AAIAC Non Statutory Accreditation

Learning Outside the Classroom Quality Badging

(Adventurous Activities Sector)

Guidance to providers on evidence required to meet the criteria

This document gives practical guidance on what you should think about and advice on systems that you might put in place in order to meet the quality criteria for the Learning Outside the Classroom Badge. Please treat the guidance as examples of how you might meet the criteria. There is no one way to demonstrate this – providing you meet the criteria, you are welcome to demonstrate this in whatever way you choose.

Laid down criteria are printed in blue. Guidance is printed in black. The guidance is designed to cater for a large variety of different users, providers and types of learning event. For simplicity, a single set of terms is used throughout this document. Participant is used to refer to children and young people, client is used to refer to the organisation that participants are part of (or its lead representative), visiting staff is used to refer to teachers, youth leaders or other responsible adults from the client organisation and events are referred to throughout, recognising that they might be one-off sessions, a series of sessions or residential courses.

The standard for award of the Learning Outside the Classroom Badge is "good" adherence to the criteria. At the end of each section, there is a panel illustrating what constitutes "good" and what would be "not good enough".

Pre Experience

1) The Provider has a process in place to assist users to plan the learning experience effectively:

Before the client's visit the Provider will

a) Offer guidance/information on **or** agree respective roles and responsibilities with the client i.e. who does what

It is good practice to produce documented guidance for the client to make it clear what you are responsible for and what the client is responsible for. This can be

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communicated in different ways: through written information sheets, website information, brochure copy or telephone conversations and reinforced on arrival.

Whichever method is chosen, it is important that there is two way communication between the provider and the client. It is also important that you have evidence that the client understands and accepts the division of responsibility. This might be through the client's signature on a booking form or other documentation.

Examples of what might be covered in your guidance are:

● A clear indication of when your staff are responsible for the supervision of participants and when visiting staff are responsible. (Although it will normally be the case that your staff take responsibility during activities, you should be aware that visiting group leaders cannot delegate their overarching duty of care, even when responsibility is shared with a provider.)
● Whether there an expectation that a visiting member of staff is present during activities.
● For residential providers, whose responsibility it is to supervise evening activities and what expectations there are for visiting staff to share in overnight emergency cover.
● Expectations on participants' standards of behaviour and visiting staff's responsibility for pastoral care.
● Who is responsible for what in terms of participants' learning. Visiting staff will normally retain overall responsibility, with the provider's role being to support and facilitate the learning. You will need to have evidence of how that support is offered in pre-event planning terms, through the event itself and in post-event follow up.

b) Capture or agree learning objectives;

This can be done in a number of different ways. There should always be an opportunity for clients to visit the site before the event. If such a visit takes place, that is an ideal opportunity to agree learning objectives in a face to face meeting.

In the case of repeat visits, clients will often not feel the need to carry out a pre- event visit. In this case, a telephone conversation or a written list of learning objectives can perform the same function. It will often be helpful to the client if you produce a list of the range of learning objectives that can typically be achieved by the programmes you are able to offer.

Whichever approach to capturing learning objectives is used, you will need to show that these are recorded and disseminated to staff who will be working with the client.

Some clients will have very specific objectives. They might wish to cover specific aspects of the curriculum. They might wish to tackle process issues such as easing the transition from primary to secondary education. They might have a group of participants

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who need to work effectively in a team. They might want to focus on activity skills. In these cases, agreeing and recording the objectives is relatively easy.

However, other clients will be convinced of the value of adventurous activities but consider that powerful learning frequently happens without the need to focus specifically on learning objectives. In this case, you should at the very least provide evidence that you have discussed learning objectives with the client. It will usually be possible to gain the client's agreement to a generic statement of objectives that embodies their understanding of the potential benefits. This does not have to be a long document. One paragraph or a simple list will often be enough.

