

APIOL Application

Experienced facilitator of outdoor learning with a consolidated breadth of experience.



Candidate Name			
IOL Membership Number		IOL Region	

Candidate Responsibilities

1. **Register for APIOL and pay the required fee**
2. **Prepare your application.**
There are two pathways for preparing your application:
 - a) **IOL Coaching Pathway.** Reflect on your practice, values, approach and career aspirations and complete this stage over several meetings with the assistance of an IOL Coach external to your organisation. [IOL recommended route]
 - b) **Reflective Pathway.** If you are critically reflective, self-motivated and have high levels of developmental support you can work through this stage with colleagues, line-managers or a workplace mentor.
3. **Get your application endorsed**
To confirm the authenticity and validity of your application you will need:
 - 1) **A workplace witness statement** to confirm that what you say you do and how you say you act is what they have seen / heard in reality.
 - 2) **An IOL Coach statement** to confirm your professional ethics, level of critical reflection and application is ready for APIOL assessment interview.
4. **Let the IOL Central Office know when you are ready for assessment.**
IOL Central Office arranges APIOL assessment interviews on demand, seeking to balance availability of assessors, costs and efficiency in the process.

Working with a coach

Being able to talk confidentially with an IOL Coach is often one of the most highly valued parts of the APIOL process. A coach can help you reflect on your practice, values, approach and aspirations as an instructor, teacher or leader of outdoor learning.

Approved IOL Coaches are experienced practitioners who are willing to give their time to support others in their on-going development.

- Working with an IOL Coach is a space to reflect on your experience, skills, strengths and approach to outdoor learning and consider your aspirations and next steps.
- It is your responsibility to make contact with your chosen coach
- You work with your coach as much or as long as you need

We recommend you work with a coach who is external to your organisation. Most people meet with their coach 2 or 3 times, either face to face or by phone / video call.

Meeting all the APIOL criteria

APIOL Accreditation is designed to be accessible to all instructors, teachers and leaders no matter what area of outdoor learning they work in. It is likely that you will need to have engaged in a variety of roles (paid or voluntary) to gather the experience to meet all the criteria. Different candidates are likely to find different criterion challenging to meet.

- Some criteria may require you to gain experience outside your day-to-day role.
- Some criteria may require you to read or research a new subject or topic.

Reflecting on your experiences

The APIOL application form is designed to support you in the process of reflection and reflective practice. It can help you to extend your self-awareness and improve or develop your professional practice.

- Use examples that show how you have reflected on your experiences and gained critical understanding of the motivations, beliefs, habits and knowledge that underpins your work as an instructor, teacher or leader.

Use relevant experiences

Not all your experience will be relevant to completing your application. We are looking for examples that demonstrate *“The knowledge, skills and experience of practitioners who are responsible for providing learning in an outdoors environment and where an inherent challenge (physical, emotional or educational) and the uncertainty of the natural world is present.”*

IOL Individual Accreditation awards are applicable nationally and so our understanding of what constitutes valid evidence for each criterion must fit for instructors, teachers and leaders operating high on mountain ridges as much as in the more remote areas of Scotland, or the shady glades of Oxfordshire woodland, or in the seas off the coast in Devon.

Be clear and concise

The APIOL application form asks challenging questions and tests your ability to be clear, concise and purposeful in what you say. Your application is NOT a piece of academic writing. You can use pictures or illustrations in your application if you wish.

The following are not good practice:

- **Simple bullet point answers** – they rarely convey enough detail to be able to evidence for meeting a criteria. [SEP]
- **Long, vague and theoretical or philosophical answers** – one of the aims of reflective practice is to allow you to be able to express your answers in a concise and accessible manner. [SEP]
- **Statements like “My organisation...”** – we are interested in your individual practice, not the policies and procedures you comply with.

[SEP]

- Good practice answers tend to include: [SEP]
 - Your own values, beliefs and opinions [SEP]
 - Examples from your practice [SEP]
 - Evidence of how an experience influenced your practice [SEP]
 - Concise and purposeful writing that answers the questions asked [SEP]

Applications are assessed on the evidence that you present in your application, so please make sure the important bits stand out. You can't rely on the assessors filling in gaps and making assumptions. Ask another person to read your application and give you feedback on whether the content shows you meet the APIOL benchmarks and is clear and succinct in its expression.

