



**STANDARD**  
**for the**  
**PROVISION of OVERSEAS**  
**EXPEDITIONS**  
**for**  
**YOUNG PEOPLE**

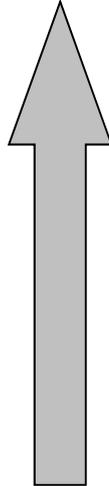
**Review cycle:**

This document / standard is subject to review by September 2018, unless a change in any organisations, legislation or advice causes a significant revision to be required before that date.

## Expedition Providers Association Membership Criteria

### EPA Full Member

1. Adhere to the EPA Code of Practice – Self Declaration\*
2. BS 8848 Self-Assessment \*\*
3. Hold the LOtC Quality Badge for Overseas Expeditions
4. Attendance at Full EPA Meetings (min 1 per year requirement)
5. Payment of EPA Membership Fees



### EPA Aspirant Member

1. Adhere to the EPA Code of Practice – Self Declaration\*
2. BS 8848 Self-Assessment \*\*
3. Commit to achieving LOtC Quality Badge within 24 months from date of application for Aspirant Member status
4. Attendance at Full EPA Meetings (Optional)
5. Payment of EPA Membership Fees

\* Membership of EPA is conditional on agreeing to comply with the procedures set out in the EPA Standard. However membership and/or association with EPA cannot and should not be implied by self-declared compliance alone. See Annex G for guidance.

\*\* Organisations may alternatively elect to attain BS 8848 Corporate Compliance status through submission for external assessment by the inspectors for the LOtC Overseas Quality Badge.

**Preface:** This standard has been produced by the Technical Committee of the Expedition Providers' Association (EPA) in order that responsible companies can collectively adopt a minimum set of requirements which would indicate the quality and safety processes of a Provider to potential customers.

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

The scope of this standard specifies requirements for the provision of overseas expeditions for young people, specifically focusing on quality of provision, the operational processes and financial security. EPA is the Awarding Body for the Learning Outside the Classroom (LOtC) Quality Badge for Overseas Expeditions.

This Code of Practice defines an expedition as 'Overseas Travel' that involves a deliberate element of risk, challenge or adventure that requires specialist skills for its safe management'. These commonly range from 1-4 weeks in duration and include in their programme:

- Treks in remote regions in challenging terrain
- Journeys by foot, horse, camel, kayak, canoe, raft and bike
- Ascents of mountains
- Cultural projects often in remote village communities
- Other cultural or adventure activities

Most programmes are at the lower end of the risk/challenge range. They differ from a more traditional school trip in that they specifically include an element of risk that is assessed and managed by the Expedition Provider. They often include an activity provided by a third party provider, such as white water rafting.

Expeditions will have a Leader who has overall responsibility for the management of all activities that form part of an expedition programme even if the activity is being delivered by a third party provider. Expedition Leaders are required to have experience and knowledge to manage all aspects of the expedition programme.

In order to achieve full membership of EPA, Providers of Overseas Expeditions for young people must show compliance with the EPA Standard, through self-assessment (Associate membership) and an Inspection process (Full membership) for the LOtC Quality Badge for Overseas Expeditions

This standard is written as a specification that sets out requirements to which a provider has to conform and recommendations to which a provider is strongly advised to conform.

Requirements are expressed in sentences using the word "shall" and recommendations are expressed using the word "should".

This standard does not warrant, guarantee or insure that compliance with its requirements prevents any or all injury or loss that may be caused by, or associated with any person's use of services, facilities, equipment, or other items or activities that are the subject of this standard; nor does this standard assume any responsibility or liability for any such injury or loss. This standard expressly disclaims any responsibility by the authors, liability or duty to certified Providers, Providers' staff and to Providers' clients and their families, or any such liability arising out of injury or loss to any person by the failure of Providers or Providers' staff to adhere to its requirements.

The standard has its roots in the publications listed in Annex B. A wide number of organisations, as listed in Annex C, have also been consulted throughout drafting of versions of this Standard.

## 2 DEFINITIONS

**Adult** – Person over the age of 18 who may be a participant or a member of the Leadership Team.

**Certified Provider** – a Provider that has demonstrated via external verification that it meets and adheres to the requirements set out in this standard.

**Client** – the individual, school, youth group and/or organisation with whom the Provider is contracted to provide a service.

**Competent Person** – an adult who is suitably experienced and/or qualified for the tasks for which they are responsible.

**Duty of Care** – the obligation that anyone of sound mind has in any given situation towards the safety of others.

**Expedition** – overseas travel that involves a deliberate element of risk, challenge or adventure and requires specialist skills for its safe management.

**Expedition Assistant** – an adult member of the expedition appointed by the Provider. Included so the provider can achieve correct supervisory ratios and/or gender balance or provide training for a potential Expedition Leader.

**Expedition Team** – a team made up of the Leadership Team and Participants.

**Higher Duty of Care** - the duty of care held by a person who has greater experience or qualifications in an activity (or aspects of an activity) than other people with a duty of care and who is therefore seen to have decision-making primacy over others with regard to that activity.

**Incident** – unplanned occurrence (accident or emergency), which does cause harm or change of plan.

**Leader** – a Competent Person who the Provider has selected to lead an expedition.

**Leadership Team** – a group of adults consisting of a Leader and one or more accompanying adults and Expedition Assistants (if any), who have a higher duty of care for the members of the expedition.

**Medical Practitioner** - a doctor who possesses a medical degree and is registered with the General Medical Council (GMC).

**Mountain Training** – is the collective term used to describe all the Home Nations Training Boards of the UK and Ireland as well as providing services for the Association of Mountaineering Instructors (AMI), British Association of International Mountain Leaders (BAIML) and British Mountain Guides (BMG)

**National Governing Body (NGB)** – body generally accepted as arbiters of good practice for a particular activity.

**Near Miss/ Unplanned occurrence** – an occurrence with the potential to cause harm or change of plan.

**Parent/Guardian** – an individual with sole or joint legal responsibility for a person under the ages of 18.

**Participant** – person taking part in the expedition who is not a member of the Leadership Team.

**Provider** – a company or not for profit organisation that is responsible for the provision of an overseas expedition for young people.

