



Guidance for completing the Learning Outside the Classroom Quality Badge Self Evaluation Form (SEF)

Introduction

For the purposes of the Quality Badge we define learning outside the classroom as “The use of places other than the classroom for the teaching and learning of young people aged 0-19.” This includes experiences that take place in:

- School grounds: for example gardening/growing activities or using school buildings as a resource for learning about energy use and waste.
- The local environment: for example, land and streetscapes, sites of special scientific interest, heritage sites, places of worship, theatres, live music events and involvement through citizenship activities like local volunteering projects.
- Places further afield: for example, outdoor, field study and environmental centres; theatre workshops and places of worship; farms and gardens; museums and galleries; places that reflect the world of commerce and technology.
- Residential places: for example, staying at field study and/or outdoor adventure centres; involvement in cultural and arts festivals; taking part in expeditions, summer camps and sports events; or in cultural, language and fieldwork visits abroad.

This guidance will help you to evaluate the provision you make for learners against each of the quality sub-indicator statements in the self evaluation form. Having evaluated your organisation’s learning provision in this way you will be in a better position to decide whether or not you can confidently tick the box alongside each statement.

This guidance gives *specific* examples of good practice in relation to each *sub-indicator*. Often good practice takes a number of different forms. Your organisation only needs to evidence one form of practice to meet the sub-indicator.

This guidance also provides an *overview* of ‘good’ practice and of practice that is ‘not good enough’ in relation to each of the six *high level indicators*. This may be useful to get a view of where you think your organisation matches the description of ‘good’ or ‘not good enough’. These overviews are examples and are not intended to be prescriptive. They help place each high level indicator in the context of the three strands of the quality badge.

1. The provider has a process in place to assist users (your clients/audience) to plan the learning experience effectively.

a) My organisation offers guidance/information on OR agrees roles and responsibilities of the user and the provider i.e. who does what.

Guidance and information can be communicated in a variety of ways. Whichever method is used it should be unambiguous, making it clear what is provided well in advance of the experience. This information should be documented/recorded (electronically or hard copy); for example, through a planning form, booking form or checklist, a telephone conversation, a clearly laid out brochure, a website or another appropriate means. It should, where appropriate, provide for a pre-visit. It needs to ensure that there can be an effective method of two-way communication.

Documentation should detail the necessary arrangements for the experience (date, time, numbers, staffing/supervision, etc.) and the roles and responsibilities essential for effective management. It should make clear where there is shared responsibility; (e.g. for agreeing what learning outcomes are intended, supervision during 'downtime' or mealtimes, use of a 'shop', etc.) NB Pastoral care is still ultimately the responsibility of the teacher/group leader.

There are understandable differences between the operational practices of providers. For example, there are those that have paid and unpaid staff that are actively involved in the delivery during experiences. There are also those whose provision is in terms of venue/resources/artefacts or an event and have little or no scope for tailored/negotiated activities. Whatever the type of provision, all providers should be able to ensure that good planning supports learning.

b) My organisation captures OR agrees learning objectives.

The provider needs to make clear the experiences being offered and the learning that they are intended to provide. Where there is some flexibility in negotiation or where the provider is able to respond to user needs, the provider should provide some evidence that intended learning outcomes are clear from the pre-planning stage onwards – recorded for example on booking forms or through correspondence with the user. These might be those offered by the provider, by the user or developed through collaboration between both. The agreed intended learning outcomes may be presented in many different ways and formats. There is often only one chance (during an experience) to 'capture' learning for future use and so providers should make it clear how this can be achieved; for example, through information provided or interpretation materials.

For those providers that provide a venue, resources, artefacts or a 'staged' event only, rather than staff, there may be no opportunity for negotiating or tailoring activities to suit what a user may want, in terms of learning outcomes. In these circumstances it should be made clear, in publicity materials, teacher guidance notes, etc. the scope of the experiences offered and the main purpose of the learning intended and how it can be accessed. Where this is not appropriate, then it should be clear that the learning is open-ended and for the user to interpret and plan.

NB. Learning objectives and learning outcomes are phrases used to describe what it is that learners are intended to have learnt during or following an activity. They are an essential part of planning and guide the nature of learning experiences and the places where they should occur. Learning outcomes can be expressed as knowledge, skills,

understanding and/or as personal development. Teachers use these as the starting point to plan how they will deliver the curriculum - subjects, areas of learning, themes, Every Child Matters.

c) My organisation offers a menu OR plans (where necessary) a tailored programme of work, with a purpose for each activity, linked to learning objectives.

