



SURF LIFE SAVING[®]
NEW ZEALAND



Surf Official

Assessor Guide

Updated: 15 July 2025

In it for life.



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Introduction

Congratulations on being accredited by SLSNZ as a Surf Official (SO) Assessor!

Assessors play a vital role in:

- Ensuring the quality and consistency of knowledge and skills
- Determining competency
- Mentoring and assessing

The ultimate objective is to up-skill and retain our people with the view that they can lead their clubs and our movement into a sustainable and vibrant future.



SO Assessor Requirements

To become an Assessor, you:

- Are held in high esteem by the sport community, especially your SO peers.
- Have significant recent officiating experience at a level appropriate to that which you are assessing.
- Have support from your region – hence we sought significant input from Staff and Surf Officials in that region.
- Are willing to mentor trainee officials and take the time necessary to support them to the required level of competence.

You will now receive:

- The Surf Official Assessor Guide.
- Relevant Assessment Record for the level you are assessing.

What is Surf Official Training?

Who is involved in Surf Official Training?

SLSNZ Regional Sport Managers: Support Facilitators and Assessors to ensure high quality Surf Officials are available.

SO Facilitators: Run the training courses and ensure all pre-learning has been completed and core skills and knowledge has been taken on board during training. They also support new Surf Officials during practical experience.

SO Assessors: Mentor and assess candidates as per this guide to ensure a fair and valid assessment.

SLSNZ Education Team: Processes all paperwork to ensure we have complete records.



How does a candidate achieve their awards?

Surf Official (SO) Level 1

Minimum Age:

16 years

Pre-Requisite Awards:

Current and active member of a SLS club

Assessment components

The assessment components have been designed to provide candidates with an opportunity to validate and demonstrate that they can apply the knowledge and skills to become an accredited Level 1 Surf Official.

At the completion of this award Surf Officials will be able to:

- Explain the competition management structure.
- List and explain what the SO L1 roles are and how they fit.
- Explain what to observe, what to record and who to report recordings to.
- Explain and apply the SO Code of Conduct.
- Explain and apply a participant-centered approach to officiating.
- Communicate effectively for the role they are holding.
- Use and locate information within the Competition Manual for a range of events.
- Demonstrate use and competency of relevant and related technology (software and apps).
- Explain health, safety and risk considerations and rationale for setting up a course (including event equipment and trailers).
- List event equipment using correct terminology.
- Set up the equipment for an event and explain SO roles involved.
- Apply Competition Manual content practically during set up.
- Understand how equipment for an event should be set up and explain the SO roles involved.
- Explain and complete post training steps.
- Can access and use Liveheats and other relevant event management technology appropriately.

The award components that must be completed include:

1. Complete the online learning modules.
2. Attend the 2-hour practical training course delivered by a trained and approved SLSNZ facilitator/s with a SO L2 Award.
3. Complete a minimum of 2 or more SO L1 roles at a minimum of 2 surf sports events under the assessment of an approved SO L1 Assessor.
(At the discretion of the assessor, may require additional experience.)
4. Completion of the SO L1 Independent Assessment Report.



Surf Official (SO) Level 2

Minimum Age:	18 years
Pre-Requisite Awards:	Current and active member of a SLS club Surf Official Level 1 Award Minimum 2 seasons officiating experience at level 1, and have officiated at least one regional championship.

Assessment components

The assessment components have been designed to provide candidates with an opportunity to validate and demonstrate that they can apply the knowledge and skills to become an accredited Level 2 Surf Official.

The award components that must be completed include:

1. Complete the online learning modules
2. Attend the 1-day training session delivered by a trained and approved SLSNZ SO L2 facilitator.
3. A minimum of two days' worth of practical experience as an official in a range of officiating roles. *(At the discretion of the assessor, may require additional experience.)*
4. Correct filling in and signing of the SO L2 Independent Assessment Report

The objectives of the SO L2 e-learning, face to face training, practical experience and assessment are for all candidates to be able to:

1. Effectively communicate with their audience using the appropriate communication tools:

- Verbal and non-verbal communication.
- Consider the needs of those they are communicating with.
- Give and receive feedback.
- Apply active listening techniques.
- Communicate the decision that has been made.

