



Level 2: Essentials of Stand Up Paddleboarding (SUP) Instructor Criteria

Course Overview

Fundamentally, participants are expected to have the paddling skills, technical knowledge, rescue ability, teaching ability, group management, and interpersonal skills commensurate with this level of certification prior to presenting themselves for evaluation as Instructor Candidates at an Instructor Certification Course (IDW, ICE, or ICW).

Course Prerequisites

- Acknowledgement of personal compliance with the [ACA Essential Eligibility Criteria \(EEC\)](#).
- Be a current ACA member
- Completion of the appropriate level skills course, assessment course, or equivalent skill is recommended

Course Duration

Combined Instructor Development Workshop (IDW) and Instructor Certification Exam (ICE) - Minimum 4 days (32 hours). Up to 8 hours may be virtual at the discretion of the Instructor Trainer.

Course Location / Accessible Venues

- Waterway with access to safe landing within 0.5 nautical miles/0.9 kilometers from shore (required)
- 5 - 10 knot winds (required)
- Note: conditions should not exceed 1 foot/0.3 meters waves or 2 knot currents

Course Size

5 Instructor Candidates : 1 Instructor Trainer; with an additional qualified assistant, the ratio can be 10 : 2. The maximum number of instructor candidates permitted is 10.

For additional details, see [SEIC Policy Manual Chapter 6](#).

Instructor Trainer

This certification course may be offered by Level 2: Essentials of SUP (or higher) ACA Instructor Trainers or Instructor Trainer Educators.

Succeeding Courses

- Level 3: Surf Stand Up Paddleboarding
- Level 3: Coastal Stand Up Paddleboarding

- Level 3: River Stand Up Paddleboarding
 - Level 4: Whitewater Stand Up Paddleboarding
 - Level 5: Advanced Whitewater SUP
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General Requirements for all ACA Certification Candidates

- Be at least 18 years old
- Demonstrate general knowledge of [ACA Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion \(DEI\) initiatives](#)
- Successfully complete an Instructor Certification Workshop (combined ICW or IDW and ICE)
- Upon successful completion, register with the [Safety Education and Instruction Council](#)
- Have and maintain venue-appropriate first aid and age-appropriate CPR
- Demonstrate a general knowledge of paddlesports and the ACA
- Demonstrate the ability to appropriately perform, model, and teach all of the material contained within the official ACA skills course and assessment course outlines corresponding to their level of certification and all levels below, if applicable
- Demonstrate the ability to appropriately perform, model, and teach all of the following material, unassisted, in the appropriate venue
- Demonstrate the ability to appropriately perform, model, and teach all of the material contained within the official ACA skills course and assessment course outlines corresponding to their level of certification and all levels below, if applicable.

Certification Maintenance Requirements

- Teach a minimum of two courses that meet ACA standards within the four-year certification period and properly report the courses using the ACA [Course Management System \(CMS\)](#). At least one course must be at their highest level of certification
- Complete an Instructor Update, at the highest level of certification, during the four-year certification period
- Maintain ACA membership and SEIC registration annually
- Maintain appropriate CPR and first aid certification for the duration of certification

ACA Level 2: Essentials of SUP Instructor Requirements

The following is a list of the criteria used to evaluate Instructor Candidates. The content covered and sequence of evaluation should be adjusted to best fit the participant's needs, class location and time allowance, and be craft appropriate.

Demonstrate a knowledge of ACA administrative processes

- How to register and report a course (with and without insurance)
- An understanding of the ACA Waiver and Release of Liability
- Familiarity with the ACA website and the resources and SEIC policies available

Demonstrate a knowledge of teaching and learning theory

- Understand multiple modalities of teaching and how they impact different learners
- Differentiate instruction targeting different learners
- Use effective teaching methods including appropriate skills progressions when teaching complex skill sets
- Present information effectively, both prepared and impromptu
- Effectively make documented skill assessments
- Focus on **core principles** rather than specific techniques
- Provide appropriate, specific, and meaningful feedback

Demonstrate the following

- Positive interpersonal skills
- Appropriate group management skills including leadership and judgment
- Ability to choose an appropriate venue / class site

Demonstrate ability to paddle efficiently and comfortably in venue utilizing:

- Board stability (trim, posture, rocking, balance, etc.)
- Efficient and effective paddle placement for intended maneuver
- Safe and effective body usage: bio-mechanics (body, linkage, and rotation)
- Parts of strokes: CPR (catch, power, recovery), static and dynamic

Model, teach and assess the following skills in Level 2 conditions. Emphasis should be placed on paddle articulation (Catch - Power - Recovery), fluid transitions, utilization of board trim, and effective transfer of power from the paddle through the feet.

