

# IOL BUSHCRAFT COMPETENCY DIPLOMA (LEVEL 3) SPECIFICATIONS

A bushcraft award designed for  
teachers, instructors, and leaders.



# IOL Bushcraft Awards

The IOL Bushcraft Professional Practice Group (PPG) has a long-standing reputation for quality and innovation within the field of Bushcraft.


The Awards designed and delivered by members of the IOL Bushcraft Professional Practice Group represent high-quality, quality assured Bushcraft training suitable for all areas of outdoor learning.



There are several levels of training in bushcraft skills with a range of different awards available:


## Awards designed for pupils, students and learners

Delivered in formal or non-formal settings such as early years, schools, colleges, outdoor centres, education centres, wildlife trusts, national parks, etc.

<b>Accredited Resource</b>	<b>Forest Explorers Bushcraft Award Scheme</b> Developed and provided by Releasing Potential.	Recommended providers: IOL Bushcraft Competency Certificate Holders
<b>Accredited Resource</b>	<b>Wild Passport Skills</b> Developed and provided by Green Man Learning.	Recommended providers: IOL Bushcraft Competency Certificate Holders
<b>Level 2</b> 	<b>IOL Bushcraft Skills Award</b> 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.

## Awards designed for the outdoor learning workforce

Intended for FE/HE students, apprentices, instructors, teachers, etc.

<b>Level 3</b> 	<b>Bushcraft Competency Award</b> <b>Bushcraft Competency Certificate</b> <b>Bushcraft Competency Diploma</b>	Training courses delivered by: IOL Approved Course Providers.  Assessment courses by IOL Approved Bushcraft Assessors.
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This specification outlines the structure and content of the IOL Level 3 Bushcraft Competency Diploma.

**Level 3**

# IOL Bushcraft Competency Diploma

## Purpose

An assessed award suitable for teachers or instructors to demonstrate a breadth of bushcraft knowledge and skills and deliver learning experiences in any setting.

Suitable for Bushcraft professionals working independently in their own business or in formal or non-formal settings such as early years, schools, colleges, outdoor centres, education centres, wildlife trusts, national parks, youth and voluntary organisations, etc.



Consists of a high-quality training course, consolidated experience, assessment of bushcraft competence and certification by IOL Awards Centre.

## Covers 14 compulsory units and 2 from 4 optional\* units

					
SAFE USE OF EDGED TOOLS AND KNIFE LAW	ESTABLISHING FIRES AND LEAVING NO TRACE	BOW DRILL	WATER SOURCING, FILTERING AND PURIFICATION	DEBRIS SHELTER CONSTRUCTION AND BEDDING	TREE IDENTIFICATION AND USES
					
NATURAL NAVIGATION	CORDAGE FROM NATURAL MATERIALS	FIRE USE AND MANAGEMENT	PITCHING TARP SHELTERS, KNOTS & LASHINGS	SAFE USE OF AXES	ANIMAL TRACKING AND AWARENESS
					
CAMPFIRE COOKING	PLANT IDENTIFICATION AND USES	CARVING AND TOOL MAINTENANCE *	GAME PREPARATION *	MAKING NATURAL CONTAINERS *	TRAPPING, SNARING AND FISHING *

## Suitability

Designed for professionals in outdoor learning to deliver progressive bushcraft learning experiences in any setting, including FE/HE students, apprentices, instructors, teachers, leaders, etc.

The award can be delivered in a variety of locations with access to suitable resources and will be most commonly delivered by providers within a woodland, forest or copse.

## Duration

- |   |           |
|---|-----------|
| • Prerequisite – IOL Bushcraft Competency Certificate |           |
| • Training Course (with IOL Approved Course Provider) | 5 days    |
| • Consolidation Period (recorded in logbook)          | 120 hours |
| • Assessment Course (IOL organised or recognised)     | 2 days    |

## Scope

The Bushcraft Competency Diploma comprises 14 compulsory units and 2 from 4 optional\* units:

### Prerequisite Units (BCC)

- 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

### Compulsory Units

- 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

### Optional units – select 2 from 4

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

Bushcraft Competency Diploma training courses include good practice when sharing bushcraft techniques with others – teaching tips and advice, site safety, sustainable practices, etc.

Generic teaching and instructions skills are not covered or assessed.

