

Outrigger Santa Cruz

Steps for Becoming an Accredited Steersperson for OC6 fiberglass single hull canoes (Rev. March, 2024)

Welcome to the steps for becoming an Accredited Steersperson. Please read the entire document before deciding to begin the process. **(Note: A list of acronyms is at the end of this document.)**

OSC wants to help you become an Accredited Steersperson (AS). With the recent growth in the club membership, we need more steerspeople to help as many people get out on the water as possible. You may also go through the process without becoming a AS (See next paragraph). The information covered in workshops, videos, books, materials is invaluable for all paddlers. Anyone who meets the prerequisites below can begin pursuing AS status. You will learn skills that will help you become a better paddler, leader, and develop a greater love for the sport. When you become an AS, OSC expects you to maintain your steering skills and give back to the OSC community. An AS is responsible for minimizing the following risks to the greatest extent possible: Injury to the crew, damage to property, and injury/damage to other people/vessels on the water.

Every paddler should learn how to steer. Knowing what the steersperson is doing will give you cues as to what each of you as paddlers must do in return. To learn how to steer, you have to learn about water and how it affects the canoe. The more each paddler knows about how the water affects the canoe, the better each paddler will be wherever they sit in the canoe. As an AS, you ultimately determine the course, the stroke rate, the change frequency, when to pass another canoe, when to increase or decrease power, when to bail, and what to do in the case of a huli, in conjunction with a designated captain or coach. You, more than any other paddler in the canoe, will contribute to, or detract from, the progress of the canoe.

Mental and Physical Prerequisites

- Demonstrated paddling stamina and endurance, recommend ability to paddle 6-8 miles with no/minimal rests.
- Strong competent paddler with extensive experience in the canoe. Recommend three years of paddling, but this can be waived in cases of experience in other ocean water activities or other factors.
- Excellent leadership skills, including a calm demeanor and ability to take charge during crisis situations.
- Ability to enter a Spec canoe from the water without assistance.
- Have a positive attitude.
- Understand and cultivate the mission of OSC: "Develop, implement and promote outrigger canoe paddling for all people without regard to age, gender, creed, ethnicity, or physical ability or disability".
- Demonstrate OSC's Code of Conduct.

The Steps for Becoming an Accredited Steersperson are as follows:

Step 1: Review the prerequisites. Make that sure you meet or exceed them. If you are not sure, check with AS's who have paddled with you. Your ASM will make the final decision on if you meet the prerequisites.

Step 2: Talk to current Accredited Steerspersons about your interest in steering. To get a sense of what you are getting into as a potential accredited steersperson, you should watch Steve West, "Profile of an Outrigger Canoe Steersman," and read "How to Steer an Outrigger Canoe" by Joshua O'Connor, available on the OSC Steering Resources webpage. If you are still interested in becoming a steersperson, begin to familiarize yourself with the information on the Steering Resources webpage. It is recommended you begin the Accredited Steersperson process by having initial conversations about steering with other AS's in the club. This is just the early phase, and you will refer to these resources and have follow-on conversations during your training.

Step 3: Study the information on the OSC Steering Resources webpage. Steering classes will also be offered by OSC periodically. The OSC Steering Resource web page is a deep resource with book suggestions, videos, and previously taped club seminars. Since all paddling is done either in the harbor or in the ocean, you should also begin to familiarize yourself with the following resources: Santa Cruz Port District website and Surfline website.

Step 4: Find an ASM. Review the list of ASM's (the list is available at the following link) when you are ready to become a SIT. Consult with the leaders/coaches of the paddling group that you would like to practice steering with. Although you are responsible for setting the pace of your training, the ASM will oversee and guide you through the training process. Once you have found an ASM and the ASM has agreed to be your ASM, email the Steering Coordinator. As mentioned in Step 1, your ASM must agree that you fulfill all prereqs. If the ASM has any reservations about the SIT not meeting the prerequisites, the ASM should inform the SC.

Step 5: Learn the art and skill of steering. Practice steering with your ASM and SAS' as much as possible. It is highly recommended you steer with several different SAS's during your training so you can experience a variety of coaching styles and information. Also, when you are ready for the final evaluation, you will want to have a few ASE's who have supervised you during your training. It is important that the ASE's know how you command and control your crews before the final evaluation. During this time, you may practice in seat 6 with a current SAS in seat 5 enabling you to perform all duties of an Accredited Steersperson in good to moderate conditions. The assigned SAS retains the responsibility for the safety of the canoe and crew and may elect to keep the SIT in seat 5.

You should keep a log of your steering practices (The log form can be found at the following link) You should share your log with your ASM periodically to help guide your training. The ASM, ASE or SC may ask to review your log.

Step 6: Complete the open-book test. The test is available at the following link. Most of the information you will need to know to pass this test is available on the Steering Resources webpage or should have been learned during your training. Any incorrect answers will be discussed with you.

Step 7: Pass the final evaluation for assessing your skills. When your ASM, in consultation with other SAS's who have supervised you, determines that you are ready, the last step is to pass an assessment of your skills by your ASM and two other objective ASE's, assigned by the SC. (A list of Evaluators is available at this link) (Note: The SC should assign ASE's who have sat in a canoe while being steered by the SIT.) This will be an evaluation of your overall steering skills including recovering from a huli (see the evaluation checklist below.) There will be at least one ASE sitting in your canoe during the evaluation. The other two ASEs will either sit in your canoe or observe from another water vessel within close proximity. Passing requires unanimous agreement and endorsement by the three ASEs. If the SIT does not pass, the ASEs should subsequently provide feedback and guidance on areas of needed improvement to focus on additional training before re-doing the evaluation at a later date. The ASM/ASEs should notify the SC as soon as the SIT has passed their evaluation.

Step 8: Once you have passed your final evaluation, the SC will submit your name to the Board and your name will be added to the Accredited Steersperson list on the OSC website.

Final Evaluation For Accreditation Checklist (to be completed with a full crew assigned by the SC)

- Demonstrate OSC's pre-launch safety check.
- Launch an OC6 into the water.
- Remove an OC6 from the water.
- Hold a canoe in position in the open ocean adjacent to a fixed object such as a buoy for 2 minutes.
- Maintain a straight heading for 1/2 mile.
- Execute a 180 degree turn around a buoy.
- Back up in a straight line to a target 50 yards away.
- Park an OC6 at the storage area.
- Explain the "rules of the road" for water vessels and sections 216, 217, and 217.1 of the Port District Ordinances.
- Explain how the current ocean conditions will affect the OC6 during the final evaluation.
- Demonstrate how to maneuver successfully in and out of the harbor entrance.
- Explain the roles of each seat.
- Execute a successful huli recovery.
- Explain how you would assist a paddler who cannot enter the canoe after a huli.
- Demonstrate docking an OC6.
- Explain how to report an incident.
- Command and control a crew. (Note: SIT's should try to utilize ASE's during their training so the ASE can become familiar with the SIT's command and control of a crew)
- Demonstrate how to use a two-way marine radio.
- Demonstrate how to rig a lako to an Ama with the OSC jig.

Acronyms

- SIT = Steersperson in Training
- SAS = Supervising Accredited Steersperson
- ASM = Accredited Steersperson Mentor
- ASE = Accredited Steersperson Evaluator
- SC = Steering Coordinator