Stances

- Prone
- Sitting
- Kneeling
- Standing - neutral with variation/slight stagger
- Hybrid/modified stance
- Surf stance
- Footwork: regular & goofy stance

Strokes

- Forward stroke: demonstrate at least two effective forward stroke techniques using efficient transfer of power at varying speeds in a variety of conditions.
- Canted forward stroke: modifying blade angle and catch position to maintain direction of travel.
- Reverse stroke

- Sweeps (forward / reverse): modifying the path of the paddle for most effective power delivery
- Draws (side, sculling, hanging draw, draw on the move)
- Draws to nose/tail and cross nose (static and dynamic): modifying the path and the angle of the paddle for most efficiency

Maneuvers

- Launching and landing: beach, dock, shoreline
- Forward paddling: paddle 200 feet (61 meters) in a straight line without changing sides; must demonstrate on both the right and left side (e.g., canted stroke or other effective means)
- Reverse paddling: paddle backwards 2 board lengths maintaining directional control without switching sides (e.g., reverse stroke & cross nose draw combination or other effective means)
- Stop: completely stop the SUP from a good speed in less than 2 board lengths
- Bracing: allowing the body to recover and maintain balance using the paddle as a support when falling towards or away from the blade
- 360: rotate SUP 360 degrees using forward sweeps, reverse sweeps, draw to nose, and cross nose draws
- Lateral movement: use draws to travel sideways 20 feet (6 meters) on both sides
- Turning on the move: sweep strokes and static draws while underway to turn board
- Board trim: transfer weight from nose to tail and rail to rail to affect momentum and maneuverability
- Side slip: move board sideways while underway to avoid an obstacle (i.e., draw on the move or hanging draw)
- Pivot turn: pivot 180 degrees in place with weighted tail
- Moving pivot turn: pivot 180 degrees while underway with weighted tail
- Paddle a course using a variety of Level 2 strokes and maneuvers with an emphasis on blended strokes, controlled tight turns, and efficient board control while maintaining momentum (e.g., figure of 8 course or other effective means)

Rescues

- Techniques for falling
- Board remount
- Assisted remounts
 - Side-by-side
 - Board flip rescue
 - Or other effective means
- Methods for board and gear recovery
- Towing
 - Contact Tow
 - Leash Tow

- Tow Line
- Or other effective means
- Rescue priorities
 - STEVE: Self, Team, Everyone else, Victim, Equipment
 - SAFER: Stop, Assess, Formulate, Execute, Review/Reflect
 - T-RETHROG: Talk, REach, THrow, ROw, Go
- Communication within the group and to the outside world
 - Float Plan
 - Paddle signals
 - Whistle use
 - Cell Phone, VHF Radio, AIS System (based on venue)

SUP Knowledge

- History of SUP
 - Indigenous roots to modern day SUP
- SUP equipment
 - SUP Board
 - Design (all-around, touring, racing, surf, whitewater)
 - Construction (composite, plastic, inflatable, foam board)
 - Parts
 - How to carry: 2-person, solo handle, solo overhead or other effective means
 - SUP Paddle
 - Design (intended use, blade angle, blade size, shape)
 - Construction (composite, plastic, aluminum, foam core blade, wood)
 - Parts
 - Sizing (fixed and adjustable paddles)
 - Effective hand placement on the paddle
 - Life Jackets (PFDs)
 - Inflatable
 - Inherently buoyant
 - How to properly fit and use a PFD
 - SUP leash
 - Types (coiled, straight, combo, quick release)
 - Parts
 - When and how to use

- Safety Equipment
 - Dry bags, waterproof containers, deck bags
 - First aid kit
 - Repair kit
 - Communication devices (cell phones, VHF radio, etc.)
 - Sound signaling device (whistle)
 - Tow Rope
 - Additional gear for your paddling environment (signaling devices, white light, hydration & snacks, extra layers of clothing, etc.)

Environmental Conditions

- Evaluate environmental conditions
 - Weather conditions, forecasts, and other environmental hazards
 - 4Ws: Water, Weather, Wind, Waves
 - Current dynamics and hazards (river and/or tidal)
 - Distance from shore
 - How to prevent cold water shock, hypothermia and hyperthermia and how to recognize and treat early symptoms
- Evaluate hazards
 - Launching/landing
 - Navigational rules of the road
 - How to plan an appropriate course to avoid potential hazardous situations
- Paddler and instructor awareness
 - Review the curriculum in Level 1 Instructor Criteria and Nows document
 - Create a welcoming environment for everyone
 - Select appropriate venue for group and experience
 - Inspect the board and all safety equipment to meet state, federal, and local requirements for the vessel and activity
 - Leave No Trace ethics
 - Awareness of SUP destinations for all levels of paddlers in the area

Group and Incident Management Skills

- Evaluating ability, water comfort, and confidence of participants prior to trip
- Effective strategies to prepare physically and mentally for paddling
- Importance of developing good judgment and group responsibility for a trip
- Awareness of the group and effective on-water management techniques

- Effective route planning and a back-up for a Level 2 outing/class/trip
- Communication Strategies
 - Pre-trip communication
 - Put-in/launch briefing
 - On-Water communication
 - CLAP: Communication, Line of Sight, Awareness/Avoidance, Position
 - Paddle/whistle signals
 - VHF radios
- Elements of a float plan (who, what, when, where, filing practices)
- Group and personal equipment and preparations
- Debrief/Reflections/Check for retention

Note:

An ACA Level 2: Essentials of SUP Instructor is expected to be able to demonstrate and teach everything on the Level 2: Skills Course and Level 2: Skills Assessment for their craft.

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This curriculum is managed by the ACA SUP Committee. To connect with the leadership of this committee, please view the SEIC Committee rosters on [the ACA website](#).