2. Demonstrate knowledge of managing a team in conjunction with a competition programme and timings:

- Organise their team.
- Implement plan provided and understand timings.
- Ensure arena is set up, equipment is available and SOs allocated to ensure the provided plan is met.
- Explain implications and consequences if plan/timings not adhered to
- Use technology for their SO L2 role (incl. Explain how to react and what to do if the technology fails/are unavailable).
- Receive information provided by the Event Referee (ER) and be able to explain why decisions have been made (including contingency planning; order of events, timings etc.).

3. Show effective conflict resolution and decision-making strategies:

- Apply strategies to avoid conflict.
- Manage and resolve conflict when appropriate.
- Make decisions.
- Answer questions.
- Explain and display appropriate behaviors in alignment with the SLSNZ SO Code of Conduct.



4. Explain their leadership in a Level 2 Officials role:

- Build Trust.
- Motivate and engage their team.
- Manage their team of Surf Officials.
- Mentor other Surf Officials below them.
- Share knowledge.
- Explain the L2 responsibilities.

5. Demonstrate application of risk management processes relevant to a Level 2 Officials role:

- Explain risk management and consequences.
- Explain policies they need to prepare for.
- How to create a safe and inclusive environment.



What records are completed?

The Assessment Records that are completed by the candidate and assessor can be found on the [Sport Resources page on the SLSNZ Website here](#)

Surf Official Level 1:

Surf Official Level 1 Independent Assessment Report

Surf Official Level 2:

Surf Official Level 2 Independent Assessment Report

Completed forms are sent to the Regional Sport Manager for checking and processing.

The SLSNZ website contains detailed information on Surf Official Development Courses and Pathways



Completing the practical assessment

A number of people are involved in completing the practical assessment following the training course. This is primarily driven by the candidate but supported and enabled by staff and volunteer roles associated with the event. The process looks like this:

Pre-event

Regional Sport Manager (RSM)

- With Event manager (EM), determine the assessors attending each event by:
 - Checking accredited assessors list and confirm who from the list is attending the event.
 - Assessors may already be attending in a traditional SO role or independently.
 - Identify assessors who will be attending in pre-event communications to all Surf Officials.

Candidates

- Can find a list of Assessors on the SLSNZ website.
- Identify to Assessor/RSM/EM what events they are attending and that they need to be assessed (either prior to or in response to pre-event communications).

Regional Sport Manager/Event manager

- Links up assessors and candidates.

At Event

Candidates/Assessor

- Meet Assessor and go through process as outlined in this (Surf Official Assessor Guide) document.

Post event

Candidates/Assessor

- Provide paperwork to RSM upon completion.

Regional Sport Manager

- Process paperwork; sends all completed paperwork to Member Education team for uploading to CRM.



What are the responsibilities of a SLSNZ Surf Official Assessor?

What is assessment?

A process in which evidence about performance is collected and evaluated against standards, to ensure a sufficient, valid, authentic, consistent and fair assessment.

A **sufficient** assessment = through assessment you have gathered sufficient evidence that the candidate meets all required competencies.

A **valid** assessment = the evidence gathered through observations ONLY assesses the candidate against the set criteria. No new or not required competencies affected your assessment.

An **authentic** assessment = the evidence gathered is for the person being assessed (i.e. you have observed that candidate meet the requirement, not a group of people where you did not directly observe the required action.

A **consistent** assessment = all candidates are against the same standards, in the same or comparable conditions.

A **fair** assessment = no biases or favoritism. You do not let your feelings affect your assessment. This also means the conditions of assessment do not drastically change from one assessment to another.

Assessors can ONLY SIGN OFF those candidates they have personally OBSERVED demonstrating the competencies required.





What are your responsibilities?

A SLSNZ Surf Official Assessor has 2 key roles:

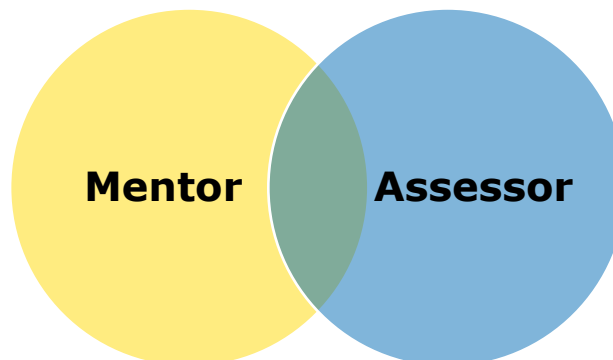
1. Assessor
2. Mentor

As an ASSESSOR, your role is to:

- Assess **candidates**¹ through observation
- Provide feedback
- Discuss findings with the candidate and set goals
- Follow the assessment processes
- Engage in post-assessment moderation (if required)
- Commit to good practice assessment standards
- Attest to competency

As a MENTOR, your role is to:

- Prepare **trainees**² for assessment
- Apply the GROW model
- Ask questions and interact with the trainee as a learner
- Provide feedback
- Set goals



As you can see some of these aspects overlap. Your role is about 30% mentor and 60% assessor, with the remaining 10% overlapping in both roles.

