

Sea kayaking with AOAC

British Canoeing (BC) courses

AOAC run several BC Discover and Explore courses in general purpose kayaks each year.

AOAC also runs coached introductory sea kayaking weekends.

We are not able to provide sea kayak coaching at higher levels, or any BC sea kayak qualifications. You need to do these with an external provider (often people get a group together and arrange this independently, or through AOAC). Subsidies are available through the club for leadership and coaching qualifications – see the Paddlesports SOP on the website or contact the Paddlesport Coordinator.

For BC personal awards see:

<https://www.britishcanoeing.org.uk/news/2018/new-sea-kayak-awards>

For leadership and coaching awards:

<https://www.britishcanoeingawarding.org.uk/>

For description of sea conditions see:

<https://www.weather.gov/pqr/beaufort>

Levels and Experience required for sea kayaking events with AOAC

To book on a sea kayaking event, you will need to have the appropriate experience. This is to ensure that everyone on that event knows what to expect, and meets the minimum requirements in order to make it enjoyable and safe.

We aim to offer top tips and gradual exposure to more advanced conditions where appropriate, so people can progress. A key element of progression is “time on the water”; meaning that you will likely go on several intermediate events before being ready to progress to intermediate, and so on. Becoming an advanced paddler can take years, **depending how often you paddle, seek out coaching etc.** Examples of the skills *attributes required for progressing to higher levels:*

- *A good feel for the kayak so that the paddler is comfortable and confident manoeuvring their craft in appropriate levels of wind and swell*
- *An efficient forward paddle stroke*
- *Fitness to complete longer journeys*
- *The confidence and ability to perform self-rescues and rescue others (deep water rescues)*
- *An ability to launch and land from beaches, rocks or slipways in small swell or surf*
- *An active member of a paddling group that takes responsibility for their own well-being and looks out for others*
- *Towing a kayak*
- *Familiarity with support strokes to keep you stable*
- *Can roll or learning how to*

Remit of leaders and coaches

The experience and likely sea and wind conditions at each level are given below; note these are not an exhaustive list, and individual events will be tailored to the level of the group. Please also remember that our leaders and coaches have to operate within their remit for insurance and safety reasons; but also so our members know that the leaders/coaches have had the necessary training and are able to operate at that level. Please also remember that the leaders and coaches cannot operate outside this remit, and this sometimes means events have to be cancelled, or if a weekend event, that you'll need to be prepared to do another activity e.g. walking or cycling, if sea conditions are not appropriate.

Note that the terms "sheltered", "moderate" and "advanced" are used as defined by British Canoeing (<https://www.britishcanoeingawarding.org.uk/environmental-definitions-and-technical-advice/>)

Level	Experience needed	Likely conditions/skills covered	Leader/coach level
Introductory	No sea kayaking experience needed. BUT you must have previous experience up to BC Explore level in general purpose kayaks. You need to be familiar with forward paddling, turning, capsize drill	Sheltered water: might be a small surf or swell (less than 0.5m). Wind Beaufort F 3 or less. Forward paddling; turning; capsize and deep water rescue; support strokes. Journey along coast with several landing spots	Sheltered water coach
Intromediate	Need to have done a coached introductory 2 day weekend in sea kayaks (with AOAC or elsewhere). Note if you haven't had any coaching please attend an introductory weekend first	Sheltered/some moderate. Some coaching in sheltered water to recap and consolidate skills as above; and/or a journey along the coast or an estuary if conditions permit. Mainly light wind and swell, but some exposure to up to 1m swell/surf and up to F4 wind to experience moderate conditions	Sheltered water coach with sea kayak leader present. Or Sea kayak leader (moderate water) offering top tips
Intermediate	Familiar with support strokes to keep you stable; competent at deep water rescues; able to tow. Can roll or learning how to. At about level of BC sea kayak award. Approx 10-20 days on the water	Moderate. Swell and surf up to 1m, wind up to F4. Top tips given on handling surf and swell; rescue and rolling practice; journeys along the coast or to islands. Able to paddle approx. 20km and stay in the boat for an hour without a break. Be an active group member; competent at rescuing and being rescued in deep water. Learning to roll and self rescue; might be working towards leadership qualification.	Sea kayak leader (moderate water)
Intermediate Plus	Comfortable in moderate conditions; ready to progress to more advanced conditions Working towards/at level of BC Coastal Sea Kayak Award Approx 20-30 days on the water	Moderate/some advanced. Including introduction to tide races and offshore islands; confident in rescues in conditions. Ability to roll and self-rescue. Swell and surf might be greater than 1m; may be no easy landing places for 2 or more hours. Required to paddle against F 4-5 wind. Be an active member of the group.	Sea kayak advanced leader
Advanced	Able to paddle in and against F5 wind, in swell of over 1m. Fit and able to paddle at approx. 5km/hr for several hours. Experience of tide races and rescues in conditions. Solid skills at level of BC Coastal Sea Kayak Award.	Moderate/advanced –tide races, swell of up to 2m, surf of over 1m. May involve long distances without getting out of the kayak at about 5km/hr. Ability to roll and self-rescue in conditions. Good level of fitness required; active group member	Sea kayak advanced leader