

quest overseas

LEADER APPLICATION PACK



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A LETTER FROM THE DIRECTORS

Dear Prospective Leader Applicant

Do not underestimate the job of a Project or Expedition Leader. Our staff are selected not only for their all-round personality, skills and abilities, but for our judgement as to how they will react and cope on the ground if things go wrong.

If you don't believe you're the right sort of person to lead sixteen young and impressionable individuals through new experiences which might well change their outlook on life, if you don't think you can hack it when accidents happen and / or when things don't go according to plan, and if you can't survive, from time to time, on an average of 3 hours sleep per night, then need to re-consider whether the job of a leader is one for you.

Of course, the good news is that leading a Quest Overseas Team is as much an enjoyable and unforgettable experience for yourself as it is for our students. Indeed, many of our staff find a way of joining us again year after year. Moreover, we nurture and develop Assistant Leaders to become Expedition Leaders, we treat our staff with respect and we provide you with all the support you should expect from a good organisation. It's a very rewarding job and a lot of fun and it may even change your outlook on life forever as well.

Moreover, we are always happy to talk to interested applicants and if we do not believe you currently match the criteria we are looking for, will try to help guide you in a direction where you can attain.

Thank you for your time,

QUEST OVERSEAS DIRECTORS

QUEST OVERSEAS

QUEST OVERSEAS has come a long way since founder Michael Amphlet ran the first expedition to South America in June 1996 – since then we have sent nearly 2,000 people overseas and raised nearly £2million for our various projects. Our core ethos has been to give equal importance both to the benefit for our projects and local contact, as well as the experience for our students. As such:

- We aim for our participants to have the travel experience of a lifetime
- We aim to truly make a difference through our projects, volunteers, partners and donations through our charity Quest4Change
- The relative level of funding our projects receive from our payments is (on last check), the highest in the industry
- We offer a high quality professional service with full training and support offered to all participants
- We work on our projects for a minimum of five years and ensure we provide maximum benefit where it is needed.

Responsible travel

All QUEST OVERSEAS employees have a passion for responsible travel and we believe that this is an ethos that should be at the heart of all travel. It is about making a tangible ‘positive impact’ on both society and the environment with everything that we and our teams do. We ensure that we have a positive impact on all the communities and environments that we are lucky enough to visit.



Becoming a Leader

Our Leaders take great pride in showing our participants the ‘real’ Africa or South America. Our core values are very important to us and we want like-minded people to become Leaders. You must have exceptional organisational, problem solving & people skills to ensure our teams have the experience of a lifetime whilst having a positive impact on their environment. All leaders must thrive on the “work hard - play hard” philosophy, and this should reflect on their teams.

Leader requirements

A passion for responsible travel: We only employ Leaders who have a genuine passion for environmentally and culturally responsible tourism. Previous experience living, traveling, working or studying abroad is an essential requirement, ideally in the countries where we work.

Language skills: All groups are led in English so fluent English is mandatory. For our Latin American destinations it is crucial that our Leaders speak Spanish or Portuguese (depending on their destination).

Excellent Leadership skills: We look for people who have strong personal leadership skills to operate independently and effectively in what may be considered remote and arduous conditions.

Strong communication skills: You will need to have a proven ability to communicate effectively in a wide range of contexts - to interact and communicate in a positive and friendly manner with all students, local staff, communities, and outside agencies.

Resourcefulness: We employ Leaders who can remain calm under unpredictable and stressful circumstances. Our Leaders need to take decisive action to resolve problems as they arise. Leading is a challenging role and we need people who are able to take charge and deal with any circumstances.

Organisation skills: All our Leaders are expected to involve themselves in every aspect of the organisation, the running and the leading of their team, project and activities and free time.

Flexibility & humour: Due to the very nature of our overseas projects/expeditions Leaders need to adopt an extremely flexible attitude towards work and maintain an inexhaustible sense of humour.

Commitment: We hire Leaders to live and work overseas for a minimum of three months but often for six months to a year at a time. It takes time to train a QUEST OVERSEAS Leader and once you have been trained we would like to have you around for a while.

QUEST OVERSEAS Leader Role Description

The primary aim of the Leader role is to ensure the overall successful operation of each project and trip as detailed by QUEST OVERSEAS with equal focus on the health, safety, activities and enjoyment of the group members, as well as keeping good relations with our local partners.



