

# Application Guidance



*Leader in the wider field of outdoor learning and  
champion of good practice and innovation*

## *Leading Practitioner* of the Institute for Outdoor Learning

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The LPIOL journey is about exploring and challenging who you are and what you believe in. The reflection process with your coach enables you to distil this into your application, so that you can express succinctly your experience and values. Writing your application is like packing your rucksack for an expedition – once everything is laid out, you can take out what you don't really need. This distillation is a vital part of the LPIOL process to ensure your application has evidence of how you:

- Innovate, shape, initiate forward looking plans/projects
- Reach out to engage/influence beyond those they normally work with
- Influence change across region/sector
- Make decisions based on an appreciation of the wider sector of outdoor learning
- Deliver concrete results attributable to own personal influence
- Create conditions and opportunities for others to develop
- Work effectively in complex, unfamiliar and uncertain circumstances

Applying for LPIOL is like applying for a role in helping IOL and the outdoor sector to move forward. You are not in competition against other candidates, but you do need to show clearly how your application meets the LPIOL criteria.

<b>Prepare Application</b>	<b>Select LPIOL Coach</b>	<b>IOL Contact Referees</b>	<b>Application Review</b>	<b>Assessment Interview</b>
Update your APIOL Logbook Personal Statement Statement against LPIOL Criteria Coach Statement List of Referees	Choose your own coach Reflect on your experience and career Be clear about the values that guide you Identify where you are going next	Three referees vouch for the accuracy of what you have written against the criteria and endorse your application	Your application is assessed for evidence of meeting the LPIOL criteria	Short presentation Professional discussion Recommendation to Accredit or Defer

## The Application Form

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Your LPIOL application is made up of the following five sections. Please put this together as one document with **your name** and the **current date** clearly marked in the header of each page.

Your application is NOT a piece of academic writing. It doesn't have to be in neat, crafted sentences but it does need to show evidence of the LPIOL mindset:

### The LPIOL Mindset

- **Operating with a medium to long term future focus**
- **Anticipating and shaping the future, scoping, creating new initiatives**
- **Influencing people who may have different and complex agendas**
- **Engaging in regular and effective reflective practice**
- **A catalyst, enabler, someone who gives to the wider field**
- **Meeting the LPIOL criteria in your practice**

You can use pictures or illustrations in your application if you wish. Your application needs to be electronic format so it can be emailed to the Institute. Please use any support necessary to type your spoken word or transcribe a recording, etc.

- Write for the LPIOL assessors who will consider your application.
- Keep the LPIOL Criteria to hand and keep checking them.
- Wherever you use acronyms in your application, write them out in full the first time you use them; don't assume your reader knows what they are!

LPIOL 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 because they happen to know you.

### 1. Career Development

Show how your professional practice has developed since completing APIOL. You could write about changes in job/role, inspiring or key events that have shaped your development.

Your application needs to:

- List the Continuous Professional Development (CPD) you have completed following APIOL
- Describe the key events that have shaped your LPIOL mindset

## 2. Your Personal Statement

Your personal statement challenges you to show the assessors the values of the person behind your experience and achievements. We realise that it may be a personal challenge to put this down on paper, but this is part of the developmental challenge of LPIOL.

Your personal statement needs to **CLEARLY** show the **RELATIONSHIP** between your values and how these have influenced your work, as well as the factors in the sector/society which have impacted on your work.

Your application needs to talk about such things as:

- What are my values? What principles guide me?
- How has this influenced my work/career choices over the years?
- How do these stack up in relation to current issues in the outdoor sector?

We are looking for honest reflection, not self-justification - your Personal Statement will only be read by the referees and assessors, so you are encouraged to be honest and tell it like it is! Let your personal values come through in your writing.

**Please do not write more than 600 words**

## 3. Your statements on the LPIOL Criteria

Please give 2 concise examples for each criterion showing experience and leadership against the LPIOL criteria.

Your experiences must involve having a positive influence beyond your workplace, but are not dependent on holding a management role within an organisation or on working in a specific sector of outdoor learning.