To help to persuade these clients of the merits of being more specific, you might find it helpful to know that there is strong research evidence on the importance of closely relating the structure and format of programmes to the goals they are seeking to achieve. The recent OFSTED report says "Learning outside the classroom was most successful when it was an integral element of long-term curriculum planning and closely linked to classroom activities."

c) Offer a menu or plan (where necessary) a tailored programme of work, with a purpose for each activity, linked to learning objectives

A menu of possible activities for the client to choose from is easy enough to achieve. However, it must be more than a menu of activities. It must also link the activities with learning objectives.

Activities can be used with a range of different learning objectives in mind. For example, a rock climbing session might be used to develop self-confidence, to encourage responsibility for each other, to serve a team building function, as a skills coaching session or as a means of delivering aspects of the curriculum or Every Child Matters outcomes.

Differentiating between these objectives might not change the core activity of climbing but it may well influence the way the activity is staffed, introduced, structured and reviewed. You should be able to show that the way the session is run is responsive to the objectives and that staff do not simply deliver a standard session but modify their approach to take account of the client's learning objectives.

It is not necessary to go into a great deal of depth in a menu of activities linked to learning objectives. However, you will need to ensure that typical learning outcomes are associated with each of the activity choices. This might be done by a simple form of cross-referencing, where each of the activities on the list of those available has a cross-reference to the possible learning objectives that can be achieved through that activity.

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Tailoring the experience to the objectives can in many cases be done most effectively through a post-activity review. Effective reviewing is one of the most powerful tools we have in turning an activity session into a powerful and lasting learning experience. It would be good evidence if your menu included choices on the use of reviewing or other tools that can help to focus participants' awareness on learning outcomes.

d) Take into account any equality, diversity and inclusion issues and needs

You should think through how to respond to a number of different equality issues, both in terms of deciding policy on responding to particular needs and also in terms of making necessary adaptations to the facilities or the programme. First, in thinking about disability provision, be aware that there is a range of disabilities: physical, sensory (eg sight or hearing) and learning disabilities and that each poses different challenges.

Employers have a legal duty to make reasonable adjustments to ensure that people with disabilities are not disadvantaged. Public sector organisations have an additional duty to be proactive in ensuring that people with disabilities are treated fairly.

It is for you to decide what constitutes reasonable adjustments. If it would require disproportionate expenditure in order to enable broader access to your particular site,that would not be legally required. However, you might be surprised how easy it is to make simple adaptations that enable all young people to experience the benefits of adventure. There is a wealth of good practice in the outdoor community that you can draw on.

It is becoming much more common for young people with disabilities to be taught in mainstream classes and a consequent need to be able to accommodate both those young people and, often, a dedicated carer. If the client has opted for activities which cannot be adapted, then alternatives should be suggested.

Catering for a range of religious beliefs can also be achieved by simple adaptations. It is no more than standard good practice to cater for specific dietary requirements and it is not difficult to make other adaptations, for example, early breakfasts to allow Ramadan to be observed. Varying the instructional approach is more challenging, for example in an attempt to attract minority groups who are not conventionally attracted to the outdoors.

However, as a minimum requirement, it is not expected that you develop proactive programmes to tackle equality issues. You should, however, be able to show how you would respond to clients who come to you with requests to accommodate a range of special needs, ideally with the aim of being able to say yes if at all possible.
It is also necessary to communicate clearly to clients any constraints or pre-requirements for participation, such as being able to swim before undertaking certain activities.

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As a footnote to this section, good providers are aware of the need to have equality of expectations between male and female participants and to avoid stereotyping.

e) Offer guidance/information on **or** agree a process with the user, for assessing learner progress during the overall experience

Assessing learner progress clearly relates to the learning objectives that have been agreed for the event. How it is done will depend on those objectives. What is important is that progress is monitored so that an appropriate level of challenge is maintained and adaptations can be made during the event.

During a short, simple event, it would be enough that staff monitor participants' progress on the spot and are encouraged to modify the activity if necessary to ensure that participants have a positive learning experience.