**Safety Management System** – a comprehensive set of policies and procedures laid down and adhered to by the Provider in pursuit of good practice.

**Stakeholders** – persons or recognised bodies having a legitimate interest in the expedition such as participants, parents, clients, School Governing Bodies and Local Authorities.

**Technical Activity** – an activity required to be conducted or supervised by a person with specialist knowledge and training in the tasks that the activity demands.

**Technical Adviser** – an experienced and qualified person competent to assess and manage technical activities.

**Young People** – young people under the age of 25 who may, or may not be in full-time education.

### 3 QUALITY INDICATORS

In order to achieve the LOtC Quality Badge for Overseas Expeditions, Providers must show that they meet the below set of Quality Indicators.

There are six high level quality indicators. These are that the Provider:

1. has a process in place to assist clients to plan the learning experience effectively;
2. provides accurate information about its offer;
3. provides activities, experience or resources which meet client needs;
4. reviews the experience and acts upon feedback;
5. meets the needs of users; and
6. has safety management processes in place to manage risk effectively.

Under each high level quality indicator is a number of sub-indicators (see Annex A), these are embedded in the EPA Standard.

The quality indicators will be the same for all types of learning outside the classroom Provider, Route 1 or 2. They are tailored to whether a Provider has staff to work with or not. These indicators are process-orientated (i.e. the way in which the Provider works with the user to plan the experience and set learning objectives) and do not attempt to assess the learning outcomes directly, as these remain the responsibility of the teacher or group leader.

The bar for the LOtC Quality Badge is set at 'good' as defined by the generic indicators across both Routes. There will be no higher or lower standard.

## 4 BUSINESS PRACTICE

4.1 Providers shall clearly identify the legal entity responsible for the expedition and/or EPA membership. This will be the same legal entity that holds all relevant insurances, financial bonding and operating licences for the body applying. Any differences in 'trading names' or a company being part of a larger group that may share some or all of the liability must be clearly identified to clients.

4.1.1 While inspections for the LOtC Badge for Overseas Expeditions would normally take place one every two years, a significant change to the company's management structure, ownership or scale of operations may warrant an interim inspection to ensure continuing compliance with the EPA Standard.

4.1.2 Examples of a significant change might be:

- a) A change in the beneficial ownership relating to one-twentieth or more of its equity share, share capital, voting rights or profit entitlement
- b) A change in its financial control in relation to entitlement to a majority of profits
- c) A change in the trading identity of the company
- d) A change in the scale of operation warranting a reassessment of the company's membership category of EPA

4.2 Providers shall supply to clients, and on request stakeholders, the following:

- a) Details of the Company and/or Group structure making it clear who has responsibility for client financial security.
- b) Details of financial security and insurance arrangements including Public and Employers Liability insurance and travel insurance, in accordance with Package Tour / Travel regulations.
- c) Copies of Public and Employers Liability Insurance that covers all UK and overseas activities.
- d) A statement of compliance with The Package Travel, Package Holidays and Package Tours Regulations 1992, and proof that any flight tickets are purchased through an Air Travel Organisers License (ATOL) holder.
- e) Copies of any Adventurous Activities Licensing Scheme (AALS) License for UK activities that fall under the licensing remit.
- f) A child protection policy including the use of background checks, such as reference checks, Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks and/or Disclosure Scotland checks where possible/appropriate
- g) An Expedition specific contract including Terms and Conditions.

- h) A copy of their environmental protection and sustainability policy.
- i) A privacy policy covering how they collect, handle and process all data associated with their potential clients, and which data will be collected and processed. This should be in line with the European General Data Protection Regulations

4.3 Providers shall comply with all external regulations relating to them.

4.4 Providers shall have an effective method of communicating regularly with clients during the life cycle of an expedition program.

## **5 HEALTH AND SAFETY**

To ensure a high level of safety throughout the activity, the Provider shall:

- a) Establish and annually review a written Health and Safety policy statement.
- b) Implement a documented safety management system in accordance with section 6.
- c) Have a documented, rehearsed and up to date Emergency or Incident Response Plan and
- d) Communications Plan.

## **6 SAFETY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM**

The Provider shall design and document a safety management system that includes:

- a) An expedition risk assessment and benefit process focusing on the activities to be undertaken, including a review of:
  - Safety
  - Health
  - Security
  - Environmental and local community factors
- b) A summary of significant risks
- c) A Risk Benefit analysis of the expedition programme

- d) Control measures to reduce risks
- e) Provision of contingency plans (Plan B's) for key expedition phases
- f) Details of any specific training required to reduce risks prior to and during the expedition
- g) For all water-based and other adventurous activities, a requirement that the Leader carries out a site-specific risk assessment, implements control measures and provides an appropriate level of supervision
- h) Details of how the clients, leadership team and other stakeholders are informed of the outcomes of this process
- i) Appointing a competent person to oversee and implement the safety management system, advised as necessary by a Technical Adviser (the two roles may be combined)
- j) Establishing document monitoring of the safety management systems.
- k) Maintaining and reviewing a written log of the details of any incident or 'near-miss' and log any corrective action taken (immediate if necessary) to preclude any recurrence.
- l) Undertaking a periodic review of safety management systems, taking account of incident trends and post expedition reports
- m) Agreeing to share unintended events/accident information with EPA members so any lessons learned become part of industry 'best practice'

## **7 DUTY OF CARE**

The Provider shall ensure that responsibility for the Duty of Care (specifically the Higher Duty of Care relating to technical activities and pastoral matters) of the expedition team throughout the expedition is agreed between the Provider and the Leadership Team. This shall take place in advance of the expedition, shall be documented and shall be communicated to all expedition team members and on request to other stakeholders prior to the start of the expedition.

## **8 CONTRACTING**

### 8.1 The Contract:

A single contract will exist between the Provider and the establishment (School). The contract must include the specific UK build up programme, expedition characteristics and booking conditions.