General:

- Consistently deliver a high level of customer service and satisfaction.
- Be QUEST OVERSEAS's representative in the field acting responsibly towards our projects, their staff and the local community.
- Run all projects & trips to budget in accordance with accounting procedures.
- Run projects & trips according to QUEST OVERSEAS itineraries, guidelines, policies & values.
- Review risk assessments and carry out new risk assessments as required.
- Carry out administrative requirements in a thorough and timely manner.
- Look out for potential opportunities for QUEST OVERSEAS such as new projects, placements, employees, students or ways to improve the itineraries.

Specific:

- Act as day-to-day guide, manager, mentor and interpreter for the team maintaining morale and motivation.
- Provide in-country orientation for all teams including cultural awareness, health & safety, risk assessments etc.
- Maintain strong professional and personal relationships with our local contacts. This includes our project partners, adventure travel agents, hostel owners, bus drivers and anyone who will work with us or our teams.

- Deal directly with participant issues & concerns, ensuring that student satisfaction is effectively achieved.
- Organise logistics of team project work ensuring that the team is instructed in the skills necessary to achieve the project goals and complete the project work in the time frame allowed.
- Use initiative to generate new activities and an exciting day-to-day environment for all concerned
- Make bookings for accommodation, transport and activities as required.
- Initiate and participate in all activities, lessons and nights out where team members are involved.
- Provide regular field updates for time spent on projects.
- Provide post-project and post-trip reports, accounts and student feedback forms for each trip in the provided format and within the required time.

Training & certificates required (as a minimum)

QUEST OVERSEAS are happy for Leaders to obtain these qualifications after Leader selection and can provide details of course providers.

- Expedition Leaders must have relevant Mountain Leadership Training (e.g. Summer or Winter MLTB Training). This is not essential for leaders on projects, but is preferable.
- First Aid certificate that satisfies the HSE requirements for first aid at work (normally a 2-day course) valid for at least 12 months from the start of the Team preparation Days. – ideally Wilderness First Aid.
- Provide an enhanced CRB police check.



Detailed description of the QUEST OVERSEAS Leader role

All of QUEST OVERSEAS' teams are initially trained and prepared in the UK for their project and/or trip. This means that students already know (hopefully) what they will be doing on the project, where they will be going and what the planned and what their activities are likely to be. Your job, as the leader, is to bring it all to life, to make sure that it all happens according to plan, as smoothly as possible or to come up with alternate arrangements if something goes awry.

Preparation

Prior to each trip, the leader will receive a list of the team on that departure. This list is used to make the bookings for the trip and to obtain some prior knowledge about the team. The leader is responsible for running the entire trip; this includes ensuring all expedition equipment is organised and of a good standard, booking and paying for all local transport, accommodation, local operators, guides, etc. For projects, the Leaders usually get to the project site one week before the team in order to set-up the team work plan, check accommodation, meet with partners, buy any project materials, ensure any required in-country staff are hired etc. Leaders must maintain detailed daily expense accounts, to be submitted with receipts to the QUEST OVERSEAS UK office at the end of the trip.

Day 1

Quest Overseas students: At the commencement of the trip, most Quest Overseas students will arrive at the airport in the same morning/afternoon.

Once the team has arrived, as early as practical the leader holds a group meeting to give a general welcome to everyone, and to provide in-country orientation. The proper presentation of this meeting is one of the most important aspects of leading – it sets the tone for the entire trip, as well as previews and forewarns students about their upcoming project work and/or adventures.

Daily leadership

Leaders are expected to spend time with the team even when there are no structured activities. It may mean that you take people to places or help them organise things to do. Leaders should eat with the group and have daily meetings to provide ongoing communication about the itinerary. You will find that teams run much more easily the

more time that you spend with the group. Although, of course, groups also need some independence so that they don't feel that they're on a school trip.

Group dynamics is the most challenging area of leading and one that is difficult to describe. At times it might mean you have to be the sole entertainer of the group or counsellor for a participant with a problem. You may have your authority challenged by individuals making 'power plays' or have people wanting you to be a porter. Your nursing skills will definitely be called upon. More positively, you will often be a resource, a font of knowledge and someone there to help the team or make travel arrangements while the passengers go off by themselves. Leaders teach all our participants how to be more independent, advise travellers on suitable behaviour towards local people and other travellers, while also being bearers of infinite wisdom regarding matters both important and trivial.

You will also need to develop good relationships with our partners, local operators and all local people that you deal with. We expect Leaders to learn the more subtle cultural rules of the country in which they work, to successfully deal with local people and to pass this information onto our travellers. You will also need to learn as much as you possibly can about the country in which you work: the history, politics, religion, etc. And all the information that is not included in guide books; like where to eat, what to eat, how to bargain, where to shop, how to behave, etc.

