

Wilderness Education Association

CERTIFIED OUTDOOR EDUCATOR

The Certified Outdoor Educator (COE) credential recognizes the professional qualifications of individuals who work in programs that provide structured training and assessment/evaluation in outdoor leadership development. These professionals are committed to excellence and have proven ability to deliver quality outdoor leadership experiences. In addition, COEs have also demonstrated proficiency to educate, evaluate, and assess outdoor leadership training and development experiences based on the 6+1 standards. The COE is critical to the training and recognition of WEA Certified Outdoor Leaders (COL).

The WEA 6+1 is a focused, standards-based curriculum in the overarching areas of: 1) judgment and decision-making, 2) outdoor living 3) education, 4) leadership, 5) risk management, 6) trip planning/logistics, and 7) environmental integration. All of the training and certification programs of the WEA are grounded in the 6+1 curriculum. The comprehensive nature of the curriculum coupled with the competencies required to obtain the COE credential in the aforementioned 6+1 areas increases the COE's professional recognition in the outdoor industry.

GAINING CERTIFICATION

There are two paths to certification. Certification through an accredited organization or through a professional path. Regardless of the path chosen, the COE must maintain membership with the WEA at the highest level and maintain medical training appropriate for the specific context and setting.

WEA Accredited Organization Path

1. Satisfactory completion of accredited program
2. Candidate prepares an online Foliotek portfolio, including at minimum:
 - a. Résumé
 - b. Wilderness Experience Inventory or other trip log
 - c. Recommendation Letter
 - d. Completion of a minimum of 100 days in the field (refer to fieldwork requirements)
3. Certifying Examiner approves the portfolio



Professional Path

1. Submission of COE application
2. WEA Training: Completion of COE Clinic
3. Minimum Fieldwork: Completion of 100 days (refer to fieldwork requirements)
4. Foliotek™ portfolio:

Required submission including the following:

 - a. Résumé
 - b. One recommendation letter from current supervisor
 - c. Wilderness Experience Inventory or other Trip Log
 - d. Introductory Cover Letter
 - i. Personally written, discussing who you are and why you are/would like to be an outdoor professional
 - e. Wilderness Education Philosophy Statement
 - i. How do you view wilderness education?
 - ii. What do you view as your role within the outdoor education community?
 - f. Artifacts: Submit artifacts equivalent to 100 points in all 7 educational components (total of 700 points). See *Standards, Artifacts, and Point Value Chart* for more information.
5. The Certified Outdoor Educator credential is not valid without medical training appropriate for the specific context and setting.

APPLICATION PROCESS

1. Enrollment Fee \$30 (waived for students/faculty/staff in accredited organizations)
 - a. Fee includes one-year access to Foliotek™
 - b. Consultation with advisor regarding timeline and feasibility of earning COE within 1-year
2. Begin portfolio artifacts upload
3. Attend a COE clinic
4. Portfolio Review
5. Upon successful completion of requirements, remit certification fee of \$275.
6. Maintain professional level of membership
7. Maintenance:
 - a. Initial certification period is 3 years. 5 years thereafter.
 - b. Complete continuing education credits during applicable certification period.



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FIELDWORK REQUIREMENT

Minimum 100 nights of field experience in leadership, training, or as Leader-in-Training in an outdoor program. The field work requirement for eligibility to become a COE is 100 field days in a leadership, training, or Leader-in-Training role. The following table describes the composition breakdown of the 100 field days. All fieldwork should be documented in a field log, wilderness experience inventory, or similar document that can be uploaded to a Foliotek™ portfolio

| Day | Description |
|-----------|--|
| 30 days | Instruction in a field week - 6 consecutive days or longer |
| 0-70 days | Instruction on Multi-day experiences (two or more consecutive field days or longer) |
| 0-21 days | Instruction on Technical Skills/Single Day Experiences (Leading/teaching technical skill/activity, i.e. rock climbing, ski/snowboard, etc.) Up to 7 days of Challenge Course facilitation may be counted in this category. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 6 hours of instruction = 1 Field Day• 3 hours of instruction = ½ Day |

COE CLINIC

The COE Clinic is an approximately 20 hour course designed to equip participants with the tools and resources to incorporate WEA Educational Components into outdoor leadership training programs. In addition, emphasis is given to the process for conducting OLTC and COL courses including:

- Administrative procedures, costs, course creation/reporting and certification maintenance
- Introducing participants to the WEA
- Review ways to facilitate meaningful LOD experiences
- Review assessment tools for 360 evaluation
- Required documentation expectations for COL/OLTC students
- Sample course outline and curriculum for COL/OLTC
- Review of scope of practice of COL/OLTC
- Practice Teaching/Best Practices

Applicants can expect to participate in teaching during the clinic. The Clinic is also an opportunity for professionals to share ideas and collaborate with other instructors.



