

# Canoeing Grades and Training

SSWA Info 010 (Nov 04)

The Irish Canoe Union (ICU) developed a very comprehensive training scheme for all aspects of canoeing a few years ago, which suited Scouting very well. The original Scout canoeing programme drawn up by the Four Association Scout and Guide Canoe Committee was abandoned. In March 2006 the ICU revised the scheme again, and this amended version of Information Document 010 takes account of this. The parallel sections for kayaks, open ("Canadian") canoes and sea canoeing remain. In general each type of canoeing has 5 Skills Awards and 5 Levels of Coach Qualifications (all Instructor levels are now called Coaches).

Most Scout Canoeing is conducted in Kayaks on rivers. There is very little sea canoeing except in sheltered coastal areas and harbours. Open canoes are quite rare in Scouting at present. In 2004, except for the Restricted Canoe Leader Certificate, the former Scout Canoe Leader levels were abolished, Existing Basic Canoe Leader or Canoe Leader certificates still remain valid, but holders are advised to convert to the equivalent ICU qualification.

The Restricted Canoe Leader (RCL) is still a Scouting Ireland certificate and is equivalent to the ICU Level 1 Coach. This means that we can still provide basic training to Scouts in flat water, which probably covers the majority of ordinary Scout Canoeing. But the holder of the SI RCL Certificate or ICU Level 1 Coach cannot "lead" a canoeing expedition.

ICU Level 2 Coach is competent to lead on flat water.

Scout Leaders are advised to progress from the Scout RCL to ICU Level 2 Coach. The problem is that training is time-consuming and expensive. Courses for this certificate are run regularly.

The information in this document is taken from the recent "Safety Through Training" pamphlet published by ICU, Sport HQ, Park West Dublin 12.

Full details can be found at [www.irishcanoeunion.com/proficiency](http://www.irishcanoeunion.com/proficiency)

## Kayaking

ICU Skills Awards & Coach Qualifications –

### Level 1 Kayaking Skills

- Perform fundamental Kayaking Skills.
- Understand the fundamental safety rules of canoeing.

### Level 2 Kayaking Skills

- Kayak safely and competently on flat water and Grade I, in a group.

### Level 3 Kayaking Skills

- Kayak safely and competently on rivers up to and including Grade 2+ as a member of a group being led.

### Level 4 Kayaking Skills

- Skills and techniques to undertake trips competently on white water in winter months.

### Level 5 Kayaking Skills

- Highly developed advanced white water skills and can undertake rescues in extreme conditions.

### Level 1 Kayaking Coach

- Qualified to instruct on flat water - specifically not qualified to journey

### Level 2 Kayaking Coach

- Competent to instruct and journey on flat water.

### Level 3 Kayaking Coach

- Qualified to instruct and lead on grade 2 rivers

### Level 4 Kayaking Coach

- Qualified to instruct and lead on advanced white water.

### Level 5 Kayaking Coach

- Considerable river kayaking experience
- Actively involved in programme design, and training and assessing of all levels of coach qualifications.

## Sea Kayaking

ICU Skills Awards & Coach Qualifications

### Level 1 Sea Kayaking Skills (as for Level 1 Kayaking Skills)

- Perform fundamental Kayaking Skills.
- Understand the fundamental safety rules of canoeing.

### Level 2 Sea Kayaking Skills (similar to Level 2 Kayaking Skills)

- Skills required in very sheltered sea areas in a supervised group.

Amended (Apr06, Nov07, Apr08)



### Level 3 Sea Kayaking Skills

Skills required to journey in accessible coastal areas in light/moderate conditions in a supervised group.

### Level 4 Sea Kayaking Skills

Skills and techniques to take part in sea journeys accompanied by more experienced sea kayakers

### Level 5 Kayaking Skills

For those who journey into open sea, includes route planning, rescue and leading skills for advanced sea and weather conditions..

### Level 1 Sea Kayaking Coach

Qualified to instruct on flat water – confined to instructing within harbours. Specifically not qualified to journey

### Level 2 Sea Kayaking Coach

Qualified to lead Groups in non-tidal areas and sheltered coastlines. Cannot lead groups in winds above Force 3.

