

IOL Course Accreditation

Accrediting CPD, training or educational courses designed for Outdoor Learning professionals

Course accreditation with the Institute for Outdoor Learning assists instructors, teachers and leaders of Outdoor Learning in identifying quality courses that are relevant to their needs.

It helps providers demonstrate their CPD event, FE/HE course, or staff training programme is well designed, and fit for outdoor learning professionals.



IOL Course Accreditation can help you to build your reputation and be known as a leading provider by using the IOL Accredited Course Badge on certificates, promotional material and web listings. Accreditation helps you extend your client base by being promoted to our community of several thousand members. You can get ahead of competitors and establish your place in the market by attracting professionals and organisations that need to purchase training and continuing professional development (CPD) activities that meet formal requirements.

Core Benefits:

- **Demonstrate** the value of your course for outdoor learning professionals
- Show your **commitment** to good practice and quality assurance
- **Publicise** to our mailing list of instructors, teachers, educators and managers
- **Share** your resource - with our 10,100 social media contacts, and beyond
- **List** your courses on our website - we receive over 300,000 visits every year

Options:

Course accreditation is open to all organisational members of IOL for all types of CPD, training or educational courses. IOL Course accreditation can be in addition to, or independent of, other accreditations.

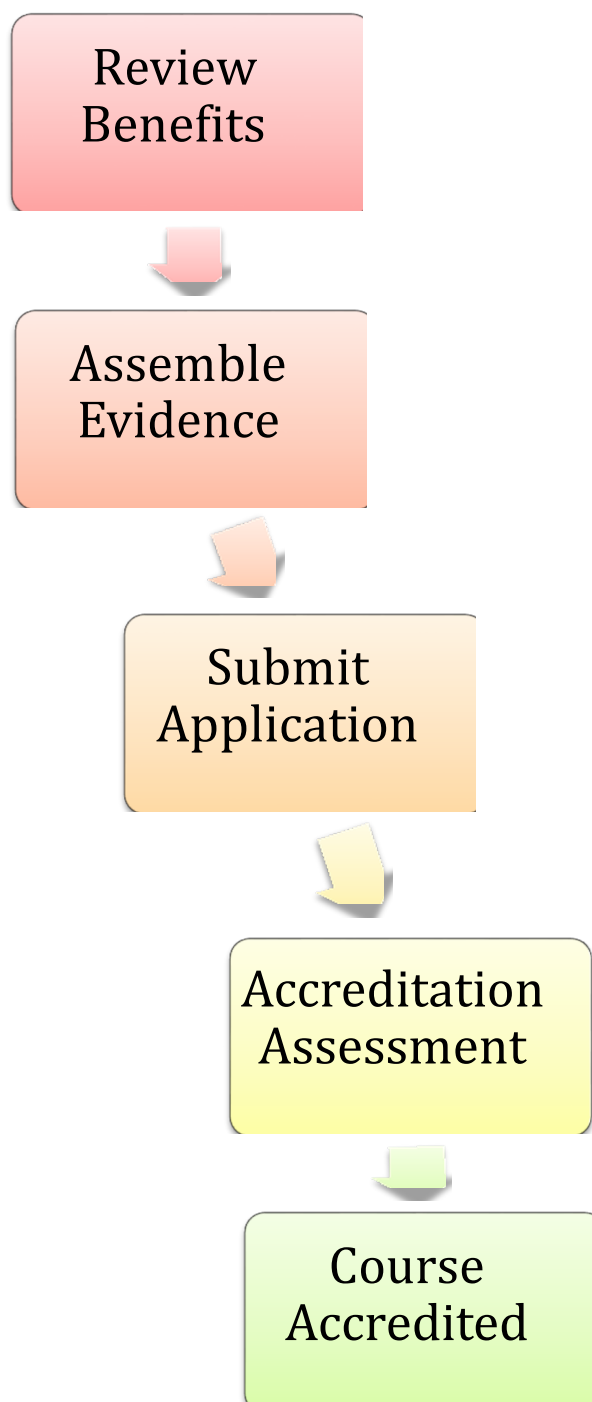
Impact:

- **Stand out** as one of a select number of courses aligned to quality standards and able to display the IOL Accredited Course badge
- Get support to use the accreditation process as a **staff professional development opportunity** and make improvements to your course
- **Builds your reputation** as a leading provider of education, training or CPD
- **Gives assurance** that your trainers are knowledgeable, skilled and understand the work of instructors, teachers and leaders of outdoor learning.
- **Recognises professional course design** with a clear aim, learning outcomes and appropriate assessment for learning.
- **Access** advice, CPD expertise and guidance.
- **Accomplishment** of an external, professional, quality assurance process.

