

As Leaders and Rovers we just want to be able to run activities for the members of our Units. What we are allowed to lead, and not allowed to lead, is always a source of confusion. How we go about attaining qualifications so that we are allowed to lead activities is often equally confusing. It doesn't help that each activity is different, and therefore the answer differs for each activity.

In Scouting most adventurous activities are run by a Youth Program Leader (a Leader of Youth), where they are not being run by a third party commercial operator. Adventurous activity qualifications expand the scope of activities available to that Leader to run.

In the same way that the ATD Leadership training program ensures that Adult Leaders are suitably qualified to run Scouting activities, the Scouts Australia policy document the National Adventurous Activities Framework (NAAF) defines the qualifications for adventurous activities. The qualifications required to lead adventurous activities, and separately verify the Outdoor Adventure Skills, are set out in the NAAF and its appendices. It can be a bit confusing on first viewing. It is available here: scouts.com.au > Key Resources.

On-the-job training is at the heart of the Scouting adventurous activities program. Experience is built up over time through training courses, participating in activities, assisting practical activities led by other skilled members, or even outside of Scouting. The key part is proving your experience through evidence. That's why maintaining a logbook of our activities is a critical requirement of our qualification process.

These answers to common questions should help you begin to navigate the various AA qualification pathways.

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What activities can I lead without any qualifications?

There are still many outdoor activities you can run within your Scout Group without a qualification, so long as you are meeting the Duty of Care requirements of all Scouting activities. This is because the Scouting Adventure course is considered to be the foundational level for all other adventurous activity qualifications. For example, as a trained Adult Leader you can still lead:

- Walks in urban parks,
- Cycling in the local area,
- Swimming in pools, surf, or open water if a lifeguard is present,
- Skiing or snowboarding within a resort, after members have had a lesson with an instructor.

What about activities through third party providers?

Many adventurous activities can be accessed through third party providers. You can book the internal Scouting specialist adventurous activity teams to run activities at low cost for your Unit members.

But externally, there are many providers who can run activities for our Units. These include climbing gyms and vertical adventure playgrounds, and adventure tourism companies like scuba diving schools. In these cases, you are transferring the risk of leading the activity over to an external provider and their respective insurance coverage.

For these occasions, a Special Activity Permission Form (Form Y5) must be signed and returned for each youth member participating in the activity.

What do all the qualification levels mean?

In the NAAF, there are five qualification levels available in over 40 activity pathway groupings. Each level is approximately the same responsibility, regardless of the pathway. The levels allow us to participate, assist and ultimately lead adventurous activities as our skills progress. In brief:

- Safe Participants can participate safely under direction and understand the risks associated with the adventurous activity;
- Trained Participants have undertaken further training and can participate safely in a variety of environments, and depending on the risk level lead some activities;
- Assistant Guides have the full suite technical activity-specific skills, and can assist a Guide by leading adventurous activities under supervision;
- Guides are adults with a CoP (Certificate of Proficiency) and with the skills and capacity to lead adventurous activities in their specialist area; and
- Activity Specialists are Guides with extensive experience leading complex adventurous activities in their specialist area. They are able to conduct particularly challenging activities in remote locations.

Can youth members become Guides?

Only adults holding a Certificate of Proficiency (CoP) can be appointed as an AA Guide, because they need to be responsible for the welfare and duty of care of youth members. Rover Scouts with a CoP can be appointed as Guides. Rovers and other adults without a CoP can still complete all the Guide level training, however Assistant Guide is the highest appointment available without a CoP.

What qualification do I need to verify the Outdoor Adventure Skills?

The required qualification you need to verify proficiency statements in the various OAS stages is outlined in the NAAF Appendix 1. It is available here: scouts.com.au > Key Resources > NAAF Appendix 1.

For further information and resources refer to the Activities section of the Scouts Victoria site.

What qualification do I need to lead an activity?

The minimum required qualification you need to lead common youth program activities is outlined in the NAAF Appendix 2. It is available here: scouts.com.au > Key Resources > NAAF Appendix 2.

