Technical Syllabus

Remit of the NCC Guide Award

The candidate is required to perform all skills in the coasteering environment, comfortably and with confidence in their own ability.

Ideally, candidates will be assessed practically in all aspects of the syllabus, however where suitable sea conditions are not available the candidate can be assessed via alternative techniques such as questioning, simulated features or videos. The assessment report will indicate the sea conditions under which the assessment occurred; assessments can be completed in calm conditions. The deploying Technical Advisor would be responsible for assessing the competency of the candidate to deliver coasteering within the local site and conditions.

Part A – Personal Coasteering Skills

A.1 Swimming over a distance of 200m, in a proactive and continuous manner, this is to be undertaken in full coasteering kit.

A timed 200m swim will take place during the assessment; this would normally be completed in less than 7 minutes. The candidate would be expected to complete this wearing full coasteering equipment.

A.2 Be fit and healthy enough to operate as a lead guide over a 3-hour coasteering session.

Candidates will be expected to have a suitable level of fitness required to work as a coasteering guide, not only leading but also while dealing with a variety of scenarios, without being a danger to themselves or their group. The assessment will allow candidates to demonstrate this.

A.3 Entering and Exiting in a range of areas to the upper end of the remit.

Candidates will be expected to effortlessly and confidently show a variety of techniques to enable safe entry and egress on wave-washed ledges, murky water, steep climbing exits and through waves.

A.4 Make appropriate decisions about the way that a variety of features can be used, or not, or navigated along the way.

Candidates will be able to read and explain how water works over a variety of features, including a pour-over, a funnel, a wash through and a swirl, to inform good decision making. Plus, to be confident in how these features work to allow themselves to immerse themselves and play within them. During the assessment, the guide would be expected to manage a group in any or all the features of a coasteer.

Part B – Safety, Leadership and Group Skills

The assessment will give opportunities for the candidate to show all of the elements which make up a coasteer. They will be able to use both human and technical skills to help make the coasteering session a safe enjoyable learning experience.

B.1 Skilful application of leadership principles

The candidate should be able to apply a robust strategy such as C.L.A.P. to ensure safe group management at an appropriate coasteering site and/or situation.

- Communication
- Line of Sight
- Avoidance
- Position (best place)

B.2 Appropriate leadership strategies, judgement and decision making

The candidate will show a range of strategies and leadership styles to suit the Group, Site and Situation which are flexible and clear in their communication and application. These include, but are not restricted to:

- Concise briefings
- Autocratic leadership style
- Democratic leadership style

B.3 Safety awareness and risk management

The candidate will follow any strategies to their final point when leading a rescue situation, including being able to execute an Emergency Action Plan (EAP) correctly.

B.4 Exercise appropriate group control and management and show concern for the general welfare of other group members

The candidate will be able to exercise appropriate group control using a dynamic risk process while managing and showing concern for the general welfare of group members in the coasteering environment

This may include (in an appropriate order for the session):

- Welcome
- Medical checks
- Water confidence
- Good group briefings that are concise, and appropriate to the stage of the coasteer
- Identifying hazards
- Exits and entries - the guide should be able to show groups methods of entry and exit.
- Swimming techniques in waves and near rocks
- Appropriate movement over rocky. slippery or steep ground when needed
- Choosing suitable routes for the group/conditions
- Use of the group where appropriate
- Prompt and suitable decision-making
- Jump Management
- Climbing and traversing above deep water
- Spotting
- Positioning during communication and pre-empting issues
- Use of signals for communication
- Play Spots
- Emergency exits

The candidate will positively add to the group dynamic, showing that they can make swift decisions and communicate clearly towards positive outcomes.

Candidates will show a consistent ability to judge the conditions, the route, with the ability of the group (both physically and mentally), to make appropriate decisions along with the need to modify plans as required.

B.5 Demonstrate the capability to manage a range of incidents

Candidates will be able to deal with a wide variety of incidents, selecting and using the appropriate equipment. These skills may be demonstrated whilst:

- Using a variety of strategies for group control, communication, leadership styles and positioning, keeping a group together e.g. group huddle.
- Moving groups in more challenging situations e.g. rips, waves, caves, zawns, boulder fields.
- Dealing with incidents that involve people, e.g. a broken limb, hypothermia, unconsciousness, spinal injury, stings, foot entrapment, panic, incidents in caves, fishing line etc.
- Undertaking the lead during incidents that involve rescue in different circumstances and conditions thereby requiring a working knowledge of a variety of approaches which may include the use of the Group and/or Assistant Guide.

Whilst doing this, the candidate will ensure an overview of the situation so that the safety and well-being of the whole group is maintained.

The equipment that they may be able to use professionally includes:

- On Person equipment such as a whistle, knife, throwline etc.
- Essential safety equipment (dependant on the venue)
- A first aid kit and familiarity with the use of its contents whilst in the coasteering environment

Communication
- A suitable means of summoning help in an emergency e.g., flares, mobile phone, VHF, PLB etc. depending on the operational area

B.6 Provide guidance through top tips and handy hints

Guides will show their ability to share and teach top tips to group members to improve their coasteering ability and confidence, as well as giving sufficient information in order to achieve a successful outcome for the session.

B.7 Be able to connect how we can learn from coasteering activities to the challenges that are threatening our coastlines and communities

Coasteering connects people to nature in ways that are more visceral than many other outdoor activities and provides the opportunity for understanding risk, challenge, and response. The candidate is expected to demonstrate ways of using coasteering and the environment they are moving through to make connections between climate-related sea-level rise, pollution, plastics and personal response to risk. As a result of this, clients will be able to better connect personal action wherever they are, to the protection of the ocean and coastal environment we treasure so deeply. Done well, all education elements to coasteering will enrich the client's experience, not dim it.