Your primary role is that of an **assessor**, but in between assessment episodes (or while the learner is being assessed by another assessor), you may actually be mentoring and helping them to develop as a Surf Official.

A SLSNZ Surf Official Assessor is expected to do both roles, BUT once your role as Assessor starts, you cannot mentor the candidate until the assessment has been completed.

¹ Trainees are still learning, whereas candidates are ready for assessment.

² Note the term "Trainee" for mentoring, but the term "Candidate" for assessment.



Who can you assess?

Candidates manage their own pathway development. Once they feel they are ready to be assessed, they can contact assessors to see if an assessment is possible at the next event.

All approved Surf Official Assessors, including a list of which levels they can assess, can be found on the [Surf Officials Course page on the SLSNZ website](#).

The candidate and assessor can contact the Event Manager if required to ensure the assessment can be completed at the upcoming event.

Remember, when assessing and signing off on documents,

You are acknowledging your responsibility to follow the process and to adhere to the guidelines. You are also attesting to the competence and capability (against assessment standards) of the Surf Official you are assessing. You are also acknowledging you have observed the candidate demonstrating all the required steps from the assessment checklists provided in the assessment document.





What is your role as a Mentor?

Quality mentoring is a foundation for successful development of competent Surf Officials who embody the values of Surf Lifesaving New Zealand in sport. We believe that mentoring development is the most effective when there is both 'doing and reflecting'.

What is our goal?

Through the surf officials development and wider leadership development framework, we are seeking to develop surf officials who are focused on making a positive contribution to sport and all sport participation

Working with, and through others

Global research has found that partnering trainees with a confidential experienced mentor enhances performance, refines leadership skills, builds confidence and clarifies goals. Mentors act as a sounding board, drawing on their experience to offer guidance, a fresh perspective and insights, enabling the trainees to develop their own strategies to apply as a Surf Official.

What are the mentor's responsibilities?

Responsibilities of the Mentor include but are not limited to;

- Meeting individually with your paired official and your Regional Sport Manager as the initial introduction.
- Working with each official to support learning and completion of the Assessment Report.
- Liaising with the Regional Sports Manager to report on progress and discuss development opportunities.
- Being familiar with the material being delivered in the surf official courses.
- Each mentor should not be assigned any more than 2-3 officials.
- It is likely that each mentor will retain an on-going mentoring relationship with their official following the season. In some cases, these relationships may extend over a number of years.

What attributes does a mentor have?

The surf official mentor will have:

- A strong empathy for people and a passion for enabling people to reach their potential.
- Experience in coaching/mentoring others either within Surf Life Saving or in the wider corporate or sporting environments.
- Understanding of the principles of effective mentoring and will be able to point to a track record of developing people.
- Genuine interest in the development of surf officials.



We expect that Mentors will offer;

- **Empathy:** The ability to see the world from the trainee's perspective, to 'connect' and be genuinely interested in helping.
- **Insight:** The ability to stand back and recognise underlying challenges or issues. Provide growth and support to their trainees
- **Resilience:** The ability to remain positive even if progress and understanding is slower than hoped for.
- **Integrity:** The ability to respect confidentiality and to recognise the limits of your mentoring capability.

Good mentors are supportive and encouraging. They are good listeners and questioners. They use these skills to seek to challenge thinking and assumptions and to create deeper understanding and ways forward for their trainees. They have the ability to speak in plain language and avoid jargon or vague concepts.

We will also expect our mentors to have a good understanding of the Surf Lifesaving environment and how it works.





Mentoring Tips

Establishing mutual credibility and trust

There may already be a working relationship; the mentor will attain credibility by competence in surf officiating, and trust by being perceived as reliable and fair. The trainee needs openness to the process. (If the mentor is not trusted and/or does not have credibility there is a question about whether he or she is a suitable mentor.)

Being Constructive

A chance to work together for a good outcome for all concerned – the mentor will lead this approach.

