Welcome Letter

Dear ACA Instructor Candidate:

Thank you for enrolling in the American Canoe Association Instructor Certification Workshop (ICW) to be held July 30-August 2, 2026. This 4 day workshop will be a time to hone your paddling skills, develop your competency as an instructor, and have a great time in the process. Please read this letter and the online resources carefully to ensure that you come prepared to be an active participant.

This letter provides an overview of the course, along with links to resources that will help you prepare:

OBXpaddler.com - Instructor Cert.

Please bookmark this site and visit it regularly to familiarize yourself with the following resources (click on Instructor Cert. to see following submenu):

Welcome/Overview
Course Outline
ACA Website and Documents
Instructor Manual & Resources
Videos (stokes, maneuvers and rescues)
Homework (and related resources)

I will plan to offer a Zoom session in the next week or two. In the meantime, please start to familiarize yourself with these resources.

The course will present a great deal of information to you on topics including efficient paddling technique, teaching styles and strategies, and safe management of a beginning kayak class on the water. Throughout the workshop, information will be passed on not only by the instructor trainers, but by the instructor candidates as well.

Instructor Certification Process

The Instructor Development Workshop (IDW) introduces and gives candidates through exposure to, and practice with the information and skills necessary to pass the ACA Instructor Certification Exam and effectively teach the ACA curriculum for the courses specified. The workshop focuses on obtaining technical paddling knowledge, experiencing various teaching techniques, and modeling paddling skills effectively. In other words, this workshop is designed to teach you how to teach paddling to beginning paddlers.

The Instructor Certification Exam (ICE) evaluates the instructor candidate regarding their skills as an instructor. Your performance at the ICE should reflect the standard of knowledge presented at the IDW, as well as any current advances in the field.

Our upcoming course is an Instructor Certification Workshop (ICW), which combines both the IDW and IDE. Throughout the workshop, you will receive feedback from the other candidates as well as the Instructor Trainers. In addition, each instructor candidate will meet with the instructor trainers at the conclusion of the workshop for evaluation of the candidate's areas of strengths, needed improvements and potential certification as an ACA Instructor.

Certification Requirements: To participate in an IDW/ICE, you must be an ACA member. The annual ACA membership fee is $40. In order to become certified as an ACA instructor, you must also join the Safety Education and Instruction Committee (SEIC) for an additional $30. This may be done after completing the ICW. Please visit the ACA website at **https://americancanoe.org** for more information about membership.

Throughout the certification process, candidates will be instructed and evaluated in the following primary areas:

- Perform paddling skills consistently with demonstration quality
- Demonstrate effective teaching skills
- Demonstrate technical knowledge
- Demonstrate appropriate safety & rescue ability
- Demonstrate effective group / course management and positive interpersonal skills

Successful candidates participate actively in all parts of the workshop and exhibit leadership, a positive attitude and strong interpersonal skills. In general, expect the course to be both physically and mentally demanding, with long hours both in the classroom and on the water. Despite all of that, it will also be fun!

As an ACA Instructor Candidate, you are responsible for a working knowledge of all the material relevant to the level of certification you are seeking. Please carefully review the ACA website at **https://americancanoe.org**, paying particular attention to the Education Tab and page "FOR INSTRUCTORS." This site includes valuable information about Instructor Certification, Course Insurance, Registration and Reporting, Course Outlines, and Instructor Criteria.

Logistics:

Candidates should bring all of their personal equipment, including a sea kayak and accessories to be on and in the water. Let me know if you need help with this.

The course will begin promptly at 8:30 A.M. You should arrive on time with all materials you need for the day. Please bring a lunch each day that can be transported in your kayak. Be prepared, Be Flexible, and Be Self-Contained

Teaching Assignments:
During the course, each Instructor Candidate will be assigned teaching topics to present to the class. These may include classroom, shore-side and on-water topics. These presentations should be concise talks (time limits will be specified) geared to beginning students in a Level 2 ACA course. This is not a chance for you to tell us how much you know, but rather to demonstrate how well you can sort through all the available information to give a beginner what they need to know in an efficient and effective manner.

A list of 10-minute teaching topics is included in the course outline. Please pick a first and second choice and let me know your selections. You do not need to be fully prepared when you arrive on day one, but you should start your preparations.

In addition, each participant will be assigned an impromptu 5 minute mini presentation on very basic topics which should be familiar to all instructors (sizing of PFD's, parts of the craft or paddle, etc.). You may also be assigned one additional topic during the course to be team-taught with another candidate later in the workshop. Resource materials and information will be available, but in preparation for the workshop we encourage you to start accruing reference materials on your own.

Additional information: For any questions, please contact me (Roland) at 301 379 1392 or email me at roland.mcdevitt@gmail.com

I look forward to a fun and productive workshop. Our goals are to facilitate your growth as an instructor by developing and refining your teaching and paddling skills, and to evaluate your readiness to teach for the ACA. We hope that you will go on to complete the certification process and promote the ACA and safe kayaking.

Sincerely,
Roland McDevitt
ACA Instructor Trainer Candidate

Ashley Brown
ACA Instructor Trainer Educator