



# YOUTH EXPEDITION LEADER DEVELOPMENT

## Good Practice Guidelines

**GOOD PRACTICE:** *this does not mean that all organisations should act precisely as in any agreed YET statement of Good Practice Guidelines, but that if actual practice varied from the agreed statement, then the organisation should be able and willing to justify to any relevant authority why any alternative system had been used.*

### AIM

1. The aim of these Good Practice guidelines is to outline a Youth Overseas Expedition Leader Development Plan, offering a seamless and progressive route through the tiers of such leadership. It is recognised that as yet there does not exist any form of formal qualification for such a leader.

### INTRODUCTION

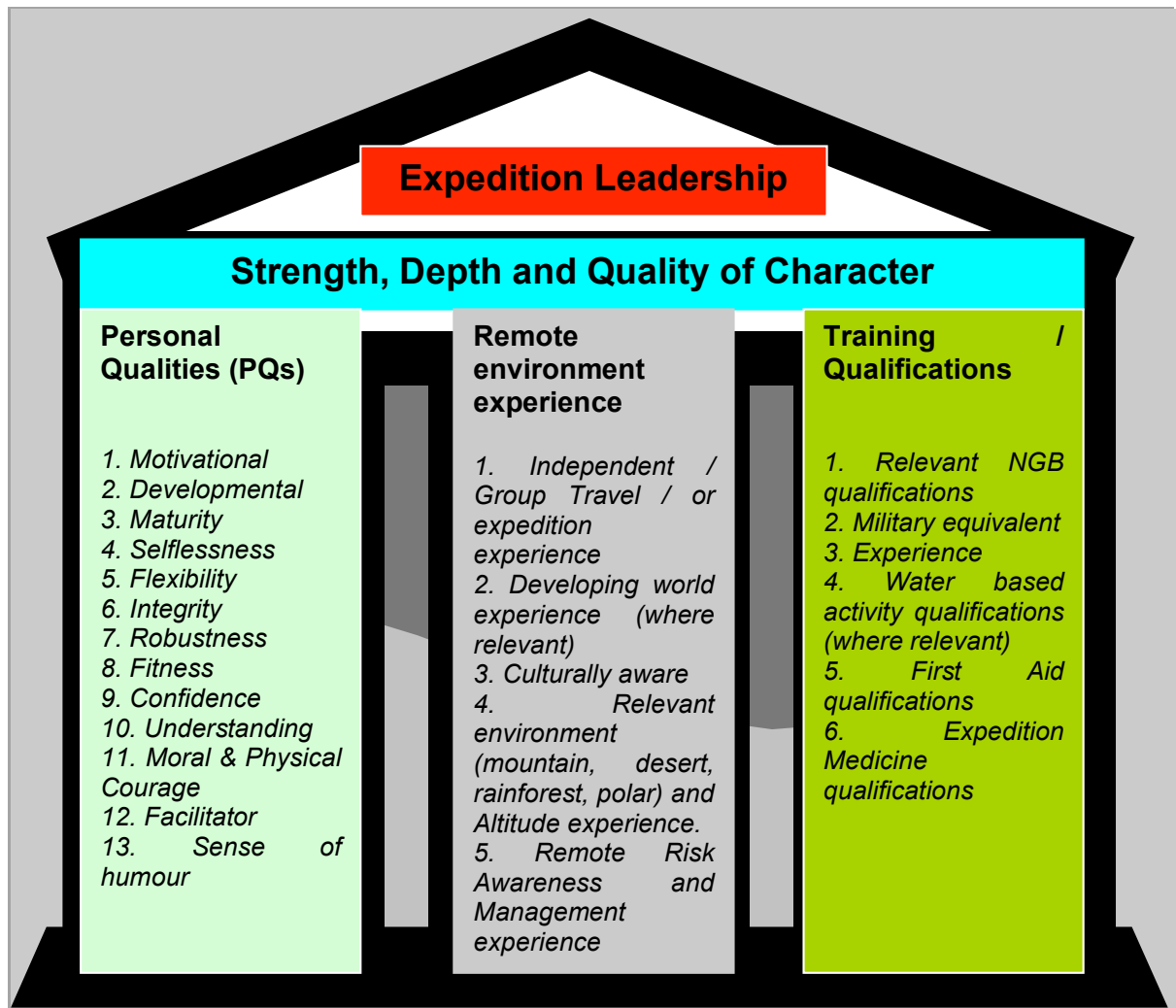
2. In order to develop an individual's character, skills and leadership qualities suitable to be a leader on a youth overseas expedition, it is necessary to define what is wanted from that individual. Youth overseas expedition Leaders frequently are required to be "all things to all people", but this is unrealistic as a definition of precise requirements. Before we embark on any leadership development programme it is necessary to define what makes a satisfactory youth overseas expedition leader (henceforth – Leader). This definition holds the key to a meaningful discussion and understanding of the issues