Allocate some time

Allocate some time to talk to your trainee. Good times to chat with your trainee could include:

- Over coffee before the event kicks off,
- Over dinner after the event concludes,
- On a shared break during competition,
- Or you may want to arrange a catch up at a mutually convenient time, away from the beach.

Schedule this in advance and make it a priority. The purpose of this meeting should be clear – whether they are for reporting, or assessing progress, or a combination of these.

Dealing with setbacks

These are inevitable and create opportunities for constructive refinement of assessment objectives. Keep assessment criteria in mind. Give honest and constructive feedback – positive feedback is more convincing when it is genuine and specific; critical feedback is constructive when it is focused on specific occurrences and behaviour, not generalities.

See Appendix 1 for some additional skills you can apply as a Surf Official Mentor.





What is your role as the Assessor?

What attributes does an assessor have?

The surf official assessor will be able to:

- Use questioning skills in a constructive way and to find out more information or evidence
 - Use open rather than closed questions
 - Use questions with words such as “What, why, who, how, when, where” with “would, could, should, might and will”
 - Give the candidate the time required to answer to the best of their ability
 - Also use appropriate starters such as “Tell me how...; Explain the process ...; Describe the way ... etc.
- Build positive relationships with candidates
- Give feedback that is:
 - Clear, positive, constructive, concise and specific
 - Use the feedback sandwich
- Follow all administrative processes
- Keep notes
- Ensure the privacy of candidates
- Be committed to your responsibilities as an assessor and follow the assessment process to ensure a fair and valid assessment
- Assess safely





What is the assessment process?

Assessment includes:

Preparing yourself and the candidate

- Prepare yourself
 - Make sure the candidate has a copy of the Assessment Record
 - Make yourself familiar with the Assessment Record and requirements
 - Refresh yourself on any content as required
- Prepare the candidate
 - Make time with the candidate for a pre-assessment meeting
 - Take the candidate through the assessment and your own requirements
 - Discuss with the candidate any specific elements you will want to verify
 - Make sure the environment, resources and equipment available will support the assessment
 - Be clear on when assessment will begin and end to ensure it is not confused with mentoring. In some cases, it might be preferable to have a different assessor and mentor, depending on availability and the relationship between assessor and trainee.
 - Ensure you are aware of any special needs (reading, language issues etc.) and have a plan to meet these needs

Assess the candidate

- Assessment will happen within the planned and discussed timeframe
- Ensure all evidence of competency has been observed
- Mark of the Assessment Record as per the instructions within
- All assessment must meet the requirements of the assessment
- Complete your observations
- Write notes
- Make sure you adhere to the behaviours expected from an assessor
- Be careful not to under or over assess
- Ask for further evidence (i.e. through questions) if you have not been able to sufficiently observe certain aspects
- Make your assessment decisions. Remember, if a candidate is not yet competent, this needs to be noted with reasoning
- Any comments written down must be useful as:
 - It supports the candidate's assessment
 - It provides valuable feedback to the candidate for their development
 - Comments can be referred to during moderation
 - Comment such as "good or well done" are of little value.

Provide and receive structured feedback

- Give clear and concise and constructive feedback to the candidate about their assessment
- Explain what your assessment decision is (including why and expectations)
- If the required standard has not been met yet, discuss next steps
- Ask the candidate for feedback on the assessment process



Record keeping

- Ensure the Assessment Record is completed accurately
- If further assessment is required, ensure the candidate has a copy of the Assessment Record they can pass on to the next assessor (if that is not you)
- If all competencies have been met, decide and be clear on who will pass the completed Assessment Record to the Regional Sports Manager.

Review your assessment process

- Did the assessment process work for you and the candidate?
- Self-review your assessment practices and make any changes for future assessments

Moderation

- SLSNZ moderates assessments periodically. You may be asked at some time in the future to discuss an assessment you completed and/or provide information that may have been missed.



What are additional SLSNZ Assessment Guidelines?

For all assessments:

Assessment of SLSNZ Surf Officials, means you must be familiar with the **assessment criteria outlines in the Assessment Report**. If you don't already have the relevant document please let the Regional Sport Manager know and they will get it to you.