#### 8.1.1. Essential elements of the contract

Control & Cancellation: Once signed the contract will provide the establishment with control of the expedition ensuring that if a Provider revokes on a significant aspect of the contractual arrangements and it is not possible to resolve the matter to the satisfaction of the establishment, the establishment will have the right to cancel the contract in line with the cancellation clauses. The contract will ensure that cancellation provides the refund of payments made however this should be without prejudice to any reasonable payment due to the provider for work carried out up until cancellation.

#### 8.1.2 Participant terms and conditions:

The contract between the establishment and the Provider should also detail the information to be shared with parents and participants to ensure their consent to participate is given with a full understanding of the specific UK build up programme, expedition characteristics and booking conditions.

### 8.1.3. Payment

The establishment will choose the preferred passage of payment. This may be either:

Parent to establishment – The establishment manages the administration associated with the collection and banking of participant payments through the school system and passes payments on to the provider as per the agreed contract schedule,

Or

Parent to the provider – The establishment delegates the collection and administration of payments to the provider as per the agreed contract schedule.

### 8.1.4. Contract arrangements

The Provider should ensure that the Head Teacher/Governing Body (or equivalent in non-school settings), or their nominated representative:

- a) Is advised to ensure that the process of contracting meets their employer's Educational Visits planning and approval requirements
- b) Signs the contract on behalf of the establishment
- c) Explains to parents the chosen method of collection and administration of payments

### 8.1.5. Provider's obligations:

If the employer of the establishment's staff has a named Outdoor Education Adviser / Educational Visits Adviser listed on the OEAP website ([www.oeap.info/](http://www.oeap.info/)), the provider will inform that Adviser in writing or email of the expedition at least 6 months prior to the expedition departure date.

8.2 The Provider shall ensure that the client and participants have been given all information specified in 8.3 in order to make an informed decision to join the expedition. The Provider shall obtain written informed consent from all participants and for those aged under 18 this shall be informed parental consent.

8.3 The Provider shall make the following information available to all clients and participants and on request to other stakeholders. Where this information is not available at point of sale, the Provider shall outline a timetable within which this information will be provided:

- a) Expedition aim and objectives
- b) Expedition Learning Experiences clearly identified
- c) Participant equipment list

- d) Information on fitness preparation and monitoring
- e) Medical guidance on any inoculations and specific medications required
- f) A summary of significant risks
- g) Detailed expedition itinerary which meet the participant's needs and expectations
- h) Emergency or Incident Response Plan
- i) Overview of the Communications Plan during the Expedition
- j) Additional costs (visas, inoculations, equipment, etc.)
- k) Competencies and responsibilities of the Leadership Team. If either the Provider or the Client have concerns about an individual's competence to be part of the leader team then this can be raised by either side, discussed and a resolution agreed. If the safety of the expedition may be compromised the Provider will have the final say
- l) Evaluation and reviewing with participants during pre-expedition training, the expedition and post expedition
- m) Feedback prior to, during and post expedition
- n) Review Process

8.4 The Provider shall have an inclusive selection policy for each expedition agreed with the client and this should be outlined in the Terms and Conditions This shall be communicated to participants (and other stakeholders on request) prior to contracting taking into account, any equality, diversity and inclusion issues and needs.

8.5 The Provider shall take all reasonable steps to provide an alternative expedition destination in the event of unavoidable cancellation due to Force Majeure.

## **9 CODE OF CONDUCT**

9.1 The Provider shall have a written Participant Code of Conduct that is agreed with the client and parent. This shall be tailored to the expedition team, type and destination.

9.2 The Participant Code of Conduct shall inform participants and clients (and on request Stakeholders) of the disciplinary action of breaching the Participant Code of Conduct.

9.3 The Provider shall have a written Leadership Team Code of Conduct.

## **10 PREPARATORY ACTIVITIES IN THE UK AND OVERSEAS**

10.1 The Provider shall provide practical, pre-expedition training as identified in the Risk Assessment. This shall be appropriate to the skills required by the participants in the light of the planned itinerary and agreed with the client before the start of the expedition.

10.2 The Provider shall comply with The Activities Centres (Young Persons' Safety) Act 1995, and shall hold a valid license issued by the Adventure Activities Licensing Scheme (AALS) for those activities within the Scheme's scope undertaken within the UK.

10.3 Where the Provider is not legally required to hold an Adventure Activities License because the activity concerned is outside the scope of The Activities Centres (Young Persons' Safety) Act 1995, the Provider shall apply the standards required by the Adventure Activities Licensing Regulations (2004).

10.4 The Provider shall ensure that all members of the expedition team have been prepared, in line with the outcomes of the risk assessment, for participation in the expedition. This preparation shall include:

- a) Establishing a system to monitor that all members of the expedition team, including adults, are mentally and physically prepared to take part in the expedition
- b) A methodology to ensure that any pre-existing medical/psychological conditions that could affect the expedition are disclosed
- c) Ensuring that all members of the expedition team with pre-declared medical/psychological conditions are deemed suitable by qualified medical opinion to participate

10.5 The Provider shall ensure that, unless by prior agreement or under exceptional circumstances:

- a) The opportunity exists for the Leader to work in a leadership capacity with other expedition team members prior to the expedition
- b) The participants and parents/guardians have the opportunity to meet the proposed Leader prior to the expedition taking place.

*An example of an 'exceptional circumstance' would be when a replacement Leader is required following the last minute incapacity of a previously assigned Leader.*

10.6 Where there is no programme of training in the UK or if an Overseas Leader is appointed who cannot take part in training in the UK or meet the expedition team prior to the expedition leaving the UK, the Provider must show how:

- a) Members of the expedition team will be made aware of the expedition programme and its risk management
- b) Members of the expedition team will be trained in country for the challenges and risk of the expedition programme
- c) the expedition leader will be introduced to the team in country and/or beforehand by Skype or other method.

## **11 LEADER SELECTION**

11. The competence of the Leader is a key factor in protecting the Health and Safety of participants involved in overseas expeditions. As such, the ability of the Provider to assess Leader competence accurately is a fundamental requirement. This applies both to UK based leaders and those who may be appointed but are based overseas and who may not meet the expedition group until they arrive in country.

11.1 The Provider shall appoint a Leader to the expedition who has been formally assessed by the Provider as competent in accordance with 11.9 and the Leader Matrix in Annex E.