During a longer event or if there are very specific objectives, it might be appropriate to conduct a formal evaluation part way through the event. This might be through a "How's it going?" questionnaire or by focusing a review session on overall progress against objectives. It is not necessary to produce anything written during this process. However, the client should be made aware of how the process works, for example by including general guidance as to how learner progress is monitored in the pre-event information.

f) Offer guidance/information on (could include resources/activities) **or** discuss with the client preparation and follow up to the visit

There is strong research evidence on the importance of preparatory and follow up work in achieving effective learning. Many clients work hard at integrating an adventure based event into classroom experience through well developed preparation and follow up.

However, this is not always the case. It is therefore expected that, at the very least, you explain the benefits to your clients and offer support in the process. The simplest way to achieve this would be to produce an information pack giving ideas for preparatory work and follow up. One way of compiling this would be to gather a variety of ideas from those of your clients who do actively carry out preparation and follow up in the classroom.

Clearly, clients need to have the necessary practical information such as clothing requirements that are needed in preparation for the event. It is good practice to go further than this and produce some ideas or resources that can be used to prepare participants for the learning experiences of the event.

Similarly, in terms of follow up resources, you could produce a simple information sheet suggesting a variety of ways in which participants could reflect on and consolidate the learning in the classroom after the event. You could also produce advice on continuing to participate in the activities sampled through clubs or other organisations.

For the badge, the minimum requirement is that you discuss preparation and follow up with the client. If you work on the basis of the minimum requirement and do not produce written materials, you will need to make a record of the fact that a discussion has taken place.

Description of 'good' practice

Clear information is provided well in advance of each visit, about what learning activities are offered and how they can be tailored to the needs of users. As a result, users can ensure that what they intend to be learnt can be well planned for and it is clear who is responsible for planning and delivery. It is clear that provision is inclusive and plans are informed by an understanding of the needs of all users. There is an effective way process for checking on the progress of learners. Guidance and/or information ensures that users know how to extend learning either side of a visit. By valuing communication and partnership in its dealings with users the provider is enabling the planning of effective learning and recognising the contribution of structure and planning to the overall learning outside the classroom experience.

Description of practice that is 'not good enough'

Information about what learning activities are offered is provided in advance of each visit. It is not always clear how these can be tailored to the needs of users. As a result, users have insufficient opportunity to ensure that what they intend to be learnt are included in plans. Information does not make sufficiently clear the roles and responsibilities of either provider and/or user staff during planning and delivery. The provider makes it clear all users are welcome, but is aware that not all activities are accessible to all learners regardless of disability and doesn't suggest alternatives. The process for monitoring progress is not shared with users before the visit and it is not clear how learners' progress will be evaluated. There is no guidance on how users can extend learning either side of a visit. By not involving or communicating effectively with the user, the provider is restricting its own and the user's potential to plan for an effective learning experience.

2) The Provider supplies accurate information about its offer:

The Provider:

a) ensures that any promotional / written materials provide an accurate description of amenities, facilities and services provided and contact details

These materials should not only reflect accurately the facilities on a practical level but they should accurately state the services offered in educational terms. In order to qualify for a Learning Outside the Classroom Badge, it is expected that providers have a focus on learning and provide a learning environment, resources and support which enable participants to have a positive learning experience. Promotional / written materials should reflect this. The accuracy of the description will be assessed during the badge assessment visit.

If the event is extended or residential, contact details must include a mechanism for parents to make contact in an emergency out of office hours. Any contingency measures such as bad weather alternatives should be described.

b) has charging policies that state honestly the charges of the experience

It must be clear to potential clients what the full cost of the event will be. Any requirement to pay for extras must be clearly shown and any discount structure must be transparent. It must be clear whether VAT is payable in addition to the basic costs. It must be clear whether there is a price guarantee and, if not, the circumstances in which and the amount by which the provider reserves the right to increase the charge.

c) clearly indicates what is included in and excluded from the services offered

This is self-explanatory.

d) indicates a clear definition of the division of responsibility between provider and party leader, respecting the party leader's overall responsibility for the welfare of pupils.

This question is more thoroughly explored in section 1a). Its presence here implies that the division of responsibility must be clearly defined at an early stage in the booking process.

