
A	The club offers an introductory sailing session to all members at an appropriate location/weather.	Likely to include many beginners, most of whom will have little experience of sailing.	All sailing activities are provided within an appropriately sheltered environment with supporting resources, with an Irish Sailing qualified sailing instructor accompanying each group of up to 6 participants and under the supervision of an Irish Sailing Senior Instructor.
B	A group of progressing club beginners wish to improve their sailing skills.	A small group of more experienced but novice sailors investing in the sport.	All sail training activities (Start Sailing, Basic Skills, Improving Skills), are provided exclusively within an accredited Training Centre environment.
C	More advanced club members wishing to participate in peer-to-peer moderate sailing.	All participants have sufficient skills and experience to be able to set up and sail in moderate weather conditions.	<p>All sailing participants that have <b>successfully completed their Improving Skills</b> proficiency qualification or higher, sail autonomously with appropriate supports and rescue craft.</p> <p>All sailing participants that have <b>not completed an Improving Skills proficiency</b> qualification, sail under the supervision of an accredited sailing instructor with appropriate supports and rescue craft.</p>
D	The club sailors are travelling to a sailing race.	The race must be an approved Irish Sailing event.	The student sailors will adhere to their club's operating procedures and the event's operating criteria.

### Scuba Diving Competence Progression

The NGB for scuba diving, Diving Ireland note that as scuba diving is an adventure sport with an elevated level of risk, there is a high level of training and risk assessment required by individuals in this sport. Diving Ireland provides the framework for training for individuals who wish to progress and has a high level of safety awareness with all its activities. Training is conducted at club, regional and National level depending on the training course and/or assessment. All information regarding these can be found in Diving Ireland's Training and Standards manual, Diving Ireland's documentation and training courses. The following provides some general guidance and a roadmap for those seeking information about the sport.

**NOTE: This document cannot be taken as an interpretation of Diving Ireland standards and at all times the internal and most current documentation of Diving Ireland takes precedence to any information contained within this document with respect to this sport.**

#### Diving Ireland Progression Diagram:



Diving Ireland recommends the following:

- **Alumni / External Membership:** Diving Ireland strongly recommended that third-level scuba diving clubs are not operated as a Student-Only club with respect to SCUBA due to the timeframe it takes to progress to leadership levels in diving. It is unlikely that most students would meet the appropriate level of competence to be Diving Officer or Training Officer of a club (which should be committee positions) within their career at least as an undergraduate student.

Diving Ireland strongly recommend, for a club to be sustainable, alumni and external members should be part of the club membership to support training and development and the safety of the activity. While there are opportunities for external clubs to support activities within third-level clubs, this is at the discretion and good-will of external volunteer members and clubs should build sustainability by accumulating a bank of knowledge, experience, skills, competence and accountability within the club.

- **Engage with the Club:** Sports officers should engage directly with the Diving Officer of the club who holds responsibility for diving activities. This Diving Officer, will present to the Sports Officer how they plan a dive. In most cases, the Diving Officer will provide a very comprehensive presentation of how they plan a dive trip or training event. It is generally recommended that the Diving Officer is a leading diver if possible. The dive officer should be knowledgeable in the sport and provide reassurance through presentation of the plan to the Sports Officer in the first instance.

- **Escalate for Support:** Where it is understood by the Sports Officer that the club has not provided sufficient reassurance, the Sports Officer can ask the dive club to engage with the Regional Diving Officer (RDO)<sup>14</sup> who may be able to support a conversation if necessary (who may delegate that responsibility to another suitably qualified instructor in the region). It should be noted that **ALL** instructor roles in Diving Ireland are voluntary and the availability of such instructors (including RDOs etc.) are dependent on their personal availability.

There are three factors for planning diving activities and developing SCUBA skills and experience:

### People

Are the right people in place?

- Diving Ireland currently recommend that Diving Officers of Clubs are of Leading Diver Grade or above. All recommendations in current form are in Training and Standards.
- Each course has a minimum level of instructor and/or course director dependent on the course (details in Training and Standards).
- Diving Ireland Training and Standards details who can dive with who and what depths divers can go to, those restrictions should be adhered to by the club.
- Do participating members meet the Diving Ireland' active diver' criteria as defined in Training & Standards?