## Learning Outcomes

IOL Bushcraft Competency Diploma (BCD) holders will have demonstrated the following knowledge, skills and behaviours:

### Unit 1: Edged tools – knives & saws

#### Bushcraft Competency Certificate Unit

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

### Unit 2: Fire

#### Bushcraft Competency Certificate Unit

2.1	Demonstrate at least three ignition sources from the following list and describe the advantages and disadvantages of each method demonstrated. Flint and steel, Ferrocerium rod, Matches, Electrical,
2.1.1	
2.1.2	
2.1.3	
2.1.4	



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**

#### Bushcraft Competency Certificate Unit

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**

#### Bushcraft Competency Certificate Unit

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**

#### Bushcraft Competency Certificate Unit

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**

#### Bushcraft Competency Certificate Unit

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.
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### **Unit 7: Natural navigation**

#### Bushcraft Competency Certificate Unit

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**

#### Bushcraft Competency Certificate Unit

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**

#### Compulsory Unit

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**

#### Compulsory Unit

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

### Compulsory Unit

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

### Compulsory Unit

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

### Compulsory Unit

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**

#### Compulsory Unit

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**

#### Optional Unit (choose 2 from 4)

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**

#### Optional Unit (choose 2 from 4)

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**

Optional Unit (choose 2 from 4)

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**

Optional Unit (choose 2 from 4)

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.

## **Training Course Entry**

### **Requirements**

Providers should ensure that learners have the potential and opportunity to gain the award successfully.

- Learners must hold an IOL Bushcraft Competency Certificate prior to attending a Bushcraft Competency Diploma training course.

Learners with considerable experience but not yet holding an IOL Bushcraft Competency Certificate should complete a logbook and attend a BCC assessment in order to register for a Bushcraft Competency Diploma Training Course.

Learners holding alternative qualifications that meet or exceed the requirements of the BCC should get in touch with the Bushcraft PPG Executive to discuss the options available.

### **Initial Assessment**

Providers should identify and make adequate provision for:

- Confirming the award is relevant and appropriate for each learner
- The existing experience and competence of learners
- Support and guidance learners may need whilst working towards the award

### **Reasonable Adjustments**

Providers should make **reasonable adjustments** to mitigate the effect of a disability or any other difficulty that may put the learner at a disadvantage during the training and assessment of the award.

The IOL Bushcraft PPG are available to support and advise as necessary.

## **Training Course Delivery**

### **Scheme of Work**

Individual teachers/trainers should design a scheme of work to suit their organisation and learners. A spiral curriculum design is encouraged to allow a logical progression in skills from the simplistic to the more complex and the ongoing reinforcement and application of knowledge.

The scheme of work should:

- Satisfy the requirements of the award
- Best meet the needs and capabilities of the learners
- Provide learners with the necessary guided learning hours

A Scheme of Work template is available. The IOL Bushcraft PPG are available to support and advise as necessary.

### **Teacher/trainer Competence**

Teachers/trainers delivering this award should have technical competence in bushcraft and credible, relevant knowledge, skills and experience in planning, teaching and assessing of learning in bushcraft, typically over a minimum period of 3 years.

The lead teacher/trainer must:

1. Be personally competent in the bushcraft skills and knowledge covered in this award.
2. Be competent in planning, delivering and assessing learning at Level 3 (England, Wales and Northern Ireland), equivalent to SQCF Level 6 (Scotland).
3. Hold an IOL Band 2 or Band 3 Outdoor First Aid qualification.
4. Be an Associate Professional Member of the Institute for Outdoor Learning or a Professional Member of the Institute for Outdoor Learning.
5. Work within relevant insurance, policies and procedures covering health & safety; safeguarding; risk-benefit assessments; data protection; equality, diversity and inclusion; environmental sustainability.

## Formative Assessment

### Feedback

Teachers/trainer feedback should be ongoing through the training/teaching and allow learners to work towards the course outcomes. Good practice is to include:

- **Self-evaluation** by the learners against the learning outcome and required standard
- **Teacher/trainer comment** based on observed behaviour and own internal feelings that recognises what the learner has done well, and what is good about it.
- **Discussion** about how things could be improved and possible ways the learner can work towards achieving the required knowledge, skills or behaviour.

## Consolidation Period

Teachers/trainers should provide learners with clear and relevant next steps to take during the consolidation period.

## Assessment Course

### Assessor Competence

Assessors must have sufficient, verifiable, relevant current experience, knowledge and understanding of Bushcraft at, or above, the level being assessed. In addition, assessors should be able to demonstrate, current and relevant competence in assessing learning.