Description of 'good' practice

Prior to the learning experience, a provider establishes communication with the user via a website or other means. This provides full and accurate information about amenities, facilities, services and costs. It includes information on any variables, such as weather or size of visiting group, which might affect the timings, costs or content of an experience. The website is regularly updated and users are advised to contact a member of staff at the organisation if they have any queries. By ensuring that the user has as much accurate information as possible prior to the experience itself, the organisation enables them to start planning effective learning.

Description of practice that is 'not good enough'

The provider provides basic information on its website about its amenities and facilities. Although the website indicates that educational visits are welcomed, there is no information on the website about the learning services offered. Contact details for the organisation available on the website and the user can contact the organisation for information on the learning services offered and costs of a learning experience. The user is not advised at any point of any variables such as weather or size of visiting group which might affect the timings, costs or content of an experience. By not providing full and clear information in its promotional materials and by not facilitating open and honest communication with the user at the earliest available opportunity, the organisation does not enable the user to plan effective learning.

During the Experience

3) The Provider offers activities, experience or resources which meet learner needs

a) offers a variety of activities delivered through a range of teaching and learning styles

Coaches of adventurous activities will be aware that activities can be introduced in a range of ways, both in relation to the coaching approach used and in ways which cater for the varied learning styles of participants. There are numerous models of learning styles and it is not expected that you adhere to any one model.

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Using the outdoors makes it relatively easy to cater for visual, auditory and kinaesthetic learning styles. Less obvious is the need to pay careful attention to the structuring of review sessions if activists, reflectors, pragmatists and theorists are all to be able to play to their strengths.

As evidence, you should be able to show that staff are aware of a range of teaching and learning styles and that they actively vary their approach in response to the participants and the learning objectives. Evidence of staff training in coaching and facilitation skills would be one way of demonstrating this. Explaining the different approaches used in the range of activities that you offer would be another.

b) equipment and materials are suitable for tasks/activities, the age and ability of the learners, and are current and in good working order

Safety expectations will determine many aspects of equipment used, particularly regarding its selection, correct fit, maintenance, regular checking and timely replacement. It is unnecessary to restate those expectations here.

However, equipment can be perfectly safe but not necessarily fit for purpose for a particular age group or activity context. Your equipment should be both safe and fit for purpose.

In addition to activity equipment, any educational resources used should be appropriate for the age group and needs of participants. In assessing needs, liaison with visiting staff is invaluable in order to gain an awareness of factors that influence the participants' needs.

c) makes good use of their location

This is the most subjective of all the criteria. "Good use" clearly depends on what is available to you at your location, on the needs and characteristics of the group and on the learning objectives.

Many providers use their location in very imaginative ways. In demonstrating how you make good use of your location, you might explain how the variety of activities you provide offer very different experiences. You might show how you use your location in different ways as participants become more experienced to allow for a learning progression. You might also show how the organisation of activities allows for maximum participant involvement and minimum waiting time.

d) the amenities, facilities and services are as described in promotional / written materials

This has been covered in 2a). Evidence will be gathered during the site visit by comparing what is seen with the promotional / written materials.

e) *where there are on site educational or instructional staff,* staff are competent

Competence of staff in technical and safety terms is clearly defined by AALS licensing requirements and on the Adventuremark section of the site. Establishing their competence by checking and keeping records of their NGB, first aid and other qualifications or by other approved means is vital and must extend to any freelance staff used.

A good provider will also ensure that staff are competent in non-technical aspects of their job such as customer care, communicating appropriately with a wide range of participants and achieving appropriate learning outcomes.

In order to gain the Learning Outside the Classroom Badge, you should be able to show that you take steps to assess and develop the competence of staff to facilitate learning. Evidence might include:

● Staff qualifications which are not confined to NGB qualifications but include accreditation of non-technical competence such as a teaching qualification, an appropriate NVQ or an Institute for Outdoor Learning accreditation.
● Evidence that the staff selection process takes account of non-technical factors such as an awareness of the values and philosophy of outdoor education, ability to work effectively with young people and to communicate enthusiasm.
● A thorough staff induction process.
● Records of staff training.
● Training or experience in modifying the approach to respond to different ages, abilities and degrees of motivation.

