NATIONAL
On-Water Standards
PROGRAM

NOWS Self-Assessment Checklist

Human-propelled craft Skills Instruction ANSs

Instruction for Safer Boating

- EDU-4 On-water Instruction Standard
- EDU-2 Skill-based Human-propelled Standard

For technical support associated with EDU-4 and EDU-2, visit www.usnows.org to download copies of their accompaniging Technical Support Documents.

Publication Date - January 2018

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Produced under a grant from the Sport Fish Restoration and Boating Trust Fund, administered by the U.S. Coast Guard.

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NOWS Self-Assessment Checklist – Human-propelled *Instruction for Safer Boating*

Version 1.0: January 2018

Use this Checklist to self-assess and improve the extent to which your instructional approach follows the American National Standards (ANSs) for on-water skills-based instruction in recreational human-propelled craft operation. The standards in this Checklist have been specifically designed for entry-level, on-water instruction, in which instruction is *delivered primarily on boats upon the water* and *focused on skills development*.

Section 1—Assess your overall instructional approach against the Instructional Approach Standard (*EDU-4: On-Water Instruction Standard*).

Section 2—Assess your curriculum content against the Human-propelled Skills ANS *(EDU-2 Skill-based Human-propelled Standard)*.

Instructions

After filling out the information about the instructional approach under review:

1. **Read** the elements in the Checklist one at a time.
2. **Review** the instructional approach and answer the question: "*Is it designed and delivered to do what is described in the element?"*
3. **Record** the results of your assessment in following manner:
   a. If the answer is YES, place a checkmark in the **Orange box** in the "Included?" column (to the left of the element description).
      - If you want track your answer, record where you found the answer and any potential actions you might take as a result of the assessment in the columns provided. *See the next to last page of this Checklist for examples of potential answer types and locations?*

   b. If the answer is NO, leave the **Orange box** blank.
      - Identify any potential actions you might take in response to the NO in the column provided.

EXAMPLE

Included?	Element description	Where to find the answer	Potential action
IAS 1	*The instructional approach* **includes curriculums and course designs that encourage optimal learning** by:		
✓	a) Using current National On-Water Standards (NOWS) **Note: Use section 2 to assess the curriculum content against the NOWS *Human-propelled Skills ANS.***	*Course overview document and student handouts on file*	
✓	b) Using experiential education as the primary method of delivery	*Videos of instruction from course review last year.*	
	c) Combining and/or sequencing skills effectively	*Instruction design document on file for the course*	*Include hard copy of document in file*

Instructional Program under Review
Title:
Description:

Section 1: Instructional Approach

Use this section to assess the extent to which the overall instructional approach follows the Instructional Approach Standard (*EDU-4: On-Water Instruction Standard).* For more information about the Instructional Approach Standard, download a free copy of its accompanying Technical Support Document at www.usnows.org.

Included?	Element description	Where to find the answer	Potential action
IAS 1	*The instructional approach* **includes curriculums and course designs that encourage optimal learning** by:		
	a) Using current National On-Water Standards (NOWS) **Note: Use section 2 to assess the curriculum content against the NOWS *Human-propelled Skills ANS.***		
	b) Using experiential education as the primary method of delivery		
	c) Combining and/or sequencing skills effectively		

IAS 2	*The instructional approach* **manages student skills development** by:		
	a) Defining performance objectives.		
	b) Aligning student expectations with performance objectives.		
	c) Assessing student progress toward performance objectives (e.g., rubrics).		

Included?	Element description	Where to find the answer	Potential action
IAS 3	*The instructional approach* **employs an effective student/instructor ratio** by:		
	a) Ensuring an adequate number of instructors are available to attend to the safety of all students involved.		
	b) Ensuring an adequate number of instructors to provide effective instruction with individualized attention (e.g., direction, coaching, feedback, etc.).		
	c) Considering available resources (e.g., time, boats, equipment, etc.)		

IAS 4	The instructional approach **encourages different types of students to participate** by:		
	a) Providing access to criteria for participation (e.g., age, weight, prerequisites, Essential Eligibility Criteria, etc.).		
	b) Informing students beforehand what they may achieve as a result of participation (e.g., skills, knowledge, enjoyment, certification, etc.).		
	c) Making reasonable modifications for students with disabilities.		

