

APIOL Assessment Interview Guidance

APIOL is an award that recognises how people use their skills, knowledge and experience to design outdoor learning solutions for individuals and groups.

Accredited practitioners of the Institute for Outdoor Learning are experienced facilitators of outdoor learning with a consolidated breadth of experience.



They have worked in challenging or unique environments and have experience planning, leading and evaluating programmes with a range of activities.

What does the APIOL assessment interview involve?

The primary aim of the assessment interview is to ensure that the candidate has provided evidence that they meet all the APIOL criteria. The assessor(s) engage the candidate in a professional discussion and allow them to bring their application to life.

APIOL interviews are usually conducted by two assessors and 45-60 minutes long

Occasionally, an experienced APIOL Assessor may conduct interviews 1:1 using the IOL Coach endorsement as the second opinion for assessment.

Who are the APIOL assessors?

APIOL assessors are independent of the candidates' centre/organisation to allow them to freely express their views and experience without prejudice or fear of adversely impacting their role or future career.

IOL Assessors are volunteers who are committed to professional standards for outdoor leaders, supported by the IOL Professional Development Team. Each APIOL Assessor will hold an APIOL and be approved by IOL.

How do candidates arrange an assessment interview?

Candidates should notify the IOL Central Office when they have fully completed their application form and are ready for an assessment interview.

Are assessments face-to-face?

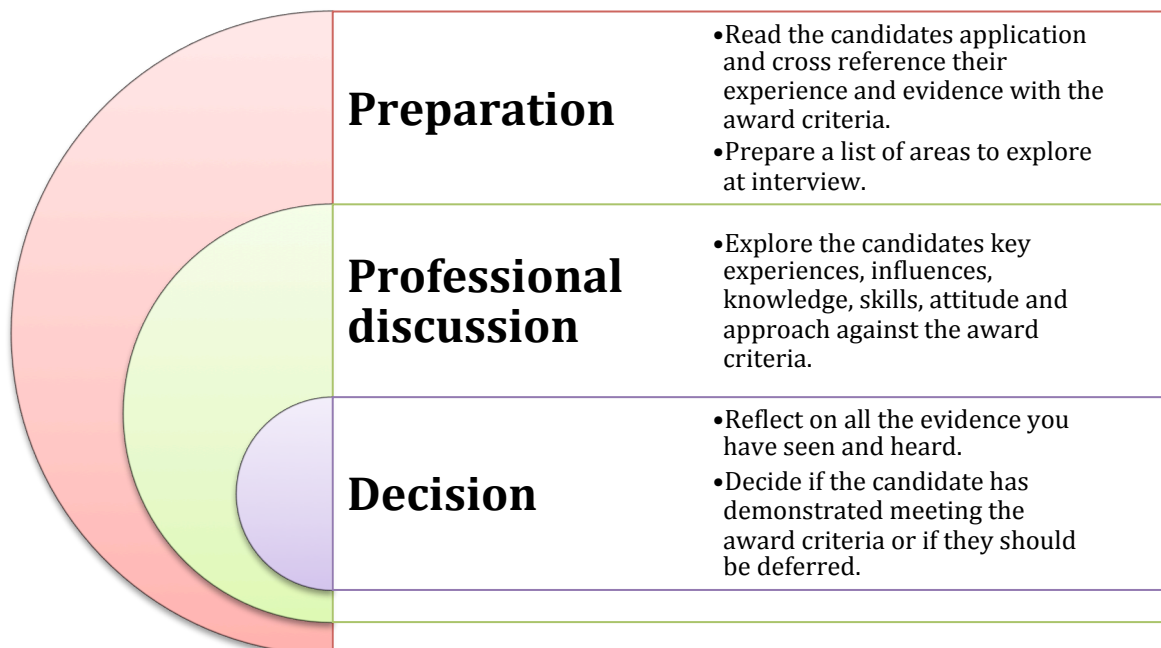
Whilst most assessments are face-to-face candidates may be invited to attend an assessment interview by skype/facetime. This is most likely to be in situations where:

1. The candidate is overseas or in a more remote area of the UK where travelling to an assessment interview would be impractical.
2. There is a single candidate in an area ready for assessment and a face-to-face interview would overly inefficient or uneconomic.

What expectations do you have for APIOL Assessors?

- To thoroughly read a candidates application form and prepare for an assessment
- To be honest and open with candidates and for them to behave likewise
- To assess candidates in a professional manner
- Not to automatically pass every candidate they assess – the role of assessor is to assess fairly and consistently against the award criteria
- Not to just let the candidate talk – the role of assessor is to actively listen to candidates' responses and challenge them appropriately

What is the interview process for assessors?



If the application is not sufficiently detailed or concise, assessors may choose to return it to the candidate for revision and resubmission.

What are relevant examples for candidates to talk about?

Candidates can talk about examples of their practice, or anything that has informed or impacted on their practice as an outdoor leader.