### Plant/Equipment

- Does the club have the correct equipment for the activity (which may vary depending on the type of activity being undertaken)?
- Is that equipment in good working order and serviced as per manufacturers recommendations and any additional requirements in Diving Ireland Training and Standards?
- Is all emergency equipment available<sup>15</sup>?
  - Large equipment such as boats or compressors regularly towed by vehicles are an essential part of the activity and provide adequate safety cover for those undertaking the activity. They also provide opportunities for increasing competence levels and skill sets in the sport. The club should have available adequate towing equipment and properly licensed drivers to ensure this equipment is transported safely to and from the activity location.

### Process/Procedures

- Are the club following processes and procedures? Diving Ireland documentation provides the processes and procedures to be followed for organising SCUBA related activities. This documentation includes the Diving Ireland Training and Standards Manual and other documentation.
- A thorough pre-dive briefing and post dive debriefing is an integral element of Diving Ireland safe diving practice.
- **Escalate for Support:** Where it is understood by the Sports Officer that the club has not provided sufficient reassurance, the Sports Officer can ask the dive club to engage with the Regional Diving

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<sup>14</sup> Regional Diving Officers are currently of a minimum Moniteur 1\* instructor and they have direct access to the National Diving Officer (who is currently of a minimum Moniteur 3\* instructor). Hence, for technical issues the contact sequence should always be: Diving Officer then Regional Diving Officer then National Diving Officer. For governance issues contact the other members of the Diving Ireland Executive. The responsibility for all club diving related activities lies with the Diving Officer of the club. Communication with RDOs should be through the Dive Officer in the first instance.

<sup>15</sup> Medical Oxygen is an important first aid tool in the treatment of divers which is different to a standard First-Aid Kit

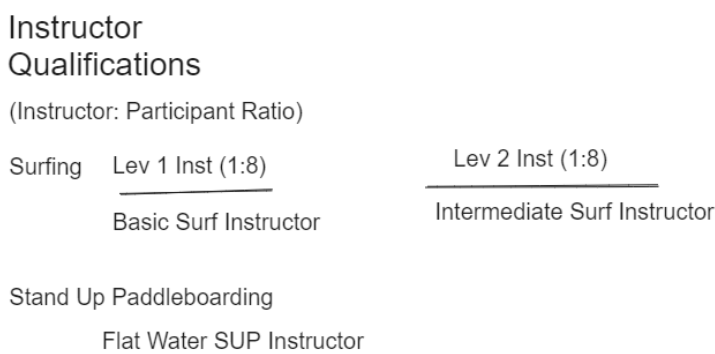
Officer<sup>16</sup> who may be able to support a conversation if necessary (who may delegate that responsibility to another suitably qualified instructor in the region). It should be noted that **ALL** instructor roles in Diving Ireland are voluntary and the availability of such instructors (including RDOs etc.) are dependent on their personal availability.

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<sup>16</sup> Regional Diving Officers are currently of a minimum Moniteur 1\* instructor and they have direct access to the National Diving Officer (who is currently of a minimum Moniteur 3\* instructor). Hence, for technical issues the contact sequence should always be: Diving Officer then Regional Diving Officer then National Diving Officer. For governance issues contact the other members of the Diving Ireland Executive. The responsibility for all club diving related activities lies with the Diving Officer of the club. Communication with RDOs should be through the Dive Officer in the first instance.

## Surfing Competence Progression

The following diagram indicates the Irish Surfing Association (ISA) award scheme; however, the ISA recommends that third-level participants in surfing take part in the activity within an accredited school or club. Third-level students are not advised to undertake the award scheme. Note that there are no peer-to-peer or proficiency training awards within Surfing Ireland.



## Understanding

The following is SSI's understanding of the mapping between the typical activities of this sport and the NGB's award scheme.

Ref	Surf Activity	Detail	Approach
A	The club offers a surf session to all members.	This will likely include many beginners who will have little experience in the sea.	(A1) All surfing activities are provided exclusively within a pre-booked affiliated surf school programme.
B	Progressing club beginners wish to improve their surfing skills.	A small group of more advanced but still novice surfers who are investing in the sport.	(B1) Bespoke more advanced training sessions within an affiliated surf school programme.
C	More advanced club surfers from the club wish to take part in peer-to-peer surfing.	All participants have sufficient skills and experience to surf in moderate conditions safely.	(C1) All surfing activities are provided exclusively within a pre-booked affiliated surf school programme. Or (C2) Appropriately competent Club Mentor (Alumni surfer or a professional surf instructor) surfs with the group and supervises their surfing activities.
D	Experienced club surfer/s travelling with a small group of other less experienced surfers.	The less experienced surfers have progressed beyond beginner but are not sufficiently independent. The experienced surfers who can independently take part in the activity safely have a de-facto leadership responsibility for the less experienced.	(D1) All surfing activities are provided exclusively within a pre-booked affiliated surf school. Or (D2) Experienced surfers surf separately as a <b>non-club activity</b> from the less experienced surfers. The less experienced surf under the care of an affiliated surf school. Or (D3) Experienced surfers are encouraged to complete a Lev 1 or 2 award and instruct and supervise the less experienced to the requirements of this award (including ratios).

