

PROCEDURE FOR CORPORATE EVALUATION (with BS 8848 Conformity)

Introduction

The Young Explorers' Trust was formed in 1972, prime amongst its activities being the Approval Scheme for youth expeditions overseas, together with Grant Aid for some expeditions. The YET Approval and Grant Aid Scheme has been in operation now for over 35 years, during which time almost 1500 individual overseas youth expeditions, and many more through corporate evaluations, have had their plans screened by the Trust.

The Trust does not organise expeditions, but offers its skilled services to voluntary youth groups, to schools, to all Venture Providers (voluntary and commercial) of ventures outside the UK, to Scouts / Guides / cadet and other uniformed groups, and to all other groups involved in providing challenging and adventurous ventures outside the UK.

In 2007 with the publication of the British Standard BS 8848 – *a specification for the provision of visits, fieldwork, expeditions and adventurous activities outside the UK* – YET re-structured its approval in line with this standard to enable providers of such ventures to demonstrate conformity to BS 8848 through the YET approval scheme.

In 2009, the British Standard was revised and YET adjusted its procedures. Whilst continuing to evaluate individual ventures, YET introduced evaluation, on a corporate basis, to enable providers to demonstrate conformance with BS 8848. Although YET evaluates the administration and management systems of the Venture Provider, that Provider has to self assess all ventures it provides and 'self declare' that they conform to BS 8848. The declaration of "other party assessment" provided to a successful applicant by YET is normally valid for 36 months; however interim checks are conducted to validate conformity during this time. This corporate procedure is explained in more detail below. The evaluation of a single venture is described in a separate document "Evaluation of Individual Venture Plans - Procedure".

The Trust's role is to examine, advise on, and approve (or otherwise) the conformity of a provider to BS 8848. The Trust can accept no responsibility for the plans or outcome of any part of an individual 'self assessed' venture.

The following notes relate to the Evaluation procedure for corporate conformity to BS 8848.

Definitions

For the purposes of the YET Evaluation Scheme the following terms and definitions apply:

Venture Provider	an individual or organisation having overall responsibility (as delegated to it by the Sponsoring Authority) for all aspects, of a venture. There can be only one Venture Provider for any one venture.
Third Party	any Provider of one or more contracted services to the Venture Provider
Venture Leader	the individual taking overall responsibility for all or a pre-determined period of a venture, and the nominated representative of the Venture Provider for this venture outside the UK.
Leadership Team	the team, including the Venture Leader, of leaders and activity specialists approved by the Venture Provider to deliver a venture.
Trainee Leader	a person learning the skills of leadership under the close supervision of an assigned member of the Leadership Team.
Participant	a person taking part in a venture, but not a member of the Leadership Team nor a Trainee Leader.
Direct Supervision	supervision where a venture leader manages the participants during all or part of the venture with the ability to intervene in person immediately.
Indirect Supervision	supervision where a venture leader manages participants during all or part of the venture without the ability to intervene in person immediately.
RAMS	a system by which a venture is assessed and managed to ensure the safety and well-being of all members on a venture and which encompasses all aspects of the Risk Analysis and Safety Management process. <i>NB: "Risk Analysis" is also known as "Risk Assessment".</i>
Threat Analysis	a written analysis of any present threat in the destination country including security, political, health and natural hazards.
Home Agent	the Venture Provider's point of contact within the UK.
Stakeholder	a person with an interest in an overseas venture.
Competent person	someone who has the necessary and sufficient training, knowledge, experience, expertise and/or other qualities to complete their allotted task safely and effectively.
Personal Time	time during a venture when an activity is not being undertaken but participants remain under the supervision of the Leadership Team.
Down Time	period of time, occurring within the overall duration of a venture, identified by agreement between the venture provider and participant prior to the commitment to participation, as being beyond the jurisdiction of the venture provider. <i>NB: "Down Time" shall <u>not</u> occur on a venture with participants who are under 18.</i>

Evaluation criteria

The underlying principle is that the provision will be for ventures that take place outside the UK or home country of the venture provider.

The organisation wishing to claim conformity with BS 8848 for the ventures it provides (i.e. the Venture Provider) is accountable for all aspects, including safety, of ventures provided either on a voluntary basis or in return for payment. Responsibility for providing constituent elements may be delegated, i.e. third party provision, but overall accountability for ensuring conformance with BS 8848 remains with the Venture Provider.

YET anticipates that a provider shall be engaged in the supply of ventures that have the provision of personal development opportunities for the participants as their aim. This shall include, but not exclusively, 'adventure tourism' and must have one or more specific objectives drawn from scientific fieldwork, physical challenge and adventure or, a community or environmental project.

YET has considerable experience in assessing the plans for the provision of ventures for people aged 14 to 25 but it may also evaluate conformity to BS 8848 for providers who also operate with a wider age range.

Any Venture Provider may apply for YET Evaluation to demonstrate conformity with BS 8848. YET is able to advise any Venture Provider that seeks its help, but YET cannot be held responsible for that advice and whether, or not, it is followed in the provision of ventures.

