

Notes for candidates taking an Irish Sailing Dinghy Instructor Pre-entry Assessment

The pre entry assessment comes in three parts:

1. On the water assessment
2. Knots assessment
3. Written paper (can be completed orally if required – [sample papers here](#))

The assessment is a **pass or fail**, and serves only one purpose: to make sure that you have the skills and knowledge to attend a sailing instructor course.

If you pass, the assessor may point out some areas that you should brush up on for the instructor course you plan on attending.

If you fail you should look at this as an opportunity to improve on the areas of your sailing skills/knowledge that require some work before you can attend an instructor course.

What to do before attending a pre entry assessment

1. Practice all of the skills (practical assessment) in a double hander, as crew as and as helm.
2. Study for the written / oral assessment. There are 3 ISA pre entry exam papers and these are available [here](#). You will be given one of these three during the assessment.
3. Know what the weather is doing before, during and after the assessment
4. If you are not sure ask (the assessor is there to pass people that have the skills and knowledge to become instructors)

What next (after the pre entry)

Make sure you have all of the pre requisites to attend an instructor course -

1. Pre entry certificate (pass).
2. Age 16.5 years of age to attend a course.
3. Irish Sailing National powerboat certificate (NPC) endorsed for tiller and console.
4. 20 hours of powerboat experience logged after completing National Powerboat Cert.
5. Current first aid certificate (8 hours minimum course duration covering CPR and hypothermia).
6. Irish Sailing Garda vetting
7. Sport Ireland Safeguarding 1

An overview of the assessment

It takes a full day to complete the assessment.

There is a briefing in the morning to run through the assessment and answer any questions you may have.

You will be asked about the current weather and tide conditions; what is expected, what is happening, any change that might occur, why this is happening (e.g. low/high pressure, sea breeze, front etc.).

Depending on weather/ tide, the water based part is normally the first part of the assessment.

Helpful hints:

Remember the assessor is there to pass people and will give you every opportunity to show that you have the skills and knowledge necessary to become an ISA Instructor.

- 1. If something is unclear at any point ask for clarification.*
- 2. Be honest with yourself and the assessor.*

Program (example)

am Briefing followed by 2-4hours On The Water Assessment

Get changed have lunch☺

pm 1 hour written paper (Use the sample ISA pre entry papers to prepare)

You will have some oral questions on tuning, weather and anything that is unclear from your paper

De brief: 5-10 minute individual debrief with the assessor where you will receive your pre entry certificate.

On The Water Assessment Skills Assessed (full breakdown on pages 3-12)

1. Rigging
2. Launch and Recover
3. Follow the Leader
4. Sail a Triangle
5. Rudderless
6. Manoeuvres
7. Coming Along Side
8. Picking Up A Mooring
9. Man Over Board
10. Tight Circles
11. Capsize
12. Knots

On the Water Assessment

Managing your time is your responsibility. Change quickly, rig and get on the water for the required time. Warm up sail for 30 minutes to get you and your crew ready and to check that the boat is set up and working properly. The assessment takes place on an Olympic triangle around 200m+ beat, in 10-18knots of wind. It will take roughly 4-5 minutes to sail around the course effectively. Some allowance will be made in respect of assessment criteria if conditions are adverse (e.g. wind strength exceeds the recommended).

Helpful hints

Throughout this guide, you will be given helpful hints showing the assessment points (AP's) that the assessor is looking for. The assessor will use an assessment sheet similar to that in a driving test. Here we have included an example with additional information on the assessment criteria for each skill. You will receive a mark in every category.

1. ● (AP) performed at the required standard
2. ○ (AP) not at the required standard
3. © (AP) unsuccessfully attempted

The scoring system for the assessment is as follows:

- a. AP's marked with a * MUST be to the required standard.
- b. 10 AP's are allowed NOT at the required standard.
- c. 2 AP's are allowed to be unsuccessfully attempted.

