



HANDBOOK & SYLLABUS

**Gorge & Ghyll Leader Award
(GGL)**

Contents

Page 3 - Aims of Awards
Page 4 - Confines & Remit of Awards
Prerequisites prior to attending a training course
Page 5 – Prerequisites prior to attending assessment
Course Registration with UK Canyon Guides
Stages of Scheme
Page 7 – Stages of assessment
Training Courses
First Aid
Consolidation Period
Page 8 - Assessment
Page 9 - Assessment Outcomes
Page 10 - Stipulation of Award
Ratios
Page 11 - Log Books
Page 12 - UKCG Canyon Guide & Gorge Leader Ratings
Page 13 - Membership to UKCG
Page 15 – Syllabus
Page 19 - APL/Exemptions
Page 20 - Assessment Marking Scale
Page 21 - Assessment Skills Sheet
Page 22 - Working with Under 18's
Page 24 - Revalidation
Complaints, Appeals and Restrictions
Page 25 - Administration
Training Centres
Acknowledgements
Sample Course Programmes

Handbook & Syllabus of the Gorge & Ghyll Leader Award (GGL)

There has been a long history of Ghyll & Gorge Walking in outdoor centres across the UK, and now many commercial companies, charities and other organisations are providing trips to their clients.

With a rapid increase in interest in the sport, UKCG has been formed to provide a resource for professional guides and enthusiasts all over the UK, and to provide training, assessment and information in the current best practices to recreational and professional guides alike.

As a non-profit making organisation, all membership fees are used to develop and increase awareness of the sport within the UK.

We Aim to:-

- Provide comprehensive training and assessment courses giving the industry a structured and usable scheme
- Provide rigging solutions for canyons.
- Bring together the UK Canyoning, Gorge & Ghyll community.
- Provide technical advice to outdoor companies.
- Organise workshops and meets.
- Create an online canyon, gorge and ghyll guide.
- Develop awareness of the sport across the UK.
- Develop an awareness of the fragile environments we visit.

Aims of Awards

To promote best practice for Canyon, Gorge and Ghyll leadership within the UK. Successful performance during assessment indicates that the candidate has the skill level required to lead groups in appropriate locations within the Gorge/Ghyll leader grading system.

The Gorge & Ghyll Leader Award will provide a training & assessment scheme for individuals who wish to take responsibility for others in the Gorge/Ghyll environment.

This will benefit Instructors, freelance instructors, managers and employers who wish to ensure a high standard of safety and expertise in this open environment.

The award will also serve as a valuable training opportunity for those who wish to visit venues for recreation.

Confines & remit of the award

The remit a Gorge Ghyll Leader may operate in is a maximum grade of 2B. Please see UKCG Canyon & Gorge/Ghyll Leader Ratings.

Terrain/Technical Rope Work

2 - Basic Canyoning / Gorge Walking / Gill Scrambling

Scrambling, easy vertical or near vertical climbing and/or down-climbing requiring frequent use of hands. Rope recommended for hand lines, belays, lowering packs and possible emergency use. Travel is possible up or down canyon. See route description for more information.

Water Volume & Current

B – Normally has water with moderate current. Water hazards - small hydraulics which require caution.

Before using your selected venue –

- You must have visited the site you wish to use at least 3 times in a variety of conditions and water levels.
- Be current with the site.
- Have completed an onsite risk assessment for the venue you wish to use.

Prerequisites prior to attending a training course

- Candidates will need to be physically fit to attend the course to take part in all parts of the training and assessment.
- Candidates must be confident to operate and swim in cold water
- Candidates must be over 18 years
- Candidates must have logged 10 personal exploration trips, in at least 3 different venues. It would also be an advantage at this stage to have experience of assisting and/or managing a group in this environment.
- Candidates must be proficient with the pre-learning documents, available from the UKCG website

Prerequisites prior to attending assessment

- Complete action plan, provided by your trainer
- Minimum of 20 personal trips in numerous venues before presenting for assessment
- Minimum of 20 trips in a leadership role
- Take an active role within a White Water Safety & Rescue Course (UKCG, Rescue 3 or British Canoeing).
- Minimum of 2 day (16 hours) first aid – To be completed every 3 years, this must remain current for UKCG qualification to remain valid
- Hold membership with UKCG.

Equipment; Candidates should have personal and group equipment appropriate to the environment. Course directors will ensure that there is a selection of equipment on offer if required.

