



Level 2: Essentials of Stand Up Paddleboarding (SUP) Instructor Criteria

Course Outline

Fundamentally, participants are expected to have the paddling skills, technical knowledge, rescue ability, teaching ability, group management, and interpersonal skills commensurate with this level of certification prior to presenting themselves for evaluation as Instructor Candidates at an Instructor Certification Exam (ICE).

Course Prerequisites

- Acknowledgement of personal compliance with the [ACA Essential Eligibility Criteria \(EEC\)](#).
- Be a current ACA member
- Completion of the appropriate level skills course, assessment course, or equivalent skills

Course Duration

Combined Instructor Development Workshop (IDW) and Instructor Certification Exam (ICE) - Minimum 4 days (32 hours).

Course Location / Accessible Venues

- Waterway with access to safe landing within 0.5 nautical miles/0.9 kilometers from shore
- 5 - 10 knot winds

- Note: conditions should not exceed 1 foot/0.3 meters waves or 2 knot currents

Course Size

5 Participants : 1 Instructor Trainer; with an additional qualified assistant, the ratio can be 10 : 2. The maximum number of participants permitted is 10.

Instructor Trainer

This certification course may be offered by Level 2: Essentials of SUP (or higher) ACA Instructor Trainers or Instructor Trainer Educators.

Succeeding Courses

- Level 3: Surf Stand Up Paddleboarding Skills, Assessment, or Certification Course
- Level 3: Coastal Stand Up Paddleboarding Skills, Assessment, or Certification Course
- Level 3: River Stand Up Paddleboarding Skills, Assessment, or Certification Course

The following is a list of the criteria used to evaluate Instructor Candidates. The content and sequence of evaluation is to be adjusted to best fit the participant's needs, class location, time allowance, and be craft appropriate.

General Requirements for all ACA Certification Candidates

- Be at least 18 years old
- Demonstrate general knowledge of ACA Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) initiatives
- Successfully complete an Instructor Certification Workshop (IDW and ICE)
- Upon successful completion, register with the Safety Education and Instruction Council
- Have and maintain first aid and age appropriate CPR
- Demonstrate a general knowledge of paddlesports and the ACA

- Demonstrate the ability to appropriately perform and teach all of the following material, unassisted, in the appropriate venue

Certification Maintenance Requirements

- Teach at least two courses that meet ACA standards within the four-year certification period and properly report the courses using the ACA Course Management System (CMS)
- Complete an Instructor Update, at the highest level of certification, during the four-year certification period
- Maintain ACA membership and SEIC registration annually
- Maintain appropriate CPR and first aid certification for the duration of certification

ACA Level 2: Essentials of SUP Instructor Requirements

Demonstrate a knowledge of ACA administrative processes:

- How to register and report a course (with and without insurance)
- An understanding of the ACA Waiver and Release of Liability
- Familiarity with the ACA website and the resources and SEIC policies available

Demonstrate a knowledge of teaching and learning theory:

- Understand multiple modalities of teaching and how they impact different learners
- Differentiate instruction targeting different learners
- Use effective teaching methods including appropriate skills progressions when teaching complex skill sets
- Present information effectively, both prepared and impromptu
- Effectively make documented skill assessments
- Focus on **core principles** rather than specific techniques
- Provide appropriate, specific, and meaningful feedback

Demonstrate the following:

- Positive interpersonal skills
- Appropriate group management skills including leadership and judgment
- Ability to choose an appropriate venue / class site

Demonstrate ability to paddle efficiently and comfortably in venue utilizing:

- Board stability (trim, posture, rocking, balance, etc.)
- Efficient and effective paddle placement for intended maneuver
- Safe and effective body usage: bio-mechanics (body, linkage, and rotation)
- Parts of strokes: CPR (catch, power, recovery), static and dynamic

Demonstrate ability to teach and model these SUP stances effectively:

- Prone
- Sitting
- Kneeling
- Standing - neutral with variation/slight stagger
- Hybrid/modified stance
- Surf stance
- Footwork: regular & goofy stance

Demonstrate ability to teach and model these SUP strokes effectively:

- Forward stroke: demonstrate at least two effective forward stroke techniques using efficient transfer of power at varying speeds in a variety of conditions.
- Canted forward stroke: modifying blade angle and catch position to maintain direction of travel.
- Reverse stroke

- Sweeps (forward / reverse): modifying the path of the paddle for most effective power delivery
- Draws (side, sculling, hanging draw, draw on the move)
- Draws to nose/tail and cross nose (static and dynamic): modifying the path and the angle of the paddle for most efficiency

Demonstrate ability to teach and model these maneuvers in venue effectively:

- Launching and landing: beach, dock, shoreline
- Forward paddling: paddle 200 feet (61 meters) in a straight line without changing sides; must demonstrate on both the right and left side (i.e.,: canted stroke or other effective means)
- Reverse paddling: Paddle backwards 2 board lengths maintaining directional control without switching sides (i.e., reverse stroke & cross nose draw combination or other effective means)
- Stop: completely stop the SUP from a good speed in less than 2 board lengths
- Bracing: allowing the body to recover and maintain balance using the paddle as a support when falling towards or away from the blade
- 360: rotate SUP 360 degrees using forward sweeps, reverse sweeps, draw to nose, and cross nose draws
- Lateral movement: use draws to travel sideways 20 feet (6 meters) on both sides
- Turning on the move: sweep strokes and static draws while underway to turn board
- Board trim: transfer weight from nose to tail and rail to rail to affect momentum and maneuverability
- Side slip: move board sideways while underway to avoid an obstacle (i.e.,: draw on the move or hanging draw)
- Pivot turn: pivot 180 degrees in place with weighted tail
- Moving pivot turn: Pivot 180 degrees while underway with weighted tail
- Paddle a course using a variety of L2 strokes & maneuvers with an emphasis on blended strokes, controlled tight turns, and efficient board control while maintaining

momentum (i.e.,: figure of 8 course or other effective means)

Demonstrate ability to teach these concepts effectively:

- Paddling environments pertinent to paddlers
 - Wind
 - Waves
 - Weather
 - Water
 - Water confidence and comfort including swimming ability
 - Nautical rules of the road
- Principles of Rescue
 - Use of safe rescue strategies such as
 - T-RETHROG (Talk, Reach, Throw, Row, Go)
 - SAFER (Stop, Assess, Formulate, Execute, Review/Reflect)
 - Rescue priorities: people, board, paddle, gear
 - Responsibilities of the group, rescuer, swimmers
 - Appropriate use of rescue and safety gear
 - Emergency procedures
 - Communication
 - Paddle, hand, and whistle signals
 - Cell phone, radios, AIS systems when appropriate
 - Paddling etiquette and Leave No Trace (LNT) principles and application to paddling environments
 - Self care and care of other group members
 - Importance of fueling, hydration, clothing/insulation, and sun protection
 - Cold shock, hypothermia, and hyperthermia: prevention and treatment

Demonstrate ability to teach and model these safety and rescue techniques effectively:

- Techniques for falling
- Recoveries: with and without a leash as appropriate
- Board remount
- Assisted remounts
 - Side-by-side
 - Board flip rescue
 - Or other effective means
- Methods for board and gear recovery
- Unresponsive paddler rescue
- Towing
 - Contact tow
 - Leash tow
 - Tow line
 - Or other effective means

Demonstrate knowledge of, and ability to teach, the following knowledge and skills effectively:

- History of SUP
 - Indigenous roots to modern day SUP
- SUP: types, parts, materials, nomenclature, and design
 - Design (all-around, touring, racing, surf, whitewater)
 - Construction (composite, plastic, inflatable, foam board)
 - Parts
 - How to carry: 2-person, solo handle, solo overhead or other effective means

- Paddle: types, parts, materials, fit
 - Design (intended use, blade angle, blade size, shape)
 - Construction (composite, plastic, aluminum, foam core blade, wood)
 - Parts
 - Sizing (fixed and adjustable paddles)
 - Effective hand placement on the paddle
- Life jackets: types, usage, fitting, regulations
 - Inflatable
 - Inherently buoyant
- SUP leash
 - Types (coiled, straight, combo, quick release)
 - Parts
 - When and how to use
- Securing board for transport on car or trailer using proper tie downs, straps, or knots
 - Knots: Figure-8, bowline, truckers hitch, and 2 half hitches
- Importance of developing good judgment and group responsibility for a trip
- Group organization, trip planning, and travel strategies
 - Float plan components and filing
 - Maps, guide books, local knowledge
 - Lead, sweep, spacing, group members with repair kits, first aid kits, and first aid and CPR training
- Federal, state, and local laws and regulations that apply to trip venue or route
- Pre-trip communications
- Put-in safety briefing
- On-water communications

- Debrief/reflections/check for retention

Demonstrate the ability to perform demonstration quality strokes, maneuvers, and rescues outlined above with competence:

- Perform in real-time
- Perform in slow motion
- Emphasize particular phases of skills through exaggerated movements
- Perform at mental ease
- Perform consistently

Demonstrate leadership, group management skills, experience and judgment necessary to be a safe, effective instructor

Notes:

An ACA Level 2: Essentials of SUP Instructor is expected to be able to demonstrate and teach everything on the Level 2: Skills Course and Level 2: Skills Assessment for their craft.

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<https://americancanoe.org>

This curriculum is managed by the ACA SUP Committee. To connect with the leadership of this committee, please view the SEIC Committee rosters on [the ACA website](#).