



Quality Assurance and Standardisation Policy



Paddles Up Training Quality Assurance and Standardisation Policy

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Introduction

The aim of this document is to specify Paddles Up Training's (PUT) commitment, responsibility and requirements for the management and delivery of high quality training and assessment courses by everyone involved in their delivery.

This policy should be read in conjunction with guidance from British Canoeing Awarding Body (BCAB).

PUT is committed to ensuring that BCAB qualifications retain their value and credibility throughout their lifecycle.

Definitions

Learner includes anyone undertaking training, development, or assessment.

Staff includes everyone who is involved in the administration of training and assessment courses, Tutor and Assessor training, quality assurance and standardisation e.g., Responsible Officer (RO), Coaching Administration Lead (CAL), Customer Service Advisors (CSA), Event Coordinators, Standards Officer (SO), Lead SO (LSO) Trainers and Quality Assurance Officers.

Tutor includes everyone who facilitates or delivers learning in any environment e.g., trainer, coach, teacher, facilitator, provider.

Assessor includes everyone on the team who takes assessment decisions. These decisions could be of competence-based performance in a work environment; however, they could also be the marking of assignments, assessing simulations, carrying out tests, etc.

Educational Philosophy

Everyone involved with the delivery of BCAB qualifications and awards need to be familiar with and implement the BCAB Educational Philosophy; this should be evident in the planning, decision making, delivery and review of their practices.

PUT recognises all relevant Tutoring, Assessing and Internal Verification /Quality Assurance qualifications.

Everyone involved in leading standardisation activities must ensure that their practice meets the requirements contained in:

- Standard 11 of the National Occupational Standards (NOS) for Learning and Development (March 2010)
- Standard 9 of the National Occupational Standards (NOS) for Learning and Development (March 2010)

Everyone involved in the delivery of BCAB qualifications must be appropriately trained, be involved in standardisation activity (as identified by the role held) and regularly take part in continuous professional development. PUT is committed to a continuous process of improvement.

Standardisation

Standardisation is essential and PUT is committed to ensuring the integrity of the awards and qualifications we provide. Standardisation is embedded in all of our processes, products and services.

It supports us to maintain the integrity and value of BCAB awards and qualifications throughout their life cycle.

There are tangible benefits for all from this approach as it means:

- improved Learner experience,
- raised Learner achievement rates,
- increased Learner retention rates,
- more cost-effective programmes,
- regulatory requirements are met.

As an organisation, we understand the need to ensure that standardisation and quality assurance measures are built into all processes that affect the 'Learner journey'.

This includes, but is not limited to:

- Recruitment of Learners,
- Learner induction processes,
- Initial Assessment,
- Learning and Assessment plans,
- Facilitating learning,
- Access to assessment,
- Reviews of Learner progress,
- Learner achievement,
- Tutor/ Assessor/ Staff recruitment,
- Tutor/ Assessor/ Staff induction,
- Tutor/ Assessor/ Staff standardisation, CPD and continual improvement,
- Tutor/ Assessor/ Staff succession planning.

The role of PUT Staff

Within PUT, each member of Staff has key responsibilities in the standardisation of Assessment.

Standardisation of Assessment occurs in several key places along the Learner Journey and consists of a coordinated programme of:

- Desk Based Standardisation,
- Field Based Standardisation,
- Community Learning and Standardisation Events.

Our systems are designed to support the Standardisation and Quality Assurance of all aspects of the Learner journey and consider:

- the number of Learners in the cohort or undertaking the qualification,
- numbers of Tutors and Assessors,
- our organisation's structure,
- experience and confidence of Tutors and Assessors,
- changes to the qualifications.

Each member of staff has the following responsibilities.

Customers Services Advisor

CSA's are the first point of contact for many Learners, Tutors, and Assessors. They provide advice and support to learners to choose the right qualifications and awards. They provide advice to Tutors, Assessors, and other staff, as well as manage desk-based standardisation and eligibility checks.

CSA's must (on appointment and annually thereafter) complete a declaration of interest, this ensures conflicts of interest are managed. If they become aware of a conflict of interest, they must bring it to the attention of the CAL or LSO at the earliest opportunity.

CSAs are required to be competent, take part in quarterly standardisation and Continuous Professional Development.