### Level 3 Sea Kayaking Coach

Qualified to instruct and lead groups close to accessible coastlines that do not involve tidal races or overfalls.

### Level 4 Sea Kayaking Coach

Qualified to instruct and lead groups on open sea crossings and areas where there are tidal races or overfalls.

### Level 5 Sea Kayaking Coach

In depth experience of sea kayaking, and are actively involved in its development

## Open Canoeing

ICU Skills Awards & Coach Qualifications

### Level 1 Canoeing Skills

elementary canoeing skills and techniques

### Level 2 Canoeing Skills

Skills and techniques required to handle a canoe on flat water.

### Level 3 Canoeing Skills

Skills and techniques required to handle a canoe on grade 2 water.

### Level 4 Canoeing Skills

Skills, techniques and competency to required to journey with others of similar ability on grade 2+ rivers.

### Level 5 Canoeing Skills

Competent to canoe in difficult water conditions.

### Level 1 Canoeing Coach

Qualified to instruct canoeing under very controlled conditions

### Level 2 Canoeing Coach

Competent to instruct and lead groups safely on slow moving water or designated lake areas.

### Level 3 Canoeing Coach

Qualified to instruct and lead on moving water of Grade 2 and lakes

### Level 4 Canoeing Coach

Qualified to instruct and lead on advanced white water journeys and inland waterways, and have an important role in developing open canoeing.

### Level 5 Canoeing Coach

In depth experience of open canoeing and are actively involved in its development

## River Safety & Rescue 1 (RSR 1)

### Introduction

The RSR is a 1 day course designed for canoeists of all levels who wish to undertake relevant training in Safety and Rescue Techniques appropriate for water of Grade 2. This is an ideal stepping stone for those canoeists who are interested in taking more in -depth advanced rescue and safety training.

## General aims of the RSR1

The RSR1 aims to enable candidates to

- 1.01 Develop an understanding of rescue / safety protocols
- 1.02 To apply the appropriate method and equipment for particular situations
- 1.03 Execute self rescue
- 1.04 Rescue of others in Grade 2 water
- 1.05 Rescue of equipment in Grade 2 water

## Course Outline

This is designed to be a flexible course depending on trainee's needs and previous experience levels-notwithstanding this the core elements of the syllabus must include:

- 2.01 Personal Equipment
- 2.02 Prioritising Rescue
- 2.03 Systematic approach to a rescue
- 2.04 Self Rescue
- 2.05 Throw-rope rescue techniques
- 2.06 Basic Hydrology /Dynamics of river features
- 2.07 Shallow Water Crossings
- 2.08 Defensive/Offensive swimming
- 2.09 Communication
- 2.10 Leadership roles and decision-making on a riverbank
- 2.11 Stabilisation lines

## 3.00 Requirements to attend a Course

This Course is open to any canoeist who wishes to improve river safety skills

## Recommended Equipment List

- 4.01 River Rescue Buoyancy Aid with integrated harness
- 4.02 Throw Bag
- 4.03 Knife

- 4.04 Length of Webbing / Open Sling 4-5 metres long
- 4.05 Closed Sling
- 4.06 Screw Gate Karabiner x 2
- 4.07 Adequate Footwear
- 4.08 Wetsuit or Drysuit
- 4.09 Thermals
- 4.10 Helmet
- 4.11 Whistle

## Guidelines

- The RSR 1 course should be delivered and run on water of grade 2 difficulty at a static site
- The Course Provider must be a Level 3 Kayak Instructor on the RSR I Course Trainer Panel
- The student /trainer ratio is a maximum of 6:1

## River Safety & Rescue 2 (RSR 2) Introduction

The RSR 2 is a two -day course designed for intermediate and advance level canoeists who wish to undertake relevant training in River Safety and Rescue techniques appropriate to water of Grade 3 and above difficulty. This is a follow on from RSR 1 introducing more advanced rescue and safety training and techniques.