As a Group Leader, how do I know what qualifications my Leaders need for a proposed activity?

First, check the NAAF Appendix 2 (see previous item). If unsure, contact the relevant State Leader for the adventurous activity type (details below). The Section Leaders should have listed the qualifications they hold on their AA1 Form outlining the adventurous activity to be undertaken.

Group Leaders are ultimately responsible for approving safe activities, and are well within their rights to require extra qualifications or training for higher risk activities to take place. However, to ensure the requirements are reasonable, they should consult with the relevant State Leader (see contacts below).

How do I get qualified?

There are two pathways to becoming qualified: those who want to learn new skills to reach a new level of attainment, and those with existing skills wishing to be recognised at a given level of attainment.

Those wishing to gain new skills should book into a Safe Participant Skills or Trained Participant Skills course for your desired activity. If you're hooked and want more experience, you should then contact the relevant AA State Leader (details below). They will let you know how you can get involved and attend existing activities to learn on-the-job. Many of our experienced Guides once started down this same pathway as keen newbies.

The remainder of this document is targeted at those with existing skills.

No, I have already been doing this for many years, how do I get qualified?

Some people will already have a wealth of experience undertaking activities. The challenge is often demonstrating that experience through evidence that will satisfy the assessment criteria. This is because for all qualifications of Assistant Guide and above, the Scouting AA qualifications are tied to the nationally recognised VET training system for outdoor recreation. We conduct these assessments through SAIT (the Scouts Australia Institute of Training) via nationally appointed Assessors. SAIT is a registered training organisation (RTO).

Some people will have heaps of experience participating in activities with their skilled friends, but little experience leading activities for novices; novices are dependent participants with no existing skills. These people may be able to apply for RPL (recognition of prior learning) for an Assistant Guide appointment, while continuing to build leadership on-the-job experience under the supervision of a Guide.

For skilled members seeking a full Guide appointment, you should refer to the document titled 'Adventurous Activity Guide qualifications: requirements and process'.

What are the activity-specific skills I need to demonstrate for a given qual?

Each activity is different. The groupings are outlined in the NAAF Appendix 3. It is available here: scouts.com.au > Key Resources > NAAF Appendix 3.

The Assistant Leader Trainers (formerly Instructors) in each AA Team can provide you with a list of required skills. These will usually involve high level activity skills, rescue skills, and (for Guide level) group management and leadership skills.

For people relatively new to an activity, you should book into a Safe Participant Skills or Trained Participant Skills course for your activity areas. See 'How do I get qualified?' above.

For those with considerable skills and experience, you should first contact the relevant State Leaders for your desired activity areas, indicating you would like to discuss whether your skills are appropriate for RPL assessment at Assistant Guide level (or higher). Their contact details are below.

How do I know when I am ready for assessment?

Safe and Trained Participants should not be assessed for VET units of competency through SAIT under most circumstances. They should maintain their logbooks, and continue building their evidence portfolio towards Assistant Guide level.

Submissions for RPL assessment should not be made until a candidate is ready to be assessed for one of the following qualifications:

- Assistant Guide appointment - competent at participating and leading activities under supervision for other skilled participants only.
- Guide appointment - competent at leading activities for novice youth members.
- Venturers specifically undertaking a Cert II program (by prior arrangement with the SC VET only).

Those wishing to become Assistant Guides and Guides should first have a conversation with an Assistant Leader Trainer (ALT) to ensure the evidence they are planning to provide meets the requirements for their intended role. There are relevant ALTs in most AA Teams that you can access through the relevant State Leaders (details below).

Those ready to become Assistant Guides should create a portfolio of evidence and submit it for assessment. These are people with activity-specific skills and assisting skills. Those needing to build further guiding skills can be assessed for the Assistant Guide qualification while continuing to build up guiding evidence.

Those proceeding straight to Guide level assessment will have considerable experience leading activities for novices. This may be through on-the-job learning in an AA Team, or external industry experience such as with adventure tourism companies, through other organisations such as Girl Guides or cadets, through other clubs, or through private activities within friendship groups.