Coaching Administration Lead

The CAL is responsible for the standardisation activity, advice, guidance, and general work of the CSA team. The CAL is also responsible for close-desk-based Standardisation of assessment decisions.

The CAL must (on appointment and annually thereafter) complete a declaration of interests, this ensures conflicts of interest are managed. If at any time during the year, a potential conflict of interest should arise, then the CAL must notify the LSO at the earliest opportunity.

The CAL plays a key role in the overview of systems and processes. The CAL can identify patterns and trends in both Learner and Tutor/ Assessor behaviour. The CAL is considered part of the Standards team and attends responsible officer meetings and BCAB training and standardisation when required. The CAL is required to be competent, take part in quarterly standardisation and Continuous Professional Development.

Trainers

Our team of Trainers are involved in both standardisation of assessment and quality assurance through the initial training of new Assessors, Tutors, and Providers. Trainers also provide a community of learning events (CLE) for existing Assessors, Tutors, and Providers, both orientations and CLE's have skill verification requirements. Trainers are also involved in the assessment of new providers through the final recommendation process.

The Standards Officer (SO)

Our SO team is a key driver of the standardisation of assessment in qualifications. Their role, in terms of managing assessment, is key in ensuring the validity and reliability of assessment decisions. Therefore, internal verification is a key factor in managing 'risk' and ensuring that when certificates are claimed for Learners, the requirements of the BCAB have been reliably met.

There are four main aspects to the SO role:

- Plan, operate and evaluate internal standardisation and quality assurance systems,
- Support and develop Tutors and/or Assessors,
- Monitor and improve the quality of assessment practice,
- Apply policies, procedures and legislation to meet internal, external and regulatory requirements.

For all qualifications that meet the national standards, we develop a sampling strategy and plan which must be implemented by all those undertaking the SO role.

SO's are required to be occupationally competent, take part in annual standardisation and Continuous Professional Development. To meet this aim, SO's must both hold the Tutor and /or Assessor role of the qualification/ environment they are involved in the standardisation of and meet the update requirements for that role.

Lead Standards Officer

Our LSO is responsible for the standardisation of assessment decisions with Paddles Up Training. The LSO is the direct line manager for the SO team, supports plans for their work, standardisation activities and chairs meetings of the SO team.



Lead Trainer

Our LT is responsible for the standardisation and quality assurance of Tutor and Assessor Development Programmes and the Learning and Development of Trainers.

Responsible Officer

Our RO is responsible for the delivery centre and our provision of BCAB qualifications. The RO is the main point of contact for BCAB Standardisation activity at Delivery Centre Forums and attend BCAB meetings and training sessions when required.

Note: Detailed Role Profiles and Person Specifications are available for each role identified.

Conflicts of Interest

Please see Paddles Up Training [Conflict of Interest Policy](#).

Remote Standardisation

Remote Standardisation takes place prior to claiming certification or updating records. Assessors may be notified ahead of an assessment if they are to be subject to a Remote Standardisation.

The notification period will normally be 4 weeks, however PUT reserves the right to ask for evidence both leading up to the assessment and up to 5 working days after the assessment.

Feedback will be given to all Tutors and Assessors on the outcome of desk and close Remote Standardisation.

Remote Standardisation is planned based on the individual risk rating of the assessor and/ or the qualification. Please see PUT [Sampling Strategy](#) for further information.

Standards Officer Field Visits

We ensure that the prioritisation of our field visits is based on transparent, fair criteria which is free from bias.

The table below sets out the risk calculations used to carry out our annual assessor sampling plan. Risk calculations are carried out in December each year. SO rates for Qualifications we deliver that are aligned with national standards. Each criterion is considered in the drawing together of the annual sampling plan.

The field SO visits are then prioritised based on the individual risk rating. Please see PUT [Sampling Strategy](#) for further information.

A field-based visit replaces any other pre-selected Desk Based Standardisation or Remote Standardisation If the course has already been selected.

If the course has been selected for a EV Desk Based Standardisation or Remote Standardisation and an standardisation officer selects the course for a field based visit then PUT will forward the report to BCAB for the EV process.

Meetings

Field based internal verifiers will meet at least 3 times per year. During these meetings, SO's will report on their activity since the last meeting. They will also update the team on any CPD, training or developments to their practice.

These meetings form an important part of our commitment to sharing best practice and key points and observations will be shared with Assessors in Provider update newsletters, moderation events or urgent direct mailings.

