

Course Notes



Countryside Leader Award

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About the Countryside Leader Award

The Countryside Leader Award (CLA) is for adults who wish to lead walks and camping expeditions in non-remote, lowland countryside.

Many types of walk and camping trip fall within the scope of the CLA. If you would like to use it for DofE expeditions, the scope corresponds with the recommended bronze and silver expedition terrain.

Our entry requirements allow us to recognise the prior experience of those who register with the CLA, and the course is designed with this in mind.

Not-for-Profit

We are a Community Interest (non-profit) Company. Aiming to improve access to the outdoors, we provide a simple process by which leaders can gain and demonstrate competence leading groups in the countryside. Our fees cover quality assurance, development and administration.

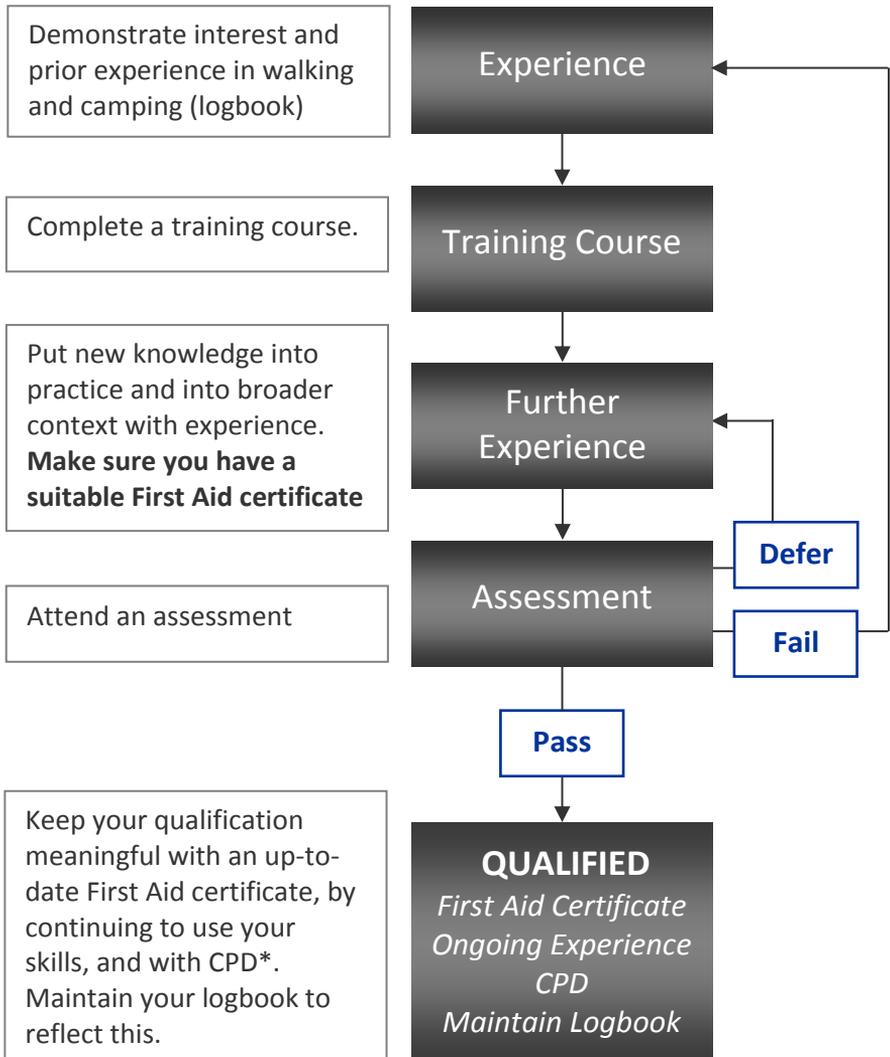
AALS Recognition

The Adventure Activities Licensing Service (AALS) recognises the Countryside Leader Award (CLA) as adequate evidence of a person's technical competence, within the remit of the award, at the time of their assessment, and within the context of a licensed provider's other safety management arrangements.

