



Level 2: Essentials of Kayak Touring Instructor Criteria

Course Overview

Level 2: Essentials of Kayak Touring (EKT), is the discipline-specific beginning of a progression in paddling skills and technical knowledge. The Level 2: Essentials of Kayak Touring instructor certification program equips kayakers with the teaching, assessing, and leadership skills to provide safe and effective learning experiences in sheltered water. It is an entry point in the ACA Coastal Kayaking instructor scheme and, therefore, appropriate for paddlers who may not have prior experience as an outdoor educator. Kayakers may choose to start their path to becoming an ACA Coastal Kayaking instructor at Level 1, Level 2, or Level 3, depending on their paddling environment, skills, and goals.

Level 2: Essentials of Kayak Touring Instructor Candidates shall meet the standard for the skills and competencies outlined in the Level 2: Essential of Kayak Touring Skill Assessment before starting instructor development. By the time of evaluation, they are expected to exceed the Level 2 skills and technical knowledge, including the “developing skills,” as identified in the assessment outline.

Instructor Candidates will focus on the instructing aspect of developing entry-level kayaking skills for those who wish to learn to kayak in Level 2 conditions. In general, Level 2 Instructors can plan courses, deliver structured learning sessions, and can recognize and correct common errors. Successful candidates will lead and teach in sheltered water environments with minimal learning distractions. As with all levels of coastal kayaking instructor training, there will also be a focus on the planning and delivering of skills courses and skill assessments, as well as the role and responsibilities of an ACA Instructor.

Course Prerequisites

- Demonstrate general knowledge of the purpose and significance of the [ACA Essential Eligibility Criteria \(EEC\)](#).
- Be a current ACA member
- Understands and acts in accordance with [ACA's Code of Conduct](#)
- They must have successfully completed **Level 2: Essentials of Kayak Touring Skills Assessment** or have the equivalent skill level to meet the skills assessment standards before their Instructor Development Workshop (IDW) or Instructor Certification Workshop (ICW).

Course Duration

Combined IDW and ICE, or ICW - Minimum 4 days (32 hours).

Course Location / Accessible Venues

A location that offers calm and protected waters with constant access to landing areas, within 0.5 nautical miles of shore. Conditions during the course shall be:

- Winds less than 10 knots
- Waves less than 1 foot (0.3 meters)
- Shore break less than 1 foot (0.3 meters)
- Current less than 1 knot

Course Size

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

For additional details, see [SEIC Policy Manual Chapter 6](#).

Instructor Trainer

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

The following is a list of the criteria used to evaluate instructor candidates. The content and evaluation sequence should be adjusted to fit the participant's needs, class location, and time allowance.

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 (combined ICW or IDW and ICE)
- Upon successful completion, register with the [Safety Education and Instruction Council](#)
- Have and maintain venue-appropriate first aid and age-appropriate CPR
- Demonstrate a general knowledge of paddlesports and the ACA
- Demonstrate the ability to appropriately perform, model, and teach all of the material contained within the official ACA skills course and assessment course outlines corresponding to their level of certification and all levels below, if applicable
- Demonstrate the ability to appropriately perform, model, and teach all of the following material, unassisted, in the appropriate venue
- Demonstrate the ability to appropriately perform, model, and teach all of the material contained within the official ACA skills course and assessment course outlines corresponding to their level of certification and all levels below, if applicable.
- Demonstrate positive interpersonal skills

Certification Maintenance Requirements

- Teach a minimum of two courses that meet ACA standards within the four-year certification period and properly report the courses using the ACA [Course Management System \(CMS\)](#). At least one course must be at their highest level of certification

- 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 Kayak Touring Instructor Requirements

ACA Knowledge and Professionalism:

- Has a general understanding of the history, mission, and philosophy of the American Canoe Association.
- Understands the mission of purpose of the ACA Safety, Education, and Instruction Committee (SEIC) and the Safety, Education, and Instruction (SEI) Department.
- Familiar with the Course Management System (CMS), use of the "test system," dashboard, uploading of credentials, registering a course with and without insurance, reporting courses, candidate evaluations, and completing and submitting an ACA Waiver.
- Understands ACA instructor certification maintenance requirements.

Personal Paddling

- Effectively models the competencies and skills listed in the **Level 2: Essentials of Kayak Touring Skills Assessment**.
- Personal skills largely "exceed" the standards and can perform the "Developing Skills" as described in the **Level 2: Essentials of Kayak Touring Assessor's Guide**.