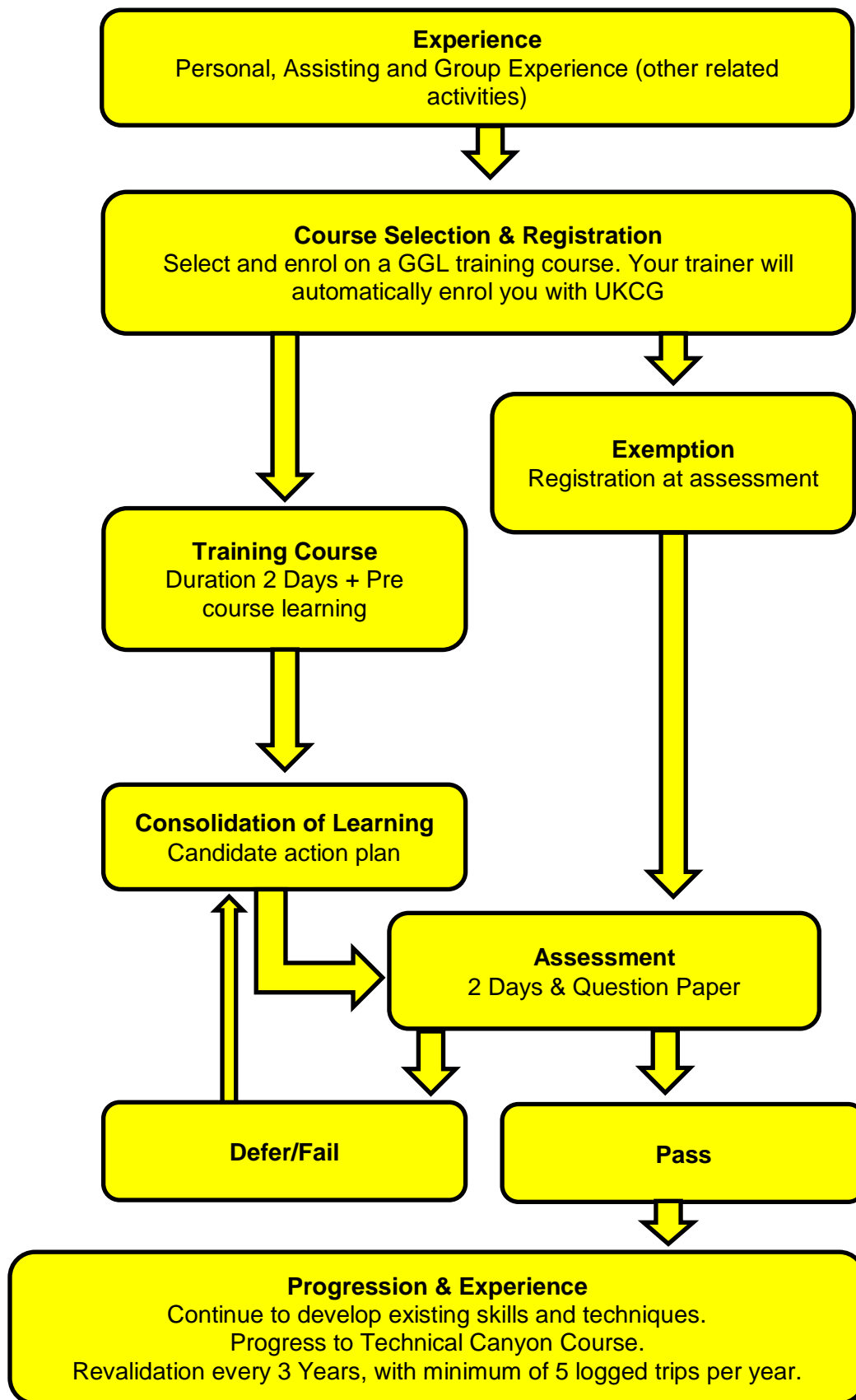
Course Registration with UK Canyon Guides

Registration to UK Canyon Guides will be completed on your behalf when attending training or assessment. The cost of this is covered by the trainer/assessor fees when they register your space on the desired training or assessment course with UKCG.