3. The definition is made up of three elements:

- a. a Leader should have the ability to develop, manage and care for, both mentally and physically, a group of young people (14 – 25) in a challenging and remote environment;
- b. they should have developed the instinct and depth of experience to anticipate, identify and manage risk in order to maintain, as much as is practicable, the safety of the whole group and possess the resources to be effective at incident handling;
- c. they must possess a robust understanding of the expedition's aims, objectives and ethos, and demonstrate the character to facilitate them in the expedition's chosen environment.

4. Underpinning the above three elements is the Technical Skill Set required by the Leader for the particular activities of the expedition.

5. It is essential that there is an in depth understanding of the qualities that make up a Leader and how those qualities build and piece together. Below are the three pillars that are in place to support the character of the individual leader. It is worth highlighting that the list of personal qualities is far greater than the others.



NB: The qualities listed are not in order of importance or priority and are not exhaustive. Rather, this is a generic model and justified additions are encouraged.

6. Once there exists an understanding of what makes a Leader, then the process of how to develop such leaders can be envisaged. It is worth commenting immediately that rarely can a venture leader expect all of the above in any one individual in the leadership team, but can aim to include all the above within the leadership team.

### GENERAL

7. Leaders need to be qualified and experienced in many aspects. With this in mind, and in order to encourage the emergence of new Leaders and to sustain the quality ones in existence, there is a need to invest in aspects of professional and personal development. The development process must be achievable, realistic and, more credible. The relationship between Provider and Leader must be built on trust and integrity, backed by a legal contract.

### CONCEPT



8. Underpinning the proposals are some assumptions and pre-requisites, as follows:

- a. A Leader data base exists within a youth overseas expedition organisation containing detailed notes on performance, skills, qualifications, and the development needs of a leader; within the restraints of data protection
- b. A wide understanding that the Leader(s) can make or break an expedition.
- c. That there will be financial implications in the development plan, but that this should be seen as an investment by the organisation concerned.

9. The consultation process in the preparation of this document took into account views and comments from a number of different groups; a mail hit on 50 random `experienced` Leaders, and associated documents (e.g. NGB and LEA Guidelines).

## ASPIRATIONS

10. For clarity four hierarchical and progressive levels of an Overseas Youth Expedition Leader were identified:

- a. **Aspirant / Trainee Leader** – a person learning the skills of leadership under the close supervision of a assigned member of the Leadership Team. Such an individual will have few or no technical qualifications or travel experience but will have expressed an interest in becoming a Leader, or one who is, at the time of application, too young or too inexperienced to be appointed as either an assistant leader or an expedition leader.
- b. **Assistant Leader** – an individual who has experience and competence in a specific area of the expedition activities but who also has the maturity, experience and competency to work in a supervisory capacity with young people. He or she should have the maturity and ability to pass on skills and qualities in the development of Aspirant / Trainee Leaders.
- c. **Expedition Leader** –the individual taking overall responsibility for all or a pre-determined period of the expedition, and the nominated representative of the Expedition Provider for this venture outside the UK. This person will have personal qualities and skills relevant to the nature of the expedition whose competence is recognized through NGB qualifications and accumulated experience. He or she should have the maturity and ability to pass on skills and qualities in the development of Assistant Leaders.
- d. **Mentor Leader** – an appropriately qualified leader who possesses experience in all aspects of leadership and a proven ability in the handling of expedition incidents. He or she must have the maturity and wherewithal to pass on skills and qualities in the development of



Aspirant / Trainee and Assistant Leaders. A Mentor Leader should be expected to play an active part in assessing potential leaders.