11.1.2 The Provider shall ensure:

That the Leader is inducted into the Provider's organisation. This induction shall include details of the Provider's safety management system.

11.2 The Provider shall appoint a Leader who is able to meet the participants and their parents within a timescale that takes account of 11.2.1, 11.4 to 11.9. This appointment shall be made a minimum of 4 months before departure, unless by prior agreement otherwise, though no explicit safety issue arises from the appointment of late or replacement Leaders.

11.2.1 If the Leader is not UK based:

- a) The provider should ensure that the leader can still demonstrate their suitability for the role in line with 11.9 and the Leader Matrix in Annex E.
- b) Where NGB qualifications are not available or relevant in that leader's home country, their competency for any technical aspects of the expedition should be assessed by a suitable technical advisor (see 11.6). This assessment may take into account non NGB qualifications, relevant experience and references, but the leader's capacity to competently fulfil the requirements of the role should be able to be clearly demonstrated.
- c) The Provider must make arrangements to ensure the expedition participants, their parents and adult school staff have details of the Leader's competencies and skills. A meeting should be arranged

between the leader and expedition participants. If a physical meeting is not possible, a virtual meeting (e.g. by skype) is acceptable.

11.3 Where an appointed Leader pulls out of the expedition, the Provider shall appoint a replacement Leader who has been formally assessed by the Provider as competent in accordance with 11.9 and the Leader Matrix in Annex E.

11.3.1 Where a replacement Leader is engaged

The expedition preparation shall include re-evaluation of the intended itinerary in conjunction with the replacement Leader and clients and the implementation of any changes.

11.4 The Provider shall ensure the assessment of Leader competence is overseen by a member of the Provider's organisation who is experienced and/or qualified to carry out the task.

11.5 If the individual specified in 11.4 is not competent to assess all the risks, the Provider shall select a Technical Adviser to assist him/her. The Technical adviser shall have:

- a) Documented experience of leading expeditions of a similar type to that for which the potential Leader is being assessed
- b) Experience of leadership and group management in the expedition environment

11.6 Where a Technical Adviser assesses the competence of the Leader to lead technical activities, the Provider shall ensure that the Technical Adviser:

- a) Holds a valid National Governing Body qualification at the minimum 'Technical Adviser' level as stipulated in HSE L77 'Guidance to the Licensing Authority on the Adventure Activities Licensing Regulations' 1996, appropriate to the activity concerned; or
- b) Holds an equivalent valid UK military qualification which is recognised by the UK Governing Body; or
- c) Formally engages the services of other Competent Persons qualified at or above the level specified in a or b

11.7 Where a Technical Adviser works with other Competent Persons to assess Leader competency, these Competent Persons:

- a) Shall conform to 11.5a and b; and

Where assessing competency to lead technical activities, shall conform to 11.6

11.8 Although the Provider may use Competent Persons to assist with the task of assessing Leader competence, the Provider shall retain the ultimate

responsibility for formally confirming Leader competence in accordance with 11.10.

11.9 The Provider shall assess Leader competence using the following methods:

- a) An interview
- b) A review of documented experience in line with the Leader Matrix in Annex E
- c) Checks on in-date original certificates of qualifications. Where it is not possible to view original certificates, the Provider shall undertake checks with the relevant National Governing Body or overseas equivalent
- d) Following up at least 2 references, one of which may be verbal.  
*These references should be obtained from persons who have either worked alongside the potential Leader in an outdoors, expedition or youth development environment, or have previously appointed him or her in a Leader capacity.*
- e) An assessment of the potential Leader's competencies relevant to the requirements of expedition leadership (independent of any National Governing Body awards held by the Leader). This shall involve observation of the Leader working with the participants that he or she is expected to lead (or a group of young people of a similar age)
- f) For activities on or at the water margins evidence of how leaders are trained and competency to lead activities are signed off
- g) Ensuring that the potential Leader holds an in-date first aid training certificate from a training provider recognized by the relevant NGB as appropriate to the environment to which they will be exposed. The training shall consist of a minimum of a 16-hour course including an assessed element at or above the level required by the relevant NGB
- h) Background checks including where appropriate/possible an enhanced check with the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) or Disclosure Scotland checks. For overseas leaders there may not be a relevant background checking service that is available (or accurate). If this is the case the provider should consider obtaining further character references.

11.10 The Provider shall ensure all Leaders have a 'Leader Statement of Competence' signed and dated by the Overseer specified in 11.4, a Technical Advisor or other Competent Persons specified in 11.7. This is a professional judgment: it does not necessarily amount to a decision to use the Leader in question, for which there shall be accountability at Director level.

11.11 The Provider shall maintain up to date records of Leader and Technical Adviser Competencies. In all cases this shall include details of Leader induction and training and items referenced in 11.9 and 11.10.

11.12 The Provider should ensure that there is at least one member of the Leadership Team of the same gender as the participants (i.e. mixed Leadership Teams are necessary for mixed gender expeditions). In all but exceptional circumstances this gender balance should be maintained for the duration of the expedition.

*An example of an exceptional circumstance is when a member of the Leadership Team is required to provide pastoral care to a hospitalized participant resulting in a temporary gender imbalance in the Leadership Team.*

11.13 The Provider shall ensure that adult supervision ratios conform to the requirements of the relevant Local Authority for the type of participant involved and activities being undertaken. These ratios shall be maintained for the duration of the expedition, taking account of all relevant local factors.

11.14 The Provider shall ensure that the risk assessment outlines the impact and mitigation of the incapacitation of the Leader and/or other members of the Leadership Team.

## **12 PARTICIPANT SELECTION**

12.1 The Provider shall assess the suitability and capability of each participant to undertake all elements of the proposed expedition. If there are concerns about the experience, fitness, health or maturity of an individual to participate in an expedition this should be discussed with the school, parents/guardian and leader team as to the best way forward. The final decision rests with the Provider.

This judgment shall be based on:

- a) Prior knowledge of the participant, including:
  - i. First-hand experience;
  - ii Information from third parties; and
  - iii All relevant medical information as disclosed by participant / parent/guardian/school.
  
