

Bushcraft Competency

Institute for Outdoor Learning
Statement of Good Practice



Institute for **Outdoor Learning**

Version 2.0

November 2021

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Reason for the statement.

Bushcraft is an established and growing sector of the outdoor industry with increasing numbers of outdoor practitioners now including bushcraft elements in their day-to-day activities.

The IOL Bushcraft Professional Practice Group (PPG) has a long-standing reputation for quality and innovation within the field of Bushcraft. They recognise the need for instructors, teachers and leaders to demonstrate that they have a basic level of safe and competent bushcraft skills and are following recommended good practice.

Good practice:

The Statement of Good Practice is designed to assist and support practitioners to learn and develop bushcraft skills, and to demonstrate their skills and competencies in bushcraft.

The statement describes the knowledge and skills required to demonstrate competence in eighteen bushcraft units:

- Unit 1 – Edged tools – knives & saws
- Unit 2 – Fire
- Unit 3 – Bow drill
- Unit 4 – Water
- Unit 5 – Debris shelters & bedding
- Unit 6 – Tree identification & uses
- Unit 7 – Natural navigation
- Unit 8 – Cordage
- Unit 9 – Fire use & management
- Unit 10 – Tarp shelters & knots
- Unit 11 – Edged tools – axes
- Unit 12 – Animal tracking & awareness
- Unit 13 – Campfire cooking
- Unit 14 – Plant identification & uses
- Unit 15 – Carving
- Unit 16 – Game preparation
- Unit 17 – Natural containers
- Unit 18 – Trapping, snaring & fishing

Related IOL Bushcraft Competency Awards

The Units comprising the IOL Bushcraft Competency Statement of Good Practice underpin a range of awards designed by the IOL Bushcraft PPG. Together they form a progressive suite of options that can be used for training and assessing the competence of instructors, teachers and leaders in bushcraft.



Bushcraft Competency Award

Training (2 days)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unit 1 – Edged tools – knives & saws 	Suitable for instructors working in outdoor centres or schools and delivering bushcraft skills sessions.
Consolidation (60 hours)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unit 2 – Fire Unit 4 – Water 	
Assessment (1/2 day)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unit 10 – Tarp shelters & knots Unit 13 – Campfire cooking 	



Bushcraft Competency Certificate

Training (3 days)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unit 1 – Edged tools – knives & saws 	Suitable for teachers or instructors to deliver progressive bushcraft learning experiences in their setting.
Consolidation (120 hours)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unit 2 – Fire Unit 3 – Bow drill 	
Assessment (1 day)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unit 4 – Water Unit 5 – Debris shelters & bedding Unit 6 – Tree identification & uses Unit 7 – Natural navigation Unit 8 – Cordage 	



Bushcraft Competency Diploma

Hold IOL Bushcraft Competency Certificate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unit 9 – Fire use & management Unit 10 – Tarp shelters & knots 	Suitable for teachers or instructors to demonstrate a breadth of bushcraft knowledge and skills and deliver learning experiences in any setting.
Training (5 days)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unit 11 – Edged tools - axes Unit 12 – Animal tracking & awareness 	
Consolidation (120 hours)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unit 13 – Campfire cooking 	
Assessment (2 days)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unit 14 – Plant identification & uses 	

Optional units – select 2 from 4

- Unit 15 – Carving
- Unit 16 – Game preparation
- Unit 17 – Natural containers
- Unit 18 – Trapping, snaring & fishing

Other schemes and awards supported by the IOL Bushcraft PPG

**Accredited
Resource**

Forest Explorers Bushcraft Award Scheme

Developed and provided by Releasing Potential

Recommended providers: IOL Bushcraft Competency Certificate Holders

**Accredited
Resource**

Wild Passport Skills

Developed and provided by Green Man Learning

Recommended providers: IOL Bushcraft Competency Certificate Holders

Level 2



IOL Bushcraft Skills Award

An assessed award at RQF Level 2 / SCQF Level 5 covering practical and applied bushcraft skills and knowledge designed for pupils and other learners.

Recommended 80 guided learning hours - can fit in a school term or be spread out over one year.

Delivered by: Experienced Instructors with demonstrated competence in Bushcraft knowledge and skills.

