

Assessing Adventure Skills (transitioned Groups only)

This document outlines the procedure involved in the assessment and awarding of the Adventure Skills stage badges. This is an interim procedure for three years which will be reviewed during the summer of 2013.

It is important for all Scouters to understand that at all times the association's Safety Guidelines and Boating Guidelines must be adhered to when undertaking Adventure Skills. Please note that the term 'Scout' refers to all youth members, be they Beaver Scouts, Cub Scouts, Scouts, Venture Scouts or Rover Scouts.

Scout Skills and External Skills

For the purposes of assessment the nine Adventure Skills have been grouped into Scout Skills and External Skills:

Scout Skills	<i>Camping, Backwoods, Pioneering</i>
External Skills	<i>Emergencies, Hillwalking, Air Activities, Paddling, Rowing, Sailing</i>

Peer Assessment

The preferred method of assessment is Peer Assessment. This is where one Scout assesses another for an Adventure Skills stage badge. At all times however the **Two-up** rule must be observed, which means that the Scout must hold a stage two higher than that being assessed. So for example, a Venture Scout who holds Stage 5 Air Activities can only assess another Scout up to Stage 3 Air Activities. Peer Assessment is to be encouraged at all times.

Assessment by Scouters

Scouters can assess stages 1 to 6 of the Scout Skills and stages 1 to 5 of the External Skills, so long as they have the relevant knowledge and experience to do so. Using the Adventure Skills Handbook the Scouter should carry out a **Self Assessment** to determine that they have the relevant knowledge and experience to assess a stage. If after carrying out a Self Assessment the Scouter believes they do not have the relevant knowledge and experience to assess a stage they should look to bring in assistance. Please see 'Bringing in Assistance' below.

Advanced Stages

The Advanced Stages are those stages of the Adventure Skills where there is close correlation to external skill qualifications or a high degree of organisational responsibility. The Advanced Stages are:

Scout Skills	<i>Stages 7, 8 and 9</i>
External Skills	<i>Stages 6, 7, 8 and 9</i>

Assessment Criteria

Adventure Skill	Scout Skills: <i>Camping, Backwoods, Pioneering</i>	External Skills: <i>Emergencies, Hillwalking, Air Activities, Paddling, Rowing, Sailing</i>
Stage 1	Scouters can assess	Scouters can assess
Stage 2	Scouters can assess	Scouters can assess
Stage 3	Scouters can assess	Scouters can assess
Stage 4	Scouters can assess	Scouters can assess
Stage 5	Scouters can assess	Scouters can assess
Stage 6	Scouters can assess	Holder of stage 8 or 9 (or external experts) can assess

Stage 7	Holders of stage 8 or 9 can assess	Holders of stage 9 (or external experts) can assess
Stage 8	Two holders of stage 9 (or external experts) must assess jointly	Two holders of stage 9 (or external experts) must assess jointly
Stage 9	Two holders of stage 9 different to those who assessed stage 8 (or external experts) must assess jointly	Two holders of stage 9 different to those who assessed stage 8 (or external experts) must assess jointly

Adventure Skill Expert Panel

The **Team Lead** for each Adventure Skill is responsible for putting together an Expert Panel for their Adventure Skill. The Expert Panel is a pool of Scouters who have been assessed to Stage 7, 8 and 9 standard, as well as Scouts who hold those stage badges. CPC's will have details of those on the panel of each Adventure Skill in their County.

The role of the Expert Panel is as follows:

1. To assess Scouts for the Advanced Stages.
2. To assess Scouters for the Advanced Stages to allow them to become members of the Expert Panel.

Once a Scouter has become a member of the Expert panel he/she is free to assess Scouts for the Advanced Stages as outlined above.

Upon successful assessment, the Expert Panel member will give the Scouter / Scout a completion certificate to allow him or her to be awarded the relevant badge as per below. (This will also act as a voucher for the purchase of the badge from The Scout Shop).

Awarding of Stage Badges

Once a Scout has been assessed for a stage by any of those mentioned above, there should be a simple decision taken to award the badge by the following:

Beaver Scouts The Beaver Section Scouters
Cubs Scouts The Sixers Council
Scouts The Patrol Leaders Council
Venture Scouts The Venture Scout Executive
Rover Scouts The Rover Crew

As these are the groups who should award badges in the various sections, it is important that they confirm that the assessment has indeed taken place and that they then 'sign off' on that assessment, allowing the Scout to be awarded the badge.

Purchasing of Stage Badges

All stage badges are available from the Scout Shop. To purchase one of the Advanced Stage badges a Scout or Scouter must present a voucher to the Scout Shop which has been given to them by the member of the Expert Panel who assessed them. The other stage badges can simply be purchased as required by a Scout or Scouter.

Bringing in Assistance

Each Scouter will have different levels of knowledge and experience in each of the Adventure Skills. The Scouter should determine what stage they feel comfortable at for each, and should only assess his or her Scouts to that stage. Where a Scouter feels that he or she does not have the relevant knowledge and experience to assess the stages indicated above as “Scouter can Assess”, training and assessment of an Adventure Skill stage can be done by any one of the following:

1. Other Scouters.
2. A Scout that holds a Stage two higher than that being assessed.
3. Programme Centres.
4. Adventure Skill Expert Panel.
5. An External Expert.

Scouters should keep in mind that to award an “Advanced Stage” they must be affiliated to the relevant “Expert Panel”.

Other Scouters in the Group and County

Different Scouters will have varying knowledge and experience in different Adventure Skills, and Scout Groups should have carried out a skills audit as part of their preparation for ONE Programme. Just as Scout Groups should have a knowledge of the skills held by each Scouter in the Group, it makes sense for a similar approach to be taken in the County. Scouters should not be afraid to approach other Scouters in neighbouring Groups to ask for assistance if those Scouters have the relevant knowledge and experience in the Adventure Skill the Scouts wish to develop.

Scouts in the section or other sections in the Group (Peer Assessment)

Scouters should be aware that individual Scouts may well have a much higher level of knowledge and experience in a particular Adventure Skill. At all times however the ‘Two-up’ rule must be observed. For a Scout to carry out an assessment, he or she must hold a stage two higher than that being assessed.

Programme Centres

A number of Scouting Ireland Programme Centres and Campsites offer courses for different stages of different Adventure Skills. Typically these will be Stages 4 through to 7. Scouters should note however that in most cases a single weekend course will not be sufficient to attain a stage. It is most likely that a certain amount of preparation work will need to be done before the event and further experience will need to be gained after the course. For more details check out the Adventure Skills section on scouts.ie.

The Adventure Skill Expert Panel

The main body of work for Expert Panels is to assess the Advanced Stages, both for Scouts seeking to achieve the stage badges and for Scouters who wish to be added to a Panel. However, members of this panel may also be available to assist individual sections if they so wish with the other stages.

External experts

Outdoor centres or individual qualified instructors can be used by sections to teach and assess stages in much the same way as the Programme Centres. They will be useful for Hillwalking, Air Activities, Paddling and Sailing which have external bodies and qualifications. Lists of acceptable external experts will be available on the Adventure Skills section of scouts.ie.

As can be seen, there are ample opportunities for a Scouter to bring in someone to work with his or her Scouts. A lack of knowledge on the part of the individual Scouter should not hold back the Scouts from progressing through the Adventure Skills.