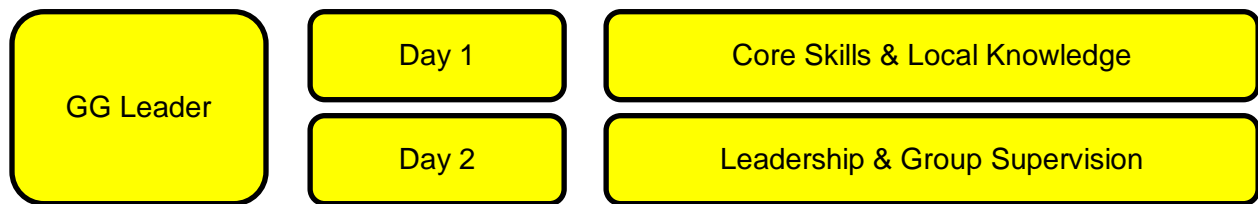
This registration will cover any office administration, postage and certification at the central office.

Stages of Scheme

- Gain experience - Personal & Group Experience.
- Course Selection.
- Training Course - minimum of 2 days & pre-course learning.
- Consolidation of training course experience.
- Assessment Course - 2 days.
- Progression & Experience - Continue to develop existing skills and techniques.
- Revalidation every 3 years.



Stages of Assessment



Training Courses

To achieve the GGL Award, candidates are required to attend a training course of a minimum of two days (plus pre-course learning). An individual action plan will be provided by your trainer to assist you in your development. The candidate can proceed to assessment.

First Aid Course (pre-requisite for assessment)

Minimum of 2 day (16 hours) first aid – To be completed every 3 years, this must remain current for UKCG qualification to remain valid.

Consolidation Period

An individual action plan will be provided by your trainer to assist you in your development.



Assessment

A two-day assessment is required to complete the Gorge Ghyll Leader Award. The assessment will cover personal skills, local knowledge, group leadership & supervision.

Day 1- will take place at a venue selected by the assessor and will include a written paper which you will receive prior to your assessment day.

Day 2-

On this day, the candidate will be assessed leading a group of no less than 4 people and deliver a short presentation (no longer than 10 minutes) on a topic selected by the assessor. You will receive the topic prior to your assessment day.

The group being supervised can be sourced by either the assessor or candidate on assessment.

By the end of the assessment process you will have been observed by two assessors, one for each day.

Assessment Outcome

The candidate's assessment will result in either one of the following outcomes, Pass, Defer or Fail

Pass

The candidate has consistently demonstrated a strong performance in all techniques and skills.

- A high and consistent level of good judgment with respect to safety and objectives is shown.
- The candidate is comfortable in a leadership role and has sufficient energy to meet the needs of the client.

Defer

If you have been given an assessment outcome of defer, this means that one or more of the areas demonstrated at assessment has not yet reached the required standard.

Your assessor will discuss and provide feedback in the areas where improvement is required. This would also be a useful time to create and action plan with an achievable time scale.

A re assessment will be required in the areas raised.

Your assessor may be able to recommend a suitable mentor.

Fail

- The candidate makes a major error (or is stopped in the process of making a major error) which has potentially life threatening ramifications, or seriously compromises objectives.
- The candidate chronically makes mistakes of a lesser magnitude.
- The candidate has little energy for client needs.

If the result fail has been presented, your assessor will discuss and assist you in generating an action plan to continue your journey to assessment. This would also be a useful time to create an action plan with an achievable time scale.

Your assessor may be able to recommend a suitable mentor.

Stipulations of award - revalidation

On successful completion of the assessment the candidate will hold the GGL Award.

The award will last for 3 years and is conditional to the candidate holding a valid first aid certificate and maintaining active. Candidates are then required to attend an update day once every 3 years, they are to supply a log book which demonstrates a minimum level of current competency.

The award is only valid when accompanied with public liability insurance and a current first aid certificate.

Instructor Ratios

Gorge/Ghyll Leader: 1 Leader: Maximum 12 Clients

UKCG have set a maximum ratio. It is the responsibility of the employer to select a suitable ratio for a chosen venue, as there are a large number of variables which can impact the selected ratio. E.g Group Ability, Weather Conditions, Grade/Rating of the venue etc.

Training Courses: 1 Trainer: 8 Candidates

Assessment Courses: 1 Assessor: 4 Candidates (with a group size of 4+)



Logbooks

Logbooks are a useful tool to help demonstrate and prove your past and current experience throughout your career. They will be required before attending any training or assessment course, to allow your trainer/assessor to focus the course to your requirements.

Any experience gained should be recorded in the logbook with new entries consisting of

- Date
- Location
- Name of Canyon, Gorge or Ghyll
- Your role – Personal Exploration, Group Leader, Solo trip, Assistant Leader
- Any other useful comments, this might include weather conditions, specific hazards etc

The logbook can be in any format you choose however templates are available from the UKCG website and could be held in paper format or electronic copy (Electronic copies are preferred).