- b) Prior knowledge of the expedition/activity, including:
  - i. The activity itself;
  - ii. The environment (terrain, climate, etc.);
  - iii Contingency Plans (Plan B's);
  - iv. The Emergency Response Plan; and
  - v. Risk assessments

12.2 The Provider shall ensure the information resulting from the analysis in 12.1 is recorded as a 'participant Risk Assessment' and shall be shared between the Leader and Provider prior to the expedition.

## **13 EXPEDITION**

13.1 The Provider shall ensure that prior to departure the Leadership Team is briefed by a Competent Person who is in possession of expedition specific knowledge gained about the destination from recce and research material.

13.2 The Provider shall give the Leader supporting documentation before departure. This shall include, but is not necessarily limited to:

- a. Medical backgrounds of all participants
- b. Emergency Response Plans
- c. Risk Assessment
- d. Itinerary and budget
- e. Contingency Plans (Plan B's)
- f. Communications Plan
- g. Copies of flight tickets and passports
- h. Equipment lists
- i. In country contacts

13.3 The Provider shall implement a system to ensure that relevant equipment is fit for purpose.

13.4 The Provider shall ensure that the Leader is empowered through their contract of employment to make adjustments to the activity/itinerary to ensure

the health and safety of participants and to continue to monitor individuals and make justifiable judgments throughout the expedition.

13.5 The provider shall ensure that the leader has the required information to meet the planned objectives of the expedition and the required resources to deliver and monitor them during the expedition through a range of teaching and learning styles.

## **14 INCIDENT MANAGEMENT**

### **14.1 In the UK:**

14.1.1 The Provider shall have a system for the Leadership Team to contact UK based duty staff 24hrs a day for the duration of the expedition. All duty staff shall have received training to carry out their duties prior to the expedition.

14.1.2 The Provider shall ensure that resources are available 24hrs a day to manage all levels of incident (appropriate to the type and number of expeditions overseas at any given time).

14.1.3 The Provider shall have the ability to transfer required funds overseas at short notice.

14.1.4 The Provider shall develop a UK business continuity plan in the event of principle premises becoming unavailable or incapacitated.

### **14.2 Whilst overseas:**

14.2.1 The Provider shall ensure that Contingency Plans (Plan Bs) are built into the itinerary, sufficient to cope with risks identified in the risk assessment.

14.2.2 The Provider shall ensure that the Leader has access to an in-country agent or point of contact at all times.

14.2.3 The Provider shall implement a system for providing the relevant British Embassies or High Commissions with expedition itinerary details before the start of the expedition.

### **14.3 Communications**

The Provider shall document a Communications Plan that includes:

- a) A method of implementing the Emergency or Incident Response Plan at all times during the expedition

*This method should be two-way communication known to be effective in the region. Mobile phones have an increasingly global coverage but Satellite phones should be the norm in the more remote regions of the Developing World. The reasons for using a type of communication should be clearly documented in the Communications Plan and Risk assessment of the region.*

*The types of devices that are commonly used to add to the robustness of the Communications Plan include:*

- i. Satellite phone*
- ii. Mobile phone*
- iii. E-mail*
- iv. Personal Locating Beacon (PLB)*
- v. Two-way radios*
- vi. Tracker*
- vii. Satellite distress beacon*

- b) Details of the regularity, methods and circumstances under which the Leader is expected to make contact with the company's UK base, providing specific guidance on the need to confer before deviations from the itinerary.

#### **14.4 Emergency or Incident Response Plan**

14.4.1 The Provider shall have a written Emergency or Incident Response Plan available for activation at all times and in all locations on the expedition for all types of incidents and emergencies. The plan shall include:

- a) Medical treatment and evacuation, including details of the nearest hospital or medical facility and its accessibility
- b) Search and rescue
- c) Media handling
- d) Stakeholder communication

14.4.2 The Provider shall supply a written copy of the Emergency or Incident Response Plan to duty staff in advance of the expedition.

#### **14.5 Medical**

14.5.1 The Provider shall ensure First Aid provision in accordance with 11.9f.

14.5.2 The Provider and the Provider's duty staff shall have access to a Medical Practitioner with the ability to communicate with the Leadership Team overseas.

14.5.3 The Provider shall ensure that expedition team has access to medical services and support, including repatriation where required, within identified timescales.

### **15 ACCOMMODATION & TRANSPORT**

*As buildings, vehicles and transport facilities in likely expedition locations cannot be expected to meet recognised UK standards, ongoing Risk Assessments made by the Leader in the field are the single most important factor in determining suitability of such items for use by participants.*

15.1 The Provider shall instruct the Leader on how to conduct Risk Assessments and take appropriate action.

15.2 The Provider shall ensure that clients are informed, prior to booking, of the type of accommodation and transport likely to be used during the expedition.

## **16 PROVIDER'S SELECTION OF GUIDES AND THIRD PARTY PROVIDERS**

16.1 In accordance with the safety guidelines of the provider, the Leadership Team retains the right to over-rule third party providers where necessary.

These checks should include:

- a) Background checks (including history, training, safety, etc.) by in-country agents and, where appropriate, British Embassies
- b) References from other users
- c) Activity observation

16.2 The Provider should ensure that the Leader agrees a Code of Conduct with the Guide and/or Third Party Provider for the activity they have been contracted to provide.

## **17 GATHERING, REVIEWING AND ACTING ON CLIENT AND LEADERS' FEEDBACK**

17.1 The Provider shall ensure that on completion of each expedition there is a reporting and review mechanism to monitor quality and identify and implement any lessons learnt. Therefore:

- a) Evaluates its own services
- b) Gathers feedback from clients including that what was agreed at the planning stage was delivered, whether learning objectives have been met and value for money has been achieved
- c) Has a process in place to change practices as a result of review, evaluation and feedback

## ANNEX A LOtC QUALITY INDICATORS

The Quality Indicators in Section 3 are those agreed by the Learning Outside the Classroom (LOtC) Council as the common standards against which all activity Providers will be assessed.

Assessment of these indicators is cross referenced into the main text of the Standard as shown below.