There needs to be evidence that the provider has made it clear the range of activities and programmes of work being offered. Where appropriate, they should demonstrate how these might be adapted to suit user needs. Evidence should be available that shows a clear purpose(s) for each activity that enables users to make informed choices. As in 1b above, there should be an obvious link to intended learning outcomes. Where appropriate, providers need to make clear how activities can build on learning by repeat visits and evidence of how learning can be guided.

d) My organisation takes into account, any equality, diversity and inclusion issues and needs.

Providers should make their policy/ies clear to users. They should be able to provide examples of how equality, diversity and inclusion can impact on planning. It should be clear how providers ask users what their requirements are in terms of equality, diversity and inclusion (could include food requirements). Examples of where providers are unable to be inclusive should be clearly communicated to users. For example some activities may have a pre-requisite - being able swim being a pre-requisite to undertake specific activities. There should also be, perhaps through a booking form or correspondence, evidence that access needs are confirmed by the user. The obligation of the provider is to provide information and ask questions, but it is the user's responsibility to ensure activities are suitable for children's specific needs.

e) My organisation offers guidance/information on OR agrees a process with the user, for assessing learner progress during the overall experience and how the experience will be evaluated.

The methods used by a provider for evaluation should be shared with users in advance of the experience; for example that the provider has had a discussion with the user about their experience of the complete visit (what happens before, during and after visit). Evidence should be available that shows how the provider is able to help with learner progress. For example, that the provider understands what preparation the user has done pre-visit (for example in the classroom) or has a way of understanding the prior level of young people's experience, knowledge, skills, etc. Providers should be able to evidence that the provider takes note and is responsive to evaluation.

f) My organisation offers guidance/information on (could include resources/activities) OR discusses with the user preparation and follow up to the visit.

Information provided to users (e.g. website, teacher notes, etc.) should make clear any opportunities to extend learning pre and post-visit. These could include any resources that could be used or suggestions on activities associated with an area of learning, in preparation for the visit. Likewise, providers with or without education staff should offer evidence that they have offered helpful suggestions about how to

plan for the experience and support users in follow-up work; for example, through information provided, extension work, collections and materials which can be taken away or through more direct support to the user post visit.

Description of 'good' practice

Clear information is provided well in advance of each visit, about what learning activities are offered and how they can be tailored to the needs of users. As a result, users can ensure that what they intend to be learnt can be well planned for and it is clear who is responsible for planning and delivery. It is clear that provision is inclusive and plans are informed by an understanding of the needs of all users. There is an effective way of making sure there is a process of checking on the progress of learners and that information is used to enable an effective evaluation of provision. Guidance and/or information ensures that users know how to 'capture' information during visits and makes information available to extend learning either side of a visit. By valuing communication and partnership in its dealings with users the provider is enabling the planning of effective learning and recognising the contribution of structure and planning to the overall learning outside the classroom experience.

Description of practice that is 'not good enough'

Information about what learning activities are offered is provided in advance of each visit. It is not always clear how these can be tailored to the needs of users. As a result, users have insufficient opportunity to ensure that what they intend to be learnt are included in plans. Information does not make sufficiently clear the roles and responsibilities of either provider and/or user staff during planning and delivery. The provider makes it clear all users are welcome, but is aware that not all activities are accessible to all learners regardless of disability and doesn't suggest alternatives. There is a system for user evaluation. This process is not shared with users before the visit and it is not clear how learners' progress will be checked or evaluated to enable an effect evaluation of provision. Information ensures that users know how to 'capture' information during visits but has no guidance on how users can extend learning either side of a visit. By not involving or communicating effectively with the user, the provider is restricting its own and the user's potential to plan for an effective learning experience.

2. The provider provides accurate information about its offer.

- a) My organisation ensures that any promotional and/or written materials provide an accurate description of amenities, facilities and services provided and contact details.**

There needs to be sufficient information made available to the user, in order to allow for a full understanding of the learning experience offered and enable planning accordingly. This information should cover site descriptions, dining areas/cafeterias, shops, outside and inside space, cloakrooms/storage facilities, access information, etc. Any information that impacts on the user experience should be detailed and contact

details, to enable the user to make relevant enquiries, should be supplied. The information could be presented in a variety of formats such as an up-to-date website, hard copy brochure, set of guidance notes or leaflet or direct correspondence with the user which describes amenities, facilities and services.

b) My organisation has charging policies that state honestly the charges of the experience.

The provider should be explicit about its charging policies so that the user can plan financially for a learning outside the classroom experience. Information about charging policies should include the cost of the experience, any variable costs (e.g. discounts depending on group size, etc.) and any additional costs likely to be incurred on site (e.g. car parking, the shop, etc.). This information might be provided on a website or in a leaflet or through direct correspondence with the user.

