

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.

Purpose: The WEA has historically been recognized for training, developing and evaluating outdoor leaders. The COE credential indicates to employers and the general public a level of experience, training and expertise expected of outdoor professionals. In addition, COEs are the individuals who educate, evaluate and assess the Certified Outdoor Leader - the front line staff who provide outdoor adventure/backcountry/wilderness programs in a variety of settings. Therefore, the COE credential also clearly signifies the scope of preparation and standard by which COLs are trained and evaluated.

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.

The ***accreditation path*** involves progression through an Outdoor Educator certification program at an Accredited Organization, including all classroom and field requirements. You can find a list of Accredited Organizations at www.weainfo.org/accredited-programs.

The ***professional path*** to the Certified Outdoor Educator credential is for individuals who are currently working or seeking to work in a professional role in the delivery of education and/or recreation programs based in the outdoors and are unable to enroll in a program at an accredited organization.

COE Paths to Certification

1. WEA Accredited Organization Path

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

2. 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.
 - a. Submission including the following:
 - i. Resume
 - ii. One recommendation letter from current supervisor
 - iii. Wilderness Experience Inventory or other Trip Log
 - iv. Introductory Cover Letter
 1. Personally written, discussing who you are and why you are/would like to be an outdoor professional
 - v. Wilderness Education Philosophy Statement
 1. How do you view wilderness education?
 2. What do you view as your role within the outdoor education community?
 - b. **Artifacts:** Submit artifacts equivalent to 100 points in all 7 educational components (total of 700 points). See Page 5 for more information and explanation of artifacts.
 - c. The Certified Outdoor Educator credential is not valid without medical training appropriate for the specific context and setting.

Application: www.weainfo.org/COE application (goes live on Dec 1, 2018)

Sequence of the 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 (see Page 5 for more information and explanation of artifacts)
3. Attend 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.

Fieldwork Requirement

The field work requirement for a COE is 100 field days. The following table describes the field work categories and description. All fieldwork should be documented in a field log, wilderness experience inventory, or similar document that can be uploaded to their Foliotek portfolio.

Category	Description
Field Week	A field week is 6 consecutive field days or longer.
Multi-Day	Field experiences that are two or more consecutive field days.

Technical Skills Instruction	Leading or teaching a technical skill/activity (rock climbing, ski, snowboard, etc.). 6 hrs of instruction = 1 Field Day
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Quick Glance

Criteria	Certified Outdoor Educator
Target Audience	Program directors, university faculty, full-time staff, staff trainers, owner/operators of outdoor programs
Objectives	Demonstrate emerging mastery of student learning outcomes 8.0-9.6; Competency in 10.0 Assessment and Evaluation
Minimum Fieldwork	Minimum 100 nights of field experience in leadership, training, or as Leader-in-Training in an outdoor program
Curriculum Delivery Structure	Accredited Program or Professional Path
Curriculum Content	Learning Outcomes 8.0-10.0 Assessment and Evaluation
Medical Qualifications	The Certified Outdoor Educator credential is not valid without medical training appropriate for the specific context and setting.
Foliotek Portfolio	Artifact upload required
Assessment	Comprehensive evaluation of 8.0-10.0 Assessment and Evaluation within the 6+1 standards. Peer Review of Portfolio
Outcome	Certified Outdoor Educator credential
Certification Fees	\$30 Application Fee Either: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$125 (Accreditation Path) OR • \$275 (Professional Path) Maintain WEA Professional Membership
Scope of Practice	Conduct OLTC and COL courses
Maintenance (includes renewal and/or expiration)	Document a minimum of 20 professional days annually Maintain WEA membership Maintain foliotek portfolio (audited annually) Maintain medical qualifications Acquire continuing education units within recertification cycle (Initially 3 years, 5 year thereafter)

COE Clinic

The COE Clinic is an approximately 20 hr 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 (standard powerpoint with mission, vision, certification levels, meet the board, familiarize with organization/committees, etc.)
- 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.

Certification Maintenance

- 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 nights annually (Initially 60, then 100 field nights - which includes 1, 5 night experience - uploaded into Foliotek)
- Maintain medical training appropriate for the setting
- Maintain a minimum of 200 hours part time outdoor education work within 3/5 years - submitted via Foliotek.

Standards, Artifacts, and Point Value Chart

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.

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

Required Artifact Type	Required Artifact Description	POINTS
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 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. 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. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Include only certificates relevant to the specific component or components b. 20 points is both the minimum and maximum value, regardless of the number of certifications an applicant may hold c. Examples noted under each component below d. 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 (<i>unless noted below</i>)
Additional Evidence	Additional Evidence/Artifacts for each component that complete 100 point requirement (10 points per artifact)	

Optional categories for additional evidence – additional evidence/artifacts for each component that complete 100 point requirement (10 points per artifact)

Optional Artifact Type	Optional Artifact Description	Points
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	A 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.

Additional component specific artifacts to consider for each component are available in the [Supplemental Guide to Artifact Selection](#).