IOL Statement of Good Practice Bushcraft Competency Units

Unit 1: Edged tools – knives & saws



1.1	Describe the key aspects of current UK knife Law including:
1.1.1	Understanding of the term public place,
1.1.2	The implications of the need to justify the carrying/transportation of blades.
1.2	Explain and demonstrate the key dangers and safety considerations of the use of a blade including:
1.2.1	Storage,
1.2.2	Safe distances from others,
1.2.3	Weaknesses of folding blades,
1.2.4	Key locations of arteries.
1.3	Demonstrate safe/competent usage of a fixed blade including:
1.3.1	The passing of a blade,
1.3.2	A selection of appropriate/recognised techniques from:
1.3.2.1	Pointing up,
1.3.2.2	Cross cut,
1.3.2.3	Feathering/shaving,
1.3.2.4	Batoning.
1.4	Demonstrate the safe/competent use of a bow and folding saw utilising:
1.4.1	Suitable safeguards to protect the hands,
1.4.2	Appropriate storage of blades when not in use.

Unit 2: Fire



2.1	Demonstrate at least three ignition sources from the following list and describe the advantages and disadvantages of each method demonstrated.
2.1.1	Flint and steel,

2.1.2	Ferrocium rod,
2.1.3	Matches,
2.1.4	Electrical,
2.1.5	Chemical,
2.1.6	Solar
2.1.7	Compression.
2.2	Have knowledge of a selection of tinder from the following list and explain the preparation and use of the tinders discussed. Describe any environmental considerations.
2.2.1	Inner bark,
2.2.2	Outer bark,
2.2.3	Seed heads,
2.2.4	Fungi,
2.2.5	Dried grass, bracken, tree resins etc.
2.3	Have knowledge of a selection of man-made tinder from the following list and explain the preparation and use of the tinders discussed. Describe any environmental considerations.
2.3.1	Waxed paper,
2.3.2	Candle wax,
2.3.3	Gel,
2.3.4	Rubber,
2.3.5	Fire-lighters,
2.3.6	Hexamine blocks,
2.3.7	Others.
2.4	Gather fuel and then build and light a fire in a timely fashion showing due consideration to location and environmental considerations.
2.5	Maintain a fire long enough to boil half a mug of water, demonstrating consideration to the size and type of fire and environmental impact.
2.6	Extinguish and dismantle a fire leaving no trace.
2.7	Show due regard for safety:
2.7.1	Having appropriate safety measures available to deal with burns,
2.7.2	Being aware of any hazardous materials used.

Unit 3: Bow drill



3.1	Name and comment on the parts of the bow drill.
3.2	Know the characteristics and qualities of those parts.
3.3	Show an appropriate selection of wood in suitable condition for:
3.3.1	The drill,
3.3.2	The hearth board,
3.3.3	Be aware of alternatives.
3.4	Produce and prepare a suitable tinder bundle (appropriate size for safety and to ignite kindling) from natural materials.
3.5	Explain how to use a tinder bundle safely with groups.
3.5	Demonstrate the bow drill; producing fire and igniting kindling in a timely fashion.
3.6	Show a due regard for safety having appropriate safety measures available to deal with burns.

Unit 4: Water



4.1	Know at least five different sources of water and be able to comment on the advantages/disadvantages of each.
4.2	Know how to use a ground well to obtain water.
4.3	Know at least four different indicators of water.
4.4	Explain the difference between filtering and purifying water.
4.5	Explain how to filter water using commercial and improvised methods.
4.6	Demonstrate how to filter water.
4.7	Demonstrate how to purify water to make it safe to drink by boiling.



Unit 5: Debris shelters & bedding

5.1	Explain the need for shelter and be aware of the threats from cold, wet, wind, insects and other animals.
5.2	Explain how to correctly site a shelter with due regard to:
5.2.1	Overhead dangers,
5.2.2	Flooding,
5.2.3	Topography and aspect of the land,
5.2.4	Availability of resources,
5.2.5	Environmental damage particularly disturbance to flora and fauna.
5.3	Construct an 'A-Frame' and 'Lean-To' debris shelter (without using cordage), taking into consideration the main structural principles (size, condition shape, angles etc.), which is sturdy and safe and shows no signs of accidental collapse.
5.4	Demonstrate an understanding of using natural materials as bedding.
5.5	Clear away a shelter leaving no trace.



Unit 6: Tree identification & uses

6.1	Identify at least 10 species of commonly occurring British trees (in closely related trees exact species is not necessary e.g., willows, poplars, oaks etc)
6.2	Explain the properties and bushcraft uses of common tree species including the softness, hardness, flexibility and strength of different woods and hence their suitability for fuel, utensils, shelters, weaving, carving etc.
6.3	Describe 5 food resources that can be sourced from commonly occurring British trees and any possible confusion species.



Unit 7: Natural navigation

7.1	Demonstrate the use of a sun shadow stick and from it determine direction.
7.2	Show clear understanding of two other natural methods of determining direction and describe their limitations and accuracy.



