

OUTDOOR ADVENTURE PROGRAM

Two-Year Diploma

2026-27 HANDBOOK FOR APPLICANTS

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OUTDOOR ADVENTURE PROGRAM

THE MOST EXHILARATING COLLEGE PROGRAM ON EARTH!

Thank you for applying to the Outdoor Adventure Program offered at Algonquin College's Waterfront Campus in Pembroke, Ontario. Our program is like no other college education. It is one of the most exciting, innovative, and physically challenging programs in all of North America.

The following material provides specific information regarding the application process and details of the program. This handbook is designed to complement the basic overview available on our web site at www.algonquincollege.com/pembroke/program/outdoor-adventure/. Please refer to these sources for general college and course information.

The attached information will guide you through the application process. As this is a unique college education with very specific demands, there is a multiple-step application process to assess applicants and to help you prepare. Please keep this package and refer to it often.

You have made the right choice by applying to the Outdoor Adventure Program. With half of our program hours delivered outdoors, technical skills training taught by industry-leading experts, several expeditions, and a comprehensive business-of-tourism education, graduates are equipped to pursue their dream job. Our alumni are leaders in the adventure industry across Canada and around the world. Once again, thank you for considering Algonquin College as your preferred location to complete your post-secondary studies.

Sincerely,



Matthew Neadow
Acting Chair
Business, Technology and Outdoor Training

For additional information, please contact:

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OUTDOOR ADVENTURE PROGRAM

APPLICANT HANDBOOK

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STATEMENT OF RESPONSIBILITY, SAFETY, AND LIABILITY

In order to learn the skills necessary to become an effective leader in the Outdoor Adventure Tourism industry, students must perform beyond the limits of a mere participant and assume a greater degree of responsibility and risk.

There is an inherent element of risk which is beyond human control. Only those risks that contribute to career related skills, knowledge, and experience are acceptable, as dictated by industry standards, certification, licenses, and specific course outlines. This is termed 'risk appropriate' training. Risks that fall outside of the scope of industry practice are deemed inappropriate for technical training programs at Algonquin College. Although effort is made to minimize exposure to these risks, we can ultimately assume no responsibility for your safety or loss of personal equipment.

A signed Liability Release is required of all students before commencement of the program. The student is encouraged to read it carefully and fully understand the form's legal implications before signing. A parent/guardian Release is required for minors (under 18 years of age).

ELIGIBILITY AND SELECTION PROCESS

Part I – Admissions Requirement (check each item as it is completed)

- ☐ Meet College Eligibility Requirements (see Outdoor Adventure Admission Requirements available on program website, <https://www.algonquincollege.com/pembroke/program/outdoor-adventure/#application-information>).
- ☐ Meet Program Eligibility Requirements; English Grade 12 (ENG4C or equivalent is required) and Mathematics Grade 11 (MBF3C or equivalent is acceptable). There are several math equivalents, including Grade 11 university level. If you have questions as to whether your math credit will qualify, please call our Admissions officer at (613) 735-4700 ext. 2708.

Part II – Other Program Logistics (check each item as it is completed)

Prior to commencement of the program, accepted applicants must:

- ☐ Submission of Letter of Intent and Resume (see below for guidelines and deadline for submission). You can do this online [here](#). These can be submitted at any time prior to the Program Readiness Camp.
- ☐ Participate in the mandatory in-person Program Readiness Camp orientation at Wilderness Tours **(June 7 & 8, 2026)**. If you can't make this date, please contact the Program Coordinator to arrange alternate options. International students please contact the Program Coordinator for the special international student orientation Program Readiness dates. Contact information on page 11.
- ☐ Submission of Applicant Personal Information, Consent and Health form (available on program website, <https://www.algonquincollege.com/pembroke/program/outdoor-adventure/applicant-personal-information-consent-health-form/>), prior to attending mandatory Program Readiness Camp orientation.
- ☐ Sign and submit an Algonquin College Outdoor Adventure Program Assumption of Risk & Release form (available at program website, <https://www.algonquincollege.com/pembroke/program/outdoor-adventure/assumption-of-risk-release-form/>).
 - Those under the age of 18 must submit Parental Consent documentation (click 'Under 18' on the online form above).
 - * Applicants will be required to sign a Wilderness Tours Waiver online prior to the Program Readiness Camp orientation; Wilderness Tours is our delivery partner in our skills training, and we use their facilities and equipment. Details and a link will be provided upon registration in the orientation camp.
- ☐ Provide proof of current Standard First Aid certification before the start of class in September (email a photo of your certificate of completion to the Program Coordinator at melmotc@algonquincollege.com).
- ☐ Obtain a passport valid for duration of program prior to commencement of winter term.