Note: *It is a requirement of conformity that the Venture Provider possesses and operates to the current BS 8848 specification. Relevant staff shall have a working knowledge of the current BS 8848 specification and its application to their specific role.*

Operation of the Evaluation Scheme

1. The YET Board of Trustees shall appoint one of its number to act as Evaluations Liaison Trustee with responsibility to oversee all affairs relating to Evaluation and to liaise as necessary with the Evaluations Co-ordinator to provide guidance, advice and assistance.
2. The Council of The Young Explorers' Trust shall appoint an officer of the Trust as Evaluations Co-ordinator to manage all affairs relating to YET Evaluation, to co-ordinate the work of all involved, and to ensure that the Evaluations Liaison Trustee is at all times fully briefed on current matters relating to Evaluation.
3. Venture Providers seeking to demonstrate conformity with BS 8848 shall submit, electronically [evaluations@theyet.org] to the Evaluations Co-ordinator, an application form currently in the format of a workbook [**“YET Corporate Conformity Workbook – BS8848:2014”**] and data forms [**“YET Sample Venture data form”**] to be completed for each YET selected sample venture. Both documents, in electronic format, can be obtained directly from the Evaluations Co-ordinator who can also provide advice if this presents problems.
4. Applications, fully documented, should be submitted at soon as possible and not later than 21 days before the agreed date for the initial evaluation interview (see “When to apply” below).

Note: *YET encourages providers to register their intent to submit an application as early as possible to assist in arranging the schedule of interviews. YET fully acknowledges that it takes time to complete the application and to assemble the*

required documentation, but early notice will be of benefit to all concerned in arranging interview dates.

5. The Evaluations Co-ordinator will carry out an initial assessment of the application and may forward the plans for comment to a selection of experienced and YET approved assessors. After further consideration the Evaluations Co-ordinator may request additional information and supportive documents from the Venture Provider in order to enable an Evaluation interview to proceed.
6. The YET Evaluation Service, as a body providing external validation, has aligned its evaluation scheme to conform to the higher requirement of an accrediting body with BS/ISO/IEC 17021, that has auditing of BS 8848 within its scope.
7. Evaluation Panels are always led by a BSI/EN/ISO 9001:2008 trained and certificated Quality Management Systems Lead Auditor; other Panel members are likewise certified, or if not, are conversant with and practiced in the ISO 9001 standard's auditing procedures.
8. Panel members are drawn from competent persons who have offered their voluntary services to YET and who, between them, possess a wide knowledge of all aspects of ventures outside the UK, including organisation, management and leadership.
9. The Evaluation interview will be by a YET Evaluation Panel that shall normally consist of at least two people. It remains the right of YET to allow named observers to attend an Evaluation interview.
10. The Evaluations Co-ordinator shall inform the Venture Provider of the names and background of the Panel members. All Panel members are drawn from competent persons who have offered their voluntary services to YET and who, between them, possess a wide knowledge of all aspects of ventures outside the UK, including organisation, management and leadership. They have significant experience in overseas expeditions, including some who continue to lead, organise and run overseas expeditions. Both YET and the Venture Provider must declare any known association of a Panel member with that Provider. If the Venture Provider requests that a named panel member is replaced a reason must be given.
11. All Panel members undertake to respect appropriate professional confidentiality and not to use information obtained in the course of evaluations for their own gain or the gain of other organisations, with which they are linked, and to respect the commercial interests of the organisations under evaluation.
12. The Panel will meet with the nominated representatives of the Venture Provider at a time, date and place as agreed. The Evaluations Co-ordinator will confirm the arrangements for the interview with the Venture Provider.
13. To demonstrate conformity with BS 8848, as evaluated by YET as an other party assessor (see standard clause 8), the administration and management systems of the provider must demonstrably ensure that all ventures provided are to agreed and declared levels of safety appropriate to the needs and abilities of participants and within the competence and the experience of the Leadership Team.
14. There are two main elements of the Evaluation:
 - Assessment of the providers business processes, conducted via interview with senior management. The interview Panel will consider all aspects of the provision as detailed in the application workbook and supporting documents.
 - Testing of the application of the business processes by reference to sample ventures independently selected by YET, as well as through dialogue with those representing the Venture Provider.

