



# Level 4: Whitewater Stand Up Paddleboarding (SUP) Skills Assessment

## Course Overview

This ACA Assessment Course is designed to evaluate your ability to perform all of the skills listed and demonstrate an appropriate level of paddling knowledge. This assessment course provides the opportunity for you to receive documentation of having achieved this level of paddling ability.

## Course Prerequisites

- Acknowledgment of personal compliance with the [ACA Essential Eligibility Criteria \(EEC\)](#).
- Be a current ACA Member

## Course Duration

One day (8 hours) minimum

## Course Location / Accessible Venues

Moving water on rivers including class I-II sections. *A rapid class includes rapids at the lower and upper ends of the difficulty range, designated "-" and "+" respectively.*

## Course Size

4 Participants : 1 Instructor; with an additional qualified assistant, the ratio can be 8 : 2. The maximum number of participants permitted is 8.

## Assessor

This assessment course may be offered by Level 4: Whitewater SUP (or higher) ACA Instructors, Instructor Trainers, or Instructor Trainer Educators.

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## Course Outline

The sequence of assessment should be adjusted to best fit the participant's needs, class location, time allowance, and craft being used. Participants must be able to perform all strokes, maneuvers, rescues, and skills in the appropriate venue. In addition, the participant must demonstrate the appropriate level of knowledge for this level of skill assessment.

## **Introduction, Expectations, and Logistics**

- Welcome, introductions, paperwork
- Student and instructor course expectations and limitations

- Explain assessment procedure
- Course itinerary and site logistics
- Review waiver, assumption of risk, challenge by choice, medical disclosure
- About the ACA
- PFD policy (always wear on water)
- Appropriate personal behavior
  - No alcohol / substance abuse
  - Proper etiquette on and off the water
  - Respect private property
  - Practice Leave No Trace ethics

### Conclusion and Wrap-Up

- Group debrief/individual feedback
- Course Limitations
- Importance of first aid and CPR
- Importance of additional instruction, practice, experience
- Importance of appropriate level of safety and rescue training
- Life sport/paddling options
- Local paddling groups/clubs
- Reference materials
- ACA membership
- Course evaluations
- Assessment cards (if applicable)

### Assessment Criteria Checklist

**Participant Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Participant ACA Membership #:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Course Venue:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Course Date(s):** \_\_\_\_\_

*P = Pass, N = Not Pass, DNO = Did Not Observe*

Strokes and Maneuvers	Pass? P/N/DNO
Lifting & Carrying: efficient, safe technique	
Launching & Landing: Low dock or bank for entering board in a safe manner	
Board trim: nose – tail / rail – rail	
Paddle: proper grip / orientation while kneeling & standing	

Strokes and Maneuvers	Pass? P/N/DNO
Stances: prone / sitting / kneeling / neutral / offset surf variations	
Efficient Forward Paddling: 200 yards in a reasonably straight line	
Stop from a moderate speed within one to one and a half board lengths, forward and reverse	
Bracing techniques (low brace, high brace and cross tail-heel side low brace)	
Spinning: forward & reverse sweeps / draw	
Figure of 8: paddle a figure of 8 course using reasonable control to include the use of pivot turns	
Lateral Movement: use draws to travel sideways taking into account fin number and size(s)	
Maneuvering: weight transfers from nose – tail and rail – rail	
Pivot Turn	
Moving Pivot Turn with submerged tail	
Cross Stepping	
Edging and Board Tilt: Paddle a circle while edging both toe and heel side	
Sideslip: board moves sideways with headway	
Front Ferry	
Eddy Turns (wide / shallow)	
Peel Outs (wide / shallow)	
C-Turn	
S-Turn	
Front Surfing	
Tripping: Show evidence of at least one day-trip of at least 3 river mile	

Comment:

Rescue and Safety	Pass? P/N/DNO
Describe rescue priorities & responsibilities of individuals	
Recover board and paddle after fall into deep water (without leash)	
Deep Water Rescue: remount board in deep water	
Swim Rescue: swim to shore with gear (25 yards) in full paddling gear	
Demonstrate a board assisted rescue	
Towing: use leash or PFD tether to pull a weak or injured paddler	
Consistently throw a throw bag at least 40 feet to a swimmer in a rapid.	
Demonstrate a proper 1-person wade	
Safety Equipment: whistle / knife	
Demonstrate a foot entrapment rescue	

Comment:

Technical Knowledge	Pass? P/N/DNO
History of the sport	
SUP terminology	
Equipment: working knowledge of SUP paddling equipment for whitewater	
Appropriate leash wear	
Appropriate PFD wear (inherently buoyant vs. inflatable)	
Safety: wind, waves, water & weather	
Cold Water Shock / Hypo / Hyperthermia	
Nautical Rules of the Road	
USCG regulations	
Safety and Rescue Equipment	
Environmental Issues	
Trip Planning	
Group Awareness	
Securing boards to rack	

Comment:

Final Assessment
Pass or Needs More Work (circle one)
Assessor Name:
Assessor Signature:
Assessor ACA Number:
Course Conclusion Date:
Comments:

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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](#).