The Institute for Outdoor Learning professional accreditation scheme is particularly appropriate for demonstrating a breadth of competence across the range that is expected of professional practitioners. To have staff working towards or holding the award of Registered Practitioner (RPIOL), Accredited Practitioner (APIOL) or Leading Practitioner (LPIOL) would constitute good evidence. For new, unqualified entrants to the industry, evidence of working towards the Outdoor Induction Award is an indicator of good practice.

f) *where there are on site educational or instructional staff,* there is a process in place for monitoring and evaluating the quality of their teaching / instruction.

Making sure that what happens on the ground reflects the policies and intentions of your organisation is one of the most important roles of a manager in outdoor education. Since staff are often given significant freedom to work with their group in ways that they see fit, regular monitoring is essential.

In addition to any informal observation, there should be a formal process of observation at intervals that may vary according to the experience of the member of staff. The findings of this observation should be recorded.

Mentoring or co-tutoring is a valuable way of monitoring and developing the quality of teaching / instruction.

Client feedback is central to maintaining and improving quality. You could structure the feedback process for clients or participants so that it requests comments on specific members of staff which can be fed in to the evaluation of those members of staff.

It is good practice to have an appraisal system. Appraisal records can provide evidence of monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching / instruction and the way in which this contributes to staff development decisions.

Finally, reviews by external organisations can be used as evidence of quality. Examples might be NGB accreditation visits, Investors in People assessment or ISO or other quality assurance accreditation.

Description of 'good' practice

Activities are carefully planned to focus on appropriate learning and/or areas of the curriculum, as agreed with clients. They are designed so that it is easy for users to match the activities to different age groups and abilities. Users have been able to discuss and contribute to planning activities that suit their intended learning outcomes. As a result, experiences are well matched to the, sometimes different, needs of learners. Planning shows a good understanding of the curriculum and the needs of Children's Services. Good use is made of resources which enables learners to be fully engaged in active learning and user staff know exactly what to expect during their visit. Education staff understand the needs of their user groups and make a valuable contribution to the progress that learners make. There is an effective way of checking on the effectiveness of staff and activities provided. As a result, the professional development of staff ensures the quality of provision. By ensuring that the structure, processes and ethos of the organisation are focused on enabling effective learning, the provider is better positioned to meet the needs of learners.

Description of practice that is 'not good enough'

Experiences are planned to provide broad support for learning in one or more subjects of the National Curriculum. The user is informed about the nature of activities but not about how this might fit in with teacher's plans or what learning can be expected. As a result, users can access the learning offered but have little opportunity to make use of experiences to suit their own intended learning outcomes or adapt them to the needs of learners. Users are provided information on a 'menu' of experiences but some learners are not engaged in learning throughout their visit and their learning is limited.
Staff are experts in their field but have too little understanding of the needs of users. Their work is not evaluated and therefore staff development is not effectively focused on their teaching and learning skills. A lack of thorough consideration of the user in the structures and processes that support a learning experience restricts the provider's ability to meet learner needs and suggests that learning provision is not a priority.

Post Experience

4) The Provider reviews the experience and acts upon feedback:

a) evaluates their own services

You should be able to show that you have processes in place for self-evaluation.
This can take a variety of forms. At individual level, it is good practice for members of staff to be subject to a periodic performance appraisal.

At event level, it is good practice at the end of any extended or residential event for staff involved to meet to review the event. There should be a mechanism (such as dissemination at subsequent staff meetings) for passing on the learning from such reviews.

At the organisational level, it is helpful to create periodic opportunities for a formal review of different aspects of your operation. This might be done at a staff meeting or through formal audits as part of a quality assurance process.

