



NZOIA Sea Kayak Assessment Set Up

Introduction

What follows is an overview of what you can expect over your sea kayak assessment. We'll consider both the assessment tasks that might be given, as well as the assessment criteria that will be used. We'll also have a look at the feedback processes that may be used, as well as what the possible final outcomes from the assessment can be. And finally, a few suggestions on what you can do to help yourself throughout the assessment.

Feedback

Feedback is obviously a very important part of the assessment process. The assessors will be putting a lot of effort into ensuring that at the end of each session, you know what you did well, what you could have improved upon, and where your performance was in relation to the NZOIA and industry benchmark. Wherever possible, tips will be given that you may choose to take on board in order to further develop your paddling and sea kayak guiding and instruction.

When comparing your performance to the NZOIA benchmark, on most occasions we'll use a five-point scale where a "three" is a benchmark (and therefore a pass) and a "five" is well above the benchmark – a role-model performance. A "two" is for a performance below the benchmark. A "one" is for a performance that is way below the benchmark and/or seriously compromises client safety.

As assessors we have a variety of methods for managing the feedback process. Our most commonly used methods are:

- A one on one feedback session with an assessor – including rounds of "What you would change if you ran the session again", "What you'd keep for next time", and "Where do you think your performance was relative to the NZOIA benchmark". This may also involve questions aimed at helping either the assessor understand your reasoning behind aspects of your session, or to help you understand the effects of certain aspects of your session.
- Criteria based feedback – where you have been given a task (e.g. an assisted self rescue) as well as the criteria/limits within which you must complete task. As you finish the task you will know whether or not you have done so successfully and how much room you had to spare. That in itself is often sufficient feedback.
- Autocratic methods – where the assessor(s) simply give you a number grading your performance – this may be done one on one with the assessor, or with other assesseees present.
- Self-Assessment and Peer Feedback – notes on this are available on the NZOIA website, see: Assessment Resources/Feedback Methods

As well as making sure that at the end of each session you know how well you have done relative to the NZOIA benchmarks, we'll also make sure that at the end of each day you know exactly where you are standing in the whole assessment process – e.g., "cruising through, keep it up", "just hanging in there by the tips of your fingernails", etc.

Possible Final Outcomes

There are three possible outcomes for you as a result of this assessment: Pass, Defer, Resit.

A "**pass**" happens when you have passed all of the sections of the assessment. I.e. If you have scored a "three" or above on each session. You will receive your certificate in the mail within the next four weeks.

A "**defer**" happens when you have scored less than a "three" in at least one session. A defer means that there is still more work to be done before you can pass the assessment. This may include such things as an assessor observing some of your assessment tasks again. E.g. if you score a "two" on your surf session, then you'll need to be observed on this again. The deferment criteria may also include requirements of further logged time, and/or further training. Once you complete the requirements of the deferment, you'll receive your certificate.

A "**resit**" happens when you have compromised your own or your client/s safety, or where the sessions in which you score a "two," amount to more than a third of the total assessment – i.e. you would need to be observed again for more than a day. A "resit" means that you turn up to another assessment – after paying the normal assessment cost, and start again with a clean slate.

The programme and assessment criteria

What follows below is the programme of a typical NZOIA Sea Kayak assessment. This does not mean however that this is definitely the programme that will be followed. The assessors may choose to change the programme for a variety of reasons. These reasons may include, but not be restricted to: sea/environmental conditions, the number of clients, time management issues, etc.

The assessors will only be assessing what is in the current syllabus – nothing more. Although we may not be able to assess everything in the syllabus, we also reserve the right to assess anything in the syllabus.

Personal paddling skills: Role Modelling, Rolls, Rescues.

This is an opportunity for you to demonstrate specific technique and strokes asked for, e.g. stern rudder, braces, rolling. In terms of where the benchmark is: The assessors have the responsibility of carrying these forward from previous assessments which have been held in different conditions, all over New Zealand. We'll be asking ourselves whether or not the visual images that you present in the surf are what NZOIA believes are a benchmark standard. I.e. what would reasonably be expected of a Sea Kayak Instructor. Think 'confident, capable and in control'!

During this part of the assessment you can expect pretty instant feedback from the assessors on your performance. We may give you a number for each type of stroke and then later average them out for the session in one way or another. One of the reasons for the instant feedback is so that everyone can gain a feel for where the benchmarks are early on.

We want to see *consistent* skills (this is not a unit-standard-type assessment where if you can do it once, you can do it) one blown move is not the end of the world. If something is looking marginal, you'll be given a further opportunity to demonstrate if time permits. If at the end of a particular section the assessors are still not keen to make a call one way or the other on your performance, they may ask that you teach/demonstrate particular skills during the guided trip with clients.