The Outdoor Adventure Program is a physical program. Students should be able to efficiently and comfortably swim 200m, be able to carry a 27kg / 60-pound backpack over long distances, do high-output physical activities several hours at a time, and spend all day and overnight outdoors in all weather from +25C to -25C. Students will be required to swim in whitewater rapids while wearing a lifejacket, and must be able to ride a bicycle and sit in a canoe and kayak for extended periods of time. Students must have the mental acuity to follow specific directions (in English) in high risk environments and consistently follow safety procedures.

FEES AND EXPENSES

Visit our program webpage for the most recent year's tuition fees and expenses:

<https://www.algonquincollege.com/pembroke/program/outdoor-adventure/#fees-expenses>

ADDITIONAL FEES AND EXPENSES

Note: Two days of every week take place at Wilderness Tours, our partner training facility, or at other designated training sites (i.e. in the Ottawa Valley, Algonquin Park, Quebec, or the Adirondack Mountains in New York State). During those training days, all transportation, outdoor equipment, accommodations, and meals are provided (Day 1 lunch and dinner, Day 2 breakfast and lunch). Meals required for the multi-day expeditions and Fall Camp are also provided. (When students are taking classes at the Pembroke Campus, they are responsible for their own meals.)

- **Program Readiness Camp:** \$355 (*subject to change*) including tax
This mandatory orientation includes all meals, whitewater rafting, all activities and equipment, access to Wilderness Tours' recreation facilities, and program assessment. Students must provide their own transportation to the orientation weekend to the Wilderness Tours location. Details on the Program Readiness Camp are below.
- **Books:** \$400.00 per term (approximate for first year, two terms per academic year)
- **Certifications:**
Students may be able to earn up to 18 industry certifications through the program bundled into their tuition and at a significantly lower cost than if attained independently. Incorporating many certifications directly into the curriculum ensures graduates are immediately qualified for employment. Certification fees are included in tuition; however, textbooks, annual membership dues and future re-certification fees are at the expense of the student. NOTE: Certifications are subject to change as all are regulated by various external national bodies; changes to certification requirements imposed by external bodies may eliminate Algonquin College's ability to deliver the certification or include it in the program of study. A sample of certifications which students may earn are:

- Wilderness First Responder First Aid Certificate
- Canoe Kayak Canada Level 2 Kayak Instructor/River Leader
- Paddle Canada Canoe Instructor
- Canadian Professional Mountain Bike Guide Trip Leader
- Low Impact Camping Skills
- Swiftwater Rescue Training (Basic and Advanced)
- Alpine Ski and Snowboard Level 1 Instructor (CSIA and CASI)
- Mental Health First Aid
- And others

- **Advanced Expedition (Level 04):**

If a group chooses a final expedition destination that exceeds the budget allotted by the program, additional costs for transportation, accommodation, documentation, etc. may be incurred by each student, depending on their choice of destination and activity.

- **Clothing & Equipment:**

Suitable outdoor clothing and gear is vital, not only for comfort, but for safety. Most students will already own appropriate items; if starting from scratch, expect to spend approximately \$1,500 on gear over the two years of the program. Keep in mind this equipment is required for work in the industry, and has a useful life far beyond the Outdoor Adventure Program. As a rule, students will not be wearing cotton t-shirts, sweat shirts, jeans, etc. during outdoor skills days, since cotton gets wet and cold. Specific outdoor clothing is required.

Please refer to the program website for a required gear list. Students reporting to Fall Camp must have all of the equipment on the 'Fall Camp Gear list' including a one or two person three-season tent, but should not purchase items from the 'Program Equipment Requirements Gear list' until after Fall Camp. Advice from faculty and special workshops will ensure students spend their money on appropriate equipment.

Discounts are available to students in purchasing new equipment. Details will be provided at the Program Readiness Orientation weekend at Wilderness Tours.

- **Food and Travel:** Food is provided for all outdoor skill courses and expeditions and travel to and from all outdoor training locations and trips is provided. Ancillary/Incidental fees are included to cover the food and travel to all overnight courses.
- **Safety Equipment Package:** (Included in the Ancillary/Incidental Fee first term, which becomes the property of the student.)

