



HIOBS Essential Eligibility Criteria

Hurricane Island Outward Bound School (HIOBS) wilderness courses range from three-day skill building programs to three-month semester programs with the goal of changing lives through challenge and discovery. The wilderness environments in which our expedition-based programs take place are challenging, remote and exposed.

HIOBS does not and shall not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion (creed), gender, gender expression, age, national origin (ancestry), disability, marital status, sexual orientation, or military status in any of its activities or operations. We are committed to providing an inclusive and welcoming environment for all members of our community - including applicants and their families, students, staff, alumni, vendors, contractors, volunteers and clients.

The health and safety of our students and staff are a top priority, along with the educative quality of the course experience for all participants. To achieve essential group goals, the individuals on each course must be fully capable of and committed to learning and using wilderness skills, meeting physical and social challenges, and taking care of themselves and each other.

HIOBS values diversity and a positive learning environment, but does not specialize in experiences for people with disabilities or with significant mental, emotional or behavioral challenges. HIOBS instructors are not therapists and are not trained in adaptive wilderness or integrative teaching skills.

The Essential Eligibility Criteria are applied to all students on expedition based HIOBS courses. A qualified person meets the general EEC for HIOBS and the EEC for the specific program activities and program areas. If an applicant does not meet specific criteria, HIOBS might be able to accommodate an applicant unless it significantly alters the fundamental nature of the course activity, jeopardizes the health and safety of HIOBS students or staff, or places an undue administrative or financial burden on HIOBS.

There are general criteria, listed below, and also criteria based on each activity (or course) type. If a course combines multiple activity types, the eligibility criteria are inclusive of all activity types to be encountered on a given course.

- Backpacking
- Canoeing
- Rock Climbing
- Sailing

General

- Able to understand verbal and visual instructions individually and in a group setting, and follow such instructions whether supervised or not.
- Able to comprehend hazards and safety concerns when explained, and to adhere to safety policies and procedures even when instructors are not present.

- Able to identify and recognize hazards posed by the environment (e.g., steep or uneven terrain, moving water, sun, wind, cold, etc.) and other participants (e.g., fatigue, state of mind and other influencers of judgment and decision making).
- Able to tolerate incidental exposure to potentially harmful substances including environmental allergens or proteins in flora, fauna or food carried by others in the group or members of the public
- Able to effectively communicate to others personal distress, injury or need for assistance, and communicate to others any hazards and dangers that they perceive.
- Able to adapt to the physical and emotional rigors of the expedition, and live in primitive conditions for weeks at a time, often more than a day from advanced medical care.
- Able to stay alert and engaged for extended periods of wilderness travel and living.
- Able to stay properly hydrated and nourished, by day or night, and learn skills for self-care, including proper hygiene and use of clothing and equipment.
- Refrain from the use of alcohol, tobacco, controlled substances, and any misuse of prescription or OTC drugs. If using prescription drugs, able to follow correct dosage and usage and keep them in good condition between resupplies (up to eight days) with or without instructor assistance.
- Able to contribute to a safe social and learning environment and maintain appropriate relationships with other group members and instructors, refrain from sexual activity, harassment and bullying, and all other behavior that disrupts the learning of others or the cohesion of the group.
- Able to follow COVID-19 guidelines both prior to course start, and while on course – as outlined in the **OBUSA COVID-19 Statement of Understanding and on the HIOBS Program Protocols page** on the website: <https://www.hiobs.org/planning/program-protocols/>

Backpacking Courses

- Able to carry a backpack weighing 50-60 pounds, or up to 45% of body weight, that will include personal clothing, group food and equipment.
- Able to travel each day wearing a loaded backpack over steep and uneven terrain, on and off trail, for over six hours, over six miles and an elevation gain or loss of over 1500 feet, including sections of scrambling (one or both hands needed), and crossing rivers and streams that do not have bridges.

Canoeing Courses

- Able to wear a Personal Flotation Device (PFD or “life jacket”) correctly, able to maintain a face up position in water while wearing a PFD, and make progress through the water to shore or a rescue boat.
- Able to follow instructions immediately upon sudden immersion into cold water, whether the instructions have already been taught or are communicated in the moment.

- Able to sit and kneel in a canoe and maintain stability
- Able to control a paddle and pull it through the water to steer and move the canoe forward.
- Able to re-enter a canoe from the water with minimal assistance from others.
- Able to help carry a 70 pound canoe with or without another person.
- Able to travel over uneven terrain on and off trail.

Rock Climbing Courses

- Able to wear a climbing harness and helmet correctly.
- Able to participate in belaying and climbing activities.

Sailing Courses

- Able to wear a Personal Flotation Device (PFD or “life jacket”) correctly, able to maintain a face up position in water while wearing a PFD, and make progress through the water to shore or a rescue boat.
- Able to follow instructions immediately upon sudden immersion into cold water, whether the instructions have already been taught or are communicated in the moment.
- Able to move around the cockpit and maintain balance while seated.
- Able to swim clear of the boat in the event of a capsized.
- Able to re-board a boat from the water with or without assistance from others. If assistance is required, it must not require special techniques or equipment, and must be within the capability of other participants.
- To walk (up to four miles) or jog/run (up to six miles) over uneven terrain including rocky shore lines, coastal trails, beaches, and wading through water. (Maine Sea Program only)
- Able to carry a dry bag slung over a shoulder containing all personal gear (up to thirty pounds) for up to two miles or for one hour, over rough terrain

Sea Kayaking

- Able to wear a Personal Flotation Device (PFD or “life jacket”) correctly, able to maintain a face up position in water while wearing a PFD, and make progress through the water to shore or a rescue boat.
- Able to follow instructions immediately upon sudden immersion into cold water, whether the instructions have already been taught or are communicated in the moment.
- Able to enter a kayak cockpit easily, and execute a wet exit in the event of a capsized.
- Able to sit in a kayak and maintain stability
- Able to control a paddle and pull it through the water to steer and move the kayak forward.
- Able to re-enter a kayak from the water with minimal assistance from others
- Able to carry a 60 pound kayak with another person