Suitability

Please check that the CLA is recognised by whoever authorises your activities (e.g. your employer or county/borough council). The CLA includes practical assessment of technical competence, and assessment of leadership skills through scenarios and discussion. The competence and suitability of a CLA holder to work in any given role are matters of judgement for both the employer and the award holder themselves.

Training and Assessment Process



*CPD = Continuing Professional Development

Prerequisites

Before attending a training course you must register with the CLA via the website.

The minimum age for registration is 18.

To attend a training course you must either:

- Be a Qualified Teacher **or**
- Hold a Level 3 Diploma (or higher) in Youth Work **or**
- Have at least 10 days' and 5 nights' experience of leading, or assisting with the leadership of, walking and camping groups

You must also have prior personal experience of:

- Camping (5 nights) **and**
- Walking in the countryside, navigating on clear paths (5 days). *Navigation to NNAS bronze level is a good benchmark. For details, or to find a course that will help you achieve this, see www.nnas.org.uk.*

First Aid Requirement

A current First Aid certificate is required for your CLA certificate to be valid. You must bring the certificate to your assessment and you are responsible for renewing it when it expires.

The First Aid course must be:

- Assessed and certificated
- Minimum of 16 hours of instruction
- Specifically relevant to outdoor leadership

First Aid regulation may change in future. Please see the website for details and up-to-date information about what is required.

Scope

Leading walks and camping expeditions in normal rural, open countryside or forest. This reflects the recommended Bronze and Silver DofE expedition terrain and conditions (as defined in the DofE Handbook).

Broader Context

The overarching framework of the CLA scope is one of non-hazardous activities in non-hazardous terrain. Individual points listed here must always be taken within this broader context.

Inclusions

CLA scope includes:

- Training and Supervision roles:
 - Direct supervision (guided walking and camping)
 - Remote supervision (leading unaccompanied groups)
 - Training of groups to walk and camp unaccompanied
- Open countryside and farmland where outside help (e.g. a hamlet or well-travelled road) is accessible within 30 minutes
- Journeys planned to finish two hours before sunset
- Camping (including wild-camping) in sheltered, accessible locations
- Night-walks that:
 - Are guided (directly supervised) by the CLA holder
 - Are a planned and separate activity
 - Leave from and return to the campsite or base
 - Follow simple routes on well-marked paths
 - Are less than 2 hours' duration

Exclusions

CLA scope excludes:

- High or remote country (mountains, upland, moor, bog or fell)
- Areas where hazardous terrain is unavoidable, i.e. a trip or slip could result in serious injury or fatality.
- Planned night walking as an extension of the day's walk
- Winter conditions (i.e. where snow is falling, is on the ground or is forecast; ice, extreme cold or other inhospitable weather conditions)
- Camping in remote locations

Scope and the CLA Holder

The onus is on the CLA holder to decide whether an activity is suitable. They must be aware of and follow good practice, which will include considering:

- a) Whether the terrain and conditions fall within the scope of this award
- b) Whether they have sufficient competence, confidence and experience to be leading a given group in any given area/conditions.

Logbook

Your logbook gives trainers, assessors and employers an indication of your experience.

The CLA is awarded on the basis of:

- a) The skill, judgement and expertise that you show during your assessment
- b) The depth and breadth of your experience

For this reason the logbook should be viewed as an important part of demonstrating your professionalism and competence.

Completing your Logbook

The logbook should give an accurate reflection of your relevant experience. If you can't remember exact dates then note at least the year and season. Significant events or difficult conditions show your breadth of experience so it's worth writing a comment. You should continue to log experience even after you have passed your assessment.

There are two types of page in your logbook:

1) Personal Walking/Camping

Use this page to log personal walks and camping. Before attending a training course your logbook must show at least:

- 5 days walking
- 5 nights camping

Personal walks should include use of a map to find your way. Walks could include anything from a day walk with friends in the South Downs to an expedition along the West Highland Way. Similarly, camping may be anything from family camping with a car to a self-sufficient expedition.

2) Leading Walking and Camping Groups

Note here any time you have spent leading, or assisting with leadership of groups. Only include days where you were *actively involved* as a leader or assistant (you had some significant responsibility for training, group safety, decision-making, planning etc.).