11. It is entirely possible for an individual, depending on character, experience, and qualifications, to enter the Leader Development Programme at any level. By virtue of the mentoring received they must have shown clear evidence of an in-depth understanding of expedition researching, planning, execution, and proven ability in delivery of an expedition's ethos and the ability to articulate the purpose and process of young people on expeditions.

12. Using the hierarchical approach will encourage the more motivated and ambitious leader to progress through the levels, and goes some way in keeping them engaged with youth expeditioning. It offers a clear route into the sector for newcomers with little or no experience and will allow an opportunity to shape future leaders.



Entry Level	Aspirant / Trainee Leader Post Compulsory Education		Assistant Leader		Leader		Mentor Leader
Areas of D E V E L O P M E N T	1. Maintain interest in travel and the outdoor. 2. Possible Gap Year or equivalent. 3. Working with youth groups. (D of E, Princes Trust, Scouts, etc) 4. UK work in the outdoors or equivalent. 5. Encourage to do independent travel. 6. BELA 7. ML Training (and equivalent in other disciplines) 8 Skills Active National Occupational Standard – expeditions and exploration Leadership		1. Basic First Aid 2. Facilitation Course 3. Aquatic Rescue Course 4. Shadow a Training Expedition. 5. Continue working with youth groups. 6. Assessed as Assistant Leader 7. Assistant Lead, with Mentor Leader on overseas expedition. 8. Encouraged to plan own expedition. 9. Attend Leader Development Expedition. 10. ML Assessment (and equivalent in other disciplines) 11. Child Protection Training 12. Background check & enhanced CRB England & Wales. Disclosure Scotland		1. Any sweep up training from Assistant Leader Development. 2. Experience in differing environments. 3. Mentor training. 4. Be shadowed as a mentor on a Leader Development Expedition. 5. Regular Leader of Expeditions 6. Wider competence in the industry 7. Possible ML (W) (and equivalent in other disciplines) 8. Instruct and assess, under supervision.  Desired: Off Site Safety Management Course		1. Incentivised and encouraged to stay 'in date' and 'competent'. 2. Can be used as Expedition advisor and able to carry out reconnaissance of new destinations.  Possible route back into the 'Leader' tier for re-qualification or up to date training.

*Possible 'bolt on' courses – languages, environmental awareness, counselling skills, management skills, expedition photography and sound recording, coaching skills, case study workshops, hostile environment training, risk assessment and management, dealing with behaviourally challenged or disabled young people, working with people in educational ways etc.*

13. It is understood that very rarely will we see a candidate progress through the entire programme from Aspirant / Trainee to Mentor Leader. In practice, an individual can, and probably will, enter the system at differing levels, gaining Accreditation for Prior Experience and Learning. However, all potential expedition leaders, regardless of experience and qualifications, will be required to be assessed for placement on a particular expedition at a level that best suits the individual's maturity, experience, technical competency, and skill set.



## CONCLUSION

14. In its rawest sense, an expedition has five basic elements: an aim, somewhere to go, a plan, a leadership team, and expedition participants. The Achilles heel of these elements is the leadership team, since it is known from experience that a weak leadership team can have a disproportionately negative effect on the success or failure of an expedition, and the consequences of bad leadership are all too obvious. Leaders are time-intensive in the development but once developed they have useful skills to share and to enable young people to develop. As such organisations providing expeditions will expect leaders to facilitate their expeditions, so they should strive to facilitate the development of the full range of leader.

15. Achieving and highlighting the need for Good Practice is contentious. It is not the intention of this document to lay down directives to providers, but to offer good practice guidelines.

*Original Paper by Mark Brazier and Ted Grey 2005 – revised October 2007 by Ted Grey, Peter Allison, Brian Needham and Will Taunton Burnett*



## OVERSEAS YOUTH LEADER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

### GOOD PRACTICE EXEMPLA

#### A. DORSET EXPEDITIONARY SOCIETY

##### Training Young Leaders

The Society is committed to promoting leadership in our young people. Safe and responsible expeditioning demands the highest standard of leadership. To this end we regularly organise nationally recognised training courses for aspiring leaders. Members are frequently sponsored to gain such qualifications as the Single Pitch Assessment, the Basic Expedition Leader Award, Mountain First Aid Certificate, Cave Leadership and Mountain Leadership Awards.