Course Structure and Delivery

- Able to plan and structure courses for paddlers with various skill and experience levels.
- Able to plan and structure courses for Level 1 and 2 venues, conditions, and content.
- Selects an appropriate course venue and moves students to an optimal location while on the water.
- Delivers effective sessions with student goals at the forefront.
- Provides effective course introduction and debrief sessions.
- Effectively communicates with Instructor Trainer and peers before, during, and after the course.

Instructional Expectations

- Demonstrates the ability plan and deliver a structured learning session.
- Demonstrates ability to deliver and adapt a session based on learner interest, need, and environment.
- Makes decisions based on learner, content, and context of delivery.
- Demonstrates the ability to facilitate purpose-driven activities (for example, learning through games).
- Demonstrates awareness of, and utilizes, educational resources (for example, student pre-course communications, informational packets, props, etc.).
- Demonstrates the ability to recognize and correct common errors.

Practical Teaching of Content from Level 2: Essentials of Kayak Touring Skills Assessment*

- **Demonstrates ability to teach strokes and maneuvers in conditions up to and including Level 2:**
 - Forward paddling
 - Reverse paddling
 - Stopping
 - Forward and reverse sweeps
 - Rotate in place 360 degrees
 - Turning on the move
 - Draw sideways
 - Draw sideways on the move
 - rudders (bow and stern)
 - Linked maneuvers
- **Demonstrates ability to teach edging and support in conditions up to and including Level 2:**
 - Edge control
 - Low brace turn
 - Low brace recovery
- **Demonstrates ability to teach rescues and towing in conditions up to and including Level 2:**
 - Capsize and wet exit in two ways¹ - release by grab loop and release at hip
 - Assisted rescues for able paddler – side-by-side, scoop, sling, and T-rescue
 - Assisted rescues for unable paddler – scoop¹, sling, and unresponsive paddler
 - Self-rescue – scramble, sling, and paddle float
 - Towing – in-line and rafted in-line
 - Move a kayak without the use of a towline – bulldozing, shove and chase, contact tow
 - Swimming with a kayak
 - Paddler separated from a kayak– bow, toggle, and back deck swimmer tow
- **Demonstrates ability to teach awareness and seamanship for Levels 1 and 2 conditions:**
 - Safety issues and hazards of flat-water kayaking
 - Situational awareness
 - Leave No Trace Principles and NOAA Wildlife Viewing Guidelines
 - Kayak nomenclature and design
 - Kayak paddle fit, hand placement, and design
 - Equipment: lifejacket (PFD), paddle float, pump, sling, etc.
 - Cold-water shock and hypothermia; prevention, recognition, and treatment

- Heat-related issues and hyperthermia, prevention, recognition, and treatment
- **Demonstrates ability to teach incident prevention and management for Levels 1 and 2 conditions:**
 - Kayak transport
 - Lifting and carrying
 - Launching and landing
 - Signaling and communication devices
 - Float plan
- **Demonstrates ability to teach trip planning and navigation content for Level 2 conditions:**
 - Weather and forecasting
 - Chart and map use
 - Trip planning
 - Route finding
 - Compass use
 - Nautical Rules of the Road
- **Demonstrates knowledge of considerations for paddling in Level 2 environments. Knowledge check should include the candidate's overall awareness for paddling in areas of Level 2 current, wind, and waves and for paddling in Level 2 venues where the shoreline may be rocky or have hard surfaces.**
 - Environmental awareness
 - Reading water
 - Boat control
 - Rescues

*** Note:** Candidates need not demonstrate practical teaching of all the strokes, maneuvers, rescues, and competencies during the course. They must simply demonstrate teaching at least one skill from each of the above categories.

Delivering Skills Assessments

- Understands the standards set in the Level 2: Essentials of Kayak Touring Skills Assessment.
- Structures opportunities for performance assessment experiences in Level 2 conditions.
- Demonstrates the ability to accurately assess whether a paddler's skill level meets Level 2 standards.
- Provides appropriate and accurate feedback in a timely manner at the conclusion of the assessment course.

Leadership

- Demonstrates appropriate leadership, judgment, and group management in various coastal environments.
- Demonstrates an understanding of the principles of group management, both on and off the water.
- Demonstrates personal leadership on and off the water.

Expectations

Candidates must be able to paddle, lead, and teach at the upper level of Level 2 conditions. Although the IT/ITE does not necessarily need to observe the candidate in these conditions, the candidate's skills must be such that the IT/ITE is convinced that this person can safely, effectively, and efficiently paddle, lead, and teach in the maximum conditions within the Level 2 parameters.

1 - Skills are not required for those participants paddling a kayak without a spray skirt. ***Successful candidates using a kayak without a spray skirt during this course will be certified to teach non-spray skirted kayaks only.***

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