Part C – Rescue Skills

Candidates will have a broad awareness of the challenges and problems associated with leading coasteering in the intertidal zone.

Candidates will implement simple solutions to problems that they may encounter whilst coasteering. This will include undertaking dynamic risk assessments for them and the group they are coasteering with. The Candidate will show a broad awareness of the hazards and potential common issues that they may come across in the coasteering environment.

C.1 Have knowledge of and demonstrate the skilful application of appropriate rescue skills in the coasteering environment

Candidates will be able to implement a range of rescues and show how to adapt them to the prevailing conditions and features, including dealing with incapacitated coasteerers.

C.2 Understand the limitations of solo guiding and the use of group members as part of an emergency action plan

Assessment will allow the candidate to demonstrate an understanding of the challenges and limitations of working as a lone guide and also the roles and responsibilities within groups.

C.3 Be conversant with different methods of towing

Candidates will be able to show and understand the use of a variety of tows in context and relevant to the conditions, whilst maintaining clean lines and quick release methods.

e.g. Foot tow, shoulder strap tow, husky tow (two person tow), safety bag tow, rescue tube tow , tow line tow (only if used by the Provider/Company), towing using a throwline, towing the line and not towing the casualty.

C.4 Be conversant with different methods of using throw lines

The candidate will know and understand the use of a throwline including throwing rescues and throwline management, reaching rescues, and use of a throwline to tow.

As well as being able to:

- Throw accurately (casualty should be able to reach the line)
- Coil and re-throw a line
- Use a throwline as a swim line
- Use of line to cross a zawn
- Use others/wider group to help with throwline methods

C.5 Be conversant with the use of Tape/ Sling/Rope

The Candidate will be able to use this as a method of rescue and or support. They will have a working knowledge of the advantages and disadvantages of slings vs tapes vs short length of rope/floating rope vs full throw lines. Length of tape 3- 5 M.

Part D – Theory

Candidates will show an awareness of potential risks, safety precautions and safety thresholds pertinent to leading groups to the upper end of the remit. A written home paper may form part of an assessment.

D.1 Equipment and design

The candidate will show knowledge and experience of using a range of equipment including the most up to date. When questioned, they will be able to explain how and why modern equipment has evolved, and which equipment best serves the situation.

D.2 Safety (includes Coastguard and Rescue Services)

The candidate will demonstrate a working knowledge of how the national and local emergency services function.

D.3 Planning weather, waves, and tides

The candidate will be afgware of a variety of sources of weather, wave, and tidal forecasts. They will be able to interpret weather, wave and tidal forecasts and be mindful of the conditions actually experienced. They must show an understanding of the impact of weather, tide, and sea on the conditions that they encounter at the venue.

The candidates will decide on the correct location for the conditions of the day given all macro and micro forecasts available; the group dynamics; and any external factors i.e. access issues and if necessary adjust plans as required by the conditions and or clients.

D.4 Wellbeing, health and first aid

Candidates will show that they can deal with the most likely injuries that may occur as part of coasteering. It should be evident that the candidate can deal with an incident and see it safely through to its conclusion (including simple evacuations, dealing with emergency services and group care).

D.5 Group awareness and management

Candidates will have an awareness of the full spectrum of responsibilities whilst being a Coasteering Guide, including:

- National Coastguard Organisations and rescue services
- Personal, legal and ethical responsibilities
- The NCC role and documents

D.6 General knowledge

Candidates will have an understanding and awareness of where Coasteering originated and of its current development through the National Coasteering Charter.
- To include a working knowledge of the NCC Coasteering Code of Conduct for Guides 2016 - 2017

D.7 Leadership responsibilities

Candidates will understand their role and responsibilities as a leader in the intertidal environment.

D.8 Water features and hazards

Candidates will understand the characteristics of swell, tidal height, and surf on a range of features.

Part E - Environment

E.1 A knowledge of codes of conduct/legislation relating to local native marine life and coastline ecology.

- To include a working knowledge of the NCC Coasteering Code of Conduct for Guides: 2016 - 2017
- We recommend sitting an Adventure WiSE course to upskill your marine environmental knowledge.

Delivery of an NCC Guide assessment

Assessments are normally run over 1 full day (minimum 6 hours contact time) with a maximum of 2 candidates being assessed. They are part assessed whilst leading a real group as a solo guide, against the criteria written in these notes. If certain areas of the criteria are not seen during the lead session, then additional safety and rescue scenarios will be required during the second session.

Where the conditions of the site / venue do not allow for an assessment to take place in one continuous session (e.g. tides, weather) then the assessment may be delivered in a modular format however, the time between starting the assessment and completion should not exceed 28 days. In cases where the time limit may be exceeded special consideration must be sought from the NCC Guide Award Administrator.

The candidate will be assessed from the stage of preparing for the session to closing the session.

Each candidate will get individual feedback on their performance and, if necessary, they will be directed on possible improvements, whether they attain the award or not.

In some specific circumstances there may be an isolated area of the assessment criteria that was not observed or met for a specific reason. In these cases, the Provider may issue a 'Conditional Pass' with an agreed action plan to complete the assessment. The time period for submission of the required evidence should not exceed 28 days.

The minimum time period that the candidate can represent themselves for re-assessment will be on advice from the Assessor, however a minimum of five additional coasteering sessions between assessment and reassessment must be undertaken.

The successfully assessed Guide will need to follow their company policy for deployment. They will still need to be signed off for deployment by the employer at the specific site that they will be working, either by the in-house or external Technical Advisor.