This gear is required to learn and work in the industry and is purchased for students at wholesale cost. The package includes:

- Whitewater rescue PFD
- Whitewater helmet
- Rock climbing harness
- Rock climbing helmet
- Throw bag
- Ski/Snowboard helmet
- Wrist guards

Note: If equipment becomes damaged to the extent it is considered unsafe, the student will be required to provide an approved replacement.

- **Gear Provided by the Program:**

- Rock Climbing equipment
- Ice climbing equipment
- Mountain bikes and helmets
- Raft and paddles/rescue gear
- Whitewater kayak, sea kayak, flatwater/whitewater canoes, skirts, and paddles
- Full wet suit
- Alpine and Nordic (classic & skate) skis, boots, and poles
- Snowboards and boots
- Snowshoes
- Three (3) season tents
- Single burner/double burner stove
- Camping pot sets
- GPS units
- Tarps

Please bring any of the above gear you may already have. Please note, if any of the faculty have safety related concerns with your gear, you may be asked to use program equipment instead.

PARTICIPATION REQUIREMENTS AND ESSENTIAL ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

This is a physical program. Essential Eligibility Criteria is a list of the physical and cognitive requirements of our training activities. In order to successfully participate in the training activities, effectively manage the hazards and risks inherent in our adventure activities, and ultimately pass the required courses, the following criteria must be met on a daily basis. None of the criteria are meant

to discriminate on the basis of any physical or mental health disability and are applied uniformly to all potential students, irrespective of the presence or absence of any disability.

If, in the application process, the student has concerns about their ability to meet these eligibility criteria, please contact the Program Coordinator to discuss your concerns and to devise a possible pathway to meet these criteria and successfully participate in the program. We are committed to making reasonable accommodations to any activity for any person with a disability, so long as they can still demonstrate the required technical skills and course learning requirements.

Language

- The language of the program is English. The student must be able to understand instruction and directions in English, particularly with regards to safety. The student must be able to converse in English. All written material is provided in English and student work must be submitted in English.

Outdoor Learning Environment

- Course activities regularly take place in remote and rugged locations. Activities including overnight camping and daily classes are scheduled regardless of rain, snow and cold. Students will spend full days and overnight camping outside in temperatures that may range from +25C to -25C with no access to shelter or buildings. Services such as electricity, running water, and washrooms may not be available for multiple days in a row.
- Remote locations may mean delays in emergency communication and increased time to access medical treatment in the case of injury, in some cases potentially one day or more delay.
- Within any given day, there are supervised and un-supervised activities and time.
- There are several outdoor courses that require extensive travel time by bus or passenger van with a driver provided (up to 12-hour drives).
- Some courses may travel to the United States. Students must be able to cross the border and have the proper passport or visa requirements (and vaccination status, if relevant) in order to participate in those courses.

Safety and Risk Management

Each student must be able to:

- Independently perceive, understand, and follow directions and instructions. Be able to successfully execute appropriate and perhaps unfamiliar techniques to avoid hazards and/or manage risks. These directions may be given before the hazard or risk is encountered or may need to be given during exposure to the hazard/risk. Instructions are typically given orally.
- Recall and understand hazards and risks previously explained by instructors.
- Independently identify and recognize environmental hazards. These hazards may include, but are not limited to, falling objects/rocks/trees, loose rock and unstable surfaces, rugged steep and uneven terrain, cliff edges, moving water (fast or slow) such as rapids, rivers, waves, or tides, unstable ice and slippery surfaces, and potentially hazardous animals and insects. Constructed

environmental hazards may exist such as in buildings, cabins, on stairs and railings, bridges, climbing walls, decks, or in parking areas and on roads.

- Arrive to a course activity prepared with the proper clothing and equipment, as directed by the course equipment list provided in advance.
- Recognize and understand the hazards and risks posed by other students, which include, but are not limited to fatigue, state of mind, impairment, and actions that may influence judgment and decision-making.
- Effectively alert and warn others of potential or impending dangers such as falling rocks or trees, aggressive animals, faulty equipment set-up or use, or other environmental hazards.
- Effectively signal or notify instructors or other students of personal distress, injury, or need for assistance.
- Act consistently, reliably, and conservatively around above stated hazards to minimize risk even when not directly supervised.

