



Award in Basic Expedition Leadership & Level 2 Certificate in Outdoor First Aid

Student Prospectus

Outer Limits Explore's courses are aimed at 17-18 year old students who enjoy participating in expeditions and want to make the transition to expedition leadership. We are an approved provider with the Mountain Leader Training Board to deliver Mountain Leader courses, Walking Group Leader courses and Single Pitch Award courses. We help you develop the skills and confidence you need to make an effective start as a volunteer or prospective outdoor professional.

Our standard course lasts ten days, usually in two five-day chunks during holidays or after final exams. You have to be 17 to start the course, with some expedition experience and a willingness to gain more.

It leads to respected qualifications that could be the start of a lifetime's rewarding volunteering in the outdoors – or perhaps even the first step to a career in the adventure industry.

If you've enjoyed Scouts, Guides, Cadets or Duke of Edinburgh, you'll enjoy this. It's a total contrast to your other studies, a great opportunity to meet new people with similar interests, and a move towards the more adult expectations of university.

Please contact us with any questions that remain unanswered.

You can:

Ring - 0845 200 8512

Email - info@outerlimitsexplore.co.uk

We look forward to hearing from you.

Yours faithfully

Chris Butler
Managing Director



The Qualifications You Get

Award in Basic Expedition Leadership

The ABEL is the most widely recognised lowland walking award and will qualify you to lead day walk and overnight expedition groups in open and rural country, and to organise static and mobile camps. Originally aimed at youth workers and teachers, it is the leadership qualification many operating authorities for the Duke of Edinburgh's Award demand.

The qualification is approved by the QCA and is accredited by Sports Leaders UK whose other Sports Leadership Awards are popular with PE departments.

Level 2 Certificate in Outdoor First Aid

Holders of the ABEL must have a current first aid certificate of at least an 8-hour course. We go one step further and opt for a 16-hour course, which meets the standards for higher awards such as the Walking Group Leader and Mountain Leader. It is fast paced and practical with a variety of scenarios to help you secure essential skills. Teachers who have renewed their first aid certificate on this course have been impressed.

The qualification is accredited by ITC First Aid Ltd, and is approved by the QCA and the Health and Safety Executive.

What You Learn

Our aim is to equip you with the skills, ideas and resources you need to successfully train and manage a group of novice expeditioners. From the first icebreaking activity on day one of the course, your instructors will model how you could work with your own groups.

As an expeditioner, develop your knowledge of navigation, camp craft, equipment and first aid. More advanced techniques will be introduced to stretch the most experienced.

As a leader, you learn how to organise expeditions, choose venues, motivate participants, assess risks and discharge your duty of care to those you lead.

As an outdoor educator, you learn about teaching techniques, session planning and behaviour management. This strand of the course is designed to meet the particular needs of sixth form students who have not had the benefit of teacher training.

In the first half of the course, we emphasise developing and passing on technical skills; as the course progresses, you and fellow trainees will take more responsibility for organising activities yourselves and the focus changes to the responsibilities of leadership.

Most sessions are practical: guided walks with intensive training in navigation; games you can use with your own groups to build teamwork or teach skills; training activities "in role" as supervisors and participants. Your course will finish with an expedition, which you have planned from scratch as leaders, with some unexpected challenges thrown in by your assessor to test your leadership skills.

There is little in the way of "homework", but the more experience you can get of expeditions and helping with groups in between the two sessions, the better.



Leadership Experience

After completing the taught part of the course, you need to complete 30 hours of service applying your skills as an assistant leader before gaining your ABEL. This could be helping out with younger students on a school D of E expedition. If you cannot find your own opportunity for completing your service hours, ask us well before you complete the course and we will try to help you find a suitable placement.

Groups

A full ABEL course comprises 20-24 students, sometimes from a single school but more usually from a mixture of schools and youth organisations. Groups drawn from a range of schools quickly develop their own team identity as new friendships form. Mixing and working with new people in this way is also an excellent preparation for university, and individual applicants have an excellent time.

Staff

We appreciate that teachers are busy people, and those who also run Duke of Edinburgh expeditions already have extra demands on their weekends and holidays, so our courses are fully staffed and insured to meet required safety ratios without requiring school staff to be present. In fact, some schools have been partly attracted to the course as a way to meet demand for further adventure opportunities from those who have enjoyed D of E, but without putting further pressure on staff support.

