



EXPLORE THE WORLD SAFELY



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EXPEDITION PROVIDERS ASSOCIATION

INTRODUCTION TO THE EXPEDITION PROVIDERS ASSOCIATION

The Expedition Providers Association (EPA) was founded in 2003. EPA initially came together as a small informal group of expedition organisations that met to discuss changes within the industry. As time went on, it became clear that there was a need for organisations to come together in order to share good practice and talk in an honest, open forum about the industry.

In 2009 EPA became the awarding body for the LOTC expedition Quality Badge scheme for the expeditions sector.

Organisations who would otherwise feel isolated and remote from the bigger picture soon had a reliable network of other industry professionals to consult on a range of safety matters.

EPA membership is made up of UK-based expedition providers catering for young adults under 25 in full-time education. Expeditions are defined as a 1-8 week experience involving overseas travel, adventurous activities and cultural exposure.

EPA has become more recognised within the wider travel industry, and was at the forefront of helping to create the BS 8848 standards for overseas expeditions, as well as the EVAC badge for overseas expeditions.

EPA ACTIVITIES

Within EPA's broad remit, its activities include:

- Being the awarding body of the LOTC Quality badge for overseas expeditions;
- Representation on behalf of its members with industry standards bodies and Government departments;
- Created, maintain and develop an industry standard in overseas quality and safety;
- Developing criteria for provider accreditation; Providing a forum to discuss factors affecting the expedition sector and to share ideas and concerns;
- Providing simple advice to inform and educate customers and stakeholders as to the services on offer.



EPA, AAA AND THE LOTC QUALITY BADGE SUMMARISED

EPA

EPA (the Expedition Providers Association) is a members' organisation that represents the expedition sector. The EPA code of practice, to which all EPA members should adhere, is what the LOTC Quality badge is assessed against.

LOtC and the Quality Badge

LOtC (Learning Outside the Classroom) is a government backed branding that encourages all types of extra-curricular learning. There are several types of LOtC quality badges relevant to different sectors (e.g. farm visits, UK based activities, overseas expeditions etc.). The LOtC Quality Badge for Overseas Expeditions is the one which is associated with EPA.

AAA

AAA (Adventure Activity Associates) are the independent inspectors who assess whether applicants for the LOtC Quality Badge for Overseas Expeditions meet the EPA code of practice, and are therefore eligible for the badge.



MEMBERSHIP CRITERIA AND PROGRESSION

EPA Full Member

- Adhere to the EPA Code of Practice
- Hold the LOTC Quality Badge
- BS8848 Self Assessment (Minimum)*
- Attendance at Full EPA Meetings (Requirement)
- Payment of EPA Membership Fees

To guide you through the process of becoming an EPA Full Member, you will be assigned a mentor from one of the EPA Full Member organisations. A key part of the mentor's role will be to verify the Aspirant Member's compliance with the EPA Code of Practice. This verification must be completed within 12 months of becoming an Aspirant Member. Compliance will allow the Aspirant Member to proceed towards becoming a Full Member. Where the mentor has concerns over compliance with the EPA Code of Practice, this will be referred to the Full Members Committee who will remove Aspirant Member status from the organisation until such time as it re-submits for verification and is shown to comply with the EPA Code of Conduct.

EPA Aspirant Member

- Adhere to the EPA Code of Practice
- BS 8848 Self Assessment (Minimum)*
- Commit to achieving LOTC Quality Badge within 24 months from date of application for Aspirant Member status
- Attendance at Full EPA Meetings (Optional)
- Payment of EPA Membership Fees

**Organisations may alternatively elect to attain BS 8848 Corporate Compliance status through submission for external assessment*



SUMMARY OF BENEFITS

FULL MEMBERS

- Entitlement to display the EPA Full Member logo on the organisations online and offline marketing materials.
- Designation as an EPA Full Member on the EPA website and on relevant marketing materials.
- Voting rights at EPA meetings or via electronic voting.
- Qualification for election to EPA offices ie Chair, Deputy Chair etc.
- Access to EPA organised events
- Additional Full Member benefits (TBC) including access to EPA Full Members area of the EPA Website
- Being part of a recognised group of accredited Expedition Providers and thus having a powerful joint voice when lobbying and expressing views on industry-related issues.



ASPIRANT MEMBERS

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COSTS

Yearly membership of EPA is £200, payable on 1st April each year. Aspirant members must as a minimum self-declare against BS 8848. They will also have to be successfully independently inspected within two years of joining against the LOTC Quality Badge in order to obtain full EPA member status. The external assessment for the Quality Badge draws an initial charge in the first year of applying, and then a lesser annual charge thereafter. This charge is based on which “band” you fall in to (depending on how many expeditions you run and for how many participants) and is paid directly to the inspectorate. The current inspectorate is the Adventure Activities Associates. For current costs and bands, please see <http://expeditionprovidersassociation.co.uk/lotc-quality-badge/>

To join EPA, either email membership@expeditionprovidersassociation.co.uk for an application form or visit our website.

