

## **Canyon Leader**



Photo: Jared Partridge – courtesy of Adventure Specialties Trust

## **Scope and Syllabus**

With the support of:



# NZOIA™ Canyon Leader Scope

## Canyon Leader Profile

The NZOIA Canyon Leader is able to:

- Plan and prepare introductory canyon experiences
- Instruct groups in the canyon skills required for a positive introductory experience
- Lead and manage groups through easy and short canyons
- Demonstrate effective safety management
- Obtain weather forecasts and apply weather interpretation skills
- Provide interpretive information about natural and cultural history and about flora and fauna
- Role model and promote accepted environmental practices

The NZOIA Canyon Leader can work independently without direct supervision. Leaders are qualified to operate within Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and Safety Management Systems. The qualification does not define the skill set required to write or approve an activity plan.

This is a foundation qualification and provides a stepping stone towards NZOIA Canyon 1.

## Scope

The holder of this qualification can lead and manage trips in canyons up to v2a2II, in conditions described as normal by the organisation's SOPs. The canyon leader must be inducted into the site and it is recommended this is completed by a NZOIA Canyon 1 or 2 holder.

In addition, the canyon leader can assist a NZOIA Canyon 1 or 2 holder in canyons up to v3a3III.

\*The grading system referred to is the French grading system, and is the standard for grading in New Zealand. This is described in detail on the [Kiwi Canyons Grading Table](http://www.kiwicanyons.org) found at [www.kiwicanyons.org](http://www.kiwicanyons.org).

## Prerequisites

Be a current Registered Member or working under an Affiliated Membership of NZOIA

Be 18 years old or over. Refer to NZOIA's policies for [exemptions](#).

Hold a current First Aid Certificate

Have the following experience as evidence in a logbook:

**Personal experience** – at least 10 days experience (a canyon day is considered to be at least 4 hours including approach and return) in canyons (can include training)

**Instructional experience** – at least 5 days additional experience as a co-leader or assistant guide in canyons

The prerequisite experience requirements are minimums, extra days are recommended.

## **Registration and Revalidation**

Registration and revalidation with NZOIA provide proof of currency for NZOIA qualification holders.

### **Progressing to NZOIA Canyon 1**

As the NZOIA Canyon Leader gains more experience they may progress towards gaining the NZOIA Canyon 1 qualification. The steps they would follow include:

- Gaining the experience outlined in the NZOIA Canyon 1 prerequisites
- Attending an NZOIA Canyon 1 training course
- Working with a NZOIA Canyon 1 holder

# **Syllabus**

## **Assessment Notes**

The syllabus outlines what the content of the assessment will include and gives an idea of what assessment tasks the candidate will be asked to complete. All judgements on how the candidate meets the syllabus must be based on current good practice and industry standards.

Assessors can use three types of direct evidence to judge a candidate's competency:

- Workbook answers
- Observation of practical tasks
- Questioning and discussion

Candidates are expected to know and follow a system; they are not expected to be flexible in their set up.

Candidates are required to provide participants with effective instruction and assistance in canyons of v2a2II.

Candidates are expected to have the personal skills to assist NZOIA Canyon 1 or 2 holders in v3a3III canyons.

## **Technical Competence**

### **1. Demonstrate and/or describe the care and correct use of canyon equipment and clothing**

The candidate will:

- 1.1** Use equipment that is in good condition, is well maintained, and is used in accordance with manufacturer's recommendations and current good practice
- 1.2** Complete a pre-activity check of equipment for completeness, damage, and correct fit

- 1.3 Choose equipment, clothing and footwear that is appropriate for the terrain, temperature and protection
- 1.4 Correctly fit and store all their personal equipment
- 1.5 Demonstrate and/or describe; the properties, common use, advantages, limitations, minimisation of wear, inspection and storage, for all equipment used

## 2. Demonstrate handling of ropes and packs

The candidate will demonstrate:

- 2.1 Packing personal and group equipment for the intended trip as per SOPs
- 2.2 Effective and safe rope and pack management
- 2.3 Coiling and uncoiling of ropes, both into and out of rope bags

## 3. Demonstrate safe and efficient skills to negotiate a v3a3III canyon

The candidate will demonstrate:

- 3.1 Safe, efficient and balanced movement
- 3.2 Ability to check pools for safe jumps, slides, and deep-water belays
- 3.3 Ability to identify hydraulic features and outline the risks associated with them
- 3.4 Ability to negotiate up to a3 white water, including swimming, jumping, sliding and crossing the canyon
- 3.5 Moving on safety lines and guided rappels
- 3.6 Safe, efficient and controlled abseiling, including choosing the appropriate friction setting, lock offs, reducing pendulum potential and awareness of sharp edges
- 3.7 Ascend single rope including mid rope conversions from up to down and down to up
- 3.8 Safe bottom belay technique
- 3.9 Safe and efficient retrieval of abseils
- 3.10 Working as part of the group and maintaining contact with the group
- 3.11 Common hand and whistle signals

## 4. Demonstrate navigation and route selection skills

The candidate will demonstrate:

- 4.1 Ability to navigate on well-formed tracks
- 4.2 Safe, efficient and appropriate in-canyon route selection
- 4.3 Location awareness
- 4.4 Accurate estimation of travel time and distance