<p><b>1.1 The Provider:</b></p>	<p>a) Has a process in place to assist users to plan the learning experience effectively</p> <p>b) Provides accurate information about its offer</p> <p>c) Provide activities, experience or resources which meet learner needs</p> <p>d) Reviews the experience and acts upon feedback;</p> <p>e) Meets the needs of users and</p> <p>f) Has safety management processes in place to manage risk effectively</p>	<p>8.3a/b</p> <p>8.3g</p> <p>13.1-6</p> <p>8.3l-n</p> <p>8.3g</p> <p>6.a-l</p>
<p><b>Pre Experience</b> The Provider:</p>	<p>1.2 has a process in place to assist users to plan the learning experience effectively. Therefore:</p> <p>a) Offers guidance/information on or agrees roles and responsibilities of the user and the provider i.e. who does what</p> <p>b) Captures or agrees learning objectives</p> <p>c) Offers a menu or plans (where necessary) a tailored programme of work, with a purpose for each activity, linked to learning objectives;</p> <p>d) Takes into account, any equality, diversity and inclusion issues and needs</p> <p>e) Offers guidance/information on or agrees a process with the user, for assessing learner progress during the overall experience and how the experience will be evaluated and;</p> <p>f) Offers guidance/information on (could include resources/activities) or discusses with the use, preparation and follow up to the visit</p> <p>1.3 provides accurate information about its offer. Therefore:</p> <p>a) Ensures that promotional / written materials provide an accurate description of amenities, facilities and services provided and contact details; to include: a statement or information about the degree of physical challenge likely to be encountered, the remoteness of the users from emergency communications and support, level and quality of local infrastructure, essential differences from conditions in the country of</p>	<p>8.3a/b</p> <p>7.0</p> <p>8.3k</p> <p>9.1-3</p> <p>8.3 a-g</p> <p>8.3g</p> <p>8.4</p> <p>8.3 l</p> <p>8.3c,d,e,g</p> <p>8.3d,f,h</p>

	domicile and  b) Has charging policies that state honestly the charges of the experience	8.j
<b>During the experience:</b> The Provider:	Identifies/demonstrates a process for review of learning outcomes or offers opportunities and/or processes for the regular and ongoing review of learning outcomes  1.4 Provides activities, experiences and resources which meet learner needs. Therefore:  a) Offers a variety of activities delivered through a range of teaching and learning styles  b) Equipment and materials are suitable for tasks/activities, the age and ability of the learners, are current and in good working order;  c) Makes good use of their location  d) The amenities, facilities and services are as described in promotional/written materials;  e) Where there are on site educational or instructional staff, staff are competent; and  f) Where there are on site educational or instructional staff, there is a process in place for monitoring and evaluating the quality of their teaching/instruction	8.a-b 10  8.c 13.3  13.1  15.1,2  11.1-11 16.1,4  6.3m,n 8.5
<b>Post experience:</b> The Provider:	1.5 Reviews the experience and act upon feedback. Therefore:  a) Evaluates their own service  b) Gather feedback on the learning experience from users (teachers and learners), including that what was agreed at the planning stage was delivered, whether learning objectives have been met and value for money has been achieved; and  c) Has a process in place to change practices as a result of review, evaluation and feedback	11.6  8.3 l,m  8.3n
<b>Organisational</b> The Provider:	1.6 Meets the needs of users. Therefore:  a) Communicates effectively with users  b) Essential written policies and procedures are reviewed, maintained and updated. This should be undertaken on a regular basis and cover all venues and all activities  c) Shows an understanding of sustainability issues and the impact of activities where appropriate; and	8.3  5.a-d 6  4.2 h  5.a-d

	d) Has a process in place to monitor the overall quality of provision across its site or sites (if multiple sites) and make changes where necessary	
	1.7 Has safety management processes in place to manage risk effectively. Therefore:	6.a-k
	a) Has safety management procedures in place, (which are shared with users) so that risks are identified and appropriately managed.	4.3
	b) Complies with all external regulation relating to them e.g. Health and Safety at Work Act.	4.2
	c) Have appropriate/agreed public liability insurance cover and	4.2 f
	d) Has relevant safeguarding procedures in place e.g. maintain Child Protection Standards and provides child secure venues.	

## **ANNEX B– Reference Documents**

The following documents were used as guidance during the production of versions of this document:

Health and Safety of Pupils on Educational Visits  
 Health & Safety: Advice on legal duties and power, Feb 2014  
 Outdoor Education Advisors Panel Guidance  
 Local Education Authority guidelines  
 School Travel Forum - Planning an Educational Visit  
 School Travel Forum - Safety Management  
 Young Explorer’s Trust – Safe and Responsible Expeditions  
 Young Explorer’s Trust - Expedition Leader Development Paper  
 OCR – Off-Site Safety Management Scheme  
 Expedition Provider’s Association Selection of Third Party Providers  
 Adventure Activities Licensing Authority - Sensible Health and Safety when Selecting and Vetting  
 Adventure Activity Providers (Version 1: 1 September 2005)  
 Kitestamp document (Clive Atkins)  
 Mark Tozer & Matt Wells, (Leader Matrix)  
 BSi 8848:2014

## **ANNEX C – Consultation Group**

The following individuals and organisations were consulted during the production of versions of this document:

Outdoor Education Advisors Panel  
 Department for Education and Skills  
 Independent Schools Association  
 Adventure Activities Licensing Scheme  
 RGS/IBG – Expedition Advisory Centre  
 Young Explorer’s Trust

Institute of Outdoor Learning  
Educational Visits Advisory Council  
School Travel Forum  
English Outdoors Council  
Adventurous Activities Industries Advisory Committee  
Clive Atkins – Outdoor Education Consultant  
Association of Heads of Outdoor Education Centres  
Adventure Activities Associates

**ANNEX D – Acronyms**

APIOL – Accredited Practitioner of the Institute of Outdoor Education  
BCU – British Canoe Union  
DBS - Disclosure and Barring Service checks and/or Disclosure Scotland checks  
PoCA List – Protection of Children’s Act List  
NGB – National Governing Body  
MTUK – Mountain Training United Kingdom  
BSAC – British Sub-Aqua Club  
PADI – Professional Association of Diving Instructors  
OSSM – Off-Site Safety Management

## **ANNEX E - Leader Matrix**

There is no single qualification to lead an expedition.