The process is effectively the same for both Assistant Guides and Guides. See 'How do I enrol and submit my portfolio?' below for more information.

If a Venturer wishes to complete a Cert II, they should first have a conversation with the State Commissioner for VET. Details below.

Do I need to attend an AA Guide Core course?

In most cases, yes. The Core courses cover some of the harder to prove assessment criteria, giving the SAIT Assessors greater confidence in determining your ability to meet the assessable outcomes of the common core units of competency.

If you are seeking Assistant Guide assessment, you may or may not need to attend an Assistant Guide Core course, depending on your previous experience. Members learning on-the-job through Scouting should likely attend that course. You should consult the Assistant Leader Trainers in your AA Team.

How do I create a portfolio?

It depends what the purpose of the portfolio is.

For skilled members seeking a full Guide appointment, you should refer to the document titled 'Adventurous Activity Guide qualifications: requirements and process'.

For the technical activity-specific units of competency you should complete the workbooks available at scouts.com.au > Key Resources > Adventurous Activities Proficiency Folios, and follow the link in that document. They will provide a starting point, but the SAIT Assessor will likely require additional evidence. You should consult the Assistant Leader Trainers in your AA Team.

Your AA logbook(s) should accompany every portfolio you submit. Photos or videos of you completing relevant skills are also very useful to include, but technically optional.

But I don't have a logbook?

AA appointments will not be issued without a logbook. Logbooks have been a requirement for Scouting adventurous activities appointments for about 10 years now.

The fundamental part of all AA portfolios is your logbook(s). For youth members this may be recorded in *Scouts / Terrain*. For adults, you will probably want to maintain your own logbooks independent from *Scouts / Terrain*. If you would like some sample templates for various activities, they are available under the Activities section of the Scouts Victoria website.

If you haven't been keeping one, it is annoying to have to create one from scratch. Many Guides before you have shared that same frustration. But it doesn't have to be every single activity you've ever done. It just needs to be representative of your skills. Some useful tips for reconstruction: go back through your photos on your phone and look at the timestamp; look back through your calendar or emails; and ask other friends if you can look at their logbook because you might have been on a lot of the same activities (and can copy the date and location).

How do I enrol and submit my portfolio?

Firstly, you need to be clear about what you are trying to achieve with your portfolio. Safe and Trained Participants will not be assessed through SAIT, with a few exceptions mentioned above. Those wishing to become Assistant Guides and Guides should first have a conversation with an Assistant Leader Trainer (ALT) to ensure the evidence they are planning to provide meets the requirements for their intended role. There are relevant ALTs in most AA Teams that you can access through the relevant State Leaders.

Because SAIT is a registered training organisation, we all need to enrol as students for the purposes of VET assessment. That means filling out an enrollment form. The State Commissioner for VET can talk you through enrolling you in the correct skillset. A SAIT Assessor will then look at the evidence you have provided, and have a conversation with you to try and provide any remaining evidence you may need to meet the requirements. Your assessor may determine which level is more appropriate based on your current evidence portfolio.

Will enrolling with SAIT affect my government-subsidised place at TAFE?

If you are an early-career worker, you may want to be careful enrolling in full qualifications through SAIT. For example, getting a Certificate II in Outdoor Recreation may affect the upfront cost for a Venturer undertaking a pre-apprenticeship. Please mention any concerns to the State Commission for VET, and they can provide you with advice for your circumstances.

Contacts

- State Commissioner – Adventurous Activities: sc.adventurousactivities@scoutsvictoria.com.au
- State Commissioner – Vocational Education and Training (VET): sc.vet@scoutsvictoria.com.au
- State Commissioner – Outdoor Adventure Skills Leader Support: sc.oas@scoutsvictoria.com.au

- State Leader – Bushwalking: state.bushwalking@scoutsvictoria.com.au
- State Leader – Survival: state.survival@scoutsvictoria.com.au
- State Leader – Pioneering: state.pioneering@scoutsvictoria.com.au
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