SLSNZ requires the following from our Surf Official Assessors:

- As the assessment is carried out during an event, both the candidate and assessor will follow the SLSNZ guidelines and health, safety and risk plan of the event.
- You are only assessing the practical aspects of the award. Other aspects are covered during the e-learning module and 2-hour practical course prior to having an assessor assigned.
- Prior to the event you should know who you are assessing, and they should know that it is you who are assessing them.
- When you arrive at the event where the assessment will take place you should attend the officials briefing so you know what the officials have been told just in case there is anything different you need to accommodate. This is the time for you to introduce yourself to the candidate/s. They should have their assessment reports with the front pages filled in ready to give to you for the day. Also make sure you have a spare copy available as there will be someone who hasn't done this, or the working copy ends up in the water!
- You are encouraged to interact with the candidate/s during the day and discuss and make suggestions so that they do get these things right as the event progresses.
- After the event is over you are expected to spend at least a few minutes with the candidate going over your observations and discussing with them how they felt they went, what they feel they would like more assistance and guidance with or can simply self-improve on. It is the self-analysis part that is really important going forward.
- If you think they need more experience/practice before being declared competent in any area, you may suggest to that individual that they try a different role or come and have another go at the same role at the next event. This should be done during your post event discussion and an agreement reached.
- The key is for you and the candidate to agree to the outcome and to be heading in a positive direction. Remember this is an entry level qualification, it should not be a threatening experience.
- Once the assessment has been completed, the forms all filled in and signed they need to be sent to your Regional Sports Manager. It is a good idea to take a copy just in case something goes wrong.
- Complete the Assessment Record as per the instruction within this document.
- Each official is asked to perform in a level 1 or 2 role (as per their assessment requirements) – please see the Surf Official Handbook for which roles apply.
- Keep Assessment Record objectives constantly under review until the goals have been achieved.
- Over time the trainee should become more responsible for self-monitoring and awareness so he or she becomes independent of the mentor.



For Surf Official Level 1 Assessments:

The below assessment criteria and tables are a copy of information provided in the Assessment Record, where candidates are asked to:

Assessment Criteria 1: Demonstrate a minimum of 2 or more surf official L1 roles below at selected sport events.

1.1 The candidate demonstrated the following roles consistently with best practice as identified in the Surf Officials Handbook:

1.2 The candidate completed observations, recording and reporting of the races (when necessary) while in the following roles:

1.3 The candidate completed key tasks of each official's role according to best practice while in the following roles:

Level 1 Roles	1.1 (✓)	1.2 (✓)	1.3 (✓)	Event:	Assessor	Comments	Date
Marshall							
Recorder							
Course Judge							
Finish Judge							
Video Judge							
Starter							

Assessment Criteria 2: Demonstrate knowledge of the rules of surf lifesaving sports.

(Tick the C column for the criteria you consider this candidate to be COMPETENT at meeting the 2.1, 2.2 and 2.3 assessment criteria for the role assessed above. Add the date they reached competency. If not yet competent, leave blank (for future assessment opportunities) and write a comment for the next assessor.

Level 1 Roles	C (✓)	Event:	Assessor	Comments	Date
2.1 Knowledge of event rules are applied in accordance to the rules in the SLSNZ Competition Manual					
2.2 Demonstrate effective observing, recording and reporting to the assessor at the selected event					
2.3 Where appropriate to the role, the specific forms, paperwork or technology are correctly completed (i.e. Live Heats, relevant operational event technology)					



As an assessor, consider:

- ✓ That they position themselves in the "best practise" position to perform their role throughout the event
- ✓ That they **OBSERVE, RECORD, And REPORT**. This as a key element of being a good Surf Official Level 1. They are to make sure they are watching what they are supposed to be watching and seeing what is going on. Any observations should be recorded in a notebook or on paper detailing the facts of what they saw, the time, the race, the heat, the person/s. A Surf Official Level 1 does not make decisions or judgements on these observations they simply pass on their notes to the arena or event referee for action. A Surf Official Level 1 does not engage in debate or discussion nor have an opinion about an incident. If the official does not actually see something, then it has not been observed and cannot be recorded or reported.
- ✓ That they are familiar with the requirements of the role they are performing as required by the Assessment report and are doing it as prescribed unless instructed otherwise by the referee.
- ✓ The Rules part of the assessment goes hand in hand with the role they are performing. They are not expected to know all the rules by heart, but are expected to be able to find a rule when necessary, in the rule book – they are expected to have their rule books with them at all times.

Additional questions:

As an independent assessor, you may require more evidence for the above practical assessment, so you may ask verbal questions to gauge a candidate's appropriate level of understanding. You are to note down the questions that were asked, record the answer and indicate whether the answer was sufficiently answered.