UK Canyon Guide
Experience Record/Log book



Date	Region & Location	Canyon, Gorge or Ghyll	Role (Leader, Assistant or personal exploration)	Comments

UKCG Canyon & Gorge/Leader Ratings

The core format of the UKCG Canyon Rating System includes two digits. The first digit is numeric and represents the values described below related to terrain and rope work. The second digit is an alpha character representing the values described below related to water volume and current. Additional values may be added to represent relative risk and time/commitment.

Ratings are cumulative

For example: descending a Class 3 canyon will require the skills listed under Class 3, as well as those listed under Classes 1 and 2.

NOTE: Ratings refer to descents in normal conditions, during what is considered the normal season for the canyon. Adverse conditions, such as higher than normal water volume or colder temperatures, will increase the difficulty of the descent.

TERRAIN / TECHNICAL ROPE WORK

1	Gorge Walking and Gill Scrambling
Non-technical; no rope required. May involve some easy scrambling requiring the occasional use of hands for balance and support. Travel is possible up or down canyon. See route description for more information.	
2	Basic Canyoning / Gorge Walking / Gill Scrambling
Scrambling, easy vertical or near vertical climbing and/or down-climbing requiring frequent use of hands. Rope recommended for hand lines, belays, lowering packs and possible emergency use. Travel is possible up or down canyon.	
3	Intermediate Canyoning (Single Pitch Canyon)
Exposed technical climbing. Down-climbing could be difficult and dangerous; most people will rappel. Rope required for belays and single-pitch rappels. Obvious natural or fixed anchors. Access after each pitch is possible.	
4	Advanced-Expert Canyoning
Route may involve any combination of the following: 1) difficult and exposed free climbing and/or down-climbing, 2) climbing using direct aid, 3) multi-pitch rappels, 4) complex rope work (i.e. guided rappels, deviations, rebelays), 5) obscure or indistinct natural anchors, 6) advanced problem-solving and anchor-building skills. See route description for more information.	

WATER VOLUME / CURRENT

A –	Normally has water with light to moderate current. Easy water hazards.
B –	Normally has water with moderate current. Water hazards - small hydraulics which require caution.
C –	Normally has water with very strong current. Dangerous water hazards. Experts only.
D –	Extreme problems and hazards will be difficult to overcome, even for experienced experts with strong swimming skills.

NOTE: Water levels in any canyon can fluctuate greatly from year-to-year, season-to-season, even day-to-day. If, upon arrival at a canyon, you discover the water volume/current is greater than indicated by the rating, descent/ascent will be more difficult than suggested by the route description.

It will be necessary to re-evaluate your decision to use the selected venue.

Membership to UK Canyon Guides

Full Membership - £15 per year

Join UKCG as a full member and get the following benefits:

- Access to the Guidebook and the ability to add to the guidebook
- Equipment discounts
- Access to pre-course learning documents
- Access to our technical pages
- Listing on the Gorge Ghyll Leader & Canyon Guide pages
- Use of Gorge Ghyll Leader & Canyon Guide Logo

Full details on membership is available at

<http://www.canyonguides.org/contact/become-a-member/>



Gorge & Ghyll Leader Award Training Course Syllabus

Day 1 Core Skills & Local Knowledge

1) Pre-Gorge/Ghyll Session Evaluation

Weather, Forecast & Sources

- Interpretation
- Prior, Recent, Expected Rainfall
- Catchment Areas

Weather and its effects

- On the catchment
- Throughout seasons
- Surface
- Reaction Times
- Effects on the body

Gorge/Ghyll Access & Conservation

- Restrictions, Gorge/Ghyll Specific, SSSI
- Awareness
- Local Residents and Public Relations
- Educating Clients

Personal/Group Clothing

- Suitable for venue choice – Dry/Wet
- Wetsuit – Types
- Hoods, Gloves, Footwear & Socks
- Belt

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) Selection

- Mountaineering Helmet
- Water sports Helmet
- Buoyancy Aids
- Harness's

PPE Technical Selection & Suitability

- Rope Type/Slings/Crabs/Pulleys/Throwlines/Reaching Aid/Fixed Aids
- Maintenance/Limitations
- Safety Check – Equipment Monitoring Systems
- Packing Bags

Group/Client Information

- Wants & Needs
- TTPP

- Medical Conditions and/or any limiting factors

Selection of Venue

- Plan B or alternative options
- Guide Book and other information sources online forums