Standardisation

SOs will take part in standardisation activities 3 times per year and be observed undertaking SO activity (Remote Standardisation, Standards Visits or leading Standardisation Events) by the LSO at least biannually and have an annual informal review.

Sampling

SO's who provide courses to maintain occupational competence are subject to sampling and will be verified by an independent SO on the same frequency and sample plan as all other Assessors. SOs will manage and notify us of Conflicts of Interest and in all SO activity, their responsibility is to make recommendations to the LSO who will communicate the final outcome to the Assessor.

Training

SO's are trained to undertake their work activity and assessed as competent by the LSO. SO's must hold or be working towards the Level 4 Award in Internal Quality Assurance or equivalent. The LSO is expected to hold the L4 certificate in Leading internal quality assurance or equivalent. In addition to the level 4 qualifications, the SO/LSO are expected to meet the same update requirements as Assessors e.g. First Aid & Safeguarding training as well as CPD.

Standardisation Administration

SO, Recording

SO, reports should be completed after each activity. The original should be retained in the office and a copy of the report returned to the Assessor.

Assessor Feedback

Standardisation and Quality Assurance is primarily a supportive mechanism, to enable Paddles Up Training to meet its responsibilities regarding the quality and consistency of assessment in qualifications. However, it is also a very beneficial process for the Assessor, forming an integral part of both their development and continuous professional development (CPD).

Both good practice and areas for development should be recognised and acknowledged throughout all Internal Verification activity, this includes field visits, desk based audits and sampling activity.

It is essential that best practice and innovations are shared across all Assessors for the development of assessment practice and support of Learners. In the case of innovation, the Assessor or SO should be credited.

Dealing with poor performance

The main aim of Standardisation and Quality Assurance is to ensure the quality, consistency, and fairness of assessment decisions. Activity should be supportive and aid the development of Assessors, however from time-to-time SOs may need to recommend more direct action.

Every scenario will be different, and the early involvement of the SO in the assessment planning stage will reduce the risk of unforeseen issues arising, however the following guidance can be used as a baseline for decision making.

Consideration should be given to PUT's Educational Philosophy as part of any decision-making process.

The Learner is the focus of our activity, so any decision taken should not negatively impact on the Learner unless necessary to protect the safety of anyone involved in the assessment or the integrity of assessment.

The SO may need to 'step in' to support the Assessor, this should be done sensitively, and the SO should 'step out' once the issue has been addressed or at the earliest opportunity.

To reduce the impact of stepping in, the SO should ensure they are introduced to all staff, learners and others involved in the assessment.

The SO needs to be prepared to go where the assessment goes and be able to observe and interact with the Assessor throughout the visit.

If the SO feels the integrity of the assessment is at risk, and they are not in a position to complete the assessment safely or without disadvantage to the Learner, the assessment must be cancelled.

The SOs role at the end of a field visit is to recommend actions and follow up. Final communication of the Activity/ outcomes/ actions and sanctions will come from the LSO.

Sanctions

Please see PUT [Sanctions Policy](#) for further information.

Appeals

Assessors have the right to appeal any outcome association with Standardisation or Quality Assurance and follow the PUT [Appeals Procedure](#).

Policy Review Arrangements

We will review this policy on an ongoing basis as part of our continuous improvement activity and revise it as and when necessary, in response to customer and learner feedback, changes in our policies and processes and actions from allegations.

In addition, we may update this policy considering operational feedback to make sure our arrangements for dealing with suspected cases of malpractice and maladministration remain effective.

Contact us

If you have any queries about the contents of the policy, contact our customer service team:

Tel: 0300 0119 500

Email: coaching@paddlesuptraining.com

Darryll Shaw Paddles Up Training Responsible Officer

Appendix 1. Completing Field Visits – Additional notes

Internal Verification is fundamental to Paddles Up Training as a Delivery Centre and is embedded in all our processes, products and services. The focus of field visits is to ensure the validity and authenticity of assessment decisions, whilst supporting Assessors and Learners.

Under certain circumstances, an SO may feel that they have time to observe and provide feedback on quality or programmes, delivery or facilities. Whilst Quality Assurance is not the focus of a visit, these opportunities should be taken.