The assessor must:

1. Be personally competent in the bushcraft skills and knowledge covered in this award.
2. Be competent in assessing learning at Level 3 (England, Wales and Northern Ireland), equivalent to SQCF Level 6 (Scotland).
3. Be an Associate Professional Member of the Institute for Outdoor Learning or a Professional Member of the Institute for Outdoor Learning.

## **Recognition as an IOL Bushcraft Competency Assessor**

The requirements and process for recognition as an assessor is defined in '*IOL Bushcraft Competency Framework for Becoming an Assessor*'.

The IOL Bushcraft PPG will approve and maintain a list of assessors for the Bushcraft Competency Certificate. Assessors will be located throughout the UK and many will also be providers of IOL Approved Bushcraft Competency Certificate Training.

## **Assessment Decisions**

The assessor will reach an assessment decision based on the sum total of evidence provided to meet the learning outcomes. Assessment decisions must be based on meeting the rules for evidence:

- Authentic – the evidence is actually from the learner being assessed
- Fair – the learner has had an equal chance to provide the evidence
- Valid – the evidence provided is relevant to the assessment criteria
- Current – the evidence reflects the learners present thinking/practice
- Sufficient – the evidence has happened enough times / is repeatable
- Reliable – an equivalent colleague would draw the same conclusion

Learners will be graded either “pass” or “refer” or “fail”.

- “**Pass**” will show the learner has met or exceeded all required learning outcomes and assessment criteria.
- “**Refer**” will show the learner has NOT met ONE or TWO of the required learning outcomes and assessment criteria.
- “**Fail**” will show the learner has NOT met THREE OR MORE of the required learning outcomes and assessment criteria.

The assessor will provide specific feedback for “Refer” or “Fail” decisions, identifying what was insufficiently demonstrated and the corrective actions that can be taken.

## **Quality Assurance**

The IOL Bushcraft Competency Award will be subject to the IOL Internal Quality Assurance Strategy designed to monitor and improve the quality of provision of IOL assessed awards and programmes and ensure we meet needs of key stakeholders such as IOL members, learners, employers, candidates, IfATE, etc.

## **Senior Assessor and Internal Quality Assurance**

IOL Bushcraft PPG will appoint one or more Senior Assessors to fulfil the role of Internal Quality Assurance (IQA) for this award. They will support the assessors and:

- Answer assessment queries and clarify the requirements of the award.
- Standardise decisions across all assessors for the award.

- Report to the IOL Bushcraft PPG.

### **Certificate Issue**

IOL will issue Award certificates when an assessor has awarded a “Pass” and the relevant Quality Assurance activities related to the learner and the course have been completed satisfactorily.

### **Complaints and Appeals**

Any complaints or appeals should follow the IOL Awards Centre Complaints and Appeals procedure.

**Level 3**

# IOL Bushcraft Competency Diploma Administration procedures

<p><b>Approval as an IOL Accredited Provider</b></p>	<p>All course providers must be approved in advance.</p>	<p>The process for new providers to be approved to deliver the IOL Bushcraft Competency Diploma is:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Read through the Course Specification and contact the IOL Bushcraft PPG and discuss your intentions and experience for delivering the course</li> <li>2. Design a scheme of work for your course that can: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Best meet the needs and capabilities of your expected learners, and</li> <li>• Satisfy the requirements of the award</li> </ul> </li> <li>3. Complete the standard IOL Course Accreditation Application process</li> <li>4. Gain approval from the IOL Bushcraft PPG – usually following a site visit</li> <li>5. Complete annual renewals and attend standardisation and development meetings to support the quality assurance process</li> </ol> <p>The IOL Bushcraft PPG are available to support and advise throughout this process.</p>
<p><b>Reasonable Adjustments</b></p>	<p>Learners should not be put at a disadvantage during training or assessment courses.</p>	<p>Follow the IOL reasonable adjustments policy and procedure.</p>



<b>Assessment</b>	IOL will arrange assessors for each assessment course with the IOL Bushcraft PPG.	Follow the application process if you wish to be an assessor for this award.
<b>Assessment Referrals</b>	If a learner receives “refer” at 3 consecutive assessments, attendance at a new training course is recommended.	An additional assessment fee is payable for every re-assessment.
<b>Maximum Duration</b>	There is no maximum time limit for learners to attend an assessment course.	Learners are strongly encouraged to complete their assessment within 18 months of their training course.
<b>Certificate Issue</b>	Award certificates are issued when an assessor has awarded a “Pass” and the relevant Quality Assurance activities related to the learner and the course have been completed satisfactorily.	Certificates will be issued to learners direct from IOL.