

# QUALITY ASSURANCE ASSESSMENT

## US Sailing Community Sailing Accreditation Program

### Definitions

1. The US Sailing Quality Assurance (QA) program is a required element of the operating standards for all Accredited US Sailing community sailing programs. The QA program is conducted by appointed term and staff US Sailing representatives in the form of an evaluative inspection at the school's site of operation and facilities.

### Purpose

2. The purpose of the Quality Assurance program is to self-impose the highest standards of teaching excellence, customer satisfaction, professionalism, and integrity upon our Accredited US Sailing facilities, and to further ensure that each program consistently and repeatedly meets the high standards set forth by US Sailing. The goal of the US Sailing program, ultimately, is to provide the best possible sailing education to our US Sailing student candidates, and to promote safety, good seamanship, enjoyment, and competency in the sailing environment.

2.1. The QA Assessments are designed to ensure that all approved US Sailing schools are:

2.2. Provided with programmatic instruction and support to provide quality, value and satisfaction to students;

2.3. Adhering to the guidelines for accredited community sailing programs;

2.4. Operating with properly maintained, suitable equipment and facilities;

2.5. Operating with procedures commensurate with good business practices. Includes relevant documentation, record keeping, product ordering and tracking, and other US Sailing policies;

2.6. Taking adequate safety and accident prevention precautions, implementing and maintaining emergency and safety procedures, and carrying proper insurance;

2.7. Utilizing properly trained and accredited instructors per US Sailing, state and federal requirements;

2.8. Teaching the Little Red Book standards in a manner and scope acceptable to US Sailing, and such teaching is receiving positive feedback from students, and the teaching provided produces student candidates with certifications commensurate with the matching skill and knowledge sets required.

2.9. In addition to ensuring the above minimum standards for operation, the Quality assurance assessment is also designed to offer help and assistance where required or asked for, and to generally support the flow of information and requirements from US Sailing to community sailing programs and personnel in the field. It is also an opportunity for community sailing programs to discuss individual needs, policy issues, and any other relevant topics directly with US Sailing staff and appointed representatives.

### Frequency/Selection/Cost

3. Frequency

3.1. QA Assessments will not be conducted more often than annually at each approved facility on a random basis. However, a program may possibly be selected due to student survey results or other reasons as noted below.

3.2. How programs are selected for QA Assessments

3.2.1. Random

3.2.1.1. At the discretion of US Sailing, programs will be selected at random, or by geographical areas, or by other random method, until all accredited programs have been inspected. At that time, the random process will start over again. If the initial time period for all programs to be inspected is greater than one year, then the selected cycle will divide Quality assurance assessments evenly throughout the cycle.

3.3. With Advance Notice:

3.3.1. Most programs will receive at least a 30 day advance notice of a required QA Assessment so that adequate preparations and appropriate school personnel and staff can be present for the Assessment.

3.4. "Short" Notice:

3.4.1. US Sailing may, at its discretion, perform unannounced Assessments at any time. Such Assessments may, or may not, be full QA Assessments with all of the required Assessment elements. Selection requirements for Short Notice Assessments could result from student surveys, or could result simply from the fact that the US Sailing Facilitator was in the area. Short Notice Assessments may, or may not, result in the formal Denial of Accreditation and/or other actions outlined for standard routine announced and planned Assessments.

3.5. Other Causes

3.5.1. A program may be selected for a QA Assessments for any one of the following occurrences: Change of senior program staff, insolvency of the program, or teaching inactivity, or a gross breach of procedures or good business practice.

3.6. Costs

3.6.1. US Sailing and the Community Sailing Council reserve the right to impose a cost to each accredited program for the QA Assessment. Such costs will be billed at the time of Assessment, or via other means, dues, or collections as the Council or organization see fit.

## Parties to an Assessment

4. Parties

4.1. Facilitator

4.1.1. The Facilitator for all Assessments may be US Sailing staff or other appointed representative. The Facilitator's responsibility will be to conduct all QA Assessments through observations and evaluations while on-site. The Facilitator will also be responsible for reporting the results of each QA Assessment.

## Procedure

5. Procedure

5.1. Scope

5.1.1. Programs may expect QA Assessments no less frequently than once every three years, or more frequently for cause.

5.1.2. To assess each program accurately, the Assessment may be conducted during the most active part of that program's season. In order to minimize impact on a program, the

Assessment will be conducted swiftly while examining a broad range of operational and administrative components outlined below.

5.1.3. Assessments may include an on-site evaluation of a program's fleet, facility, staffing, teaching and evaluation methods, safety protocols and performance, and professional/administrative management of the organization. Largely, the assessment process will be based on the standards and requirements for initial acceptance and Accreditation.

5.1.4. All proprietary information and materials will be treated confidentially by the Facilitator as privileged information. The Facilitator will not share any proprietary information with other programs without express permission from the originating school.