In general IOL accreditation is focussed on examples relating to where the candidate is 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* is present.

What are typical topics for candidates to talk about?

- Their APIOL application and what they have written
- Examples from their work which show how they meet the APIOL benchmarks
- Their background knowledge of outdoor learning
- What is exciting them/challenging them at present as an outdoor leader
- Where they see themselves going next

What is the process for deferring candidates?

Deferral at interview is not common but usually occurs when:

- The candidates application does not provide sufficient evidence of meeting all the award criteria
- The candidate is not able to provide relevant and concise examples to demonstrate meeting the award criteria
- The candidate is not able to express their knowledge and views on the benefits, purpose and role of outdoor learning
- The candidate cannot demonstrate engaging in reflective practice by giving examples of how their practice was influenced by a particular event

If the assessor(s) decide deferral is the assessment decision they will complete the assessment deferral record that details the reason for deferral and describes the evidence required for the candidate to meet the award criteria.

What is the administration process for assessors?

1. Prior to the interview complete the **APIOL Assessment Against Criteria Sheet**
2. At the interview complete the **APIOL Assessment Interview Record**
3. Share your completed record forms with the candidate before they leave
4. Email or post the **APIOL Assessment Against Criteria Sheet and APIOL Assessment Interview Record** to Louise at IOL central office
5. IOL central office will let the IOL Coach know the outcome of the decision
6. IOL central office will send the assessor(s) an expenses claim form

What are typical questions that may be asked?

These are a guide. Assessors will ask questions that relate specifically to the candidate and the application they are assessing.

Understanding the nature & potential of outdoor learning

- How do you describe outdoor learning to someone who is outside the sector?
- What is special about Outdoor Learning for you?
- If you had to critique the approach to outdoor learning used where you work, what would you say?
- Can you give a particular example of where your work with others truly benefitted from potential of outdoor learning?

Promotion of responsible & sensitive use of the outdoor environment.

- How do you pass your personal enthusiasm for the outdoor environment on to others?
- Can you give a particular example of how you engaged people to be personally responsible for the impact they were having on the environment?
- How do you create a sense of wonder and perspective for the people you work with?
- What choices would you make for sustainability in outdoor learning if you weren't constrained by organisational policies and procedures?

Reflective practice & continuous professional development.

- Can you give a particular example of when you proactively sought some feedback on your outdoor leadership? How did that impact your practice?
- What has been the most beneficial CPD activity you have taken part in recently?
- What effect has the outdoors had on your own personal development?
- Could you give an example of where critical reflection on your practice led to you changing or modifying your approach as an outdoor leader?

Values & professional integrity.

- Can you give a particular example of when your values conflicted with those of the programme or participants? What action did you take?
- Which person or organisation has had the greatest impact on your values as an outdoor leader?
- How do you decide when to challenge others values and when to respect others values?
- What would have to happen for you to walk away from a situation?

Design & management of learning experiences.

- How are the needs of the various groups with whom you work, different from each other? How do you respond to this?
- How do you make decisions about the best sequence of activities in the delivery of a programme?
- Can you give a particular example of when you allowed participants to shape the learning outcomes and plan the activities for a programme?
- What methods did you use to evaluate the effectiveness of a particular programme you designed?

Learning process, facilitation skills & transfer of learning.

- How has your style as an outdoor leader changed from when you started to where you are now?
- Can you give particular examples of how you tailor activities and approaches to meet the needs of the participants?
- How can you tell if you've pitched the level of challenge appropriately?
- Do you consider that the learning from all outdoor experiences can or should be transferred to another context?

Competent outdoor practice & risk management.

- What value do you place on prior experience when making decisions or judgements regarding safety in the outdoors?
- How do you go about encouraging participants to manage their own safety?
- Can you give a particular example of carrying out a dynamic 'risk-benefit analysis' and the decision you reached?
- What are the current limits or boundaries of your competence?

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

- What developments in the outdoor sector are impacting on your work at present?
- If you could improve good practice where you work what would you like to see happen?
- Can you give a particular example of how you worked with a member of staff who was having difficulty delivering the programmes learning outcomes?
- What have you learnt from your training and experience that guides you now in your working practices?

APIOL Assessment Against Criteria Record

Candidate Name

IOL Coach Name

Interview Date

Interview Location

Please tick to show you have seen / heard evidence that the candidate has met each of the APIOL criteria in one (or more) of the following sections:

- Part 1 – Outdoor Learning Experience, Achievements, Qualifications, Awards
- Part 2 – Professional Practice, Range of Experience, Development Activities
- Part 3 – Key Experiences and Evidence against the APIOL Criteria
- Part 4 – Endorsements from Witness and IOL Coach
- Assessment Interview