The Leader Matrix relates to technical qualifications and experience. This alone does not suggest competence in leading overseas expeditions. In order to gauge the suitability of a Leader, assessments shall be made with regards to the potential Leader's character, personality and previous experience of travelling within Developing World countries in conjunction with this Matrix. Therefore other skills alongside technical expertise are necessary additional competencies for the outdoor leader who wishes to lead an overseas expedition.

A person who is qualified by experience but does not possess NGB qualifications may be appointed as a Leader provided that: -

- a. the experience is relevant and verifiable; and
- b. the experience can be judged to be suitably above the minimum standard required for the venture.

This includes:

1. Expedition Activity
2. Experience
3. Regional knowledge
4. Leader Qualifications
5. Core Competencies
6. Essential Knowledge and Additional Experience

This might apply to a leader from the UK or Overseas

**A hard or electronic copy of all certificates, other evidence of competence and references should be kept.**

Below is a matrix of essential and desirable skills for an Expedition Leader. What is essential and desirable for any expedition will vary depending on the group experience, the expedition itinerary and the environment it takes place in.

### Expedition Overview

<b>Country</b>	
<b>Environment(s)</b>	
<b>No Participants</b>	
<b>Leader</b>	
<b>Assistant Leader</b>	
<b>Teachers</b>	
<b>Additional requirements</b>	

### Essential Qualifications

	<b>Name of Qualification</b>	<b>Checked Signature and date</b>
Essential Qualifications (E.g. Mountain Leader Summer Award or PADI Divemaster)		
Other NGB Awards required		
First Aid		
DBS checks and/or Disclosure Scotland checks for UK leaders. Police background checks where available for overseas leaders.		

**Demonstrate experiential expertise in areas relevant to planned activities:**

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Essential</b>	<b>Desirable</b>	<b>Checked Signature and date</b>
Treks			
Mountaineering			
Rafting			
Caving			
Cycling/Mountain Biking			
Canoeing			
Working with animals			
Vehicle			
Diving			
Swimming			
Cultural/Social Projects			
Other			

**Demonstrate experiential expertise in regions relevant to intended environment:**

<b>Environment</b>	<b>Essential</b>	<b>Desirable</b>	<b>Checked Signature and date</b>
Mountain			
Desert			
Jungle			
Water-based			
Tropical			
Polar			
Developing World			
Altitude			
Other			

**Demonstrate further professional development through:**

<b>Professional Awards</b>	<b>Essential</b>	<b>Desirable</b>	<b>Checked Signature and date</b>
APIOL			
Degree/Diploma			
Mountain Training Awards MIA/C, IML etc			
BCU Awards Coach 2/3/4/5			
BSAC/PADI			
OSSM			
Other NGB Coaching Awards			
NVQ Awards			
Others			

**Demonstrate commitment to and evidence of the following key areas:**

<b>Skill/Experience</b>	<b>Essential</b>	<b>Desirable</b>	<b>Checked Signature and date</b>
Self-awareness			
Professional conduct and maturity			
Experienced based judgement and decision making			
Teaching/ Facilitation			
Environmental Awareness			
Programme Management			
Safety and Risk Management			
Technical Ability			
Working with Young People			
Other			

**Demonstrate understanding and ability in assessing:**

<b>Skill/Experience</b>	<b>Essential</b>	<b>Desirable</b>	<b>Checked Signature and date</b>
Crisis Management			
Medical facilities			
Emergency support			
Local Guides competence			
Accommodation safety			
Crime prevention awareness			
Gender issues			
Understanding of differing Religions			
Flexible Leadership Style			
Problem Solving Ability			
Travel on a variety of Transport systems			
Experience of unexpected I Situations			
Other			

## ANNEX F

### Expeditions Providers Association

#### Accident/Unintended Events Reporting

Compliance with the EPA Standard 6 (m) requires that members '*Agree to share unintended events/accident information with EPA members so any lessons learned become part of industry 'best practice'.*'

Members are encouraged to discuss such incidents in EPA meetings and share ideas for improved good practice.

This form should be used to fill in relevant information about such incidents. This should be returned to the inspectors for the LOTC badge where data will be compiled and shared with members as part of the inspection report process. Such information will be treated confidentially.

<b>Company Name</b>	
<b>Date of incident</b>	
<b>Place of incident</b>	
<b>Activity or Expedition phase</b>	<i>Acclimatisation/Trek/Project/Activity etc</i>
<b>Size of group leaders/participants</b>	
<b>Nature of Incident</b>	<i>Medical/Psychological/RTC/Life Threatening/Security/ etc</i>
<b>Actions taken</b>	
<b>Follow up actions</b>	
<b>Recommendations/Learning Points</b>	

## ANNEX G

### Expedition Providers Association Standard/LOtC Quality Badge Self-declaration of conformity:

The following checklist can be used to support a self-declaration of conformity or to gather evidence for a full LOtC Inspection. The checklist follows the order of the EPA Standard Version 3.4 and should only be used in conjunction with that document. **All clauses of the Standard should be considered in making this self-declaration.**

Requirement for EPA Standard/LOtC Quality Badge conformity	Sub-clause	Name, location and type of evidence Documents should be electronically attached or send as a hard copy with references the below clearly shown.	Date/ author of evidence	For Office use: Assessors Comments
<b>General Information for LOtC Inspection</b>  (Cross reference with below if applicable)		Forward Operational Plan – planned expeditions for next 12 months  Sample Client Pack <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Prior to booking</li> <li>b. Prior to expedition Leaving</li> </ul> Brochure(s)		
<b>4. Business Practice</b>	<b>4.1 a</b>  <b>4.1 b, c, d</b>  <b>4.1 e</b>  <b>4.1 f</b>  <b>4.1 g/ 8.1</b>  <b>4.1 h</b>  <b>4.1 i</b>  <b>4.2</b>  <b>4.3</b>	<i>Company structure</i>  <i>Evidence of Compliance with Package Tour Regulations, Company Insurance and financial Bonding</i>  <i>AALS Licence</i>  <i>Child Protection Policy</i>  <i>Expedition specific Contract inc terms and conditions</i>  <i>Environmental Protection &amp; Sustainability Policy</i>  <i>Privacy Policy</i>  <i>Compliance with any other relevant external regulations</i>  <i>Method of communicating with clients</i>		
<b>5. Health and</b>	<b>5.a</b>	<i>Copy of Health and Safety Policy</i>		