Assistance to complete your application

Please use any support necessary to type your spoken word, transcribe a recording, correct spelling or grammar, etc. It is expected that APIOL candidates will take a professional approach and be able to make the necessary arrangements to suit their specific needs. The IOL Professional Development Team can assist you if required.

Getting your application endorsed

Endorsement is critical part of APIOL process to confirm the authenticity, currency, reliability and validity of all you have written in your application.

- **Your workplace witness statement** must be from someone who has observed you at work and can comment on how your practice matches what you describe in your application. Most people ask their line-manager or senior colleague. You can use one or two witnesses.
- **Your IOL Coach statement** must be from someone from outside your organisation and be an APIOL holder and IOL Coach. Ideally you will meet your IOL Coach face-to-face but online (skype/facetime) or phone is also acceptable. Whether you followed the IOL Coaching pathway or the Reflective pathway to prepare your application you will need an IOL Coach statement to endorse your application.

Format of Application

Your application needs to be electronic format so it can be emailed to the Institute and the assessors.

- Your application should be one document with your **name** and the current **date** in the header of each page.

Part 1 – Outdoor Learning Experience, Achievements, Qualifications

Your Experience

Please list paid and voluntary roles, most recent first, with BRIEF details of what you did in that post.

Dates	Organisation	Job/Role, Type of work	Key achievements

Adventures / Achievements that are relevant to your work

Use this section to tell us about other things that you do / have done, which have had an influence on the work you do. These might be work placements or projects, trips and adventures (journeys, expeditions, family adventures, pilgrimages, active holidays, etc.), outdoor activities and hobbies, etc.

Where, what, with whom?	When, how long for?	Key experiences, high points, achievements, learning

Other information that conveys your passion and interest in the outdoors

Core Competence

IOL Accreditation requires practitioners are competent in three core areas. Please outline where you covered these core subjects and any training, awards or qualifications.

Core Subject	Date last completed	Organisation	Award
First Aid			
Safeguarding			
Managing Personal Data			

Your Qualifications and Awards

Please list qualifications that are important to the work you do in the outdoors. Please list them in date order - most recent first. Examples of qualifications you might list:

- FE / HE qualifications e.g. BTEC, Degree, etc.
- Vocational awards (e.g. related to teaching / youth work)
- National / Local Outdoor Leadership Awards, Sports Coaching (NGB) awards, etc.

Date	Qualification/Award	Awarding Body or Institution

Membership of associations and clubs (relevant to outdoor practice)

Please write whole name of the organisation and include past and current memberships

Association, Club or Body	Membership Dates (from-to)	Specific role/contribution

Part 2 – Professional Practice

Your range of experience

Use this grid to record different types of groups and individuals you have worked with as an instructor, teacher or facilitator. For APIOL we need to see you have been responsible for delivering outdoor learning with at least **three different types of group** (primary, youth, secondary, adult, etc.) at least **three different types of programme aim**, and in at least **three different locations** (centres, woodland, lakes, mountains, shoreline, etc.)

Only include experiences where you were responsible for *providing learning* in an outdoors environment where there is an *inherent challenge* (physical, emotional or educational) and when the *uncertainty* of the natural world was present.

Year	Location, environment	Aim of programme and main activities	Group/individual needs Particular challenges	Your role & responsibility, key achievements

Professional Development

Commitment to professional development, extending your knowledge and skills, and making a contribution to the outdoor sector are all hallmarks of an outdoor professional. Please use this section to record the way in which you do these things.