As an assessor, consider:

- ✓ The value of asking additional questions to your candidate:
 - Confirm the learning (their prior knowledge and understanding) of aspects you were not able to fully observe.
 - Ensure your assessment is complete and by signing off the candidate, you are setting them up for future success.
 - You challenge and engage them in the assessment process.
- ✓ When asking a question ensure you:
 - Think through and plan the question you want to ask
 - Allow the candidate time to think about the question and respond
 - Follow up and ask additional questions if the answer was insufficient or ask them to justify their response
- ✓ When asking questions it helps to focus on why you are asking the question in the first place:
 - Are you trying to find out if they can do something you didn't observe?
 - Are you wondering why they acted/re-acted a certain way?
- ✓ Noting down the question asked and the answer provided in the Assessment Report.



For Surf Official Level 2 Assessments:

The below assessment criteria and table are a copy of information provided in the Assessment Record, where candidates are asked to:

Assessment Criteria:

Tick the C column for the criteria you consider this candidate to be COMPETENT at meeting the 1.1-1.7 assessment criteria for Surf Official Level 2 roles observed. Add the date they reached competency. If not yet competent, leave blank (for future assessment opportunities) and write a comment for the next assessor.

In role observed:	C (✓)	Event	Role	Assessor	Comments	Date
1.1 Lead a team of officials (including organise their team).						
1.2 Display appropriate behaviours in alignment with the SLSNZ SO Code of Conduct and Participant Centred Officiating.						
1.3 Communicate appropriately (applying active listening, verbal/non-verbal communication best practice when answering questions, giving/receiving feedback etc.).						
1.4 Apply strategies to avoid conflict. Manage and Resolve conflict when appropriate.						
1.5 Make decisions and communicate the decision that has been made.						
1.6 Implement plan provided (including time and arena management).						
1.7 Adhere to SLSNZ processes (including Health, Safety & Risk Management; Protest and Appeals; SLSNZ Competition Manual).						

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As an Assessor, consider:

- ✓ Are you confident you can sign off the candidate? Are you confident they have met all the Assessment Report criteria requirements?
- ✓ Are you signing off the candidate on all aspects you personally observed?
- ✓ Does the candidate need another assessment opportunity, or can you check aspects you did not observe fully via the additional questions (see below)?
- ✓ Is your assessment of the candidate sufficient, valid, authentic, consistent and fair? (see page 7)

Additional questions:

As an independent assessor, you may require more evidence for the above practical assessment, so you may ask verbal questions to gauge a candidate's appropriate level of understanding. You are to note down the questions that were asked, record the answer and indicate whether the answer was sufficiently answered.

As an assessor, consider:

- ✓ *The value of asking additional questions to your candidate:*
 - *Confirm the learning (their prior knowledge and understanding) of aspects you were not able to fully observe.*
 - *Ensure that assessment is complete and by signing off the candidate, you are setting them up for future success.*
 - *You challenge and engage them in the assessment process.*
- ✓ *When asking a question ensure you:*
 - *Think through and plan the question you want to ask*
 - *Allow the candidate time to think about the question and respond*
 - *Follow up and ask additional questions if the answer was insufficient or ask them to justify their response*
- ✓ *When asking questions it helps to focus on why you are asking the question in the first place:*
 - *Are you trying to find out if they can do something you didn't observe?*
 - *Are you wondering why they acted/re-acted a certain way?*
- ✓ *Noting down the question asked and the answer provided in the Assessment Report.*



SLSNZ administration requirements

Once you are confident in the candidate's ability and that they have met ALL Assessment Criteria from the Assessment Record:

1. Ensure both of you complete, sign and date the "Agreement" page of the Assessment Report
2. Before providing the final Assessment Report to the candidate for submission, please check the following:
 - a. It has been signed off by you, an **approved** SO L1 or L2 Assessor.
 - b. All details and signatures have been completed correctly and there are no blank spaces where information is required.
 - c. All assessment requirements in the document have been met (i.e. assessment completed over 2 events, for 2 appropriate roles etc.).
3. The candidate will then:
 - a. Submit their Assessment Record to their Regional Sport Manager
4. The Regional Sport Manager will:
 - a. Complete all required checks
 - b. Submit the appropriate documentation to the Member Education Team
5. The Member Education team will:
 - a. Process all documentation
 - b. Load the achievement of the award in the CRM (SLSNZ database)



Appendix 1: Additional skills development

These are core skills that apply to both mentoring and assessing. These include but are not limited to:

- Effective Listening
- Questioning

This section of the document provides some additional information in these areas.