Considerable experience of leadership is required before attending a training course. If you are a qualified youth-worker or teacher then you do not also need logged experience here. If you are not a qualified youth-worker or teacher then you must log at least 10 days' and 5 nights' of leadership experience in these pages.

Training Course

The training course runs over 3 days, and includes a camping expedition. It assumes basic competence in navigation, country walking and camping.

Bringing together candidates with this knowledge will promote discussion and practice sharing. Candidates without basic competence are unlikely to absorb the information delivered on the course or to contribute to discussion, and so will be asked to leave the course.

A common format for the training course is:

- Introduction Day (partly classroom-based and partly outdoors)
- Camping weekend (this is a lightweight, self-sufficient expedition)

The priority is to cover skills specific to expedition leadership that might be difficult to learn outside a training course. Please bear in mind that the course cannot cover every aspect of every part of the syllabus. Candidates must ensure they gain sufficient experience and knowledge before attending an assessment (and in general before leading groups).

Consolidation

At the end of your training course your trainer will give you a consolidation plan, which outlines areas on which to focus and the minimum experience you need to gain before attending an assessment.

The usual requirement is for candidates to lead or assist with three walking and camping expeditions, where assisting means active involvement in planning, delivery and leadership.

If the Training Course Director feels a candidate is exceptionally strong they may reduce this. For candidates

with only the minimum prerequisites further experience may be required, along with other specific recommendations.

The consolidation plan gives minimum requirements. We strongly advise that you exceed them and continue to gain experience until you feel prepared for assessment.

Assessment

Assessment takes the form of a two-night lightweight and self-sufficient camping expedition. Your assessor may send you a home exam paper in advance.

You should bring your logbook with you, containing:

- 1) Endorsement Page with Training Course sticker
- 2) Personal Walking and Camping Logbook Pages
- 3) Leading Walking/Camping Groups Logbook Pages
- 4) Training Course Report
- 5) Consolidation Plan
- 6) Completed Personal Reference
- 7) Valid First Aid Certificate

Pass

The candidate has shown the required skills and knowledge throughout the syllabus; and has shown the necessary experience and attributes, such as responsibility and good judgement.

Defer

The candidate has shown the required skills and knowledge in some areas of the syllabus, but there are either some knowledge/skill gaps, or they have not shown the necessary experience or attributes.

In this case the Assessor will discuss what additional experience they should gain before attending a reassessment.

Timescale

Reassessment may be a full assessment or some specific part of it, as the assessor sees fit. Other than in exceptional circumstances, reassessments must be taken within one year. If the period from initial assessment is more than one year, or if after two reassessments the candidate has not passed, then they should retake a full assessment.

Fail

The candidate has globally not shown appropriate levels of skill, knowledge, or other attributes. They will be required to gain further experience and then attend another training course.

Exemption from Training

Exemption from training will be given to those with:

- ML training
- WGL training

There is no exemption from consolidation or assessment.

Register with Exemption

Candidates will be guided through exemption when they go to the CLA registration page. The cost is slightly higher because of extra administration and special delivery postage.

Candidates who have already registered without exemption should contact us for guidance about how to proceed.

Consolidation for Exempt Candidates

Exempt candidates must, *in addition to the prerequisites for normal registration*, have experience of leading or assisting with at least three further walking and camping expeditions. The experience must show:

- Active involvement in the planning, delivery and leadership of the trips
- A variety of types of trip - different goals, group members, venues and colleagues

Effectively this means that:

- ***Teachers and youth-workers*** must have a total of at least 3 walking and camping expeditions
- ***Those registering on the basis of experience*** must have a total of at least 8 walking and camping expeditions

Apply for Exemption through Experience

On an individual basis, CLA will consider exemption from training on the basis of experience. This is a more involved process and requires a written application from the candidate, who should be able to demonstrate substantial breadth and depth of experience leading different types of expeditions.

To be considered for exemption on this basis a non-refundable fee is charged, since each individual application requires consideration and discussion from the board. For more information please contact the CLA directly.

Appeals and Complaints

Appeals and complaints should be made in writing to the awarding body, Foundation Expedition Leadership CIC: fel@countrysideleaderaward.org

After an investigation, the awarding body will inform the complainant and others involved, in writing, of the result.