Personal and Physical Preparedness

Each student must be able to:

- Stay alert and focus attention for up to several hours at a time while learning and traveling in high-risk environments, attending classes, or receiving instructions.
- Have the cognitive and physical ability to learn fast-paced outdoor skills and material within the time frame limitations allotted for program courses.
- Plan ahead and prepare for a day's or trip activity by reading preparation material, packing appropriate clothing and food, and self-manage food intake, hydration, staying warm and dry with the use of clothing layers.
- Accept and welcome all individuals and contribute to a positive learning environment that is free from racism, sexism, gender stereotypes, and any other form of discrimination or harassment.
- Work effectively as a member of a team despite potentially stressful and difficult conditions.
- Live in a physically demanding, remote wilderness environment for the uninterrupted period of the course activities or expeditions, which can range from one day to 10 days, including camping, sleeping on the ground and in tents, lack of running water, toilets, and showers.
- Abstain from alcohol, cannabis or other recreational drug use while on daily course activities and expeditions (therefore full day and potentially multiple days of abstinence).
- Carry a 27kg/60lb backpack or canoe over long distances and uneven terrain.
- Swim 200m without a lifejacket in calm water; and swim whitewater rapids with a lifejacket. Students will be expected to swim whitewater rapids with a lifejacket on as a requirement in specific guide training courses.
- Ride a bike on/off road, for several hours, with breaks and on beginner to moderate trails.
- Sit in a kayak or kneel in a canoe for multiple hours at a time, on multi-day excursions.
- Engage in moderate output, strenuous activity for several hours at a time with little opportunity to rest, such as in cycle touring, paddling on kayak expeditions, or portaging canoes.

- Disclose to program staff relevant medical conditions that may influence student safety or wellbeing.
- If taking prescription medications, be able to care for medication and maintain proper dosage by self-medicating without assistance from instructors or others (except possibly in emergency situations).
- Students not within minimum/maximum weight range of program equipment, i.e. over 127kg/280pd, may have to provide their own equipment. This weight limit is indicated by, for example, kayak and safety equipment maximum capacity, as set by manufacturer.
- Students with shoe size 14 or larger, or size 4 or smaller, may have to provide their own ski, snowboard, and climbing footwear.

PASSPORT

Certain courses may travel to the United States and possibly other international destinations. As such, a passport (mandatory) or other travel visas or documentation (depending on location) will be needed. Proof of "out of country" insurance will be required on a per-trip basis and is the responsibility of the student. ***All students must have a valid passport at the start of the second year.***

FINANCIAL AID PROGRAMS

Financial assistance programs are meant to supplement, not replace, the financial resources which the student is expected to contribute toward his or her own education. Financial aid is designed to help students meet the costs of tuition fees, books and supplies, and basic living expenses.

Students planning to apply for financial aid through OSAP (Ontario Student Assistance Program), or other provincial funding programs, are advised to do so as soon as applications are available, usually around May 1. You do not have to wait until you are accepted into a program to apply. It is recommended that students find more information and apply on-line at <http://osap.gov.on.ca>.

MORE INFORMATION AND QUESTIONS

The information here reflects the most current at the time of publication. Modifications may be made prior to program commencement. For inquiries, please contact:

613-735-4700 or 1-800-565-4723

Chris Melmoth, Program Co-ordinator	melmotc@algonquincollege.com	X 2880
Jodi Bucholtz, Manager, Community & Student Affairs		X 2712
Amanda Asselin, Admissions Officer/Registration		X 2708

MANDATORY PROGRAM READINESS ORIENTATION CAMP INFORMATION

The Program Readiness Camp is a mandatory orientation full of activities and acts as an introduction to the Outdoor Adventure Program. Students meet the program instructors and other students, are introduced to our skills training activities, learn program policies and expectations, are introduced to the physical requirements of this program, and learn the details of the program. As the Outdoor Adventure Program is like no other college education, it is imperative our students are fully prepared and know what is expected of them to be safe and successful in our program.

Prior to the Program Readiness Orientation Camp, students must complete the Personal Information, Consent and Health form, available on program website at (<https://www.algonquincollege.com/pembroke/program/outdoor-adventure/applicant-personal-information-consent-health-form/>), and the Outdoor Adventure Program and a Wilderness Tours Assumption of Risk and Release form (<https://www.algonquincollege.com/pembroke/program/outdoor-adventure/assumption-of-risk-release-form/>).