5.1.5. A school must successfully meet ALL requirements and areas of an Assessment to be Re-accredited.

## 5.2. Timeframe

5.2.1. Depending on the size and scope of sailing classes offered, the assessment process may require between 8 and 20 hours of on-site inspection and evaluation.

5.2.2. A written report, combined with a teleconference or in-person interview, will conclude an Assessment. The Assessment Report will recommend either Accreditation, an Accreditation Remediation Program, or Denial of Accreditation.

## 5.3. Methodology

### 5.3.1. Facilitator Pre-assessment preparations

5.3.1.1. Notify Program School and Certified Instructors 30 days prior to an Assessment, unless a Short Notice Assessment is required.

5.3.1.2. Supply Program with an Assessment package which includes a detailed schedule of documents and functional areas of a school that will undergo evaluation.

### 5.3.1.3. School Pre-assessment preparations

5.3.1.4. Provide Facilitator with organizational contact names, numbers, and/or addresses upon notice of an Assessment (if different or expanded beyond the primary program administrator).

### 5.3.2. Administrative Package (must be available in its entirety upon Facilitators arrival)

#### 5.3.2.1. Insurance Policies

5.3.2.2. Protection & Indemnity (P&I) including Jones Act coverage, general liability and statutory limits for worker's compensation and employer's liability

#### 5.3.2.3. Long-term Property Deeds/Leases

#### 5.3.2.4. Boat Titles/Lease(s)

#### 5.3.2.5. Organizational Chart/Employee List

#### 5.3.2.6. Employee Training/Evaluation Materials

#### 5.3.2.7. Accident/Injury Reports

#### 5.3.2.8. Emergency Action Plans (EAP)

#### 5.3.2.9. Marketing materials

#### 5.3.2.10. Description of courses taught

#### 5.3.2.11. Lessons plans

5.3.2.12. Instructor employee files (e.g. proof of USCG licenses or US Sailing Certification (where applicable),

#### 5.3.2.13. CPR/First aid certifications

5.3.2.14. US Sailing certification for each instructor employed by the school who is teaching a course that leads to US Sailing student level certification.

5.3.2.15. US Sailing student files – correspondence and US Sailing certification tracking, internal course reviews, etc (if applicable)

5.3.2.16. A written report of new programs being offered, fleet or facility expansion, or instructional improvements.

## 5.4. Observations and Meetings

5.4.1. The Facilitator will conduct an Opening Interview with Program Administrator(s).

5.4.2. The Facilitator will conduct an Initial Observation of the fleet, facility, as well as instruction and on-the-water visits for Certified Instructors to on-going classes.

5.4.3. Following the Initial Observation, the Facilitator will conduct a mid-point interview with the Program Administrator(s) and Certified Instructors.

5.4.4. The Facilitator may then undertake additional on-site observations, including more instructional observations.

5.4.5. An Exit Meeting by the Facilitator and Program Administrator(s) will be conducted as the final phase of the on-site Assessment.

5.4.6. A formalized written follow-up report will be sent by the Facilitator and discussed by phone with the Program Administrator(s).

## 5.5. Instructional Vessels

5.5.1. Prepare all instructional vessels, safety equipment, storage facilities, dock space/landing/moorings to meet all Coast Guard and State registration and safety requirements.

5.5.2. Site Assessment Preparation

5.5.3. Major and minor hazards to safety either removed or identified with signage.

5.5.4. Facility is clean

5.5.5. Storage areas are neat and organized.

5.5.6. Adequate instructional area with functional instructional materials

# Assessment

## 6. Assessment

### 6.1. Administrative Package

6.1.1. Review and evaluate all Administrative Package documentation

6.1.1.1. Fleet

6.1.1.2. Boat Registration and documentation current

6.1.1.3. USCG equipment check for all instructional vessels

6.1.1.4. Lifejackets

6.1.1.5. In good, legal condition

6.1.1.6. Stored properly

6.1.1.7. Correct number for crew of vessel

6.1.1.8. Correct type for vessel

6.1.1.9. Seaworthiness check

6.1.1.10. Hull is structurally sound, no observable leaks or damage

6.1.1.11. Rigging is safe, properly rigged and tuned.

6.1.1.12. Hardware is properly installed and functional

6.1.1.13. Bilge pump/bailer functional

6.1.1.14. Condition upkeep check of equipment including sails, etc

6.1.1.15. Sails in good condition (no holes or tears)

6.1.1.16. Anchor(s)/rode appropriately sized and secured

6.1.1.17. Storage areas tidy and organized

6.1.1.18. Vessel appropriateness assessment for teaching intended US Sailing levels

6.1.1.19. Instructional vessels are size, and type friendly to teaching students at appropriate level.

## Facility

7. Facility
  - 7.1. Site Assessment for adequate safety, cleanliness, teaching areas, and storage organization.
  - 7.2. Instructor/Instructional Observations
  - 7.3. Observations of instructor(s) for;
    - 7.3.1. Professional conduct
    - 7.3.2. Use of US Sailing instructional methodology (Visual, Kinesthetic, Auditory)
    - 7.3.3. Effective and appropriate instruction
    - 7.3.4. Proper skill evaluation
    - 7.3.5. Proper record keeping
    - 7.3.6. Awareness and communication of US Sailing
    - 7.3.7. Customer service focus
    - 7.3.8. On-the-water group management/safety