Syllabus

1. Navigation
 - *NNAS silver level: www.nnas.org.uk*
 - *Low-visibility / night navigation*
2. Route-planning
 - *Able to plan a route appropriate for the terrain, conditions and attributes of the group, and within the recommended scope of this award*
3. Campcraft and expedition skills
 - *Complete a 2-night self-sufficient camping expedition*
 - *Be able to lead and train others in these skills*
 - *Choose and use equipment appropriately*
 - *Teach and demonstrate safe use of both methylated spirit and gas stoves*
4. Leaders' equipment
 - *Choose appropriate equipment to carry as an expedition leader*
5. Judgement and risk management
 - *Aware, with perspective and realism, of risks associated with camping expeditions*
 - *Effectively mitigate those risks with risk-benefit analysis appropriate to the situation and the group*
 - *Adopt leadership and training that is prioritised to mitigate risk (ensure participants' skills and equipment are appropriate: e.g. stove use, road safety, emergency procedures)*
 - *Display good judgement so that reasonably foreseeable incidents and emergencies are avoided*
 - *Train others to make good judgements so that reasonably foreseeable incidents and emergencies are avoided*

- *Understand how these variables influence the degree of independence it is appropriate to give a group, especially where remote supervision is used.*
- 6. Incidents and Emergency procedures
 - *Describe appropriate action in an emergency, including where outside help is required*
 - *Train participants to take appropriate action in an emergency, including where outside help is required*
- 7. Legal responsibilities and good practice
 - *Understand the relevant laws and legal responsibilities (e.g. enhanced duty of care)*
 - *Understand types, and importance, of insurance*
 - *Understand the relevant good practice guidelines and regulations (e.g. OEAP National Guidance, MTUK National Guidelines, leader record of training and competence where subjects are safety critical)*
- 8. Environment and Access
 - *Respect residents, farmers and other users of the countryside. Support local economies*
 - *Be fully subscribed to the overriding importance of using the countryside sustainably, and transmit that importance to participants. Understand the sensitivities and tensions around the overuse of 'honeypot' areas. Leave no trace.*
 - *Understand local and national legislation regarding access to the countryside (e.g. public rights of way, CRoW act)*
- 9. Weather
 - *Know the importance, and sources, of up-to-date weather forecasts: their relevance, limitations and accuracy; and consequently make appropriate decisions (e.g. route, leader's equipment and participants' equipment)*

A current First Aid certificate is required for validity of the award. See website for details.

Course Specifics

Staff to Candidate Ratios

Training

Ratio = 1:6

Minimum group size: 4

Maximum group size: 12

Assessment

Ratio = 1:4

Minimum group size: 4

Maximum group size: 8

Assisting Trainers

A second trainer can work alongside a course provider in order to increase maximum candidate numbers from 6 to 12 on training courses and from 4 to 8 on assessments. The provider should ensure that the assistant is competent to deliver the material, and holds as a minimum:

- WGL qualification (or higher) **and**
- Significant experience of leading expeditions

The Course Provider must be present throughout the contact time of the course, and should ensure that on:

Training Courses

The Course Provider's time is distributed evenly between all candidates.

Assessments

The Course Provider spends sufficient time with each candidate to make a decision about their result. This may mean spending longer with borderline candidates.

Become a Course Provider

Provider Requirements

Training Course Providers must:

- Be ML qualified (or higher)
- Have significant experience of leading expeditions
- Attend a CLA Course Provider Workshop and then a refresher once every three years
- Attend at least one CLA Training Course either as an assistant member of staff or as an observer

Assessment Course Providers must:

- Have all of the above
- Attend one of Mountain Training's Mountain Assessor Training Workshops

Provider Costs

There is an annual subscription fee, and a small fee per endorsement sticker.

For up-to-date information please see the website.

Moderation

Generally the first course that a new Course Provider delivers is moderated, after which courses are moderated as appropriate.

Moderation is an essential part of quality assurance, and there is no charge to the provider. The cost is covered by course provider workshops and annual subscriptions.

Resources

The 'Resources' section of the website has up-to-date links to:

- Advice and guidance on good practice
- Current discussion about outdoor education
- Teaching/learning resources
- Updates to this document
- CLA Logbook page downloads