Attendance (via advance registration) at the Program Readiness Camp is mandatory, and a student may not start the program without first attending the mandatory orientation. If, after participation and assessment in the orientation camp, a candidate's physical or mental fitness is evaluated as poor and jeopardizes their safety and/or ability to successfully progress through the program, the student will be coached on options, which may include postponing program start to the following year.

Parents are welcome to attend, too! We host parents with a parallel information session, tour, and familiarization with the program. Details are available on our website:

<https://www.algonquincollege.com/pembroke/program/outdoor-adventure/prc-orientation/>.

DATES FOR MANDATORY PROGRAM READINESS ORIENTATION CAMP 2026

June 7 & 8 (Sunday & Monday). If you are unable to make it to the Program Readiness Orientation Camp, be sure to contact the Program Co-ordinator (contact info on page 11). International students contact the Program Co-ordinator for dates for the international student camp.

Students must register in advance by calling the Pembroke Campus Admissions Officer (no online registration for this event):

1-800-565-4723, ext. 2708 or 613-735-4700, ext. 2708

Payment can be made by credit card. For payment by other means, please discuss by phone with the Admissions Officer at the numbers above.

Note: The Program Readiness Camps take place at Wilderness Tours; for directions, please visit www.wildernesstours.com.

PROGRAM READINESS CAMP AGENDA

Sunday & Monday

(Hosted at Wilderness Tours; for directions, please visit www.wildernesstours.com)

Sunday:

Arrive at Wilderness Tours no later than 11:30 a.m.

11:00 - 12:00 noon	Sign in and register at Reception Desk
12:00 p.m.	Lunch and Opening Comments – Pavilion
12:45 p.m.	Pick up wetsuits and change into rafting clothing
1:00 p.m.	Bus departs for raft trip
1:30 p.m.	Rafting on the Ottawa River – Swimming evaluation
5:30 p.m.	Return from raft trip – Return your wetsuits
6:00 p.m.	Dinner – Pavilion
7:00 p.m.	Group work – Case study/preparation/presentation

Monday:

6:30 a.m.	Breakfast – Pavilion
7:15 a.m.	Intro to rappelling/sizing for all equipment
8:30 a.m.	Group A: Trail run
	Group B: Cliff rappelling, personal interview
11:30 a.m.	Gear list and information
1:00 p.m.	Lunch – Pavilion
1:30 p.m.	Submit personal essay/Closing Remarks

The Camp Includes:

- Four meals (vegetarian option available)
- Rafting and swimming workshop
- Introduction to rappelling
- Trail running fitness assessment
- Use of equipment*
- Use of Wilderness Tours facilities
- All Program Readiness Camp activities

Supplies Required for Program Readiness Camp:

There will be a variety of physical and group activities, so you should pack accordingly. Please include the following supplies:

- Sleeping Bag
- Tent (if you do not have access to a tent, let us know in advance)
- Footwear for rafting/swimming that won't fall off in water (i.e. sport sandals or old running shoes; flip flops or Croc type footwear is inappropriate)
- Running or hiking shoes for trail run
- Appropriate clothing for cool weather conditions
- Swimsuit
- Wool or fleece sweater
- Shell or windbreaker
- Towel and toiletries
- Sunblock/insect repellent

***Note:** All activity equipment is supplied. Participants will be required to sign a Wilderness Tours waiver form and use an assigned Wilderness Tours life jacket.

PROGRAM READINESS CAMP STATEMENT AND POLICIES

In order to learn the skills necessary to become an effective leader in the outdoor adventure industry, we believe that individuals must perform beyond the limits of a mere participant and assume a greater degree of risk and challenge.

In the activities involved, there is an element of inherent risk which is beyond human control. Although we go to great lengths to manage these risks, we cannot assume responsibility for participant's safety or loss of personal equipment.

A signed liability release is required of all Program Readiness Camp participants before the Camp begins. A parent/guardian release must be completed for minors (under 18 years of age).

Applicants will not be able to participate in the Program Readiness Camp unless Algonquin College receives a signed liability release waiver prior to the Camp.

1. Alcohol and Cannabis

- There will be no consumption of any alcohol or cannabis while participants are at the Program Readiness Camp.

2. Smoking

- No smoking is allowed at any time during any Program Readiness Camp activities.
- No smoking is allowed in vehicles or near equipment.