15. The Panel will be concerned to determine if the organization's processes include any 'major', or 'minor', nonconformities to BS 8848. A major nonconformity would automatically require the Panel to determine that the organization had failed in its objective to achieve the requirements of BS 8848. Individual minor nonconformities would not lead, in themselves, to rejection by the Panel. However, were these to indicate a pattern of significant nonconformity in any area covered by BS 8848, or be too numerous to leave the Panel satisfied as to the reliable quality of the organization, rejection could result. The organization is required to undertake corrective action regarding all minor nonconformities within timescales determined by the Panel.
16. During the course of the Evaluation, the Panel may also note 'Observations'. These are not to be considered as nonconformities and are not, in themselves, prejudicial in any way to the organization's standing regarding conformity to BS 8848. They are intended as comments based on the Panel's experience that may be of assistance to the organization in further developing its strategy regarding BS 8848, or possibly pointers to matters for the organization to keep under review in case circumstances change, and where a situation might arise in consequence that could lead to a nonconformity of some form in the future.
17. The Evaluation is intended to provide the organization with an opportunity to consider, and possibly continually improve, the quality and effectiveness of its processes, both real and as may be perceived by clients and other interested parties.
18. The outcome of the evaluation will be one of the following:
 - **Conformity:** all aspects of the provision reach the required specification of BS 8848. Although the Panel may make observations for possible ways to improve the participants' experience; it is not mandatory for the venture provider to follow these.
 - **Conformity subject to corrective actions:** timescales will be defined by the Panel for completing corrective actions against minor non conformity, together with the means by which these will be assessed.
 - **Rejection:** the provision has shortfalls at the time of the interview which are considered by the Panel not to comply with BS 8848. Conformity can only be gained through a complete resubmission.
19. In the case of rejection, the Venture Provider will be given the reasons for the decision.
20. Payment of the evaluation fee in full, immediately, shall still apply in the case of rejection.
21. In all cases of rejection, no further consideration will be given to that application. If the provider wishes to proceed with YET approval of conformance then a new application must be made and a new full fee paid.
22. Once the above process has been completed the Panel, through The Evaluations Co-ordinator, will submit their proposed decision to the Evaluations Liaison Trustee for confirmation. Only in exceptional circumstances will the proposal of the Panel be overruled.
23. After the decision of the Panel is confirmed by the Evaluations Liaison Trustee, the Evaluations Co-ordinator will communicate that decision in writing (along with the Panel's report) to the Venture Provider. This is normally within a fortnight of the date of the Panel meeting. An 'Other Party Declaration of Conformity' together with an Approval logo image that may be used in Presentations will be forwarded to the Provider and YET will display this information about the Venture provider on its web site. No other YET logo shall be used to demonstrate conformity to BS8848, nor is it appropriate to use the BSI Kitemark.

24. Any reasons for rejection will be conveyed in writing by the Evaluations Co-ordinator to the Venture Provider, normally within a fortnight of the date of the Panel interview.
25. Ultimately, the Council of The Young Explorers' Trust holds the right and responsibility of confirming or rejecting the decision of the Panel, as confirmed by the Evaluations Liaison Trustee, or against that decision should the Trustee over-ride the proposal of the Panel.
26. Should the Venture Provider wish to appeal against the decision as conveyed by the Evaluations Co-ordinator, then appeal may be made to the Chairman of The Young Explorers' Trust through the Evaluations Co-ordinator.
27. A copy of the outcome of the Evaluation interview, including any observations and requirements, given to the Venture Provider will be retained confidentially in the YET archives.
28. Interim checks of holders of Corporate Conformity are usually held at the end of the first and second years of tenure. The purpose is to confirm that no changes of corporate management or operational matters have occurred that would negate the continued award the statement of Conformity. The reviews are undertaken by Panel interview and review of relevant documentation. Should the Provider fail to satisfy the Panel of its continued Conformity, the existing 'Other Party Declaration of Conformity' will be withdrawn by YET.

How to apply

1. Intention to apply for BS 8848 conformity should be registered with the Evaluations Co-ordinator as soon as possible.
2. The application workbook "**YET Corporate Conformity Workbook – BS8848:2014**" and forms for the specific sample ventures "**YET Sample Venture data form**" can be obtained by direct request to the Evaluations Co-ordinator [evaluations@theyet.org]. Both the workbook and data form are in Word tabular format to allow further information to be inserted.
3. The completed application, with any necessary documents and other attachments, should be returned by email to the Evaluations Co-ordinator.
4. Please ensure that **all sections are completed** so as to avoid delay or rejection. Details may be updated, by email, at any time between the application and the interview, or with appropriate notification, and agreement with the Evaluations Co-ordinator, at the time of the interview. If an application is so short of detail that the evaluation process cannot commence, then the Venture Provider will be contacted to this effect by the Evaluations Co-ordinator.

When to apply

Venture Providers should apply as early as possible, and preferably after initial registration of the intent to apply. Opportunity to update plans will be given prior to, or at, the evaluation interview.

Providers are encouraged to register their intent to seek Evaluation as early as possible. A mutually convenient date will be agreed upon. Applications and documentation shall be received at least 21 days prior to the evaluation date.

Although it is possible for YET to accept later applications, this remains at the discretion of the Evaluations Co-ordinator in consultation with the Evaluations Liaison Trustee.

Application fee

The total Corporate Evaluation Fee is normally due immediately following completion of the Initial Evaluation. However, YET at its sole discretion, may permit the spread of payment in installments over the three year period for which conformity normally applies. The initial installment is due immediately on completion of the Initial Evaluation, subsequent installments will be invoiced annually on the anniversary of the Initial Evaluation. The basis for the fee installments will remain fixed at the level operating at the time of the Initial Evaluation.

Details of the current scales of fees "**YET Schedule of fees for evaluations**" are provided on the YET web site. However, fees may be revised at any time; therefore please confirm the exact level of the fee applicable with the Evaluations Co-ordinator.