<b>Safety</b>	5.b/4	<i>Safety Management System (see Section 4)</i>		
	5.c/12	<i>Copy of Emergency/Incident Response Plan (see Section 12)</i>		
	5.d	<i>Communications Plan</i>		
<b>6. Safety Management System</b>	6. a-d	<i>Safety management system that includes:</i>  <i>Examples of generic and expedition specific risk assessment &amp; risk benefit process focusing on the activities to be undertaken</i>		
	6.e	<i>Provision of contingency plans (Plan B's) for key expedition phases;</i>		
	6.f	<i>Specific training required to reduce risks;</i>		
	6.g	<i>Process for dynamic risk assessment for all water-based and other adventurous activities</i>		
	6.h	<i>How the clients, leadership team and other stakeholders are informed of the outcomes of this process;</i>		
	6.i	<i>Details of Competent person within your company person to oversee and implement the safety management system and of additional Technical Adviser support (the two roles may be combined);</i>		
	6.j-l	<i>System for monitoring of the safety management systems, including near miss log and how this is monitored and corrective action taken.</i>		
	6.m	<i>Example of shared near-miss/accident information with EPA members</i>		
<b>7. Duty of Care</b>		<i>Clear statement of responsibility for Duty of Care</i>		
<b>8. Contracting</b>	8.1/ 4.1 g	<i>Example of contract with school/client</i>		
	8.1.3	<i>Client Payment Details</i>		
		<i>Example of information to clients</i>		

	<p><b>8.3 a-n</b></p> <p><b>8.4</b></p> <p><b>8.5</b></p>	<p><i>highlighting:</i></p> <p><i>a. Expedition aim and objectives.</i></p> <p><i>b. Expedition Learning Experiences clearly identified</i></p> <p><i>c. Participant equipment list.</i></p> <p><i>d. Information on fitness preparation.</i></p> <p><i>e. Medical guidance on any inoculations and specific medications required.</i></p> <p><i>f. A summary of significant risks.</i></p> <p><i>g. Detailed expedition itinerary which meet the participant's needs and expectations.</i></p> <p><i>h. Emergency or Incident Response Plan.</i></p> <p><i>i. Overview of the Communications Plan during the Expedition.</i></p> <p><i>j. Additional costs (visas, inoculations, equipment, etc.).</i></p> <p><i>k. Competencies and responsibilities of the Leadership Team.</i></p> <p><i>l. Evaluation and Review with participants prior to, during and after the expedition.</i></p> <p><i>m. Feedback prior to, during and post expedition.</i></p> <p><i>n. Review Process</i></p> <p><i>Evidence of company 'inclusive selection policy'</i></p> <p><i>Process for dealing with unavoidable cancellation</i></p>		
<p><b>9. Code of Conduct</b></p>	<p><b>9.1</b></p> <p><b>9.3</b></p>	<p><i>Participant Code of Conduct</i></p> <p><i>Leadership Team Code of Conduct</i></p>		

<b>10. Preparatory Activities in the UK &amp; Overseas</b>	<b>10.1</b>          <b>10.2-3</b>          <b>10.4 a-c</b>          <b>10.5</b>	<i>Generic and specific Pre-expedition training programme</i>          <i>Copy of AALS License &amp; in-house sign off for non-Licensable activities</i>          <i>System for Physical &amp; Medical Monitoring of participants &amp; Leaders</i>          <i>Expedition Leader Induction Process</i>		
<b>11. Leader Selection</b>	<b>11.1-2</b>          <b>11.4-10</b>          <b>11.3</b>          <b>11.11</b>	<i>Expedition Leader Selection Process (for UK and Overseas based Leaders)</i>          <i>Late replacement of leader process</i>          <i>Recording of Leader and Technical Advisor Competencies</i>		
<b>12. Participant Selection</b>	<b>12.1</b>	<i>Process of assessing and recording the suitability and capability of each participant</i>		
<b>13. Expedition</b>	<b>13.1</b>          <b>13.2,4,5</b>          <b>13.3</b>	<i>Leader Team training and Briefing Process</i>          <i>Example of Leader Documentation for expedition</i>          <i>Process for ensuring all expedition equipment is fit for purpose</i>		
<b>14. Incident Management</b>	<b>14.1</b>          <b>14.2-</b>          <b>14.3</b>          <b>14.5</b>	<i>Incident Management process in the UK</i>          <i>Incident Management process Overseas</i>          <i>Communication during the Expedition</i>          <i>Medical and FA provision during the Expedition</i>		

<b>15. Accommodation and Transport</b>	<p><b>15.1</b></p> <p><b>15.2</b></p>	<p><i>Process for Risk Assessment and Management for Accommodation and Transport during the expedition</i></p> <p><i>How clients are informed of types of accommodation &amp; transport prior to booking</i></p>		
<b>16. Provider Selection of Guides and Third Party Providers</b>	<p><b>16.1</b></p> <p><b>16.2</b></p>	<p><i>System for assessing and approving 3<sup>rd</sup> Party Providers Pre and during the Expedition</i></p> <p><i>Proof that the Leader team have 'right of veto' on activities</i></p> <p><i>a. Background checks (including history, training, safety, etc.) by in-country agents and, where appropriate, British Embassies.</i></p> <p><i>b. References from other users.</i></p> <p><i>c. Activity observation.</i></p> <p><i>Copy of Agreed Code of Conduct for Third Party Providers and Guides</i></p>		
<b>17. Gathering, Reviewing and Acting on Client and Leaders Feedback</b>	<b>17.1</b>	<p><i>Post expedition review process</i></p> <p><i>a. Self-Evaluation of Provider Services</i></p> <p><i>b. Client Feedback</i></p> <p><i>c. Review and implementation process</i></p>		