Description of 'good' practice

Prior to the learning experience, a provider establishes communication with the user via a website. The website provides full and accurate information about amenities, facilities, services and costs. It includes information on any variables, such as staff shortages, weather, size of visiting group, which might affect the timings, costs or content of an experience. The website is regularly updated and users are advised to contact a member of staff at the organisation if they have any queries. By ensuring that the user has as much accurate information as possible prior to the experience itself, the organisation enables them to start planning effective learning.

Description of practice that is 'not good enough'

The provider provides basic information on its website about its amenities and facilities. Although the website indicates that educational visits are welcomed, there is no information on the website about the learning services offered. Contact details for the organisation are available on the website and the user can contact the organisation for information on the learning services offered and costs of a learning experience. The user is not advised at any point of any variables such as staff shortages, weather, size of visiting group which might affect the timings, costs or content of an experience. By not providing full and clear information in its promotional materials and by not facilitating open and honest communication with the user at the earliest available opportunity, the organisation does not enable the user to plan effective learning.

3. The provider provides activities, experiences and resources which meet learner needs.

a) My organisation offers a variety of activities delivered through a range of teaching and learning styles.

Information on provision (through written correspondence, on the website, leaflet, etc.) should make clear the suitability of experiences for different learning styles and learning needs; for example, watching a theatre performance as compared to participation in a craft workshop or pond dipping. Providers should be able to show that they have considered different learning styles and are aware that an essential element of Learning Outside the Classroom is learning through direct first-hand experience. For example, a 'Look-See' activity as compared to a 'See-do' practical activity - worksheets have their limitations!

b) Equipment and materials are suitable for tasks and/or activities, the age and ability of the learners, are current and in good working order.

Providers should have evidence which shows that equipment and materials used in activities are suitable to the needs of users. This means ensuring that they are accessible; for example by providing a viewing gallery or a platform to improve visibility. Equipment should be well maintained and the provider should be able to provide evidence of routine checks, maintenance and replacement. For providers reliant on self-guided experiences, guidance and support is especially important for learners; for example, through the provision of interpretative materials, guide maps or audio guides, etc.

c) My organisation makes good use of its location.

All locations have rich opportunities for learning. However, many locations have special merit and evidence of how these are exploited for educational purposes should be available. Where resources are not purpose built, alternative provision for such things as toilets, storing clothing and eating areas, can be effective. Some providers have multiple locations which can provide evidence of a range of provision for multiple visits and variety and progression in learning.

d) The amenities, facilities and services are as described in promotional and/or written materials.

Providers should provide accurate information about what they provide. This should reflect their operational practices to ensure consistency, safety and security. Where changes are necessary, users need to be forewarned or informed as quickly as possible. It should be made clear to users beforehand if there are any areas/activities where access is denied to certain groups; for example, private areas, shop, public places, etc.

e) Educational and/or instructional staff members of my organisation are competent.

My organisation does not have educational and/or instructional staff members.

Evidence will be needed of how a provider ensures the competency of staff (paid and voluntary) to meet their educational role. This could be through the management of human resources - recruitment, induction, mentoring, professional development, appraisal and training. Where providers do not have staff for education, then there should be evidence that provision has been developed and supported by appropriate professional advice.

- f) My organisation has a process in place for monitoring and evaluating the quality of the teaching/instruction of our educational and/or instructional staff members.
My organisation does not have educational and/or instructional staff members.**

Evidence should be available that shows that there is an effective mechanism for evaluating the quality of teaching and learning of the education staff. There should be evidence of how information is collected through monitoring their work. For example, through making checks on planning, peer mentoring, direct observation, evaluations and feedback, performance reviews, etc. The monitoring process needs to provide evidence that there is a process to evaluate the quality of teaching and learning and that this informs staff development.

Where there are no education staff, there should be evidence that there is a mechanism for evaluating the quality of provision more generally. This should take into account any learning objectives or outcomes that were agreed prior to the experience.

Description of 'good' practice

Activities are carefully planned to focus on appropriate learning and/or areas of the curriculum, as agreed with clients. They are designed so that it is easy for users to match the activities to different age groups and abilities. Users have been able to discuss and contribute to planning activities that suit their intended learning outcomes. As a result, experiences are well matched to the, sometimes different, needs of learners. Planning shows a good understanding of the curriculum and the needs of Children's Services. Good use is made of resources which enables learners to be fully engaged in active learning and user staff know exactly what to expect during their visit. Education staff understand the needs of their user groups and make a valuable contribution to the progress that learners make. There is an effective way of checking on the effectiveness of staff and activities provided. As a result, the professional development of staff ensures the quality of provision. By ensuring that the structure, processes and ethos of the organisation are focused on enabling effective learning, the provider is better positioned to meet the needs of learners.