## 5. Construct simple rigging systems for v2a2II terrain

The candidate will:

- 5.1 Construct a hand line to assist short and easy climbs and down climbs
- 5.2 Construct a lowering system

- 5.3 Construct a releasable and retrievable abseil system on fixed anchors
- 5.4 Organise a backup system for abseils e.g. top rope belay, bottom belay (non-client assist), deep water belay
- 5.5 Consistently assess fixed anchors for signs of damage, wear or weakness
- 5.6 Demonstrate the use of at least two abseil devices or methods
- 5.7 Demonstrate effective sharp edge management
- 5.8 Construct a safety line where access to the abseil anchor is exposed and identify when a safety line is needed

## **6. Demonstrate rescue techniques for v2a2II terrain**

The candidate will:

- 6.1 Release the system and lower a stuck abseiler to ground
- 6.2 Self-rescue from a jammed abseil device
- 6.3 Effective rope coil throwing and throw bag techniques
- 6.4 Demonstrate a group escape from a canyon using handlines and belays

## **7. Demonstrate safe assistance techniques**

The candidate will manage the safety of others by:

- 7.1 Spotting
- 7.2 Providing direct assistance e.g. helping hand, guiding foot placement, providing a knee, foot or shoulder as support
- 7.3 Assisting people through both calm and turbulent water

## **The Environment**

### **8. Obtain a weather forecast and apply weather interpretation skills**

The candidate will:

- 8.1 Obtain a relevant weather forecast for the planned canyon trip and provide a verbal summary of the forecast
- 8.2 Describe the implications of the weather forecast for the planned canyon trip
- 8.3 Observe any changes to the weather or flow levels and revert to contingency plan if necessary

### **9. Demonstrate cultural and environmental knowledge and interpretation of areas visited**

The candidate will provide interpretive information about:

- 9.1 The natural and cultural history of the area
- 9.2 Tikanga Māori, Mana Whenua, and pūrākau relevant to the area
- 9.3 The geography and geology of the area
- 9.4 Local flora and fauna

## **10. Role model and promote accepted environmental practices**

The candidate will:

- 10.1** Demonstrate and/or describe the responsibilities to landowners and other users, including access protocols
- 10.2** Describe the impacts of visitation on canyons
- 10.3** Role model and promote the principles of Leave No Trace
- 10.4** Demonstrate an awareness of practices to stop the spread of didymo and other freshwater pests

## **Group Management and Leadership**

### **11. Lead and manage a group for an introductory canyon trip up to v2a2II**

The candidate will be responsible for a group of participants on a canyon they have been inducted into, and demonstrate:

- 11.1** Professional conduct i.e. role modelling behaviour, clothing, use of equipment, conservation etc
- 11.2** Preparing and briefing the group including setting boundaries/safe areas and ground rules and risk disclosure
- 11.3** Managing time appropriately in relation to the SOPs and conditions
- 11.4** Effective management of the group
- 11.5** Coaching and encouraging clients to ensure they are engaged and have a positive experience
- 11.6** Establishing rapport with clients and an awareness of their physical, emotional, cultural and other needs

### **12. Demonstrate effective safety management in v2a2II**

The candidate will:

- 12.1** Leave intentions information with an appropriate group/organisation/person
- 12.2** Carry appropriate communications and know how to use them
- 12.3** Have a first aid kit and be able to deal with first aid situations if required
- 12.4** Carry safety equipment appropriate for the trip and conditions e.g. spare clothing, lighting, heating
- 12.5** Take reasonably practicable steps to eliminate or minimise the effect of significant risks for self and others
- 12.6** Position themselves at appropriate places within the group to manage risks e.g. slippery surfaces, small drops, junctions, loose terrain, lagging clients
- 12.7** Demonstrate safe practices and good judgement and decision making
- 12.8** Know where their clients are at all times and where the nearest canyon escape is
- 12.9** Describe how they would manage a crisis with reference to the operations SOPs

## **Instruction**

### **13. Plan and prepare an introductory canyon experience**

The candidate will prepare a written activity plan containing the following:

- 13.1** Aims based on knowledge of the clients and the Safety Management System they are operating under
- 13.2** A logical sequence of progressions and activities
- 13.3** Any consent, cultural or access considerations
- 13.4** Route information including estimated times and escape routes
- 13.5** A conservation plan to minimise human impact
- 13.6** Clothing and equipment list for both individuals and the group (including emergency equipment)
- 13.7** A weather forecast and the implications for the proposed trip
- 13.8** Hazard identification and management
- 13.9** Emergency procedures
- 13.10** Intentions form

### **14. Instruct a group in the canyoning skills required for a positive introductory experience**

The candidate will provide clients with effective instruction in the following canyon knowledge and skills:

- 14.1** Fitting of equipment and clothing
- 14.2** Basic movement techniques
- 14.3** Spotting
- 14.4** Swimming in a2 water
- 14.5** Jumping
- 14.6** Sliding
- 14.7** Abseil techniques
- 14.8** Communication

The candidate will:

- 14.9** Use a logical sequence of progressions
- 14.10** Use clear demonstrations and explanations
- 14.11** Provide opportunities for participants to practice
- 14.12** Deliver feedback that is timely and specific
- 14.13** Maintain a positive learning environment