MAINTAINING CERTIFICATION

- Initial certification for 3 years, then a 5 year cycle thereafter.
- Recertification application and documentation must be complete and submitted within the 3 to 5 year certification period.
- Current professional level WEA membership.
- Recertification fee
- Foliotek™ portfolio and Field Log maintained and up to date
- Earn 80 hours of general continuing education (options listed below), with at least 10 hours in each educational component
- Documented 20 professional field days annually (Initially 60 minimum total during the 3 year period, then 100 field nights during the 5 year periods - one 5 night experience is required per each 3 or 5 year cycle - uploaded into Foliotek™)
- Document in Foliotek™ 20 professional field days annually. One 5 night experience is required during at least one year of each 3 or 5 year cycle.
- Maintain medical training appropriate for the setting



STANDARDS, ARTIFACTS, AND POINT VALUES

Everyone's portfolio will include different artifacts. Accredited Organization will have slightly different requirements for what is required for portfolio review which should be clearly outlined in a document available at that organization. If you have any questions about what you will be required to submit in your Foliotek portfolio, please ask your program's Certifying Examiner (CE). The following table is intended for those pursuing a professional path towards certification but may also be useful for individuals enrolled in an accredited organization.

RATIONALE

The COE is qualified in the following components personally, but can also educate, evaluate, and assess others in each area. The COE Professional Path provides an avenue for existing professionals

to showcase their ability to educate, evaluate, and assess. Ideally, existing professionals would need to create very little new material to complete this credential, but would simply gather documents from trainings, courses, and lessons they are already teaching and students they already evaluate.

ARTIFACT SELECTION GUIDELINES

- Priority should be given to artifacts in the required categories first.
- Artifacts should be a reflection of your own individual or collective professional or scholarly work. Please indicate when you are submitting documents that are representative of a combined effort.
- Provide an introductory document for each educational component that briefly outlines the artifacts selected.
- The Optional Artifact Description table provides general categories for consideration when selecting and submitting artifacts.
- An additional table is provided for each of the 6+1 educational components highlighting artifacts germane to that particular educational component. Each artifact beyond those that are required are worth 10 points each.
- You may submit artifacts not captured in those identified in the tables below.

COMPONENTS

Optional Artifact Descriptions

- Judgment & Decision-Making
- Outdoor Living
- Leadership
- Environmental Integration
- Trip Planning & Logistics
- Leadership
- Risk Management
- Education
- Field Work Requirement

CATEGORIES

REQUIRED

All four categories of artifacts must be submitted for every component for a total of 100 points

OPTIONAL CATEGORIES FOR ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE

Additional evidence/artifacts for each component that complete 100 point requirement (10 points per artifact)

WEA 6+1
We have standards.



REQUIRED AND OPTIONAL ARTIFACTS

| Required Artifact Type | Required Artifact Description | Point Value |
|---|---|----------------------------|
| Curriculum Development & Teaching | Lessons or course components developed and implemented related to each educational component (6+1). Syllabi/outline/agenda/etc. Must be provided with relevant components highlighted. Lessons/course components documents can be associated with academic courses, staff training, and/or field courses. | 30 |
| Assessment & Evaluation | Assessment/evaluation tools used to provide feedback relevant to component <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Copies/examples of evaluations completed for students who participated in the lesson/course component above. Minimum of 4 field/training evaluations must be submitted for each component in order to receive point value. | 30 |
| Certification & Training | Certificate of Completion(s) - (if available) Certificates and/or transcripts of any kind: diplomas, NOLS, LNT, staff training, etc. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Include only certificates relevant to the specific component or components 20 points is both the minimum and maximum value, regardless of the number of certifications an applicant may hold Examples noted under each component below If no certification/ certificate of completion exists for a component the difference in point value should be made up for through additional artifact submissions | 20 (unless noted below) |
| Additional Evidence | Additional Evidence/Artifacts for each component that complete 100 point requirement (10 points per artifact) | |
| Optional Artifact Type* | Optional Artifact Description | Point Value |
| Internship Supervision | Supervision of an intern that includes professional development and training in areas of educational component that results in documented artifacts and field time toward COL competencies for the intern. | 10 |
| Continuing Education (Formal) | Continuing Education includes participation in professional workshops, conferences, and other formal programs directly related to the educational components (Maximum of 3 stand alone experiences per component). These continuing education experiences are in-person events and involve interaction with a facilitator or instructor. | 10 |
| Continuing Education (Self-Directed) | Continuing Education that is self-directed may include activities like the review and incorporation of new text books and completion of self-directed continuing education courses. These educational experiences are often available online and do not involve interaction with a facilitator or instructor. | 10 |
| Presentations | Presentations made at professional conferences, workshops or programs (10 points per presentation). | 10 |
| Publications | Articles, editorials, professional editing of textbooks, etc., directly related to any of the educational components (Maximum of 1 per component). | 10 |
| Justification, Philosophical and Professional Development Statement | Justification statement is an approximately one page submission that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describes proficiency in a particular educational component Traces professional development, competencies and training Provides any philosophical approaches in program delivery and/or teaching. | 10 |
| Demonstrated Teaching | Video of a 20-minute (minimum) lesson related to an educational component or component | 10 |
| Apprenticeship | Apprentice with a WEA COE for 5 -15 field days (can be counted toward 100 field days and results in artifacts for portfolio development). The number of artifacts varies based on the length of apprenticeship. 10 points for every 5 apprenticeship days, maximum of 30 points | 10 |
| Mentorship | Complete one-year WEA mentorship (off-site internship). Results in artifacts for portfolio development and points towards certification and training in education and one additional (justifiable) component of choice. | 30 |

*The above artifacts may be repeated for each educational component. Please provide explanation and documentation.