## 1.00 General aims of the RSR 2

The RSR 2 aims are to enable candidates to

- 1.01 To further enhance the understanding of rescue / safety protocols
- 1.02 To apply the correct method and equipment for a given situation
- 1.03 Execute self-rescue
- 1.04 The rescues of others in grade 3 / 3+ water
- 1.05 The recovery of equipment from grade 3 / 3+ water

## 2.00 Course Outline

This is designed to be a flexible course to allow for students needs and previous experience- notwithstanding this the core element of the syllabus must include:

- 2.01 Personal Equipment
- 2.02 Prioritising Rescue
- 2.03 Systematic approach to Rescue
- 2.04 Extraction of Foot / Body Entrapments, Broaching / Pinning
- 2.05 Self Rescue
- 2.06 Throw Rope Rescue Techniques
- 2.07 Advance Hydrology / Dynamics of River Features
- 2.08 Advance Anchor Points and Belaying
- 2.09 Shallow Water Crossing Methods
- 2.10 Defensive, Aggressive and Combat Swimming
- 2.11 The Use and Applications of Vector Pull, Tensioned Diagonal, V-Lower, Z Drag
- 2.12 Communication
- 2.13 Leadership roles and decision making on a riverbank.

### **3.00 Applying to attend a course**

This course is open to all who have completed RSR1 and wish to build on their river safety skills.

### **4.00 Recommended Equipment List**

- 4.01 Buoyancy Aid with integrated harness
- 4.02 Throw Bag
- 4.03 Knife
- 4.04 Length of Webbing / Open Sling 4 /5 metres in length
- 4.05 Closed Sling
- 4.06 Screw Gate Karabiner x 2
- 4.07 Prussic Loop x 2
- 4.08 Adequate Footwear

4.09 Wet suit / Dry suit

4.10 Thermals

4.11 Helmet

4.12 Whistle

### **Guidelines**

- The RSR 2 training course should be delivered and run on water of Grade 3 / 3+ difficulty at a static site.

RSR 2 course can only be delivered by a currently registered Level 4 Instructor who is a member of the RSR 2 Course Trainer Panel.

- The course student / trainer ratio is a maximum of 4:1

### **GRADING OF RIVERS**

River Grading is not an exact system: rivers do not always fit easily into one category. Regional or individual interpretations may cause misunderstandings. It is important to know that graded difficulty is not the only factor that affects grading, and grading should not be the only factor you rely on when deciding whether a river or a rapid is for you.

### **Water conditions in Ireland are graded as follows:**

**Grade I Flat Water** – This is either flat, open water with minimal current, or water with a slight current. There are no obstructions.

**Grade II Moderately Difficulty** – Rivers that have a choice of clearly evident routes. Occasional manoeuvring may be required, but rocks and medium-sized waves are easily missed by moderately trained paddlers

**Grade III - Difficult** – Route is easily recognisable from the water. There are moderate, irregular waves which may be difficult to avoid. Complex manoeuvres required in fast currents. Good boat control required. Stoppers and small eddies exist. Obstructions can be numerous.

**Grade IV – Very difficult** – Route is not always clear, inspection advisable. Rapids are continuous and breakouts few and small. Continual manoeuvring with precise control. Sharp decision-making required.

**Grade V – Extremely Difficult** – Inspection often essential and protection from the river bank possibly required. Serious dangers exist. Very complex continuous technical difficulties..

**Grade VI** – Almost never attempted and often exemplifying the extremes of difficulty, unpredictability and danger. The consequences of errors are very severe and rescue may be impossible. For teams of experts only, at favourable water levels, after close inspection and taking all precautions.

### **ICU/SI Equivalent**

ICU Skills Level	SI Equivalent
Level 1 Kayak	No equivalent
Level 2 Kayak	Canoeing Attainment Badge Basic Canoeist Merit Badge
Level 3 Kayak	Canoeist Badge
Level 4 Kayak	No equivalent
Level 5 Kayak	No equivalent
ICU Coach Level	
Level 1 Kayak Coach	Restricted Canoe Leader
Level 2 Kayak Coach	No equivalent
Level 3 Kayak Coach	No equivalent