Are You Listening?

Being influential is not a one-way relationship with those we hope to influence. Listening is something we all do, all the time, wherever we are. At work, we listen to our staff, our colleagues, and our bosses. At home we listen to our partners, our families, our friends. But *how well* do we listen to them? How well do we really hear what they're trying to tell us? Most listening specialists (and many of the people we listen to) would say "Not too well!"

But why all the fuss about Listening you might ask. Why is it so important? Well, it's important because until people have a sense that they've been listened to, they're just going to keep trying to tell you what you've already heard. And that gets boring! But even more importantly, good listening will help you (and the person you're listening to) get to the real issues!

Here is a 3-step process which will help you to listen better. It is a simple, practical and powerful way to hear more of what people are trying to say to you.

- **Attend** *to what the trainee is saying*
- **Reflect** *back what you are hearing*
- **Expand** *on what is being said*



How good a listener are you?

Attend

When someone is talking to you the first step is simply to pay attention to them as a person. This will create a climate in which the trainee feels valued, safe and respected. In turn the trainee will be able to express him or herself more confidently and accurately.

Here are some hints:

- Turn to face the Surf Official and make some eye contact with them
- Show signs of interest (non-verbal listening): nod, grunt, mm-hmm etc.
- Listen for thoughts, feelings and intentions
- Put your own thoughts and reactions aside as best you can

Reflect

The next step in the process is to let the trainee know you are hearing what's being said. You may not understand what you're hearing but don't worry. Reflecting what you've heard will lead to clarification for both you and the trainee!

Ways of Reflecting:

- Repeat back some key points that you're hearing:
"So A happened then B..."
- Check your understanding of what's being said:
"Let me see if I've got this right..."
- Offer a summary of what you've heard:
"Sounds to me like you're feeling..."

Expand

Why questions now? A well-timed, open question can help the trainee consider their next step, evaluate an alternative or see the situation from a different point of view. A poorly timed, closed question can end the conversation.

To Expand Effectively:

- Use questions which require more than a yes or no answer:
"What are your views on the matter?"
- Offer suggestions or possibilities in the form of a question:
"How would it be to...?"
- Help the trainee to clarify their goal:
"What would you like to see happen here?"



How do we use Questioning?

A key skill is the ability to ask questions, which require the trainee to think further than they would usually. You encourage the trainee to problem solve and think critically rather than do it for them. This provides an opportunity to empower and upskill the trainee.

Powerful questions come from powerful listening. A powerful listener will naturally ask powerful questions.

Useful questions using GROW

GOAL – What is the goal?

- What do you want to discuss?
- What would you like to achieve?
- What would you like from (to achieve in) this event?
- What would need to happen for you to walk away feeling that this time was useful for you as a Surf Official?
- What would you like to be different when you leave this event?
- What would you like to happen that is not happening now, or what would you like to stop that is happening now?
- What outcome would you like from this event/competition/ assessment/ officiating practice/interaction?
- Is that realistic?
- Can we do that in the time we have available?
- Will that be of real value to you as a Surf Official?

REALITY – What's the reality?

- What's happening at the moment?
- How do you know that this is accurate?
- When does this happen?
- How often does this happen? Be precise if possible.
- What effect does this have on you/other SOs/the event/competition?
- How do you know that this is true?
- What other general/surf/beach/competition factors are relevant?
- What is their perception of the situation?
- What have you tried so far?

OPTIONS – What are the options?

- What could you do to change the situation?
- What alternatives are there to that approach?
- Tell me what possibilities for action you see. Don't worry about whether they are realistic at this stage.
- What approach/actions have you seen used, or used yourself in similar circumstances?
- Who (i.e. other surf officials, SLSNZ staff) might be able to help?
- Would you like suggestions from me?
- Which options do you like the most?
- What are the benefits and downsides of these options?
- Which options are of interest to you as a developing Surf Official?
- Rate from 1-10 your interest level in the practicality of these options.
- Would you like to choose an option to act on?



WRAP-UP – What are the ways forward?

- What are the next steps?
- When will you take them?
- What might get in the way?
- Do you need to log the steps in your diary?
- What goals do you need to set?
- What support do you need?
- How and when will you enlist that support?

Adapted from: Landsberg (1996)