Key people, books and experiences, which have influenced you and your practice

Conferences, workshops, training courses and events attended

Include here anything that you have not mentioned in other sections

Date	Title	Location	Duration

Contributing to the outdoor learning sector

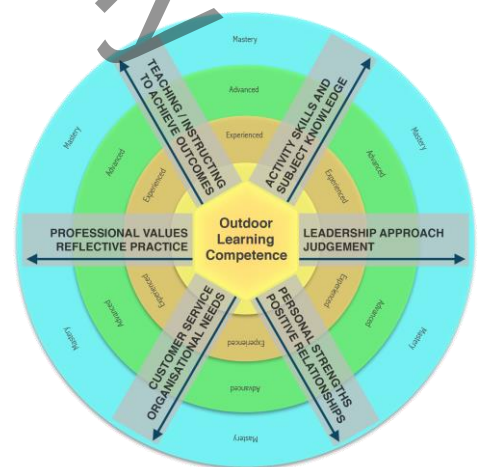
For example; Sharing ideas with colleagues or the wider community; Volunteering (e.g. committees, conservation work, youth/ faith groups etc.); Running workshops, writing articles etc.

Date(s)	Group/organisation/publication	Specific role/contribution

Professional Development Plan

Please complete this to represent where you are right now, and where you want to go next. Have a look at the [IOL Development Map](#) to see the areas in which you wish to develop. Also consider what your ideal next role could be and your longer-term aspirations in outdoor learning.

We recommend you explore your goals with your coach - what is most important for you to focus on in the next 1-3 years?



Strengths - What I offer/am good at, at this point in time

Development - Areas where I need/want further development

Goals - Where you are going next in your career?

Action - What development activities are you considering that will help you get there?

For Review Only

Part 3 – Evidence against the APIOL Criteria**Key Experiences**

Please choose up to 2 key experiences that have been crucial in helping you to develop as an outdoor practitioner. These might be a particular job, an adventure that changed you profoundly, a particular incident etc.

Experience**1**

- Dates, and what the experience was
- Your role/responsibilities in it
- Why this event/experience was so crucial to your development
- What you learned from this experience that guides you now

Experience**2**

- Dates, and what the experience was
- Your role/responsibilities in it
- Why this event/experience was so crucial to your development
- What you learned from this experience that guides you now

Self-Assessment against the APIOL Criteria

Take the time to familiarise yourself with the APIOL Criteria and make a self-assessment of the evidence you have gained through your experience to meet the criteria.

- Low** You have one or two examples of how you meet the criterion
Medium You are able to offer several examples of meeting this criterion
High You have a good number of examples of how you meet the criterion

Reflect on your self-assessment and talk with your Coach about ways in which you can demonstrate you meet each of the APIOL Criteria.

- Which criteria require you to gain experience outside your day-to-day role?
- Which criteria require you to read or research a new subject or topic?

APIOL Criteria	H	M	L
1. Understanding the nature and potential of outdoor learning			
1.1. Have a reasonable breadth of knowledge about the way in which the field of outdoor learning has developed and an understanding of its current scope			
1.2. Be familiar with a range of beliefs, values and philosophies underpinning outdoor learning			
1.3. Understand how outdoor learning can be used to help individuals to develop			
1.4. Be aware of how outdoor learning can be of value to society			
1.5. Describe a clear personal philosophy of outdoor learning			
2. Promotion of responsible and sensitive use of the outdoor situation			
2.1. Describe the special contribution that the outdoors can make to individual learning and development			
2.2. Be able to share your enthusiasm for the outdoors with others			
2.3. Encourage participants to appreciate the wonder of the outdoor environment and their place within it			
2.4. Promote the importance of sustainable use of the environment			
2.5. Encourage participants to accept personal responsibility to act in an environmentally responsible manner			
3. Reflective practice and continuous professional development			
3.1. Evaluate and reflect on your own practice			
3.2. Actively seek feedback and use it to develop your performance			
3.3. Participate regularly in activities to maintain and develop professional competence			
3.4. Actively apply the learning from your professional development in your work			
4. Values and professional integrity			
4.1. Be aware of your own value system and the impact your actions have on others and be prepared to challenge prejudices and assumptions			
4.2. Work with others in a way that respects their values and help them to develop those values			
4.3. Evaluate your working practices in order to engender a sense of inclusiveness for people from a wide range of background and abilities			
4.4. Know and apply best practice in protection of participants from abuse			
4.5. Consistently uphold the Institute's Code of Professional Conduct, Statement of Purpose, Managing Diversity Policy and Environmental Sustainability Policy			