What is Assessed?



Pathway to Course Accreditation



Consider

1. Read through the guidance and decide if IOL accreditation is appropriate for your course.

Prepare

2. Download the application form and guidance notes from the IOL website.
3. Assemble all the evidence required and complete your application form.

Submit

4. Submit your full application and pay the required fee.

Assessment

5. Your application will be checked for completeness and considered by an IOL Accreditation Board.

The desk-based assessment covers all the criteria in detail.

6. For successful applications, receive your IOL Accredited Course Badge & certification

If your application is deferred, gather more evidence and re-apply.

Renew

7. Renew accreditation annually.

Quality of Training Criteria

IOL Accreditation of CPD or training courses designed for instructors, teachers and leaders of Outdoor Learning requires evidence of meeting all the IOL quality of training criteria in the application form. A summary is given below.

Course Structure and Learning

In brief	Examples of how this will be assessed
Clear aim, measurable learning outcomes and scheme of work (programme timetable)	Submission of course aims, learning outcomes and scheme(s) of work. References an external syllabus where appropriate.
Uses assessment for learning methods that are fair, consistent and appropriate	Description of assessment for learning approach. Mapping of learning outcomes to assessment methods. Description of moderation procedures fair, authentic, valid, current, sufficient and reliable.
Uses appropriate teaching and learning methods for the activity / subject and the learners	Description of delivery methods, resources provided, manuals. Describes balance between theory and practical activity.
Able to be meet individual learners needs	Description of entry requirements and procedures for flexible course admission including APL. Description of approach to equality and diversity. Description of how the delivery of the course will consider and adapt to the needs of individuals.
Course administration and operation	Submission of course marketing, joining and administration procedures. Description of quality assurance processes.
Relevant venue and facilities	Outline of facilities, logistics, hospitality arrangements, site-management plans.

Relevance to Practitioners of Outdoor Learning

Clear outdoor learning practitioner target market	Designed for instructors, teachers and leaders of Outdoor Learning Descriptions of the target market, involvement of the Outdoor Learning field in course design.
Appropriate needs assessment for the Outdoor Learning sector	Details of needs analysis undertaken. Evidence of need e.g. case studies, market research results, employer / provider testimonials.

In brief	Examples of how this will be assessed
Course content supports IOL good practice in outdoor learning	Details of how reflective practice is included in the course. Detailed mapping the learning outcomes of the course to APIOL Criteria or IOL Good Practice Statements

Facilitating Learning

Appropriate process for delivery staff selection, training & support	Submission of procedures for training staff selection, monitoring and training.
Delivery staff competence	Evidence of competence in teaching / training of adult learners. Evidence of competence in subject area and knowledge and experience to deliver the learning outcomes for the training. Evidence of current knowledge of the outdoor learning sector and an understanding of the role(s) of learners.

Organisational Structure and Values

Properly constituted organisation with a sound financial position	Details of organisational structure, insurance, registered details and purpose. Confirmation of financial stability to deliver the course.
Operates ethically with the appropriate policies and procedures in place	Confirmation of holding health & safety, equality & diversity, data protection, environmental impact, complaints, risk-benefit assessments and other relevant policies. Two recent client testimonials.
Endorsements	Existing accreditations, approvals or certifications
Motivation and drive	Description of the reasons for seeking course accreditation and the tangible benefits expected.

Support for Outdoor Learning

Supports the outdoor learning sector	Membership of the Institute for Outdoor Learning prior to application.
Can explain why outdoor learning is of value to the wider society	Organisational statement in application or APIOL holder as designated course director.

Frequently Asked Questions

What types of courses do you accredit?

- Training Courses designed for ASPIRANT or NEW outdoor learning instructors, teachers or leaders
- CPD courses designed for EXISTING instructors, teachers or leaders to broaden or further develop their competence
- Educational courses – a FE, HE, degree or Master’s course or similar that is typically over 12 months or longer

The IOL Accredited Course Badge

IOL Accredited Course Badges can be used on certificates, promotional material and web listings when your course is accredited.

Can I accredit a course made up of several modules?

Yes. It is important to be clear on certificates, promotional material and web listings that IOL course accreditation covers the whole course. If the modules are stand-alone and independent courses, then each will require its own course accreditation.