For the purposes of the Learning Outside the Classroom Badge, you should show that this self-evaluation process, whether at individual, event or organisation level, includes an evaluation of the quality of the learning and identifies steps that can be taken to maintain and improve this. Staff meeting minutes would be one way of demonstrating this.

b) gathers feedback from users (teachers and learners), including that what was agreed at the planning stage was delivered, whether learning objectives have been met and value for money has been achieved

There must be a mechanism for gathering feedback from both clients and participants at the end of or after an event. There are various ways in which this might be done. It is common to issue an end-of-event questionnaire. However, you may have reservations about the fact that a "happy sheet" is likely to produce skewed responses if completed right at the end of an event and might prefer to seek feedback some time afterwards. You might feel that verbal feedback, either face to face or by telephone, is likely to be more meaningful than a questionnaire response. You may use email, the internet or other IT related approaches to generate feedback.

Whichever approach is used, some of the questions should focus on the learning, in relation to the objectives that were set before the event.

Value for money is a very subjective idea and one that may be difficult to pin down through direct feedback. One way of judging customer satisfaction (of which value for money is part) might be by showing the degree to which you get repeat bookings.

Third party review by external organisations such as those mentioned in section 4f) can also generate helpful feedback.

c) has a process in place to change practices as a result of review evaluation and feedback

There should be a system for recording evaluation and feedback findings and a mechanism for acting on both positive and negative feedback. A pat on the back in response to positive feedback can be a very real motivator for staff.
Conversely, negative feedback should be shared with any staff who might have contributed to the situation that generated the feedback and there should be a process for considering any steps that are necessary to avoid similar situations arising in future. This is likely to involve an internal communication mechanism such as discussion at staff meetings.

You should be able to show that you have a process for changing the way you do things in response to feedback, show how this works in practice and give examples of how feedback has caused you to change the way you do things.

Description of 'good' practice

The provider seeks to gather feedback from the user by providing users with feedback forms prior to the learning experience to be returned after the experience or by actively seeking feedback on the experience informally. The organisation also reviews and adapts its own services at quarterly staff meetings or by entering awards schemes which incorporate an element of evaluation and assessment. By encouraging self and third party review, the provider is sustaining productive communication with the user and allowing for the development of learning services which meet the needs of the user.

Description of practice that is 'not good enough'

The provider does not operate a feedback process, but occasionally receives feedback from users via telephone, email or letter. If there are a large number of complaints about a particular aspect of the learning service, staff will review the problem and affect any changes necessary. The organisation does not drive the feedback and evaluation process and does not conduct its own review of its provision. This lack of self and third party review and consequently random developmental process means that effective partnerships with users are not sustained and the potential for enabling effective learning is limited.

Organisational

5) The Provider meets the needs of users:

a) communicates effectively with users

Communication with users is central to meeting the criteria in sections 1, 2 and 4. Detailed advice is given in those sections.

The extent of communication will depend on the scale of the event. A simple, one-off session will clearly need less client contact than a longer or more complex event.

Effective communication is a two way process. There should be evidence that this happens, with at least simple records of client contact kept. While clients might not always take up the offer, they should always be able to arrange a pre- event visit and meeting to agree the details of their event.

There should be an efficient system for communicating up to date administrative details such as participant numbers to those staff who need to know. Potentially life threatening medical conditions such as asthma and serious allergies are increasingly

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common and it is vital that all relevant medical information is obtained from the client and communicated to all relevant staff.

Obtaining informed parental consent is important. It is good practice to point out to parents that it is impossible to eliminate all the risks inherent in adventurous activities. There are helpful examples of wordings for the acknowledgement and disclosure of risk on the AALS website.

b) essential written policies and procedures are reviewed, maintained and updated. This should be undertaken on a regular basis and cover all venues and all activities

Depending on the size of your organisation and the range of provision, you may have a legal requirement to maintain certain written policies and procedures. It is beyond the scope of this guidance to list these. However, whether or not there is a legal duty, it is good practice to document essential policies in written form.

Organisations other than very small concerns are likely to find it helpful to have policies in a wide range of areas. However, for the purpose of the Learning Outside the Classroom Badge, the primary concern is with customer facing policies such as:

● Procedures for running the various activities on offer
● Guidance on the way in which activities are used to meet defined learning objectives and on adapting the approach to different groups
● Health and safety policy and guidelines
● Child protection policy

It is important that the key policies are reviewed formally on a regular basis and that they reflect what actually happens on the ground. There should be a mechanism for any member of staff to raise a concern about any of the procedures. Procedures should be reviewed after any accidents or incidents and there should be a "near miss" reporting process which encourages open and honest reporting so that lessons can be learned.