## Assessment Results

8. Results
  - 8.1. Program Assessment sheet
    - 8.1.1. The Program Assessment Sheet is the official record form of each Assessment visit. The Program Assessment Sheet keeps objective records of the Administrative Assessment items as well as subjective grading of the Fleet & Facility Assessment and Instructor/Instructional Observations.
    - 8.1.2. The Fleet & Facility Assessment and Instructor/Instructional Observations will also contain written observations and suggestions for areas where accolades are warranted, improvements could be made, or problems need to be remedied. The written evaluations provide explanations for the graded elements and suggestions for improvement if necessary. Additionally, the Facilitator may offer suggestions for improved operations or management based on public information available from other schools.

## Exit Interviews

9. Exit Interview
  - 9.1. Prior to departing a school during an Assessment, the Facilitator will conduct a verbal exit interview with the Program Administrator(s). The Exit Interview is a preview of the final Assessment Report. The Facilitator will inform the Program Administrator(s) of areas of strength, weakness, also discussing suggestions for improvement and the Facilitators decision about re-accrediting the school. This is the opportune time for the Program Administrator(s) to ask questions about the assessment and overall assessment of their school and programs. In essence, the Final Assessment Report will reiterate the discussion at the Exit Interview.

## Final Assessment Report

10. Final Assessment Report
  - 10.1. The Final Assessment Report will be drafted and sent to the assessed school within 14 days. This is the formal report that will be placed in a schools record at US Sailing. The

Facilitator will contact the Program Administrator(s) to discuss the Final Assessment Report to ensure that they understand the implications and decisions in the report. Final Assessment Reports are confidential to the assessed school in that report, the Training Director, and Assessment Facilitator, and the Keelboat Program Board of Examiners if required.

## **Accreditation and Revocation of Accreditation**

### 11. Accreditation and Revocation of Accreditation

#### 11.1. Accreditation

11.1.1. Accreditation is award based on successful completion of all Assessment criteria

#### 11.2. Remediation

11.2.1. A Plan for Accreditation with a timeframe for completion if only a few, minor assessment areas are incomplete.

## **Denial of Accreditation**

### 12. Denial of Accreditation

12.1. Revocation of accreditation of a Program may result for failure in any area of an Assessment, or for other cause(s) such as grossly improper business management that demonstrate(s) a failure to uphold the standards of the Program.

#### 12.2. Appeal of Adverse Assessment Reports

12.2.1. If a Program wishes to appeal an adverse Assessment decision, they must submit a written appeal to the Community Sailing Council's Executive Committee within 15 business days of receiving their final Assessment Report. An adverse decision includes (a) the denial or revocation of their accreditation status, or (b) a plan for Remediation.

12.2.2. An adverse decision may be appealed only on the grounds that;

12.2.2.1. The Program accreditation standards were disregarded,

12.2.2.2. stated procedures were not followed, or

12.2.2.3. evidence favorable to the Program provided to the Examiner was not considered.

## **Process of Appeal**

### 13. Process of Appeal

13.1. If a participating program believes that revocation or probation of its accreditation, or a factor in the decision not to grant accreditation is made in error, the only available means of redress is through the appeals process. The program must convincingly demonstrate that this error made a difference in the accreditation decision. To appeal the decision successfully, the program would have to show two things: (1) actual prejudice to it; and (2) that the prejudice changed the accreditation decision.

13.2. An appeal is heard by representatives of the Community Sailing Council. The findings are communicated to the school in a written report that conveys the basis of the action taken.

13.3. No later than 30 days after submission of the appellant's brief, the Council members are convened to hear and act on the appeal. The appellant shall have the right to either (a) present an argument by teleconference, or (b) appear to present an oral argument on its brief, at the expense of the appellant. Whether the program is presenting information in person or via teleconference, individuals designated as "program representatives" must be employees of the program or must have been employed by the program at the time of the site visit. In cases of accreditation decision reviews, the Council members will be provided copies of

pertinent action letters and reports. Appellant petitions of appeals are provided to all Council members.

13.4. The Council members will prepare a written report that conveys the basis of their findings and action taken on the appeal, and submit that report to the program within two days of the action taken. If the Council members do not uphold the appeal, the decision of the Facilitator becomes final.

## **Costs of Appeal**

14. Costs of Appeal

14.1. If the appeal leads to an affirmation of the Facilitator's original decision, the appellant will be liable for (a) the costs of a teleconference or (b) the travel expenses of the Council members which may include airfare, hotel, and other expenses. The meeting format, either teleconference or in-person, is at the decision of the appellant. If the Council members find in favor of the school, the fee will not be assessed.