If IOL accredits a course does that mean IOL endorses the content?

By accrediting a course IOL is accrediting the process by which providers deliver the learning outcomes they have set out. IOL course accreditation confirms that the chosen course content and training process is relevant to practitioners of outdoor learning.

Does IOL accredit individuals?

Yes, see the IOL awards of RPIOL, APIOL and LPIOL at [IOL Awards and Accreditation](#)

Does IOL accredit courses for people who are participating in outdoor learning?

No, we encourage providers to use the IOL supported National Outdoor Learning Award at [National Outdoor Learning Award](#)

Are discounts available for multiple courses?

Yes. Discounts are available for organisations that apply for accreditation of two or more courses in the same subject area at one time. See pricing below.

Does my course have to conform to external standards?

IOL accredited courses must meet all relevant legal or good practice guidelines that have been described and accepted within the field. IOL course accreditation can be independent of, or in addition to, any other form of course accreditation, approval or endorsement.

Does the course have to include assessment?

The assessment methods for a course are a matter for the course provider to define. In learning terms, every course should have an aim, learning outcomes and an assessment process that identifies when the delegates have achieved the desired learning outcomes. Both formative assessment and summative assessment are usually expected.

How much paperwork is there to complete?

The process is designed to check information that most course providers committed to high delivering quality learning experiences will have already considered.

Wherever possible we strongly encourage applying organisations to use evidence of accreditation with other bodies in their application. The aim is not to introduce unnecessary paperwork but to ensure an external, professionally based, quality assurance process.

How are applications assessed?

Each application will first be checked for completeness and detail. Any missing information and the application will be returned to resubmit with the full information.

Once we have received a completed application it will be reviewed by at least two members from the following list:

- IOL Operations Manager
- Independent External Quality Assessor

In addition, further specialist guidance will be sought where necessary to assess all areas of the application and particularly the sections relating to relevance to practitioners of outdoor learning and course design and assessment.

Guidance can come from one or more of:

- **Chair of relevant IOL Professional Practice Group or equivalent expert** to provide specialist advice or knowledge.
- **Partner organisations** that are supporting IOL Course Accreditation in a particular area (e.g. AHOEC for centre management/leadership courses).
- **IOL Chief Executive or Trustee** to ensure the charitable aims and objectives of IOL are upheld by accrediting a course in a particular area or field.

Each area of course accreditation is different and IOL will draw together an accreditation board that brings the appropriate specialisms to assess each application fairly.

Is there a visit to my site?

IOL course accreditation is designed as a desk-based process. We only make a site visit where necessary to satisfactorily confirm the providers policies and procedures in action.

What is the IOL quality assurance process?

IOL undertake monitoring of Accredited Courses each year. This will include looking at delegate questionnaires, annual reports and course material reviews.

Providers can expect that within the first couple of years of course accreditation IOL will monitor that what they said they would do regarding delivery of the course is taking place. This may include an open discussion to find out how well the course is working for the provider and how well it is meeting the needs of instructors, teachers and leaders who attend it.

What is the renewal process?

The annual renewal process is to complete and submit your renewal form. You will be required to provide IOL with information that includes:

- How many Accredited Courses you have delivered in the past 12 months
- How many delegates attended each course
- Summary of course evaluations

Your accreditation will be renewed if it meets all the current criteria. In line with an IOL commitment to reflective practice it is expected that minor updates will occur each time a course is run, these will not usually require re-accreditation.

If there are significant changes in your application at renewal you will be charged an amendment fee or, for larger changes, the full course accreditation fee.

Can course accreditation be withdrawn?

IOL retains the right to withdraw accreditation at any time, including the reasons:

- Failure to comply with the current accreditation criteria
- Failure to comply with the policies and processes submitted at accreditation
- Significant changes to the course structure (learning outcomes, scheme of work)
- Significant changes to the facilitation team (selection & training process, trainers)
- Misuse of any branding, wording or logos of the Institute for Outdoor Learning

Complaints

If you have any questions or queries about the process or your specific application, please contact the IOL central office in the first instance. We will do our best to ensure that IOL Course Accreditation is right for you at this time and support you to complete your application to meet the criteria.

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

To Apply for Course Accreditation

Organisational members of IOL can apply for course accreditation regardless of whether they are a charity, sole trader, business or educational institution. To begin the process, download the Application Form and email to institute@outdoor-learning.org