There should be evidence (such as staff meeting minutes) that procedures are regularly reviewed and that changes are communicated to everyone who needs to know. Policies and procedures should be available to your clients on request.

c) shows an understanding of sustainability issues and the impact of activities where appropriate

Most outdoor providers are very aware of their impact on the environment and work hard both to minimise unnecessary impact and to communicate to participants the need to take positive action to act in a sustainable way. Many will have a clear statement of environmental policy.

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You should be able to give examples of steps you have taken to minimise your impact. You should also be able to show how you ensure that sustainability issues form part of participants' learning.

d) has a process in place to monitor the overall quality of provision across its site or sites (if multiple sites) and make changes where necessary

Advice in section 3f) on monitoring what happens on the ground is particularly relevant to a large site or multiple sites. It is also important that staff at each dispersed site have enough expertise and experience to make any independent judgements that are necessary to ensure quality provision at that site.

Providers with dispersed sites will often have a central set of policies and procedures. They may also have centrally organised training provision and opportunities for exchange of good practice across the sites.

Whatever specific arrangements are in place, you should be able to demonstrate a rigorous quality assurance mechanism which operates across the sites. As has been pointed out in section 4, that mechanism must be capable of driving a change in practice should this be necessary.

Description of 'good' practice

All of a provider's structures and processes are monitored, reviewed and adapted with the user in mind. Good practice is upheld in written policies and procedures which provide structure and support to the learning experience and where necessary, detail action taken in regard to environmental sustainability. These documents are regularly updated and shared with the user via the website, at the site itself or on request. By operating a transparent organisation with structures and processes which endeavour to meet the needs of users, the organisation demonstrates a commitment to learning outside the classroom.

Description of practice that is 'not good enough'

The provider sends out pre-event information but does not ensure that there is a two way communication process. There are written policies and procedures but these are not reviewed and updated regularly. Individual teams and sites are evaluated separately and the provision of learning is not considered in reviews of teams other than the learning team. By not considering or communicating with the user, the organisation does not demonstrate sufficient understanding of or commitment to learning outside the classroom and the value of working in partnership with the user.

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6) The Provider has processes in place to manage risk and other liabilities effectively:

Providers must:

a) Comply with the Provider Accreditation Criteria of Adventuremark (for activities outside the scope of Adventure Activity Licensing) or hold an AALS License (for providers in scope)

No guidance on this criterion is included here as extensive guidance is available, either on the Adventuremark section of the site (www.adventuremark.co.uk) or from AALS.

b) Ensure all risks and liabilities in the services promised to the user are effectively managed, even if fulfilled by a sub-contractor or other third party

Risk assessments and safety management procedures covering the whole range of activity and non-activity risks should be available to clients on request.

If a client contracts with you to run an event, then you are responsible for all aspects of provision, even if sub-contractors are used. Although contracting out some aspects of provision may well be an efficient way of operating, it is often more difficult to ensure consistent safety and quality standards across the whole operation.

If you use sub-contractors, you will need to show that expectations are clearly communicated to them, that your system for monitoring their performance is at least as robust as it is for employed staff and that the feedback mechanism between you and your client is direct, rather than through the sub-contractor.

c) Provider must ensure safety management processes are in place for all services offered in addition to activities e.g. accommodation, catering, transport and excursions.

Providers who offer these services will be aware that there are numerous legal requirements that must be observed. It is beyond the scope of this document to list these. Instead, it gives brief examples of the steps that you might take to demonstrate that you have safety management processes in place.

AALS Licensed providers must demonstrate that for all out of scope activities they provide, appropriate safety management systems are in place.

Where providers hire in third party transport options they are responsible for ensuring appropriate checks to ensure safety and quality are in place.

