

5 Star Surf - Assessor Notes

Craft and Equipment

Candidates will need to be conversant with surf specific boats, ski or a general purpose boat suited to the performance expected in the surf environment at this level i.e. carving. An advance surf paddler will be comfortable in most craft, indeed paddlers may need to swap craft in rescue situations and hence experience and a working knowledge of a variety of craft would be important element to their knowledge needed on an assessment

Part A – Personal Paddling Skills

A.1 Launching and landing

Candidates should be capable of getting afloat in a range of environments, other than a beach, efficiently and without assistance.

A.2 Control

Candidates should be capable of a high level of personal performance. The casual observer watching from the beach should be able to identify that the surfer has considerable skill. Five star paddlers should be able to deliver sequences of moves that show variety and intent, and rarely make errors in terms of positioning.

A.3 Paddle out

As for four star but with the addition of rolling under waves and strategies for negotiating pitching waves.

The access to some breaks will begin to impinge on leadership and knowledge covered in the level 3 Sea award. This would include tidal movement and group leadership on coastlines with limited landings.

A.4 Take off

Take offs should display decisions based on patience and etiquette, and positioning should be accurate 99% of the time. Almost all waves attempted are caught, and paddlers should be able to perform more difficult take offs such as paddle outs, regains etc.

On reefs and points the paddler should demonstrate an accurate ability to use transits, foam cones and wave patterns to position themselves with accuracy

A.5 Turning

Bottom turns should be appropriate to the wave showing a variety of speed and attack. Turns at the top of the wave should display the same characteristics but should show carved and sliding turns with the boat being visible from behind the wave.

Body positions will be accurate and the boat would be seen to be in a permanent state of manoeuvre. Paddle independence will be obvious.

A.6 Variety, pace and attack

Manoeuvres should be displayed that produce power and accuracy of positioning. There should be an expectation on an observer's part to see something they weren't expecting rather than the same moves repeated on a number of waves. Attempts should be made to attack approaching lips or close out with re-entries and the foundations of aerial moves would be seen.

A.7 Timing, height and the shoulder

The whole of the wave face should be used with significant height gain and loss. Although errors will occur they will normally be when adjusting to a unique situation developed from ambition around the shoulder or the miss-timing of sequences rather than errors in completing the action. The rider should be clearly making decisions allowing them to ride using the characteristics of the wave effectively and thus appear to be imposing themselves on the wave. This could be summed up as the paddler clearly illustrating a pro-active manner to the ride rather than purely responding to the wave's patterns.

Part B – Rescue Skills

Candidates should be able to rescue from a variety of positions with multiple strategies, complicated rescue scenarios that are indicative of the types of waves surfed should be engineered for both training and assessment at this level. A solid understanding should be evident of the rescue building blocks, and it would be expected that candidates would be able to display exceptional rescue skills and strategies, in challenging environments and situations not always immediately accessed from a car park. A list of some of the possible skills needed is included in the training notes.

Part C – Leadership and Group Skills

C.1 Risk Management

Five star paddlers should be capable of leading and managing groups in advanced conditions; they should be able to accurately identify safe working areas, giving full consideration to the identification of risk and actions to minimize it.

C.2 Group control and communication

The Five Star leader should be able to manage a group of competent paddlers, and set up a safety framework appropriate to the environment. This should clearly illustrate awareness of risks and the actions taken to lessen the likely-hood and severity of those risks. Although not a coaching award the ability to frame a safe learning environment with constructive input or feedback to a less able paddler should be seen as integral to the award.

C.3 Equipment

Equipment at this level should be of a very practical nature and may be spread throughout the group. The scenarios which candidates will be expected to manage will be realistic and have varied solutions dependant on conditions, equipment available and the decisions made based on the candidates experience. Any equipment deemed important should be carried throughout the assessment.

Part D – Theory

D.1 Advanced Surf forecasting

Candidates presenting themselves for five star assessments will have an expert knowledge of the surf environment. They should be able to make accurate macro surf forecasts and produce comprehensive micro forecasts for the areas to be surfed. The ability to move beyond 'home page' forecasts or webcam images is necessary at this level. The synthesis of data from wave models, pressure charts and wave buoys taking into account long range swells, constructive / destructive swells and the effect of micro / macro weather will be used to assist venue selection.

D.2 Wave theory

They will be able to discuss the bathymetric features of reefs, convex and concave points, thus allowing the candidate to accurately select a venue and understand the wave type encountered.

D.3 Etiquette

All aspects of wave etiquette will be understood both in theory and in a practical context, this will be particularly transparent when surfing breaks where incorrect application of these principles would lead to another rider being endangered. There should be an understanding of competitive surfing, and competition framework.

D.4 First aid

Problem solving first aid particularly to relevant to the environment commonly encountered in advanced surfing. This would include current CPR protocols for water asphyxiation and treatment of cold shock hypothermia

D.5 General

It would be expected at this level that candidates are also conversant with the fundamental principles and skill set of beach life-guarding, with particular relevance to rescues.