Unit 8: Cordage

8.1	Name three plants or trees that can provide fibres suitable for making strong cordage.
8.2	Describe how to extract and process the fibres from two of these.
8.3	Demonstrate how to construct a length of 2 ply cordage from natural materials which includes feeding in additional fibres to increase the length.
8.4	Show an example of 2m of cordage made by the candidate.



Unit 9: Fire use and management

9.1	Demonstrate 3 different fire lays and describe their main use.
9.2	Manage a fire for a sustained period of time (8 hours) whilst also completing other tasks.
9.3	Use the fire appropriately as a tool apart from cooking e.g.:
9.3.1	Making birch tar,
9.3.2	Pine pitch,
9.3.3	Charcloth,
9.3.4	Pottery,
9.3.5	Smoking hides.



Unit 10: Tarp shelters & knots

10.1	Explain how to site a tarp shelter taking into account safety and other environmental factors.
10.2	Pitch a tarp in two different configurations using cordage and appropriate knots.
10.3	Demonstrate 5 different knots and lashings and describe their bushcraft uses. At least 1 lashing must be demonstrated.
10.4	Hank cord or rope in a manner to prevent it becoming tangled.



Unit 11: Edged tools - axes

11.1	Explain and demonstrate the key dangers and safety considerations of the use of an axe including:
11.1.1	Storage,
11.1.2	Safe distances from others and obstructions,
11.1.3	Main ways to reduce likelihood of injury.
11.2	Demonstrate safe/competent use of a small axe or hatchet including:
11.2.1	Passing an axe
11.2.2	A selection of appropriate/recognised techniques from:
11.2.2.1	Limbing,
11.2.2.2	Sectioning,
11.2.2.3	Feathering/shaving techniques,
11.2.2.4	Splitting,
11.2.2.5	Batoning with a wooden baton.
11.3	Demonstrate how to maintain an axe in good working condition.



Unit 12: Animal tracking & awareness

12.1	Identify:
12.1.1	5 species of commonly occurring British mammal tracks,
12.1.2	2 bird tracks (in closely related birds exact species is not necessary e.g. pigeon, etc.
12.2	Identify 5 other types of ground or aerial sign apart from animal footprints.
12.3	Describe 2 examples of different stride patterns.
12.4	Describe 2 techniques to improve awareness.



Unit 13: Campfire cooking

13.1	Know about the properties and nature of different firewood and its suitability for various methods of cooking with respect to ember production, flames, smoke etc.
13.2	Cook simple damper bread on a campfire.
13.3	Describe other ingredients that can be used when making damper bread from:
13.3.1	Milk or milk powder,
13.3.2	Yoghurt,
13.3.3	Sparkling water,
13.3.4	Savoury ingredients,
13.3.5	Sweet ingredients,
13.3.6	Foraged ingredients.
13.4	Be able to demonstrate 3 different methods of using a campfire for cooking from:
13.4.1	Ground oven/hangi,
13.4.2	Steaming,
13.4.3	Cooking in embers,
13.4.4	Hot rocks,
13.4.5	Reflector ovens,
13.4.6	Dutch ovens,
13.4.7	Billy can or frying pan,
13.4.8	Smoker.



Unit 14: Plant identification & uses

14.1	Describe the key aspects of current UK law related to foraging including:
14.1.1	Legality of foraging,
14.1.2	Ethical aspects of foraging including sustainability.
14.2	Identify at least 15 species of commonly occurring edible or medicinal British wild plants (not trees); with closely related plants the exact species is not necessary e.g. docks, etc.
14.3	Know the key identification features of the species and how to distinguish from possible confusion species.
14.4	Describe how the plant is prepared and processed for edible and medicinal use.

Unit 15: Carving



15.1	Demonstrate safe/competent usage of a selection of appropriate tools such as a spoon/crook knife or scorp to carve:
15.1.1	A spoon, and either
15.1.2	A bowl, or
15.1.3	Kusksa.
15.2	Describe the properties of 5 different woods and their suitability for carving.
15.3	Demonstrate how to maintain the tools being used and describe the dangers of blunt tools.

Unit 16: Game preparation



16.1	Prepare:
16.1.1	A mammal,
16.1.2	Bird
16.1.3	Fish for cooking.
16.2	Identify the key internal organs in the game being prepared.
16.3	Describe potential signs to be aware of that may present a health issue to humans if the animal is consumed.
16.4	Describe an appropriate way to cook the game.