APIOL Criteria	Part 1	Part 2	Part 3	Part 4	Assessment Interview
Understanding the nature and potential of outdoor learning					
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.					
2. Be familiar with a range of beliefs, values and philosophies underpinning outdoor learning.					
3. Understand how outdoor learning can be used to help individuals to develop.					
4. Be aware of how outdoor learning can be of value to society.					
5. Describe a clear personal philosophy of outdoor learning.					
Promotion of responsible and sensitive use of the outdoor situation					
1. Describe the special contribution that the outdoors can make to individual learning and development.					
2. Be able to share your enthusiasm for the outdoors with others.					
3. Encourage participants to appreciate the wonder of the outdoor environment and their place within it.					
4. Promote the importance of sustainable use of the environment.					
6. Encourage participants to accept personal responsibility to act in an environmentally responsible manner.					
Reflective practice and continuous professional development					
1. Evaluate and reflect on your own practice.					
2. Actively seek feedback and use it to develop your performance.					
3. Participate regularly in activities to maintain and develop professional competence.					
4. Actively apply the learning from your professional development in your work.					

Values and professional integrity				
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Be aware of your own value system and the impact your actions have on others and be prepared to challenge prejudices and assumptions. 2. Work with others in a way that respects their values and help them to develop those values. 3. Evaluate your working practices in order to engender a sense of inclusiveness for people from a wide range of background and abilities 4. Know and apply best practice in protection of participants from abuse 5. Consistently uphold the Institute's Code of Professional Conduct, Statement of Purpose, Managing Diversity Policy and Environmental Sustainability Policy. 				
Design and management of learning experiences				
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Use a broad range of activities, in different environments, to achieve learning outcomes for a range of client groups with different needs. 2. Identify learning outcomes for experiences/programmes with a variety of types of aim, and tailor activities to achieve these. 3. Identify the needs of individual participants and know how to involve them in planning experiences if appropriate. 4. Plan, organise and manage the delivery of activities and learning experiences, taking into account legal, safety, access and environmental factors. 5. Resource and staff activities and learning experiences appropriately. 6. Plan and deliver a learning progression during a programme/experience. Evaluate the appropriateness of learning experiences and adapt activities / experiences / programmes accordingly. 				
Learning process, facilitation skills and transfer of learning				
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Choose appropriate facilitation approaches to suit the age, ability and background of the group and to achieve different learning objectives. 2. Create an atmosphere which promotes learning and establishes effective relationships with and between participants. 3. Manage participants with a range of ability and/or motivation and deal with difficult or negative behaviour. 4. Estimate comfort zones and adventure thresholds and pitch level of intellectual and physical challenge appropriately. 5. Recognise and support individual as well as group needs and objectives. 6. Encourage participants to take responsibility for individual and group learning objectives and experiences. 7. Enable individuals and groups to reflect on their experiences and to review and apply what they have learned. 				

8. Help individuals and groups to transfer what they have learned to a context beyond the learning experience or programme.					
Competent outdoor practice and risk management					
1. Provide evidence of competence and experience at an appropriate level in the activities and environments to be used 2. Plan and equip for foreseeable problems or variations in weather and conditions 3. Do competent 'on the hoof' risk/benefit assessment and management in challenging situation (as well as generic and site specific risk assessment) 4. Lead/manage a group to control their exposure to risk 5. Continuously monitor and lead groups to challenge, but not exceed participants' adventure thresholds, levels of competence, fitness and motivation 6. Share information with participants and encourage them to become competent in helping to manage their own safety 7. Know how to take appropriate action in an emergency situation Promote, in actions and attitudes, a culture of: valuing individuals, risk/benefit management, and care of the environment					
Professional responsibilities – leadership, teamwork, client relations and involvement in sector					
1. Establish and maintain good working relationships with all team colleagues and managers 2. Organise and motivate other staff to deliver the learning outcomes of a programme 3. Work as a member of a team with professionals from outside your workplace (e.g. clients, group leaders) 4. Fulfil professional responsibilities required by others at work (i.e. pull your weight!) Be involved in developing the outdoor field outside your workplace					

Assessor Name	Assessor Name
IOL Region	IOL Region
Signed	Dated

Electronic signatures are accepted.

APIOL Assessment Interview Record

Candidate Name

IOL Coach Name

Interview Date

Interview Location

We certify that:

YES/NO

- 1. The candidate can describe how their outdoor leadership has changed through reflective practice and professional development**
- 2. The candidate can describe their approach, personal qualities, ethics and influences when leading outdoor learning**
- 3. The candidate applies an appropriate approach to delivering learning, decision making and managing safety in the outdoors**
- 4. The candidate has demonstrated meeting the APIOL criteria**
- 5. The candidate demonstrates the professional attitude of an APIOL**

Recommend PASS		Recommend DEFER	
Comments about the candidates approach, style, special value		Reason for deferral and evidence required in order to meet the APIOL criteria	
Overall Comments from Assessors			
How well did the application evidence meeting the criteria?			
How able was the client to provide concise and relevant examples?			

Assessor Name

Assessor Name

IOL Region

IOL Region

Signed

Dated

Electronic signatures are accepted.