On overseas ventures, each group member accepts responsibility for one vital area of activity. This specialised responsibility may require them to gain qualifications or more specific experience before taking to the field. They learn that to succeed on expedition, they must be competent in their chosen field, work together and achieve a high degree of interdependence.

In addition to providing young leaders with administrative support, the Society can assist with recruitment and selection of candidates, as well as access to a comprehensive database of information gained from over forty overseas ventures. We maintain a mentoring programme to support those starting out to organise their own venture. Aspiring leaders are encouraged to develop their personal skills under the guidance of experienced expedition leaders.

##### **We are rightly proud of our success in fostering young leaders:**

- They increasingly feature on our United Kingdom Teams.
- Overseas ventures always include them.
- In any year up to six young DES members will graduate in Outdoor Education.
- Young people have gone on to lead their own peer group expeditions to the High Atlas Mountains of Morocco, the Alps and Pyrenees of France, the Central Highlands of Indonesia, the Italian Dolomites, the High Tatras of Slovakia, Iceland, and Pakistan.

In keeping with the Society's philosophy of developing young leaders, at least a quarter of the Management Committee are young members.

Comment from young member of DES Ecuador Expedition:

*"At the end of our travels in South America, a new idea was discussed. This was a venture to North Africa led by a small group of young leaders. And so the Morocco Expedition was born. In the next twelve months I needed all the experience I had gained, in addition to the support of the Society. Once in Morocco, our team camel trekked across the Sahara, climbed the highest mountain in North Africa and explored the Western Coast. The expedition was hugely successful and was repeated by another team of young leaders the following year."*



In later years regular “peer group” Expeditions from Dorset have been arranged to places such as Mexico, Dolomites and Peru. The expedition has to submit its ideas to the DES Committee and these are monitored throughout. It also has to apply for YET Evaluation so that the plans are assessed by an independent panel. All members of such expeditions are over 18.

The Society organises courses for potential leaders - “Planning to succeed – a seminar for young leaders” - to which a select group of potential young leaders drawn from DES Expeditions are invited.

The Society runs a scheme to help potential leaders gain qualifications. It grant aids half of the cost of course (e.g. ML) and upon successful conclusion will fund the balance. Any young leaders planning an expedition can be given “seed “ money to help the initial planning.

## **B: THE BRITISH SCHOOLS EXPLORING SOCIETY**

### **Leadership Training**

In 2004 BSES introduced the concept of the Young Leader to its expedition in Iceland and continued the concept in 2005 in Peru. Now the concept has changed, and a specific Leader Training programme is run annually.

#### **Who is it for?**

It is designed for anyone aged 18 -23 who is serious about becoming a leader in their career and / or on expeditions, and who has some previous expedition or outdoor experience.

#### **What is it all about?**

It is an opportunity to develop and to practice leadership skills in an expedition context with the support of experienced wilderness leaders and management trainers. A key component of the programme is the recognition of the link between expedition leadership skills and career leadership roles. The programme combines best practice from business management, sports coaching and leadership training models to provide a solid grounding in leadership theory, with the opportunity to practice both the soft and hard skills of leadership. The programme is delivered over six months through three pre-expedition weekends and a five-week remote Arctic expedition. All the training is extremely practical, incorporating real and role-play projects that relate to expedition planning, the delivery of scientific fieldwork, and the safe running of adventure activities in an expedition environment. This presents real opportunities to lead and practice leadership skills – when it actually matters.