2) Gorge/Ghyll Environment

- Basic Gorge/Ghyll Geology – Surface and Landscape features
- Flora & Fauna
- Development – Previous & Current
- Formations
- Minerals, Deposits
- Rock Types – Sedimentary, Metamorphic, Igneous

3) Emergency – Equipment, Procedures & Risk Assessment

Risk Assessment

- Generic, Site Specific & Daily Assessments
- Dynamic Control Measure Assessment – Risks always remain the same, but we have ability to change the control measure providing a lower consequence.
- Incident Reporting – Accident, Incident & Near Miss
- Incident Reporting to UKCG
- What to carry - First Aid, Group Shelter, Bivi Bag, Knife, Whistle, Mobile Phone, Torch, Flask, Incident Card, Spare Clothing, Food etc

Storage & Transportation

- Rucksack/Canyon Bag
- Dry Bags and Containers (Darren Drums)

4) Hazards

- Jumps, Drops, Climbs & Slides
- Assessing pool depth
- Hydrology
- Flooding reaction and viable tell tales
- Wet, Dry, Loose Rocks & Boulder Chokes
- Entrapment, syphons, strainers, weirs and hydraulics
- Pollution
- Leptospirosis (Weils Disease)
- Remoteness of Venue/Difficulty of Rescue
- Flood Debris

Day 2 - Leadership & Group Supervision

5) Leadership & Group/Client Management

- C.L.A.P – Communication, Line of Sight, Avoidance, Position of maximum usefulness
- Shout, Reach, Throw, Go
- P.O.M.U – Position of maximum usefulness
- Client Observations & Assessing Ability
- Judgment
- Spotting
- Communication – Visual and Audio

6) Incident Management

- First aid / Assessment
- Hypo/Hyperthermia - Awareness
- Flowcharts – Step by step & Plan of action
- Call outs & Overdue issues – Timings

7) Technical Ability

Location of Venue

- Basic Surface Navigation

Movement in Gorge/Ghyll Environment

- Climbing, Running, Bridging, Swimming, Jumping, Sliding

Anchors, Inspection & Selection

- Trees & Types
- Threads
- Glue in & Expansion
- Hangers
- Nut's & Hex's

Fixed Aids

- Chains
- Ropes

Rope Work

- Assisted hand line/hoist
- Life lining
- Life lining using friction
- Short rope/Confidence Roping – without harness
- Lowers – Releasable System
- Tensioned Pool/Deepwater Traverse Lines/In water zip
- Body Belay
- Meat Anchor
- Creating a belay & Sharing Anchors

Knots, Hitch's & Application

- Italian Hitch, Fig 8, Adjustable Butterfly, Overhand, Clove Hitch & Bowline.

Spotting

- Unprotected Climbs, Lowers and Traverses

Fitting a Harness

8) Insurance

Candidates must be aware of any issues affecting their sites and why appropriate insurance should be held

- Public Liability
- Personal Accident
- Professional Indemnity

Accredited Prior Learning

The Accredited Prior Learning process will allow candidates to apply to have any of their existing qualifications or prior learning identified.

UKCG recognise that an individual may have relevant experience or hold a qualification from another discipline which can be transferrable to this environment.

Any exemption will need to be directed to the UKCG secretary, once received the application will be passed to two assessors who will individually reach an outcome and notify the secretary.

The application will need to include;

- Current Log Book
- First Aid Certificate
- White Water Safety & Rescue Certificate
- Reference from a current UKCG Leader, Guide or employer
- Full details of Qualifications or prior learning experience (inc copies)
- Personal Contact details
- Supporting evidence
- The training you wish to apply for exemption/APL

Please note applications, do not automatically grant you with exemption/APL, you will be contacted with the result once your application has been reviewed.

Assessment Marking Scale

The marking scale used is 1 through 4, with 1 being the lowest score and 4 being the highest. Too much detail in marking is simply splitting hairs, when the real question is: “Was the performance Excellent, Good or unacceptable?”

Marks will be based on the following criteria:

Mark	Explanation
4	<p>Pass 4 = Excellent Pass 3 = Good</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The candidate shows consistently strong performance in all techniques and skills. • A high and consistent level of good judgment with respect to safety and objectives is shown.
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The candidate is comfortable in a leadership role and has sufficient energy to meet the needs of the client.
2	<p>Defer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The candidate displays weakness in important techniques, knowledge or experience. • Poor or inconsistent application of guiding techniques or principles is apparent. • Multiple attempts and/or excessive time is required to attain acceptable performance. • The candidate is preoccupied with his/her own needs and has limited energy for the client.
1	<p>Fail</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The candidate makes a major error (or is stopped in the process of making a major error) which has potentially life threatening ramifications, or seriously compromises objectives. • The candidate chronically makes mistakes of a lesser magnitude. • The candidate has little energy for client needs.