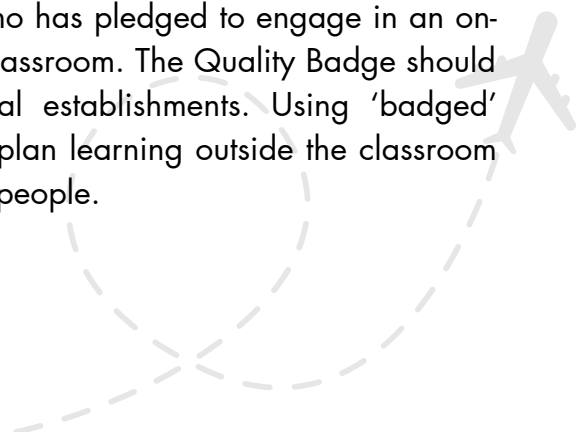
THE LEARNING OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM QUALITY BADGE

The Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) and the Council for Learning Outside the Classroom have created the Learning Outside the Classroom (LOTc) Quality Badge. This provides for the first time a national accreditation combining the essential elements of provision – learning and safety – into one easily recognisable and trusted Quality Badge for all types of Learning Outside the Classroom provider organisations. Visit: www.lotcqualitybadge.org.uk for further details.

External organisations that provide learning outside the classroom experiences for children and young people (i.e. LOTc providers) having the Quality Badge will be:

- Offering high quality teaching and learning experiences
- Managing risk effectively

The Quality Badge will be awarded to a LOTc provider who has pledged to engage in an on-going process to sustain high quality learning outside the classroom. The Quality Badge should provide huge benefits for schools and other educational establishments. Using ‘badged’ providers will help schools, teachers and other leaders to plan learning outside the classroom experiences that meet their needs and those of their young people.



DO I HAVE TO GET THE BADGE

This is a non-statutory scheme and as such, there is no legal requirement for providers to achieve the badge. However, we hope that all providers will see the benefit of the badge in reviewing and improving their own offering. In order to become a full EPA member, organisations are required to hold the quality badge, this is in part due to schools increasingly expected to seek the quality badge in potential providers.

DESCRIPTION OF THE BADGE



To ensure that the badge is fit for purpose, it is essential that safety and risk management are assessed at the right level. The route providers take to achieve the Quality Badge will be determined by the degree of risk management required to manage the activities offered. Providers will not be able to choose the route they take; the route will be determined by the activities they offer.

Route 1 - Everyday risk

Activities such as museum visits or outdoor poetry readings where risks can be managed without specialist technical knowledge.

Route 2 - Technical Requirement

Activities that require a degree of specialist technical knowledge and experience beyond the lay person, such as visits to farms, adventure activities, or knowing which beaches are safe to use for field studies at certain states of the tide.

Providers of these activities will follow Route 2, where their safety management systems will be assessed by external agencies before they can be awarded the Quality Badge. The expedition sector falls into Route 2.



ADVENTURE ACTIVITY ASSOCIATES

Adventure Activity Associates (AAA) currently inspects for and operates the LOTC Quality Badge within the expeditions sector on behalf of EPA. The company is made up of outdoor professionals with proven track records in management and relevant outdoor project work. They are recognised within the industry as deliverers of practical solutions to difficult problems.

Further information about the company and its accreditation work will be found at: www.adventureactivityassociates.co.uk

WHAT IS THE APPLICATION PROCESS?

Route 2 providers who want to attain a Quality Badge will need to apply to their relevant sector Awarding Body. If you are part of our sector, you can apply for assessment directly to EPA via our website www.expeditionprovidersassociation.co.uk or by emailing membership@expeditionprovidersassociation.co.uk.

EPA will confirm that you are eligible to be assessed and will then pass your contact details to AAA who will send you a detailed application form. The information which you supply to AAA will be treated as confidential throughout the assessment process and will not be communicated to any members of EPA. You will be asked to pay AAA the relevant fee for the assessment. On completion of the assessment AAA will notify EPA of the outcome.

When assessment against the LOTC Quality Indicators is successfully completed and payment made, the final step in the badging process is for providers to fill in an online registration form including information about their provision. This information will be added to the searchable database of badged providers available at the Quality Badge website www.lotcqualitybadge.org.uk.

Providers will be sent a link by their Awarding Body in order to access the registration area at the Quality Badge website and complete this form.

Once they have registered, providers will receive the Quality Badge certificate and logo from the Awarding Body. Providers will be sent a reminder from their Awarding Body when their Quality Badge is due for renewal.



WHAT ARE THE QUALITY INDICATORS?

There are six high level generic quality indicators. These are:

1. The provider has a process in place to assist users to plan the learning experience effectively;
2. The provider provides accurate information about its offer;
3. The provider provides activities, experience or resources which meet learner needs;
4. The provider reviews the experience & acts upon feedback;
5. The provider meets the needs of users; and
6. The provider has safety management processes in place to manage risk effectively.

Underneath each high level quality indicator is a number of sub-indicators. The quality indicators will be the same for all types of LOTC provider.

These are expanded upon with a number of sub-indicators. The EPA Standard which is the basis of these can be found at www.expeditionprovidersassociation.co.uk

The indicators are process-orientated and do not attempt to assess learning outcomes directly, as these remain the responsibility of the teacher or group leader.

Assessment inspections occur every two years.

FOR HOW LONG WILL THE BADGE BE VALID?

The Quality Badge is valid for 2 years.

For further information please email: membership@expeditionprovidersassociation.co.uk





EXPEDITION PROVIDERS ASSOCIATION

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT

info@expeditionprovidersassociation.co.uk

www.expeditionprovidersassociation.co.uk