With accommodation, the most significant risk is that of fire. New fire safety law

introduced in 2006 placed the burden of assessing the risk to your premises on you. You have a legal duty to decide on the fire precautions to be adopted. However, you may wish to draw on expert advice in that process. The Fire Service is normally willing to advise and will often carry out periodic inspections. You will need to show that your fire risk assessment is up to date and that appropriate steps have been taken both in terms of preventative measures to minimise the risk of a fire and in terms of procedures which guard against injury or loss of life in the event of a fire.

Catering services are subject to numerous legal requirements relating to food hygiene and other safety issues. Like all forms of safety management, it is necessary to assess the risks, decide on appropriate control measures, ensure that you have competent, well trained staff and put a monitoring system in place to ensure that your operating procedures are consistently carried out in practice. You will need to show that these steps are in place. Your evidence might include a written hygiene and safety policy, staff food hygiene qualifications and evidence of a checking system for key safety indicators.

Transport is arguably the most hazardous element of most courses and one that is clearly subject to numerous legal requirements. If driving is required of your staff, you will need to show that you have evidence that they hold the appropriate licence (PCV, D1 or B depending on the vehicles used and whether you have section 19 minibus permits, together with a CPC if required). There should evidence of driver training, particularly for those staff who are not required to pass a PCV or D1 test. This may be to external standards such as MIDAS. You will also need to show you have a robust system for checking vehicle safety, including complying with roadworthiness safety inspections at the intervals recommended by the Vehicle and Operator Services Agency.

There must be a system for regular review of all significant risks.

d) Provide evidence of Public and Employers Liability Insurance cover

Employers Liability cover to £10 million is a legal requirement. There is no fixed level for Public Liability cover. If any of your clients require a specific level of cover, that will determine the minimum level. If not, it is a matter of personal judgement. However, it would be unusual for that level to be less than £5 million.

e) Comply with the Package Travel Regulations when the operation falls within their scope

Your operation falls within the scope of the Regulations if you offer a residential package which includes two or more of the following at an inclusive price:

● Transport (excluding incidental transport during a course)
● Accommodation
● Other tourist services that account for a significant proportion of the package

Depending on the circumstances, instruction may or may not be considered to be an "other tourist service". For further details of the requirements, see http://www.berr.gov.uk/whatwedo/consumers/buying-selling/holidays- travel/package-holidays/index.html.

If your operation falls within the scope of the Regulations, it is a legal requirement that you safeguard payments made by clients in advance. There are a number of ways in which you can do this:

● By bonding through ABTA or a similar organisation.
● By taking out financial failure insurance.
● By holding the money in a trust account.
● Or of course by not requiring payment until after the event.

You will need to provide evidence that you are using one or other of these options. As well as having to safeguard user payments received in advance, the Regulations specify requirements on the contents of brochures, what you must tell your clients, contracts and procedures on changes and cancellations. If you are in scope of the Regulations, you must show that you comply with these requirements.

f) Have relevant safeguarding procedures in place concerning child protection

From October 2009, it will be a legal requirement to check whether potential employees in specified activities are registered with the Independent Safeguarding Authority before they start work. Details are at www.isa- gov.org.uk/. In the meantime, you will need to show that you have details of CRB Disclosures for staff who have contact with young people.

You should also have a written child protection policy which should include practical advice to staff. This might include guidance on preventing bullying, recognising different types of abuse, how to respond to suspicions, allegations or disclosures of abuse and guidelines on appropriate staff behaviour.

Description of 'good' practice

A provider manages risk effectively. The organisation ensures that risks are identified and appropriately managed and that essential safety management procedures are in place, are regularly monitored, reviewed and updated and there is evidence that this is an active and ongoing process. These processes support and enable effective learning. The organisation's safety management procedures are shared appropriately with all users via a website and/or programme planning/booking information and/or during a pre-visit, and at the venue itself.

Description of practice that is 'not good enough'

A provider manages risk effectively and ensures that risks are identified and appropriately managed. Essential safety management procedures are in place, but there is little or no evidence that these are regularly monitored, reviewed and updated. The organisation does not always make these safety management procedures available to users. As a consequence, the organisation does not make it easy for the user to make informed judgements on the quality of the provision.