For each example you give, please show clear evidence of:

- Your personal responsibility within the project/example
- The range of people you had to influence/work with
- The concrete results of the project/your influence
- How your contribution has influenced the wider outdoor sector

Don't just state that something you did was "innovative", "shaping" etc. You need to state **HOW** it was innovative etc., and the effect that it had. Be sure to show your personal involvement and how your contributions have helped to move outdoor learning forward beyond your own specialisms.

Help the assessors to see how specifically your contribution makes a difference to participants and to a wider audience, how it has led to concrete changes to the way things get done regionally and in the wider outdoor learning sector.

For shaping and creating, we need to hear about, for example, what you had to overcome in order to bring people together, and how your work is influencing how things get done in the regional outdoor scene, not just the effects on individuals.

**Your 8 statements against the LPIOL criteria should be a TOTAL of not more than 1200 words.**

#### **4. Your LPIOL Coach statement**

Your LPIOL Coach helps you reflect on your experience and refine your application to meet the LPIOL criteria. They must hold LPIOL.

The supporting statement from your LPIOL Coach should include their full name, role and contact details, and comment on the following:

- Your reflective practice in relation to the LPIOL criteria and mindset
- Confirmation that what you have written about yourself in your personal statements matches their experience of working with you.

**Maximum length 300 words**

#### **5. Choosing 3 referees to confirm the statements you have given**

You must name three referees who vouch for the accuracy of what you have written against the criteria and endorse the application.

Please make sure that you choose referees who can comment specifically on the examples you refer to. You may not use an LPIOL Assessor or another LPIOL candidate as a referee.

Referees must:

- Be senior practitioners, clients, managers or other people who are operating in line with the LPIOL criteria
- Have seen you doing the things you will be writing about in your statements against the Criteria.
- At least one referee must be from outside your workplace.

Please ensure you include referees' names and full contact details (particularly email address), and state which criterion(a) you want them to comment on. Please ask their permission first!

**IOL will contact them direct to request the reference; they should do nothing until they hear from IOL.**

### **Additional references**

We would expect LPIOL candidates to be known to the outdoor sector network in their region. If the assessor feels that your referees do not give enough information to back up your application, they may identify a local contact of their choosing who can offer information about you. This person:

- May be an LPIOL
- May be an expert in your field
- May be someone who can comment on your work in your region
- May be the regional IOL chair.

If the assessors request an additional reference, IOL will ensure that this person knows you and can comment on your role in your field/region/home nation.

### **Support to Complete Your Application**

If you have any questions or queries about the process or your specific application please discuss them with your LPIOL Coach or contact the IOL central office in the first instance. We will do our best support you to complete your application in order to meet the criteria.

### **Working with a LPIOL Coach**

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LPIOL Coaches provide a central role in supporting you to achieve your goal of being a Leading Practitioner of the Institute for Outdoor Learning. Your coach will help you reflect on your career so far, be clear about the underpinning values that guide your practice, identify where you are going next and refine your LPIOL application.

- You choose your LPIOL coach. They must hold LPIOL.
- Your coach needs to be from outside your workplace
- It is your responsibility to make contact with your chosen coach
- You work with your coach as much or as long as you both wish

**You are expected to meet with your coach at least once.**

**Your LPIOL Coach will complete a supporting statement to endorse your application.**

## Examples of Meeting The LPIOL Criteria

Below are some examples of meeting the LPIOL criteria. These are not obligatory, but they show the sort of things that you could describe.

The critical element is to show your personal responsibility within the project/example, the range of people you had to influence/work with, and the concrete results of the project/your influence for the wider outdoor sector. Illustrations