Assessment practice key behaviours and responsibilities of an Assessor

On all PUT assessments, Assessors are responsible for.

- Managing the process of assessment, of practical and written evidence, from assessment planning through to making and recording assessment decisions
- Assessing evidence of Learners' knowledge, understanding and competence against the standards specified in the Syllabus and Assessment Notes, and making reliable judgments about Learners' performance.
- Ensuring the validity, authenticity and sufficiency of assessment evidence produced by Learners.
- Clarifying any shortcomings in the presented assessment evidence and explaining to the Learner how to remedy them.
- Remaining as unobtrusive as practicable during assessment, whilst being able to see and hear the Learner at work.
- Giving and recording evaluative feedback as soon as possible and when the Learner is ready.
- Confirming success to the Learner as soon as they have demonstrated competence against all of the specified outcomes.

- Agreeing further action with the Learner where appropriate
- Conducting assessment in the way that upholds the equal opportunities principles specified by PUT; Assessors must ensure that it is only the Learners' skills, knowledge, understanding, and competence that have a bearing on assessment results, which should not be influenced by any other factors. No Learner must be either discriminated against or given an unfair advantage.
- Maintaining accurate and verifiable assessment records for each Learner
- Fulfilling PUT administration requirements.
- Follow the PUT Guidance on Reasonable Adjustments to the Assessment Process where Learners find the assessment methods difficult.
- To achieve uniformity of assessment standards, careful attention should be paid to the definitions in the qualification and awards supporting documentation. All Providers must be fully familiar with the Syllabi and Assessment Notes for the qualification or award concerned.
- Providers must provide clear guidance to Learners about the assessment process and completion of the various tasks, including.
 - What Learners are required to do?
 - The assessment programme.
 - The relevant assessment criteria
 - The assessment methods
 - When Learners will receive feedback

Main competencies expected of Assessors.

As a minimum, Assessors should meet the following requirements.

- Be able to demonstrate technical competence in the discipline concerned.
- Be able to demonstrate competence in the assessment of the syllabus.
- Be able to use plain language which is free from bias and appropriate to our paddlesport qualifications.
- Be committed to equal opportunities in assessment and have the ability to translate this commitment into practice.

Appendix 2. Internal Verification Reports – aide memoire

The SO must ensure that their written feedback to the Assessor is recorded on the SO report form. The feedback must be directed to each Assessor and should address their practice.

The SO should avoid generalised statements (e.g. *'Well done to both of you. Lots of hard work undertaken'*).

- Precise, focused comments on the work sampled will support the Assessor's development and evidence the rigour of internal verification activity.
- The SO will record the unit and Assessment outcomes sampled on the report form to ensure that an audit-able system exists in the centre records.
- Depending on the experience and qualifications of Tutors and Assessors, the IQA may review more than one unit during an internal quality assurance session and should indicate all the units reviewed on the report form.
- The SO will record the method of assessment used, the assessment focus (and whether the evidence is valid, authentic, reliable, current and sufficient), and that there is evidence of consistent practice.
- SO will note whether the records have been signed and dated by Assessors (where required) and authenticated by Learners.
- Where necessary, the SO will check that assessments are countersigned and that the appropriate records are made on the countersigning report form.
- If a standardisation issue is identified, the SO will need to record and raise this at SO meetings or with the LSO.
- Action plans - Assessors will record what action is required and by what date it must be completed. Once this action has been completed, the SO will also record this.

- On completion of the qualification, the final SO Final Report Form should be completed.
- Records of Internal Verification are kept by the delivery centre (intact and safe) for a period of three years.

Appendix 3. Quality Assurance Expectations

Assessors' key responsibilities

- BCAB staffing requirements are met.
- Staff utilisation is appropriate to the needs of the Learners and the course.
- Civil Liability Insurance is held.
- Appropriate ratios adhered to throughout (Assessor – Learner – mock students)
- Moderation of all learning sessions and assessments decisions within the programme staff team to ensure other staff deliver sessions of required quality, at the correct level, and meet the requirements laid down in the Tutor notes.
- The course is run in line with the BCAB requirements.