IAS 5	The instructional approach **prepares students for learning experience(s)** by:		
	a) Determining student's desires, expectations, etc.		
	b) Ensuring that students understand performance objectives.		
	c) Determining in advance students' unique needs (e.g., scheduling, diet, swimming ability, propensity to motion sickness, health/medical considerations, etc.).		

IAS 6	The instructional approach **supports student learning during instruction** by:		
	a) Staying focused on performance objectives.		
	b) Adjusting pace to optimize learning.		
	c) Allowing time for personal reflection, individual practice, etc.		

Included?	Element description	Where to find the answer	Potential action
IAS 7	The instructional approach **provides students with effective feedback** by:		
	a) Delivering feedback during and after the course.		
	b) Ensuring feedback is specific and actionable.		
	c) Using a variety of appropriate feedback tools (e.g., videos, diagrams, textbook reviews, visual aids, checklists, etc.).		

IAS 8	The instructional approach **ensures instructor effectiveness** by:		
	a) Selecting (e.g., identifying, recruiting, evaluating, hiring, etc.) qualified instructors.		
	b) Developing (e.g., preparing, assessing, supporting, mentoring, etc.) successful instructors.		
	c) Retaining (e.g., supporting, providing continuing education, compensation and opportunities for growth, etc.) quality instructors.		

IAS 9	The instructional approach **ensures instructors deliver quality program content** by:		
	a) Knowing the content being delivered.		
	b) Verbalizing and demonstrating skills effectively and with a positive attitude.		
	c) Modeling behaviors (e.g., wearing life jackets, using three points of contact, using proper skills even when not being demonstrated, etc.) that emphasize safety.		

IAS 10	The instructional approach **promotes student learning** by:		
	a) Providing support information (e.g., safety briefings, textbooks, handouts, pre-departure checklists, etc.) to enhance experiential activities.		
	b) Using a variety of instructional techniques (e.g., hands-on practice, guided self-discovery, teachable moments, repetitive practice drills, positive behavior reinforcement, etc.).		
	c) Encouraging students to seek additional practice opportunities.		

Included?	Element description	Where to find the answer	Potential action
IAS 11	The instructional approach **enables a safe learning environment** by:		
	a) Providing a comfortable physical environment (e.g., access to food and drinking water, bathroom facilities, shelter, life jackets, etc.) for students and instructors.		
	b) Providing an emotionally supportive environment (e.g., managing perceived and real emotional risks, allowing mistakes to be made safely, proactively identifying and addressing concerns, etc.).		
	c) Using appropriate strategies for coping with changing environmental/weather conditions (e.g., sun protection, access to foul weather gear, layered clothing, etc.)		

IAS 12	The instructional approach **uses boats, equipment and facilities appropriate for the instructional activity** by:		
	a) Ensuring boats and equipment needed to deliver an effective program are available and functional.		
	b) Ensuring availability and functionality of safety equipment (e.g., communication devices, rescue equipment, first-aid supplies, anchor, etc.).		
	c) Complying with applicable federal, state and local laws, regulations, manufacturer recommendations, etc.		

IAS 13	The instructional approach **manages risk** by:		
	a) Creating and following risk management procedures (e.g., Emergency Action Plan [EAP]).		
	b) Reviewing procedures periodically and updating as needed.		
	c) Ensuring instructors are able to effectively implement emergency procedures.		

IAS 14	The instructional approach **incorporates a program improvement process** by:		
	a) Reviewing course delivery, instructor effectiveness, and student outcomes against performance objectives.		
	b) Collecting student feedback on course effectiveness and customer satisfaction.		
	c) Looking externally to seek improvement ideas.		

Section 2: Human-propelled Skills

Use this section to assess the **curriculum content** against the Human-propelled Skills ANS (*EDU-2: Skill-based Human-Propelled Standard)*. For more information about *EDU-2: On-Water Human-Propelled Standard*, download a free copy of its accompanying Technical Support Document at: www.usnows.org.