Unit 17: Natural containers



17.1	Either manufacture a container from tree bark such as:
17.1.1	Shrink pot,
17.1.2	Folded bark container.
17.2	OR manufacture a simple woven basket from materials such as willow wands.
17.3	Manufacture a container, sheath or strap woven or plaited from strips of tree bark
17.4	Describe the process for making a bark container from an additional species to that already used.



Unit 18: Trapping, snaring & fishing

18.1	Describe the UK legislation relating to trapping, snaring and fishing and awareness of DEFRA recommendations for legal snaring.
18.2	Fashion and set 4 different primitive traps or snares which must include a deadfall and some form of twitch up.
18.3	From natural materials fashion either an improvised:
18.3.1	Fish hook,
18.3.2	Fish trap,
18.3.3	Or fish spear.
18.4	Describe the legal framework in which such improvised fishing equipment may be used.

IOL Awards that meet this Statement of Good Practice

The Units comprising the IOL Bushcraft Competency Statement of Good Practice underpin a range of progressive awards designed by the IOL Bushcraft PPG.

- IOL Bushcraft Competency Award (5 units)
- IOL Bushcraft Competency Certificate (8 units)
- IOL Bushcraft Competency Diploma (16 units)

Award training courses are delivered by IOL Accredited Bushcraft Competency Course Providers. Award assessment courses are arranged by IOL with Bushcraft Competency Assessors.

Becoming an IOL Accredited Bushcraft Competency Course Provider

New providers

The process for new providers to be approved to deliver the IOL Bushcraft Competency Award, IOL Bushcraft Competency Certificate, or IOL Bushcraft Competency Diploma is:

1. Read through the Course Specification and contact the IOL Bushcraft PPG and discuss your intentions and experience for delivering the course
2. Design a scheme of work for your course that can:
 - a. Best meet the needs and capabilities of your expected learners, and
 - b. Satisfy the requirements of the award
3. Complete the standard IOL Course Accreditation Application process
4. Gain approval from the IOL Bushcraft PPG – usually following a site visit
5. Complete annual renewals and attend standardisation and development meetings to support the quality assurance process

The IOL Bushcraft PPG are available to support and advise throughout this process.

Current BCC providers

The process for existing providers for the IOL Bushcraft Competency Certificate (BCC) who wish to deliver the Bushcraft Competency Award, or the Bushcraft Competency Diploma is:

1. Read through the Course Specification and design a scheme of work for the new course that can:
 - a. Best meet the needs and capabilities of your expected learners, and
 - b. Satisfy the requirements of the award
2. Complete a 'request to provide an additional course' form with details of your competency to deliver the units required in the course. Gain approval from the IOL Bushcraft PPG
3. Complete annual renewals and attend standardisation and development meetings to support the quality assurance process

Becoming an IOL Bushcraft Competency Assessor

The number of IOL Bushcraft Competency Assessors is demand led and follows the published requirements and process from the IOL Bushcraft PPG.

1. Demonstrate meeting the IOL Bushcraft Competency Assessor requirements.
2. Attend standardisation and development meetings to support the quality assurance process.

Accrediting a Bespoke Bushcraft Course

Bushcraft providers can apply to IOL to accredit Bushcraft courses of their own design.

Courses can be of any duration and content but wherever the content is covered by an IOL Bushcraft unit the knowledge and skills must meet the requirements of this statement of good practice.

- IOL Accredited Bushcraft Courses are not expected to partially cover a unit described in the Bushcraft SoGP.
- Bespoke Bushcraft Courses can include content that is not covered by the Bushcraft SoGP (e.g. core teaching and instruction skills, recording risk-benefit assessments, personal survival knowledge and skills, etc.).
- The IOL Bushcraft PPG will evaluate applications for IOL to accredit a bespoke bushcraft course and advise whether the overall course content and duration is 'fit for purpose'.
- Each application will be considered on its own merits.
- Course providers should contact the Bushcraft PPG Exec at the earliest opportunity to discuss accreditation of their bespoke course.

The process for accreditation of a bespoke Bushcraft course is:

1. Identify the IOL Bushcraft Unit(s) relevant to your course.
2. Agree to deliver training in line with the IOL Bushcraft Unit Statement of Good Practice by completing the 'UNIT ALIGNMENT' form.
3. The IOL Bushcraft PPG will confirm your overall course content and duration is 'fit for purpose'.
4. Complete the standard IOL Course Accreditation Application process.
5. Complete annual renewal and share information to support the quality assurance process.

Further Information:

This IOL statement has been developed by the IOL Bushcraft Professional Practice Group (PPG) Executive Committee, in conjunction with the accredited IOL Accredited Bushcraft Course providers, IOL Bushcraft Competency assessors and the IOL Professional Standards Manager.

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