Rescues: You'll be given a series of tasks to perform. The tasks will need to be completed safely, and with you in the role of a guide/ instructor rescuing/assisting a client. The water used for these rescue tasks will reflect the type of conditions where a guide/ instructor could realistically expect to be required to rescue a beginner/intermediate. In order to gain marks above the benchmark, you will need to be safely and efficiently completing the tasks using methods of 'best practice,' safely and efficiently.

Theory: There will be written and oral questions and scenarios on weather, navigation, risk management, marine charts, SKOANZ Code of Practice and you will need to hand in your trip planning exercise etc. (Sample questions can be found on the NZOIA website: www.nzoia.org.nz. See Assessment Resources/Sea Kayak Review Questions.)

These will be returned to you as soon as is practicable and a briefing and prep for the following days guided trip will occur.

Practical demonstration/assessment: Navigation map and compass, weather, general knowledge etc will be assessed here. The assessors 'shadow' the guided trip.

Guided trip: Lastly, it is up to the **assesseees** (as in you!) to provide a day (or half day trip - minimum 4 hours) trip, where the desired end result is for the clients to have a safe, enjoyable experience. As a group of candidates, you'll be expected to take responsibility for the day trip, including the organisation of the clients and their equipment, site selection, shuttles, time management etc.

This should be the 'bread and butter' day for you as instructors/guides...do what you normally do when working! Your clients should gain appropriate basic beginner sea kayaking skills and knowledge, some introduction to the area/environment/NZ, and have had a great time! Assessors may well ask the clients for their feedback as to how they felt the day went.

There are some things that the assessors need to see. They need to be confident at the end of the day that those who pass are indeed up to the standard of an NZOIA Sea Kayak 1 and will therefore follow up on any flags that may be raised over the time of the assessment.

The assessors reserve the right to change the programme plans around at any particular point in time. Such changes *may* include (but will not necessarily be restricted to):

- Asking that you teach a particular part of the syllabus (e.g. communication signals etc).
- Asking that you work with particular clients
- Asking that you manage the clients on a particular stretch of water.
- Including more oral assessment components – in order to assess understanding of certain components of the syllabus.

Sea Kayak 1 info

If any such requests are to be made, we'll communicate them to the affected assesseses as soon as practicable.

We'll also expect to see and talk with you about the equipment that you take on a guided trip and perhaps some other equipment. Throughout the assessment, some other aspects relating to History, Ethics and Equipment may also be formally assessed.

Note: if the assessors are getting to see everything that they need to, and everyone is really well prepared for the assessment, then there should be few if any of these "extra" requests.

In terms of how the assessors compare what they are seeing and hearing to the NZOIA Sea Kayak benchmarks, some questions that we often ask ourselves are:

- If I had to work with these clients tomorrow, is there anything from today's session that I would have to un-teach?
- Was the session sufficiently **Safe** – up to NZOIA Sea Kayak/ Industry standards?
- Was the session sufficiently **Educational** - up to NZOIA Sea Kayak/ industry standards? (e.g. How much did the individual clients learn? How appropriate were the progressions and teaching points? How clear was the communication? etc)
- Did the session have sufficient **X-factor** - up to NZOIA Sea Kayak/ industry standards? (e.g. Was there enough challenge? How enjoyable was the session for the clients? How much fun?

Dealing with assessments:

Some tips for having as good a time as possible over the time of the assessment are:

- If in doubt, do what you would usually do! Avoid playing the 'assessment game' and doing things because you think it is what the assessors want to see.
- If you have any questions ask them. You may not get the answer that you are looking for – the assessors are always running a very fine line between telling you *what* they want you to do and *how* it should be done. We'll tell you *what* and go to great lengths to avoid the "*how*".
- Remember that it is simply your actions over the assessment that are being assessed – and not you as a person or instructor. The assessors will assess what they see and hear over three days – we do not pretend to be able to guarantee that everyone who does not pass a session would usually not pass that session in the workplace, nor can we guarantee that everyone who passes a particular session would usually pass that session in the workplace.
- The feedback is given on a take it or leave it basis. Although the assessors are drawn from amongst New Zealand's most experienced and skilled sea kayak guides/instructors/operators, we do not expect you to take on board every piece of feedback that you are given over the assessment. It's your choice what you take on board and what you choose to discard.
- Participate fully in the group decision-making in terms of programme design. If however after your participation a decision is made that you feel is inappropriate, tell the assessors.
- When the assessors are writing things in their notebooks, please don't assume that they are noting down pieces of "improvement" feedback. It may well be things that they really like about the session, it could be things about another session that they have just observed.
- Please read this in conjunction with the syllabus, and assessment notes for candidates!

Have an enjoyable assessment. If you have any further questions then either ring or email your assessor prior to the assessment or ask at the pre-assessment meeting.