Irish Surfing recommends the approach outlined in A1, B1, C1 and D1. D2. Irish Surfing is considering but is not currently recommending C2 and D3, where these activities take part outside of an affiliated surf school setting.

## Windsurfing Competence Progression

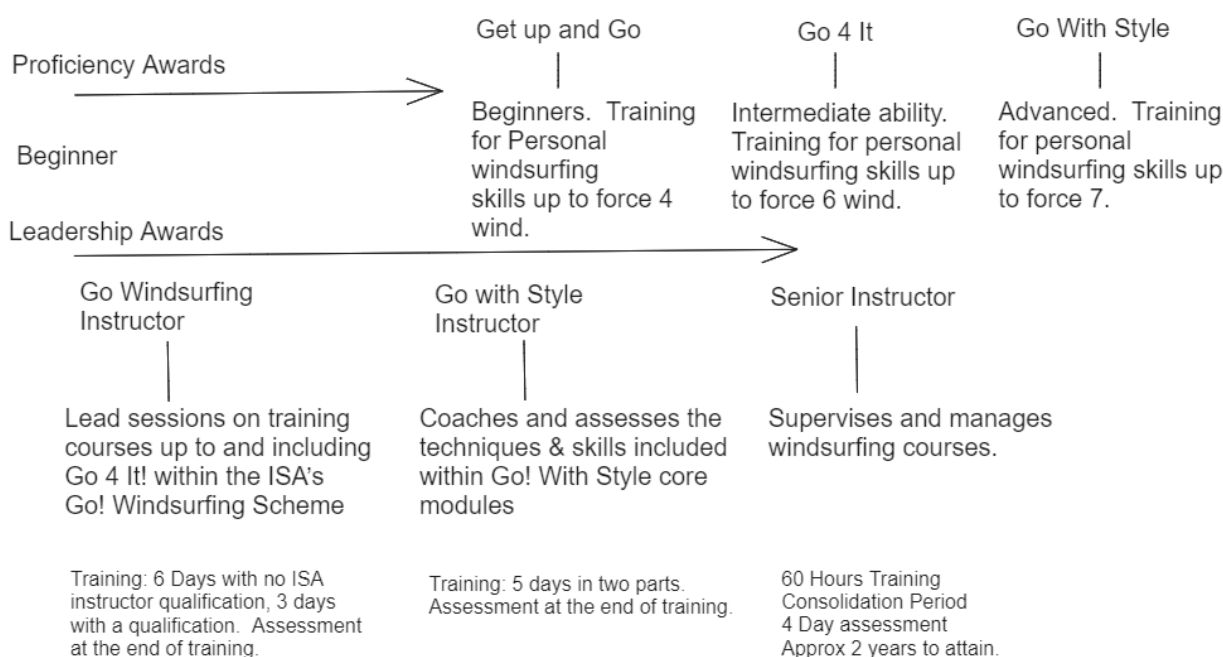
The strong recommendation of Irish Sailing is that all windsurfing activities, including peer-to-peer, should take place within an Irish Sailing accredited Training Centre environment. However, Irish Sailing recognise that clubs with appropriate equipment, competence and operating procedures may wish to operate in suitable locations without the oversight of a training centre. As a minimum any led or peer-to-peer windsurfing activities should be delivered by an Irish Sailing qualified windsurfing instructor and take place with the oversight supervision of an Irish Sailing Senior (windsurfing) Instructor.

The following awards represent a reasonable progression pathway for an individual, however, they do not increase the autonomy of a third-level club's windsurfing activities.

The most attainable qualifications for student club members are:

- Peer to peer: Get up and go, Go 4 It.
- Leadership Award: Go Windsurfing Instructor.

### Windsurfing Progression Pathway



## Understanding

SSI's understanding of the mapping between typical club adventure sports activities and Irish Sailing's windsurfing award scheme is that windsurfing participants should be encouraged to attain proficiency awards and instructor awards where appropriate.

Irish Sailing advise that the information provided in this windsurfing section, may vary with respect to windsurfing racing / competition areas such as the Intervarsity's or Team racing, Further clarification on this will be provided by Irish Sailing in due course.