Learners

- A mechanism is in place to gain information ahead of the course, and then address Learners with specific learning requirements.
- Information is gathered ahead of the course about Learners' experience and areas of interest.
- Learners receive adequate pre-course information.
- Learners are registered with their Home Nation Association, and have the required Registration or Check-in Form
- Learners have received their Learner Pack (where relevant), and have access to it throughout the course.
- For Learners under the age of 18:

- A Safeguarding and Child Protection policy is available and in use.
- Parental consent forms are available and have been completed.
- Staff are aware of child protection and safeguarding issues.
- Disclosure and Barring Service requirements are met.
- Learners who arrive without all the prerequisites in place are dealt with as per the BCAB guidance.
- Learners have the opportunity during the course to explore a range of boats, equipment and resources, in line with the requirements of the course.
- Learners can use craft they are most likely to use in their normal coaching/leading / personal paddling environment, for the majority of the practical sessions.
- Learners wear appropriate clothing and safety equipment during all practical sessions, as identified in the Risk Assessment and in line with current best practice.

Learning Programme

- The Learning Programme includes appropriate activities that meet the learning outcomes from the unit specification.
- Where the learning programme is modified for a specialist group of Learners, this has been agreed with the Home Nation Association
- The Learning Programme is planned and tailored to suit the Learners normal working environment.
- The Learning Programme maximises the learning opportunities of the venues used (accounting for weather and environmental conditions)

- The Learning Programme meets the guided learning hours requirement for the qualification.
- The Learning Programme is delivered over an appropriate length of time, and in appropriate blocks.
- Learners are introduced to all of the resources that are available to support their development, for example, eLearning, workbooks and portfolios, articles, videos, podcasts and books.
- The programme includes sufficient time for Learners to reflect on each session.
- The balance between classroom and water-based sessions is appropriate.
- The balance between active participation and tutor-led content is appropriate.
- The balance between Coaching Theory 'the How', and the Technical/Tactical/ Psychological and Physiological 'What' is appropriate.
- Learners are provided a clear outline of the programme at the start of the course.
- The aims of the course are clearly explained.
- Learners are provided guidance on finding an appropriate mentor to help with their on-going development.
- The remit of the award is clearly explained and reinforced throughout the course.

Policies

- All programme staff are familiar with, have available, and know how to put into practice the following;
 - PUT [Appeals Procedure](#)
 - PUT [Complaints Procedure](#)
 - PUT [Equality and Diversity Policy](#)
 - PUT [Special Consideration and Reasonable Adjustments Policy](#)
 - PUT [Malpractice and Maladministration Policy](#)

Resources and Facilities

- All facilities, equipment, and resources meet health and safety requirements.
- Suitable, appropriate and safe indoor facilities are used to facilitate learning that are fit for assessment activities.
- Suitable, appropriate and safe resources and equipment are used to facilitate learning that are fit for assessment activities.
- All physical resources used are appropriate to the award and of industry standard.
- The distance between classroom and water venue is appropriate (normally a maximum of 15 minutes' drive)
- Water environments used for the practical work meets the requirements of the qualification. For example:
 - is appropriate for running sessions from a boat or the bank.
 - meets health and safety requirements.

- provides a high-quality learning and assessment environment.
- has appropriate light and temperature conditions.
- has space and quiet from other water users.
- has a risk assessment recorded.
- has appropriate access for all Learners.
- has agreed access.

Health and Safety

- Written, and dynamic risk assessments are conducted as appropriate and risk management strategies suitably deployed.
- Appropriate first aid equipment is available at all times.
- Appropriate safety equipment is available at all times.
- The delivery team provides a safe environment for all elements of the programme that complies with relevant health & safety legislation and:
 - ensures Learners are aware of the risks associated with activities, and ways to minimise these risks are discussed.
 - ensures volunteer participants are aware of the risks associated with activities and ways to minimise these risks.
 - Assessment Learners have access to participant details, including details of paddling experience and emergency contact.
 - Learners are made aware of the expectations on them to ensure safe practice and an effective assessment environment.
 - Emergency contact details for staff, Learners and other participants are available.

- A plan in place to ensure the safety of Learners and participants in an emergency which involves themselves.
- That an incident and accident reporting system is in place

Further Reading

The following documents can be found on the [Paddles Up Training website](#).

- Appeals Procedure
- Complaints Procedure
- Conflict of Interest Policy
- Equality and Diversity Policy
- Malpractice and Maladministration Policy
- Sampling Strategy
- Sanctions Policy
- Special Consideration and Reasonable Adjustments Policy