5. Design and management of learning experiences			
5.1. Use a broad range of activities, in different environments, to achieve learning outcomes for a range of client groups with different needs			
5.2. Identify learning outcomes for experiences/programmes with a variety of types of aim, and tailor activities to achieve these			
5.3. Identify the needs of individual participants and know how to involve them in planning experiences if appropriate			
5.4. Plan, organise and manage the delivery of activities and learning experiences, taking into account legal, safety, access and environmental factors			
5.5. Resource and staff activities and learning experiences appropriately			
5.6. Plan and deliver a learning progression during a programme/experience			
5.7. Evaluate the appropriateness of learning experiences and adapt activities / experiences / programmes accordingly			
6. Learning process, facilitation skills and transfer of learning			
6.1. Choose appropriate facilitation approaches to suit the age, ability and background of the group and to achieve different learning objectives			
6.2. Create an atmosphere which promotes learning and establishes effective relationships with and between participants			
6.3. Manage participants with a range of ability and/or motivation and deal with difficult or negative behaviour			
6.4. Estimate comfort zones and adventure thresholds and pitch level of intellectual and physical challenge appropriately			
6.5. Recognise and support individual as well as group needs and objectives			
6.6. Encourage participants to take responsibility for individual and group learning objectives and experiences			
6.7. Enable individuals and groups to reflect on their experiences and to review and apply what they have learned			
6.8. Help individuals and groups to transfer what they have learned to a context beyond the learning experience or programme			
7. Competent outdoor practice and risk management			
7.1. Provide evidence of competence and experience at an appropriate level in the activities and environments to be used			
7.2. Plan and equip for foreseeable problems or variations in weather and conditions			
7.3. Do competent 'on the hoof' risk/benefit assessment and management in challenging situation (as well as generic and site specific risk assessment)			
7.4. Lead/manage a group to control their exposure to risk			
7.5. Continuously monitor and lead groups to challenge, but not exceed participants' adventure thresholds, levels of competence, fitness and motivation			
7.6. Share information with participants and encourage them to become competent in helping to manage their own safety			
7.7. Know how to take appropriate action in an emergency situation			
7.8. Promote, in actions and attitudes, a culture of: valuing individuals, risk/benefit management, and care of the environment			
8. Professional responsibilities – leadership, teamwork, client relations and involvement in sector			
8.1. Establish and maintain good working relationships with all colleagues and managers			
8.2. Organise and motivate other staff to deliver the learning outcomes of a programme			
8.3. Work as a member of a team with professionals from outside your workplace			
8.4. Fulfil professional responsibilities required by others at work (i.e. pull your weight!)			
8.5. Be involved in developing the outdoor field outside your workplace			

Evidence against the APIOL Criteria

You are asked to fill in the boxes as a way of reflecting on your experiences and evidencing your competence. IOL are looking for evidence of quality reflection rather than long writing. We suggest a **maximum word count of 400 words for each section**. The ability to clearly express your thoughts, ideas and experience in writing as well as in person is a key part of being an APIOL.

1. Understanding the nature and potential of outdoor learning

Please tell us something about:

- Different ways of viewing outdoor learning and the effect they have on your practice.
- How outdoor learning can be used in a range of fields to aid personal development.
- How outdoor learning can be used to develop skills of use in society, and to address problems.

2. Promotion of responsible and sensitive use of the outdoor environment

Please tell us something about:

- Why you are enthusiastic about the outdoors, for yourself & as a medium for learning and growth.
- Issues around sustainability arising in the outdoor field.
- How you take personal action and work with participants to safeguard the environment in which you work and promote sustainability.

3. Reflective practice and continuous professional development

Please tell us something about:

- How you systematically reflect on and learn from your experience.
- How you have sought feedback from a range of people (colleagues, managers, clients, visiting leaders etc.)
- How you have used feedback to improve your practice.

4. Values and professional integrity

Please tell us something about:

- How you respect others' values and help them to develop.
- How you encourage inclusiveness and avoid/recognise/report abuse.
- Which bits of IOL's policies do you find most difficult to apply at work?
- An ethical issue you have dealt with at work.