AP	Assessment criteria	Mark
Launch and recovery		
Control	(stopping on the slip, leaving with purpose)	©
Safe*	(don't jump out of the boat, crowd the slip, or impact on anyone else)	●

In this example the candidate may pass the assessment dependant on the rest for the test

Control	(stopping on the slip, leaving with purpose)	©
Safe*	(don't jump out of the boat, crowd the slip, or impact on anyone else)	©

In this example the candidate will not pass the assessment

Rigging

Helpful hint:

Check the boat before launching. You are responsible for checking that it is rigged properly. Make sure all halyards are tidied away, bungs in etc. and tune the sails before launching. Always re-tune once on the water (if there is a problem with the boat notify the assessor immediately).

Assessment criteria

Rigging	
AP	Assessment criteria
Safe *	(tidy boat, fit for propose)
Tuning	(outhaul, kicker, cunningham)

Launch & recover

Helpful hints

You will be responsible for launching or recovering the boat. The 2 assessment criteria below apply to everything that you do for the day.

Assessment criteria

Launch and recover	
AP	Assessment criteria
Control	Stop on the slip, leave with purpose
Safe *	Don't jump out of the boat, crowd the slip, or impact on anyone else's safety

Follow the leader

Helpful hints

You will be assessed on the gap between you and the following boat, but do be aware of the boat in front of you. The candidate group will be asked to sail in company (follow the leader) from the holding area after launching to the sailing area. You will be given a signal to leave and a leader appointed. Form a line in a timely fashion. Don't sail away from the group.

Assessment criteria

Follow the leader	
AP	Assessment criteria
Control *	Maintain minimum 1 boat length and not more than 2 boat lengths between boats

Sail a triangle

Helpful hints

Sail to best advantage i.e. apply the five essentials. Relax, sail efficiently around the course focussing on good application of the 5 essentials. The five essentials will be considered continuously during the assessment but specifically during this exercise.

Assessment criteria

Sail a triangle	
AP	Assessment criteria
Flat boat	Use sheet control to keep the boat reasonably flat at all times, especially in gusts.
Hiking *	Helm to hike when appropriate the crew can trapeze if they wish.
Trim	Should be aware of reducing drag i.e. do not drag the transom.
Sails setting *	Set correctly for all points of sail. Jib & Main. Do not over sheet.
Course made good	Sail close hauled up wind, lay lines (don't sail beyond lay lines or further than required).
Rudder	Do not use excessively
Centre board	Set correctly for all points of sail
Tack	Close hauled to close hauled, maintain control (don't let go of sheet/ tiller)
Gybe	Broad reach to broad reach, maintain speed, maintain control (don't let go of controls)

Rudderless:

Helpful hints:

Using the same triangle as for the previous exercise....

Balance the forces in the boat using the 5 essentials. Adopt sailing position (i.e. not standing up wind, sitting or hiking on the windward side).

Assessment criteria:

Rudderless	
AP	Assessment criteria
Control *	Avoid collisions.
Up wind	Sail close to the wind but not necessarily close hauled.
Tacking *	Tack successfully without tacking again or gybing (two exceptions allowed).
Gybing	Do not round up past a beam reach, or allow the main sail to flap excessively after the gybe.
Helm *	In their appropriate sailing position.
Jib *	Properly set.

Manoeuvres

Helpful hints

Always be in control of the boat. The assessor can see this if you perform these manoeuvres at a controlled speed. Have an obvious escape route/plan.

Manoeuvres do not have to be completed on the first attempt but you must show control if aborting for a second attempt. Do perform these in a timely fashion as there is only a few hours to complete the assessment.

Never run into or over any buoys/boats.

Coming along side:

Helpful hints:

You will come alongside several times during the assessment. Approach on a close reach using the ‘fill and spill’ method to control speed. Hold onto the rib when alongside, don’t make heavy contact with the rib, consider the angle the coach boat is lying to the wind and come alongside the leeward side if it is not head to wind. When leaving, lift the centre board, back the jib and/or push the boom away from the coach boat.

Assessment criteria

Coming along side	
AP	Assessment criteria
Approach	Demonstrate speed control, appropriate approach angle relative to the wind.
Stop	Stop alongside the coach boat stern to stern stay in control.
Leaving *	Leave in a controlled manner.