Assessment Skills Sheet (Some areas may be covered in question paper)

Module 1 - Personal Skills & Local Knowledge		Mark 1-4
Module 2 – Leadership & Group Supervision		
Pre Gorge/Ghyll Session Evaluation	Weather, Forecast & Source	
	Weather and its effects	
	Gorge/Ghyll Access & Conservation	
	Personal/Group Clothing	
	Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) Selection	
	PPE Technical Selection & Suitability	
	Group/Client Information	
	Selection of Venue	
Gorge/Ghyll Environment	See Syllabus	
Emergency Procedures	Risk Assessment	
	Equipment	
	Emergency Procedures	
	Storage & Transportation	
Hazards	See Syllabus	
Leadership & Group Management	See Syllabus	
Incident Management	First Aid/Assessment, Hypo/Hyperthermia, Flow Charts	
	Call Out & Overdue Procedures	
Technical Ability	Personal Movement	
	Location of Venue	
	Anchors, Inspection & Selection	
	Fixed Aids	
	Rope Work, Knots,	
	Spotting	

Working with under 18's

Adventure Activities Licensing Service (AALS) – The following Information has been selected from <http://www.hse.gov.uk/aala/public-information.htm>

The Activity Centres (Young Persons' Safety) Act 1995 and the Adventure Activities Licensing Regulations 2004 make it a legal requirement for providers of certain adventure activities for young people to undergo an inspection of their safety management systems and hold a licence.

Licensing only applies to those who offer activities to young people under the age of 18 years and who operate in a commercial manner.

Generally, licensing only applies to these activities when they are done in remote or isolated places. For example, climbing on natural terrain requires a licence but climbing on a purpose-built climbing wall does not.

A licence is not required for:

- Voluntary associations offering activities to their members (eg scout groups, local canoe clubs etc)
- Schools and colleges offering activities only to their own pupils or students
- Activities where youngsters are each accompanied by their parent or legally appointed guardian (this does not include teacher or youth leader)

Licensable activities include the following:

Climbing
Watersports
Trekking
Caving
Rock climbing
Abseiling
Ice climbing
Gorge walking
Ghyll scrambling
Sea level traversing
Canoeing
Kayaking
Dragon boating
Wave skiing
White-water rafting
Improvised rafting
Sailing
Sailboarding

Windsurfing
Hill walking
Mountaineering
Fell running
Orienteering
Pony trekking
Off-road cycling
Off-piste skiing
Caving
Pot-holing
Mine exploration

This list is not exhaustive.

If you want to send your child or a child in your care, to an activity centre or provider you can call the Adventure Activities Licensing Service and they will tell you if the centre is licensed or you can check the register.

Licences are issued when the Licensing Authority is satisfied that the provider's management of safety is satisfactory. Inspection does not include standards of accommodation or service.

Revalidation

Upon successful completion of the GGL, the award remains valid for 3 years.

There are 3 ways to revalidate your award...

- Option 1 – Attend a higher-level training course within the UKCG Scheme
- Option 2 – Attend a revalidation workshop
- Option 3 – Self Assessment

Revalidation workshops will be available on request by approaching an assessor, the intention of these workshops is to update the candidates with;

1. Any new best practise
2. Updates to the scheme
3. Review skills and techniques
4. Discuss any recent issues

Lapsed Awards – If your award has lapsed with no revalidation process having taken place within 4 years, the candidate will need to re sit the GGL assessment.

Complaints, Appeals and Restrictions

If for any reason the candidate wishes to make a complaint about any aspect of their training or assessment course outcome it is suggested this done in writing.

1. The first step would be to contact your course provider to discuss and seek clarification.
2. If you feel this has not resolved any issues or you are still unclear, please contact UKCG Training Officer through the website.

Administration

Secretary - info@canyonguides.org

Registered Address:

UK Canyon Guides Association
21 Paradise Avenue
Bridge of Earn
PH2 9AU

Training Centres

Vertical Descents LTD (Scotland)

How Stean Gorge LLP (Northern England)

Cave & Canyon UK (Northern England)

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