QUEST OVERSEAS takes health & safety very seriously and carries out full risk assessments for all countries and activities students partake in. You will be responsible for reviewing risk assessments and providing new risk assessments where required to ensure that QUEST OVERSEAS maintains its health and safety record.

Project leadership

Our projects vary. In general, Leaders need to ensure that the team are motivated and carrying out the work that they are expected to do safely. On some projects the leader will manage all project costs including hiring in-country staff, buying materials, on others this is managed by our local project partners. An important part of the project leadership is also to ensure that our project partners are happy with the QUEST OVERSEAS team and how work is progressing. It is also important that the project is run ethically and responsibly and that the long-term project goals are being worked towards.



Trip leadership

While running the trip you will find that you are very busy. As well as spending time with the team, you will be making arrangements with local guides, booking hotels for future trips, paying hotels (not always an easy process), arranging transport for the next few days, etc. You need to be well organised! However the mechanics of running the trips soon becomes second nature and somewhat automatic. This is important as it gives you the freedom to concentrate on the team and their safety and enjoyment.

Activity leadership (e.g. language courses)

Language courses are run at the beginning of some combined trips and projects and it is useful time to ensure that the team are gelling and that everyone is prepared for the weeks ahead. The activity instructor or teacher will be looking after the students for part of the day and it is up to the Leader to make sure the instructor is doing their job and students are enjoying their course and learning. Spare time can be used to prepare for projects, booking itineraries etc.

Last day

On the last day of the trip or project the leader need to de-brief the team. We also like to help participants who are going on to travel further around the area – so do give out tips, must sees, things to look out for, dangers etc. We also like to know what our participants will be doing in the future – we are always on the look out for QUEST OVERSEAS reps back home for example, or even future leaders.

Post-trip/project

At the end of the trip/project the leader writes a report reviewing all aspects of the trip. The purpose is to let head office know what is happening in the field and at our projects and to let other Leaders know about any issues with local partners, operators, hotel or transport. You are also required to send in your accounts and the feedback forms within two weeks of the end date of each trip.

FUN!

A leader always defines the trip. For us, this means your role not only lies in ensuring the safe and smooth running of everything which happens with the team, but also that the team has as much fun as the can, both day and night. What this means for the leader often depends on the team, some teams will require motivation from the front whilst other teams will be more than capable of making their own fun. Either way, we expect leaders to be there with the group on a social level as well as a professional one, with the right balance of course.



Recruitment and Training

Application

You are able to submit your application for a Leader position at any time, however you may not be interviewed immediately. Selection courses are conducted at certain times of the year. The timing of interviews and the number of new Leaders sought are largely dependent upon our departure dates. After submitting your Application, you will be advised by email if you have progressed to attending our selection days, and subsequently, of the date of the selection days. Sometimes this may take a few months! We aim to contact you whether you have been successful in your application or not, so do chase us up if you don't hear from us.

Selection Day

The Selection courses are held at or close to our offices in Brighton in the UK. This gives us an opportunity to assess your suitability to the role as well as giving you the time to understand more about QUEST OVERSEAS and our ethos. It's not unusual for applying Leaders to de-select themselves during the staff selection days – please ensure you are happy with the responsibility of the role before accepting a job from us.

Training

As well as obtaining first aid and MLTB qualifications, all new Leaders must complete our staff training course before running their first trip. The course consists of 3-4 days of group training run in the UK followed by shadowing overseas. The UK training covers all you need to know to start leading trips - Customer Service, Group Dynamics, Safety, Responsible Travel, Accounts and more. We also expect you to be available for our student training weekends, which also take place in the UK.

Following this, we will also send you overseas before your team arrives for a number of weeks or months, during which time you will shadow an experienced leader. The length of this shadow period depends largely on your level of experience and is determined on a case by case basis.

Employment contract

You will receive your Employment Contract when your initial destination is finalised and you've successfully completed your training.

Pay

Your remuneration package is made up of the following components:

- Base Salary & Allowances
- Return flights to your destination
- Insurance (covering everything except personal belongings)

You will receive a daily rate of pay for each day you work. During trips or projects your accommodation and food is included, as well as all the activities provided for the students. Wage amounts for next year are currently being confirmed and we will be able to let you know about these before or at our selection days. As a point of reference though, leaders this year were paid between £10 and £50 per day, depending on their position and level of experience.

Contract renewal

Most Leaders continue leading for about 2 years. We are keen for all our good Leaders to renew their contracts beyond the initial period, and start discussing their future plans with them before their contract finishes, to help everyone's planning.

Ending contracts

When you decide that it is time to stop leading trips, it is important that you give QUEST OVERSEAS as much notice as possible.