Picking up a mooring:

Helpful hints

Sail near the mooring to check how the wind and tide may affect you. Check how you are going to attach to the mooring and prepare the painter. Pass it through the mark and attach it to the boat with a round turn and 2 half hitches.

Assessment criteria

Picking up a mooring	
AP	Assessment criteria
Approach	Demonstrate speed control, appropriate approach angle relative to the wind.
Stop *	Stop with the buoy at the windward shroud.
Tie on *	Tie on with your painter using the proper knot.
Settle boat	Remain on the mooring until the boat settles centre board up.
Leaving *	Leave in a controlled manner. Sail backwards away from the mark if possible

Man over board (simulated)

Helpful hints

Be aware that the simulated MOB will be heavy when immersed in the water.

You will have three minutes to rescue it (this should give you a second chance).

Your crew must not help and should sit on the centre board case with arms folded remaining silent. You will be given a general area to perform the manoeuvre, be aware of (don't place the man over board up tide of) potential hazards. Don't rush, take your time, 3 minutes is a long time.

Assessment criteria

Man over board	
AP	Assessment criteria
Approach	Demonstrate speed control, appropriate approach angle relative to the wind.
Gybe *	Do not gybe.
Stop	You must be stopped with MOB on windward shroud.
Collect	Collect at windward shroud.
Stay in control *	Do not tack when collecting.

Tight circles

Helpful hints

Sail smoothly by using a reasonably fixed amount of rudder and using the sails efficiently. Keep within a 1-2 boat length radius of the rib (there will be no tidal current to consider as the safety boat will be free floating). Try to keep the assessor at the centre of the circle. You are not required to adjust the centre board. Hand changes are expected after each tack and gybe.

Assessment criteria

Tight circles	
AP	Assessment criteria
Sheeting *	Sails not over sheeted or flapping excessively.
Body movement	Balance to keep the boat flat or leaning away from the rib.
Tiller	Use a reasonably fixed amount of rudder, do not fight the rudder.
Smooth	There will be no sharp corners in the wake line you draw with your boat. Tacking may require a little additional use of the rudder.

Capsize

Helpful hints

Don't lose contact with the boat. If you capsize during the assessment this is not a bad thing (every one capsizes). Perform a wet capsize, do not turtle the boat by hanging off of the gunnel or other parts.

Assessment criteria

Capsize recovery	
AP	Assessment criteria
Capsize recovery *	Without assistance

Knots

Helpful hints

Make sure you can tie all of the required knots. Know the uses/ advantages/ disadvantages of these knots. You are given a maximum time of 1 minute per knot.

Assessment criteria

Knots	
AP	Assessment criteria
Figure of 8 *	
Round turn and 2 half hitches *	
Bowline *	
Clove hitch	
Sheet bend	
Make off on a horn cleat	
Coil and secure a rope	

Assessor record sheet				Assessor:			
Date:				ISA Dingy instructor assessment			
Boat/Sail number							
Candidate Name							
Rigging							
Safe *							
Tuning							
Part of the boat							
Coming along side							
Approach							
Stop							
Leaving *							
Follow the leader							
Control *							
Sail a triangle							
Flat boat							
Hiking *							
Trim							
Sails setting *							
Course made good							
Rudder							
Centre board							
Tack							
Gybe							
Rudderless							
Control *							
Up wind							
Tacking *							
Gybing							
Helm *							
Jib *							

Boat/Sail number								
Candidate Name								
Launch and recover								
Control								
Safe *								
Picking up a mooring								
Approach								
Stop *								
Tie on *								
Settle boat								
Leaving *								
Man over board								
Approach								
Gybe *								
Stop								
Collect								
Stay in control *								
Tight circles								
Sheeting *								
Body movement								
Tiller								
Smooth								
Capsize recovery								
Capsize recovery *								
Knots								
Figure of 8 *								
RT & 2 HH *								
Bowline *								
Clove hitch								
Sheet bend								
Horn cleat								
Coil and secure								