

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 familiar 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
- Assist a NZOIA Canyon 1 or 2 holder in moderate terrain

The NZOIA Canyon Leader can work independently without direct supervision. Leaders are qualified to operate within an activity specific risk management plan. The qualification does not define the skill set required to write or approve such a 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 of up to 4 hours duration in easy vertical and aquatic canyons (v2a2I)* in normal conditions. The canyon leader must be inducted into the site and it is recommended this is completed by a NZOIA Canyon 1 or 2.

The access to the canyon is on well-formed tracks. The canyon must have easy escape from flow throughout in case of an emergency.

The canyon leader can abseil clients down dry pitches on very easy terrain with no chance of foot entrapments. The abseil must be able to be operated with verbal communication from top to bottom.

In addition the canyon leader can assist a NZOIA Canyon 1 or 2 holder in moderate vertical and aquatic canyons (v3a3II)* in normal conditions.

*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.

Prerequisites

Be a current Full Member of working under an Affiliated Member of NZOIA

Be 18 years old or over

Hold a current First Aid Certificate (minimum of 12 hours or 2 day course including some direct contact with course tutors)

Have the following experience as evidence in a logbook:

Personal experience – at least 5 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 v2a2I.

Candidates are expected to have the personal skills to assist NZOIA Canyon 1 or 2 holders in v3a3II canyons.

Technical Competence

1. Describe the development of canyoning in New Zealand

The candidate will be able to describe:

- 1.1** The role of the New Zealand Canyoning Association
- 1.2** The role of the Canyoning Activity Specific Guidelines and the operations Safety Management System and how to access this information

2. Demonstrate and/or describe the care and correct use of canyon equipment and clothing

The candidate will:

- 2.1** Use equipment that is in good condition and is well maintained e.g. ropes, abseil device, harness, helmet, PFD's
- 2.2** Complete a pre-activity check of equipment for damage
- 2.3** Choose clothing and footwear that is appropriate for the terrain, temperature and protection e.g. wetsuits, wind proof jacket, shoes
- 2.4** Uses equipment in accordance with the manufacturer's recommendations and current good practice
- 2.5** For all equipment used demonstrate and/or describe; the properties, common use, advantages, limitations, minimisation of wear, damage checking and storage

3. Demonstrate handling of ropes and packs

The candidate will demonstrate:

- 3.1** Packing personal and group equipment for a day trip
- 3.2** Effective pack management
- 3.3** Coiling and uncoiling of ropes, both in and out of rope bags
- 3.4** Effective throw bag techniques

4. Demonstrate safe and efficient skills to negotiate a v3a3II canyon

The candidate will demonstrate the following while canyoning in normal conditions:

- 4.1** Safe, efficient and balanced movement
- 4.2** Ability to safely check pools
- 4.3** Ability to identify hydraulic features and outline the risks associated with them
- 4.4** Negotiation of water difficulties including: moving water swimming, jumping, sliding, and river crossing
- 4.5** Moving on safety lines and guided rappels
- 4.6** Safe and efficient abseiling including, self-protection and locking off
- 4.7** Self-rescue from a jammed belay device while abseiling
- 4.8** Safe bottom belay technique
- 4.9** Working as part of the group and maintaining contact with the group
- 4.10** Common hand and whistle signals

5. Demonstrate navigation and route selection skills

- 5.1** Ability to navigate on well-formed tracks
- 5.2** Safe, efficient and appropriate route selection
- 5.3** Location awareness
- 5.4** Accurate estimation of travel time and distance

6. Construct simple rigging systems for v2a2I terrain

The candidate will:

- 6.1** Construct a hand line to assist ascent or descent
- 6.2** Construct a lowering system
- 6.3** Construct a releasable and retrievable abseil system on fixed anchors
- 6.4** Organise a safety system e.g. top rope belay, bottom belay (non-client assist), deep water belay
- 6.5** Demonstrate the use of at least one belay/abseil device or methods
- 6.6** Demonstrate edge management

7. Demonstrate abseil rescue techniques for v2a2I terrain

The candidate will:

- 7.1** Release the system and lower client to ground

8. Demonstrate safe assistance techniques up to v3a3II

The candidate will demonstrate management of others safety by:

- 8.1** Spotting
- 8.2** Direct assistance e.g. helping hand, guiding foot placement, providing a knee or foot as support
- 8.3** Assisting people through both calm and turbulent water

The Environment

9. Obtain a weather forecast and apply weather interpretation skills

The candidate will:

- 9.1** Obtain a relevant weather forecast for the planned canyon trip and provide a summary of the forecast
- 9.2** Describe the implications of the weather forecast for the planned canyon trip and make decisions about the session based on the forecast
- 9.3** Observe any changes to the weather or flow levels and revert to contingency plan if necessary

10. Demonstrate cultural and environmental knowledge and interpretation of areas visited

The candidate will provide interpretive information about:

- 10.1** The natural or cultural history of the area
- 10.2** The geography and geology of the area
- 10.3** Local flora and fauna

11. Role model and promote accepted environmental practices

The candidate will:

- 11.1** Demonstrate and/or describe the responsibilities to land owners and other users, including access protocols
- 11.2** Describe the impacts of visitation on a given canyon including; the impacts of rigging on fixed anchors, risk of didymo
- 11.3** Describe the need for discretion in disseminating information about the location of canyons, access points and vulnerable features
- 11.4** Role model and promote the principles of Leave No Trace

Group Management and Leadership

12. Lead and manage a group for an introductory canyon trip up to v2a2I

The candidate will be responsible for a client group on a familiar canyon route and demonstrate:

- 12.1** Professional conduct ie: role modelling (behaviour, clothing, use of equipment, conservation etc)
- 12.2** Preparing and briefing the group including setting boundaries/safe areas and ground rules and risk disclosure
- 12.3** Manage time appropriately in relation to the activity plan and conditions
- 12.4** Implementing the management of a group including; spotting, positioning, communication and accounting for everybody
- 12.5** Coaching, encouraging, motivating clients to ensure they are interested, engaged and have a fun and positive experience
- 12.6** Establishing rapport with clients and an awareness of their emotional, cultural and other needs

13. Demonstrate effective safety management in v2a2I

The candidate will:

- 13.1** Leave intentions information with an appropriate group/organisation/person
- 13.2** Carries appropriate communications and knows how to use them
- 13.3** Have a first aid kit and be able to deal with first aid situations if required

- 13.4** Carry spare clothing, lighting and/or a thermos if appropriate for the trip and conditions
- 13.5** Never compromise their personal safety or the safety of their clients
- 13.6** Position themselves at appropriate places within the group to manage risks e.g. slippery surfaces, small drops, junctions, loose terrain, lagging clients
- 13.7** Demonstrate safe practices and good judgement and decision making within the scope of this qualification, including the assessment of client's competency and confidence
- 13.8** Know where their clients are at all times and where the nearest escape route is
- 13.9** Describe how they would manage a crisis with reference to the operations risk management plan

Instruction

14. Plan and prepare an introductory canyon experience for v2a2I terrain

Using information from the organisations safety management system the candidate will present a written activity plan containing the following:

- 14.1** A clearly defined purpose and session appropriate for the group
- 14.2** A logical sequence of progressions and activities
- 14.3** The canyon location including any consent, cultural or access considerations
- 14.4** Route information including estimated times and escape routes
- 14.5** A conservation plan to minimise human impact
- 14.6** Equipment lists for both individuals and the group (including emergency equipment)
- 14.7** A weather forecast and the implications for the proposed trip
- 14.8** Risk and hazard identification and management
- 14.9** Emergency contacts and procedures
- 14.10** Intentions form

15. Instruct a group in the canyon skills required for a positive introductory experience in v2a2I terrain

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

- 15.1** Fitting of equipment e.g. wetsuit, shoes, harness, helmet
- 15.2** Basic movement techniques
- 15.3** Spotting each other
- 15.4** Swimming in a2 water
- 15.5** Jumping
- 15.6** Sliding
- 15.7** Use of belay device
- 15.8** Abseil techniques
- 15.9** Communication system i.e.: hand signals
- 15.10** Waste management e.g. rubbish disposal, toileting

The candidate will use:

15.11 A logical sequence of progressions

15.12 Clear demonstrations and explanations