All our course directors are first aid trained and CRB checked and hold at least the Summer Mountain Leader Award. They have been chosen for their combination of adventure experience and their qualities as communicators and leaders. First aid tuition is provided by instructors from one of our Expert Partners - Adventure First Aid.

Discounted or, in some circumstances, free places are available to staff wishing to train for the ABEL alongside students. Other teachers are welcome to attend. In the early stages of the course, extra instructors can be a benefit, and if you have a large group and can help with minibus transport then that's a bonus. However, some groups build their leadership skills more quickly in the absence of familiar teaching staff – so teachers, please don't be offended if you are asked to take a back seat!

Schedules

We usually stick to two five day blocks (mostly Monday to Friday or Sunday to Thursday) as we have found that getting a group of busy people together for five separate weekends is very difficult. These are the usual patterns (we can arrange other patterns where there is demand):

	Session 1	Session 2
Autumn finish	Summer Holidays	October half term
Spring finish	February half term	Easter/Spring Holiday
July finish	Easter/Spring Holiday	Early July, after exams
August finish	Early July, after exams	Late August, after results and clearing

You should be able to find an accessible course with a schedule to suit you.



Locations

Apart from the first aid, which may be delivered as two days at a local venue, all sessions are residential. You should bring what you need for camping, although we sometimes have access to bunkhouses.

Courses are held across the country in areas that might be used for Bronze and Silver Duke of Edinburgh expeditions. You are officially responsible for your own transport to and from the venue, although we may be able to arrange a lift if you are struggling.

Food and Equipment

Candidates are expected to be self-sufficient in food and equipment. On each session you should bring two days worth of food that you would recommend for a Bronze or Silver Duke of Edinburgh group. The cost of the rest of your meals is included. This can be whatever you prefer to cook for yourself, remembering that you'll only have your camping stove to cook on, you will be given guidance on healthy menu planning and budgeting. Where we have access to a kitchen, tea and coffee making facilities and basics like bread, spreads and cereals will be available to save time.

You should bring all the equipment you would bring as a participant in an expedition with two overnight stays, plus any extras you would take as a leader that will fit in your rucksack. If there are essentials that you don't have and can't borrow from school, get in touch to request to borrow them. You'll get good tips on kit on the course, so don't feel you have to rush out and buy the latest gear before you start.

Eligibility

You must be 17 when you start the course and 18 before you can receive the Award (although it doesn't matter if the taught sections of the course finish before your 18th birthday).

Gaining expedition practice is an important part of being an effective leader. When instructing groups, you need to be talking from experience, and you must be able to look after your own needs efficiently so you have time to take care of others. On applying, candidates will be issued with a log book in which to record their expedition experience.

Most candidates will have substantial expedition experience and many will be Gold D of E award participants or keen members of Scouts, Guides or Cadets. The minimum experience level for direct entry to the course is two expeditions involving overnight stays i.e. the expedition section of the Bronze Duke of Edinburgh's Award. If you come in at this level of experience, you will need to get some extra expedition practice in, so that on completion all candidates have participated in at least four expeditions outside the course.

Assessment

Your course director continuously assesses the course, their assessment is verified both internally by a visiting instructor from another Outer Limits Explore course, and externally by a verifier from Sports Leaders UK. Assessment is built naturally into the course, mainly observing you demonstrating skills during practical activities. There are no written assessments due to the practical nature of the course.

The final days of the course give you the opportunity to apply all your skills in an expedition you have planned from scratch. You will switch between expeditioner and leadership roles, facing a succession of surprises that test your ability to improvise and manage uncertainty, both key skills in the outdoors.

If your course director is concerned about you meeting the required standards, they will alert you at the earliest opportunity and support you to address that area of weakness. If at the end of the course, you need more time to achieve some of the standards required, you will be given a personal action plan and a deferred assessment date. Because of the quality of candidates and instructors and their joint commitment to success, failure to meet the demanding standards of either qualification is rare.



Cost

The cost of the course, including both qualifications, is £600. This includes your accommodation, accreditation fees, instruction, course materials, resources and food.

Unusually for a business, we don't mind advertising our competition: some areas have courses run by a charity or the council. They are usually for youth workers and teachers, but some may admit sixth formers. Such courses are cheaper because they are often subsidised or use volunteers, whereas we have to pay commercial rates for instructors, venues and overheads.