5. Design and management of learning experiences

Please tell us something about:

- The most challenging novel programme you have developed (including the needs analysis you carried out).
- The most challenging programme where you had responsibility for organising, resourcing and managing delivery.
- How you evaluate learning experiences and use the data to improve practice.

6. Learning process and facilitation skills

Please tell us something about:

- How you set up activities in ways that encourage good relationships and learning.
- How you involve participants in taking responsibility for their own learning.
- How you vary learning approach according to the needs of the group (including managing challenging or unmotivated behaviour).
- How you encourage participants to reflect, review and transfer learning to their everyday life.

7. Competent outdoor practice and risk management

Please tell us something about:

- How you contribute to developing risk/benefit assessment practices used in your workplace.
- How you manage risk/benefit on the hoof with groups in challenging environments.
- How you use a range of leadership/control styles to manage adventure/competence/fitness thresholds.
- A difficult leadership decision you had to make, and what you learned from this.

8. Professional responsibilities – leadership, teamwork, client relations and involvement in the outdoor field

Please tell us something about:

- How you build good relationships with colleagues, motivate and lead other staff.
- How you have proactively looked for opportunities to add value at work.
- How you work with the operational and strategic challenges faced by your organisation.
- How you provide good customer care to external people.

Part 4 – Application Endorsements

Workplace Witness Statement

Thank you for agreeing to comment on this APIOL application. We recognise the amount of work required to provide an honest and thoughtful statement. We hope that you find this also serves as a useful opportunity to discuss the applicants' strengths and areas for further development.

Please provide a few detailed comments to confirm the authenticity and reliability of what the candidate describes in their application.

If you have not observed the applicant in one or more of these areas within the last 12 months, please ask the applicant to find an additional witness who can provide evidence for each of those specific criteria.

1. Understanding the nature and potential of outdoor learning	Initial
2. Promotion of responsible and sensitive use of the outdoor environment	Initial
3. Reflective practice and continuous professional development	Initial
4. Values and professional integrity	Initial
5. Design and management of learning experiences.	Initial

6. Learning process and facilitation skills.	Initial
7. Competent outdoor practice and risk management.	Initial
8. Professional responsibilities – leadership, teamwork, client relations and involvement in the outdoor field.	Initial
Any further comments:	Initial

Witness Name (s)		
IOL Accreditation		
Role/Job Title & Organisation		
Relationship to Applicant		
Contact Details		
Signed / Dated		

Electronic signatures are accepted.

IOL Coach Statement

Your IOL Coach statement must be from someone from outside your organisation and be an APIOL holder and IOL Coach. Whether you followed the IOL Coaching pathway or the Reflective pathway to prepare your application you will need an IOL Coach statement to endorse your application.

IOL Coach Name		Organisation	
Membership No		Role	
Comments			
The candidates level of reflection and critical understanding of the motivations, beliefs, habits and knowledge that underpins their work as an instructor, teacher or leader.			
The candidates approach and professional attitude in line with the <u>IOL Code of Conduct</u> .			
I certify that:			
1) The candidate has the breadth of experience expected for APIOL			
2) The application is complete (all sections completed)			
3) I have seen their certificates/awards as detailed on this application			
4) In my opinion, the candidates practice meets the APIOL criteria			
5) The candidate can talk about their how their key influences, values and experiences have shaped their professional practice			
6) The candidate can talk about how their practice has changed, developed or been enhanced by the APIOL process			
Signed		Dated	

Electronic signatures are accepted.

APIOL Application

In applying to be a Accredited Practitioner of the Institute for Outdoor Learning you agree:

1. Your application will be assessed by the IOL Professional Standards Team
2. The information contained within your application will be shared with paid and voluntary IOL staff for the purpose of accreditation only
3. To only use the APIOL wording, logo, etc. in a way that conforms to IOL guidelines
4. IOL retains the right to withdraw accreditation at any time, including the reasons:
 - Failure to comply with or uphold the accreditation criteria
 - Failure to comply with the policies and procedures of IOL
 - Misuse of any branding, wording or logos of the Institute for Outdoor Learning

Signed _____ Date _____

Next Steps

IOL Assessment interview dates are listed on the IOL website. When you have completed your APIOL application in full email it to Louise in the IOL Central Office and let her know your preferred date.