LPIOL Criteria	Examples include:
<p><b>A. INNOVATION – Extend the boundaries of best practice</b></p> <p><i>Extending what is known about outdoor learning, and/or an area of best practice, and making this knowledge and expertise available to the outdoor sector.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Carrying out and sharing research</li> <li>• Writing publications, creating videos</li> <li>• Making innovative or imaginative contributions to practice and sharing through workshops or presentations</li> <li>• Writing article(s) for in-sector magazines (e.g. Horizons) that share experience and good practice</li> </ul>
<p><b>B. REFLECTION - Demonstrate high standards of reflective and ethical practice and motivate others to reflect</b></p> <p><i>Modelling high standards of reflection and ethics in your practice, and building those standards/practices in others.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creating programmes or training events with a focus on an element of ethical and inclusive professional practice</li> <li>• Using your own critical reflection and key experiences to inform and develop the practice of others</li> <li>• Leading discussion on issues around values, ethics, challenges, national and international developments and learning methods in outdoor learning</li> </ul>
<p><b>C. DEVELOPMENT – Build and help the practice of other practitioners</b></p> <p><i>Helping practitioners in the region/sector to raise the level of their practice.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Providing expert tuition and/or coaching to others beyond those you normally work with</li> <li>• Disseminating good practice in the region/sector e.g. by facilitating workshops, making presentations at conferences</li> <li>• Setting up regional/sector systems/ processes to enable practitioners to develop more effectively</li> </ul>
<p><b>D. SHAPING and CREATING – Make a contribution to building the future of outdoor learning</b></p> <p><i>Bringing people together, managing conflicting interests and mobilising people to move the outdoor learning sector forward.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Active service on in-sector committees</li> <li>• Setting up stakeholder groups to manage sites/resources</li> <li>• Raising funds to enable a new initiative to take place, or save existing provision</li> <li>• Co-ordinating or representing regional/sector responses to government initiatives</li> </ul>

## Creating your LPIOL Application

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**Please stick to the guidelines in this document** – any incomplete applications will be returned.

### **Put your application into a single file saved in .pdf format**

- Put your name in the header and in the filename
- Put a clear heading on each section

**Then email this document to the IOL Office at [louise@outdoor-learning.org](mailto:louise@outdoor-learning.org)**

## What happens after I send in my application?

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The IOL Professional Standards Team will check your application for completeness and take up references by email. If necessary we will contact further referees.

Applications are evaluated as follows:

1	Strong application - all criteria clearly covered with relevant and in depth examples	Recommend interview
2	Good application – has one or more suitable examples for each criterion	Recommend interview
3	Fair application - some concerns with one or two criteria not clearly covered	Recommend specific improvements and resubmission before interview
4	Poor application - the criteria are not covered and the application is lacking quality or depth	Recommend revision and resubmission in due course

You will then be contacted either:

1. To invite you for interview
2. To discuss where there are gaps in your application and what evidence the felt was missing in your application

### **LPIOL Assessment Interview**

Your interview will be a professional discussion with 2 Approved LPIOL Assessors. It will last about one hour.

***Please come prepared to make an informal presentation of not more than 10 minutes***



- It is your opportunity to be proactive and talk to the assessors about things which are **important to you** and which **you are passionate about**
- You could use it, for example, to develop your Personal Statement, to give more detail on key areas of your experience, to say more about a key project you are leading.
- Be honest and reflective (i.e. demonstrate the LPIOL mindset).

The rest of the interview will be an opportunity to further celebrate, explore and expand on the ideas put forward in your presentation and your application.

The interview should feel like a stimulating exchange between committed and experienced outdoor practitioners – a meeting of equals.

Your assessors will be inviting you to show LPIOL reflection and say more about stories you have told against the criteria. They will also be keen to know about your values and personal beliefs – who you ARE as well as what you DO. Some examples of possible questions:

- How have your values changed over the years, and how does that affect your practice?
- What has been your greatest challenge so far? How was it challenging and how did you handle it
- What did you learn from that experience that influenced your practice?
- Please describe an example of when you created partnerships and needed to influence people over whom you have no “control”

## **Accreditation Decision**

The decision at the end of the interview is Recommendation to Accredite or Defer.

The decision of the assessors is ratified by an IOL Professional Standards Board, so final and formal confirmation of achieving the LPIOL Award usually follows within 72 hours of the interview (i.e. not on the day).

If your application is deferred, gather more evidence or revise your application to meet the criteria and re-apply for interview. The assessors will provide developmental feedback and you are encouraged to work with your LPIOL Coach as you revise your application.

## **Grievance - Appeals**

If you feel your application has been unfairly assessed, please contact the Professional Standards Manager who will look into the matter and respond. Should this cause a conflict of interests then the IOL Chief Executive will look into your concerns and respond.