Included?	Element description	Where to find the answer	Potential action
Operation #1: Prepare to depart			
	The operator will be able to:		
	1.1 **A: Obtain (recite), weather conditions, forecasts, and evaluate hazards to navigation and other environmental factors…** B: assessing if conditions are favorable for the voyage for length/time of trip.		
	1.2 **A: Put on a life jacket…** B: ensuring it is serviceable, fits properly, and is appropriate for the boat/activity.		
	1.3 **A: Confirm all others on the craft put on their life jackets…** B: ensuring life jackets are serviceable, fit properly, and are appropriate for the boat/activity.		
	1.4 **A: Inspect craft systems and safety equipment…** B: by completing a pre-departure checklist noting state, federal, and manufacturer requirements for the intended voyage and weather.		
	1.5 **A: Prepare the craft for departure…** B: readying equipment (e.g., secured, appropriate load, craft balanced, etc.) and individuals (e.g., safety equipment, plan, etc.) for intended departure.		
Operation #2: Leave a departure point (e.g., dock, slip, shoreline, etc.)			
	The operator will be able to:		
	2.1 **A: Enter and launch the craft…** B: using appropriate techniques for the venue (e.g., kneeling on a SUP during departure, etc.), keeping the craft upright with minimal wobbling or loss of control.		
	2.2 **A: Check for a clear departure…** B: using a 360-degree scan to confirm a clear path of departure with no conflicts with craft's intended actions and boats/activities in the vicinity and ensuring that departure is not a hazard for others underway.		

Included?	Element description	Where to find the answer	Potential action
Operation #3: Maneuver in close quarters			
	The operator will be able to:		
	3.1 **A: Propel the craft forward…** B: while maintaining proper grip and paddle/oar orientation along with trim and balance of the craft.		
	3.2 **A: Stop the craft…** B: within two boat lengths, using the appropriate and effective strokes, while maintaining trim and balance of the craft.		
	3.3 **A: Turn the craft from a stationary position…** B: 180° to the right and left, within 1-2 boat lengths, based upon a 360° scan of the surrounding area, using appropriate and effective strokes, while maintaining trim and balance of the craft.		
	3.4 **A: Move the craft sideways (*if applicable)…** B: 10 feet (to each side), based upon a 360° scan of the surrounding area, using proper techniques with appropriate and effective strokes, while maintaining trim and balance of the craft. **This element is applicable when paddling a canoe, kayak, raft, or stand-up paddleboard.*		
	3.5 **A: Propel the craft in a figure of 8 course (*if applicable)…** B: around markers 3-4 boat lengths apart, based upon a 360° scan of the surrounding area, using appropriate and effective strokes, while maintaining trim and balance of the craft. **This element is applicable when paddling a canoe, kayak, raft, stand-up paddleboard, or operating a classic dinghy-type rowboat.*		

Included?	Element description	Where to find the answer	Potential action
Operation #4: Operate in open water			
	The operator will be able to:		
	4.1 **A: Propel the craft forward in a straight line…** B: 15-20 boat lengths using appropriate and effective strokes to maintain a constant heading, while maintaining trim and balance of the craft.		
	4.2 **A: Turn the craft while maintaining forward motion…** B: 90° to the right and left, and based upon a 360° scan of the surrounding area and using appropriate and effective strokes, while maintaining trim and balance of the craft.		
	4.3 **A: Move the craft sideways (*if applicable)…** B: 10 feet (to each side) using proper techniques with appropriate and effective strokes, while maintaining trim and balance of the craft.		
	4.4 **A: Move the craft backwards…** B: 3-4 boat lengths using appropriate and effective reverse strokes while maintaining directional control, while maintaining trim and balance of the craft.		
Operation #5: Arrive at a destination (e.g., dock, slip, shoreline, etc.) making first contact			
	The operator will be able to:		
	5.1 **A: Check for clear approach…** B: using a 360-degree scan to confirm a clear path of arrival with no conflicts with craft's intended actions and boats/activities in the vicinity and ensuring that arrival is not a hazard for others underway.		
	5.2 **A: Arrive at a destination point (e.g., dock, slip, shoreline, etc.) and exit the craft…** B: using appropriate techniques for the venue (e.g., kneeling on a SUP during arrival, etc.), keeping the craft upright with minimal wobbling or loss of control.		
Operation #6: Secure the boat (preparing to leave craft unattended)			
	The operator will be able to:		
	6.1 **A: Secure the craft and equipment…** B: using appropriate techniques and anticipating winds, currents and tides.		