#### **What are the outcomes?**

- NVQ Level 3 in Leadership and Management
- Adventure First Aid qualification
- Preparation for Mountain Leader (summer award) training
- Experience in planning and leading activities on expeditions
- Training to the standard required to join the leadership team on a BSES expedition. Successful participants are anticipated to be ready for Assistant Leader or leadership roles on future BSES expeditions





**Comment from Chris Wane, leadership trainee:**

In today's work environment, employers are looking for more than just a degree. They are looking for the proven ability to work as part of a team, and also the potential to lead that team. If going on expeditions is a step towards achieving these skills, then the BSES Leadership Development Expedition is a giant leap. You are exposed constantly to situations that require leadership, with an experienced leadership team that is there to support you through the process of leadership, rather than just doing it themselves. I know of no other programme in which you can learn and apply these skills in such a challenging majestic environment.

**Expedition Destination**

The initial training weekends will take place in the UK and the expedition itself will be run among the glaciers, mountains and fjords of Norway. The wilderness environment offers great challenges, a fantastic range of adventure activities, and awesome scenery, including magnificent fjords, snow-capped mountains, and mesmerizing sunsets. This stunning expedition location has the great advantage of accessibility and low costs, ensuring that the programme is kept as affordable as possible, as part of BSES' commitment to ensuring that it is accessible to potential leaders from all backgrounds.

**Programme Dates:**

- Start of March – applications close
- Late March – introduction week-end, focusing on leadership theory and the NVQ
- June –Mountain training week-end, focusing on practical leadership skills
- July – expedition first aid training week-end and final expedition planning
- Mid-July to mid-August – Arctic Norway expedition
- September – programme wrap-up week-end

**First Training Weekend – theories of leadership and introduction to the NVQ.**

This weekend aims to introduce some of the theories behind differing leadership styles and to provide some basic tools for participants to develop their own techniques of leadership. The structure of the NVQ will be explained, course notes will be distributed, and leaders will explain the work required to gain this qualification.

The weekend will be based around group activities, with practical leadership exercises and team building activities, and investigation of topics such as:

- Understanding leadership
- Balancing leadership challenges and creating self-awareness
- Understanding how individuals can work together
- Emotional intelligence
- Leadership styles
- Expedition leadership
- Wider leadership application

**Second Training Weekend – practical leadership skills for the outdoors.**

The aim of the weekend is to develop practical skills for leading groups in the mountains. Camping in the Lake District, each day will be spent out on the hills practicing the skills required for a leader on an arctic expedition and completing role-play activities that put initiative to the test.



Areas covered will include:

- Giving briefings and instructions
- Logistical and emergency preparations
- Safety checks
- Navigation
- Communications
- Camping and field craft
- Technical mountain leadership skills
- Leading adventurous activities
- Managing major incidents
- Controlling and managing risk
- Contingency planning

### **Third Training Weekend – adventure first aid training and final expedition planning.**

This weekend provides vital first aid awareness and a HSE accredited Wilderness First Aid qualification (16 hours of tuition). This course is tailored specifically to those going to remote environments and uses practical role-play scenarios to bring the theory to life and imbed the skills in the memory.

The weekend also is a chance for participants to exchange information from the expedition planning projects they have been working on, and for the group to work through any last minute preparations.

### **The NVQ**

The NVQ Level 3 is equivalent to an A-level qualification, and is comprised of seven modules that are assessed through observation of the participants behaviour and comments, as well as from written reports of what has been learnt. There are no examinations, and both learning and assessment take a very practical format.

The seven modules:

- Manage your own resources and professional development
- Provide leadership in your area of responsibility
- Develop productive working relationships with colleagues
- Allocate and monitor the progress and quality of your work in your area of responsibility
- Ensure health and safety requirements are met in your area of responsibility
- Provide learning opportunities for colleagues
- Manage a project

A major part of the NVQ assessment is based around the project. Each participant will be given a project at the first training weekend, relating to some area of expedition planning, preparation or execution in the field. A written report has to be completed after the expedition. This involves researching, writing and delivering a briefing and then the training for an expedition critical function eg communications, daily risk assessments, navigation etc.

Some examples are:

- In field communications
- Expedition provisions and supplies
- Travel planning



- Expedition training
- Delivering a science fieldwork project
- Logistical planning and communication
- Safety and risk management
- Reporting and accounting
- Delivering safe adventure activities

Project titles are quite flexible, and suggestions can be made to fit personal preference, and even be made to fit in with ongoing dissertations in a geography or science degree.