The ABEL itself will be the same qualification whoever you train with, but the first aid element may vary. Some courses ask for you to arrange first aid separately and some only include the minimum one day course, rather than a two day, full Level 2 qualification.

Our courses are specifically designed for sixth formers. We use two five-day sessions to leave your Saturdays and Sundays free, and we emphasise teaching and group management skills more. There also tends to be a strong social aspect to the course, with groups often arranging additional get-togethers outside the schedule.

Funding

There are several ways you might be able to get assistance in paying for your course.

Government

State schools that joined us in 2007-2008 were able to obtain government funding for the course. Sadly, the funding system for schools is changing from September 2008, and as the complexities of the new "simpler" system have emerged, it looks like it will be difficult for new schools to claim funding for the ABEL. The ABEL and the Outdoor First Aid Course are both eligible for funding (Codes: QAN 10034006 and QAN 50015102), so in theory over £725 is available for each candidate, but schools will not automatically get extra money for running extra courses in the way they did before.

If a school is dropping other courses, so that funding can be claimed for ABEL students without increasing the overall level, there should be no problem, but in any event schools seeking funding should talk to their local Learning and Skills Council.

Some schools allow students to do the ABEL instead of General Studies or an enrichment programme, and put that share of the money towards it. Speak to your Head of Sixth Form.

International Baccalaureate

The ABEL is ideal for fulfilling the Creativity, Action and Service part of the IB, so schools offering this qualification in place of A Levels may be particularly supportive.

School Activity Funds/Parent Teacher Association

Many schools have funds to support extra-curricular activities, and if your qualification will be used in the future to help with school expeditions, they may be willing to part fund your course. School Duke of Edinburgh programmes are often very dependent on one or two members of staff, and we hope to help schools to build up a pool of volunteers who can help out, perhaps on occasional weekends during their time at university.

Fundraising

Every year, students raise thousands of pounds for international expeditions. Even the whole cost of the course is a much smaller sum, and training up volunteer leaders has a ripple-effect benefit because of all the young people you will help to enjoy the outdoors.



Host a First Aid Course

One unusual but effective way to fundraise is for your school or youth organisation to host a first aid course and share the proceeds. You advertise and recruit to it, provide a venue for the course and overnight accommodation for the instructors, and we look after the rest. This saves our first aiders time and money, and if you succeed in filling a course of 24 for a two-day course, we can rebate the entire fee for one ABEL candidate. One day courses are also available. Please email for details.

Last Resort

If you are absolutely stuck and have done your best with these three routes, get in touch before you give up on the idea. We are hoping to find some charitable funding to ensure that candidates are not prevented from training because of their financial circumstances, and we may be able to subsidise a few places ourselves. Either way, it will probably mean asking about your family income, and we will not be talking about dozens of places, so please do your best to find funding some other way.

Applying

Fill in the application form included in this prospectus and post it to us. If your school or youth organisation is going to be responsible for your fees, please enclose a letter from them or get them to email us separately.

We can process applications at any time of the year but the sooner you apply the better. Once we receive your application, we'll confirm within two weeks whether you meet our criteria. We'll then send you a list of possible dates for your course and ask you to express a preference.

Once we have a viable number of candidates for a course in your area, we'll send you a formal offer of a place on a specific course at a particular venue. If you accept it, we'll then send you a medical form and request a £100 deposit to confirm your place. The remainder of the cost is due 4 weeks before the date of your first session, you will be invoiced for this nearer the time.

What's Stopping You?

We hope this has answered most of your questions and that you are keen to join a course. Students this year are certainly having an enjoyable, productive and memorable time.

If there's anything else you want to know, please email info@outerlimitsexplore.co.uk or ring 0845 200 8512.

If you have decided that this is not for you, despite being interested in leading in the outdoors, please let us know why. We never get to speak to the people who decide *not* to do it. In particular, if the cost of the course is the only reason you are not applying, it might help us make the case for government or charitable support for leadership training.

Finally, please spread the word around to others at school or your youth organisation who might be interested. There are over 15,000 leaders missing to fulfil the present demand for D of E, Scouts, Guides and Cadets. That's an awful lot of young people missing out on the experiences you have enjoyed.