Included?	Element description	Where to find the answer	Potential action
Operation #7: Perform general safety/emergency procedures/maneuvers			
	The operator will be able to:		
	7.1 **A: Avoid capsizing the craft…** B: maintaining proper body position and paddle/oar techniques.		
	7.2 **A: Exit the craft after capsize…** B: using proper body position and contact with the craft and paddle/oar (wet-exit).		
	7.3 **A: Rescue self and the craft…** B: using a proper self-rescue technique.		
	7.4 **A: Avoid cold water shock and hypothermia…** B: by wearing appropriate clothing for the venue and using a documented safety technique.		
	7.5 **A: Rescue a person in the water and capsized craft…** B: using an appropriate assisted rescue technique and standard practice for rescue priorities.		
	7.6 **A: Use essential safety equipment…** B: by ensuring it is available on the craft and appropriate for the trip, follows local, state, federal laws and regulations; and employing according to manufacturer instructions.		
	7.7 **A: Propel an appropriate course…** B: using information provided by navigation markers and hand/whistle signals.		
	7.8 **A: Avoid collisions…** B: by maintaining a proper lookout, assessing potential hazardous situations and taking early and decisive action, while maintaining trim and balance of the craft.		

Where to find the Answers:
Types and Locations

One benefit of conducting a NOWS Self-Assessment is the opportunity to document how your course or program follows the American National Standards (ANSs). What follows is a non-exhaustive list of potential sources of documentation that can be used to demonstrate the extent to which your approach follows ANSs.

On-Water Instruction Design: Examples of support that demonstrate your approach is *designed* to follow the ANS might include:

- ☐ **Curriculum design** overviews indicating *what* skills within the ANS are included within instructional program
- ☐ **Website links** to materials showing information students have access to before participating
- ☐ **Course designs** that detail goals, objectives, agendas and instructional activities associated with teaching and learning content that aligns with the ANS.
- ☐ **Instructional Plans** for *how* skills contained within the ANS will be instructed
- ☐ **Student assessment tools** used to identify targeted student outcomes for instruction
- ☐ **Instructor certification program descriptions** that include ANS content
- ☐ **Supplemental handouts**, course textbooks, website links, or related sources of information and materials included in the approach
- ☐ **Jump drive** containing soft copies of instructor materials
- ☐ etc.

On-Water Instruction Delivery: Examples of support that demonstrate your approach is *actually delivered* to follow the ANS might include:

- ☐ **Videos of teaching** and learning ANS content
- ☐ **Instructor checklists** for what skills and behaviors are included during a session
- ☐ **Records** of student performance (assessment) with video or written evaluations during, and as a result of, engaging in the instructional approach
- ☐ **Instructor feedback** on instructional programming in relationship to ANS
- ☐ **Student feedback** on the quality of instruction and instructors
- ☐ **Maintenance checklists** for inspecting boats and equipment before going out on the water
- ☐ **Peer reviews** results
- ☐ **Administrative forms** that show all emergency equipment is available and in good working order
- ☐ **Videos of the location** within which instruction takes place
- ☐ **Post-instruction checklists** that inventory what ANS elements were followed
- ☐ **Customer feedback** from sources outside your typical feedback loops.
- ☐ etc.

General Notes

Disclaimer

The content of this Self-Assessment Checklist is advisory only. Its use is entirely voluntary. It represents, as of the date of publication, current understanding of best practices associated with designing and delivering recreational boating safety educational programming designed to incorporate content of the American National Standards: *EDU-4: On-Water Instructional Approach Standard* and *EDU-2: Skill-based Human-propelled Standard*. EDU-2 and EDU-4 are copyrighted by the American Boat & Yacht Council.

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Users of this Checklist are responsible for protecting themselves against liability associated with application of its content. This Checklist is a guide to achieving specific entry-level skills in recreational boat operation identified within *EDU-4: On-Water Instructional Approach Standard* and *EDU-2: Skill-based Human-propelled Standard* and is not intended to preclude attainment of desired results by other means.