Description of practice that is 'not good enough'

Experiences are planned to provide broad support for learning in one or more subjects of the National Curriculum. The user is informed about the nature of activities but not about how this might fit in with teacher's plans or what learning can be expected. As a result, users can access the learning offered but have little opportunity to make use of experiences to suit their own intended learning outcomes or adapt them to the needs of learners. Users are provided information on a 'menu' of experiences. These activities are based on a 'Look-See' tour and a series of worksheets for completion. As a result, some learners are not engaged in learning throughout their visit and their learning is limited. Some of the interactive equipment is not working and there is no systematic way of keeping equipment and displays up-to-

date. Staff are experts in their field but have too little understanding of the needs of users. Their work is not evaluated and therefore staff development is not effectively focussed on their teaching and learning skills. A lack of thorough consideration of the user in the structures and processes that support a learning experience restricts the provider's ability to meet learner needs and suggests that learning provision is not a priority.

4. The provider reviews the experience and acts upon feedback.

a) My organisation evaluates its services.

The provider must ensure that learning programmes are appropriate to the nature of the organisation and the needs of children and young people. In order to do so, the provider needs to instigate self or third party evaluation of its services. For example the organisation might participate in an external/third party accreditation scheme which reviews and evaluates the overall quality of learning provision at the organisation (e.g. external awards scheme, funding application, etc.). Alternatively there might be in place an internal quality assurance system or review process which requires those responsible for delivering learning to review and evaluate staff performance, programme content and delivery and the overall role of learning. This could be a formal process or could take the form of regular, noted staff meetings. The evaluation should be regular, all-encompassing and the results should be recorded and acted upon as appropriate.

b) My organisation gathers feedback from users (teachers and learners), including:

- **whether what was agreed at the planning stage was delivered;**
- **whether learning objectives have been met; and**
- **whether value for money has been achieved.**

The activities and programmes offered by a provider should also be current and relevant to the needs of the majority of users. Ideally, there should be a mechanism which allows teachers and/or learners to comment on the stated content of the learning experience, whether the stated learning objectives were met and whether the experience was worth the money spent (e.g. feedback form, comments book, comments board, video diary, web discussions, etc.). Alternatively, the provider should initiate follow up contact with the user (telephone, letter, email, etc.), asking them to comment on the stated content of the learning experience, whether the stated learning objectives were met and whether the experience was worth the money spent.

If the experience takes place over an extended period of time, the provider should have a mechanism for feeding back on and developing the experience as it progresses.

In order that user feedback is as considered as possible, the provider should, where possible, discuss (or share information about) the feedback process with the user prior to the learning experience.

c) My organisation has a process in place to change practice as a result of review, evaluation and feedback.

Review, evaluation and feedback must be acted on in order to develop learning provision which more closely meets the needs of the user. Anecdotal and statistical evidence should be recorded and analysed. Where there are clear trends in the feedback, action should be taken in response to that feedback and that action should be evidenced in updated versions of the education programme, menu of activities or specific session/activity plans. Regular meetings should be held to establish what, if any, changes need to be made in terms of planning, staffing, programme content and delivery in relation to learning services based on feedback and evaluation.

Description of 'good' practice

The provider seeks to gather feedback from the user by providing users with feedback forms prior to the learning experience to be returned after the experience or by actively seeking feedback on the experience informally. The organisation also reviews and adapts its own services at quarterly staff meetings or by entering awards schemes which incorporate an element of evaluation and assessment. By encouraging self and 3rd party review, the provider is sustaining productive communication with the user and allowing for the development of learning services which meet the needs of the user.

Description of practice that is 'not good enough'

The provider does not operate a feedback process, but occasionally receives feedback from users via telephone, email or letter. If there are a large number of complaints about a particular aspect of the learning service, staff will review the problem and affect any changes necessary. The organisation does not drive the feedback and evaluation process and does not conduct its own review of its provision. This lack of self and 3rd party review and consequently random developmental process means that effective partnerships with users are not sustained and the potential for enabling effective learning is limited.

5. The provider meets the needs of users.

a) My organisation communicates effectively with users

Information and guidance on the learning provision offered by a provider should be easily available to the user. The provider should provide clear and accessible channels of communication for the user. Of course, there are circumstances in which the user does not enter into communication with the provider at any point prior to or subsequent to a visit. As long as the provider has made all relevant information and guidance available to the user, it has communicated to the best of its ability. For example, if there is no booking system in place to support educational visits to a site/organisation and visiting groups arrive unannounced, there should be a website or leaflet which provides guidance on planning a visit and contact details for the organisation.

Where the user does enter into two-way communication with the provider – perhaps through guided or tailored learning experiences, that provider should seek to maintain that communication. More established communication with the user might take place

before, during and after the learning experience; for example through the offer of pre-visits, correspondence with the user, etc.

b) Essential written policies and procedures are reviewed, maintained and updated. This is undertaken on a regular basis and covers all venues and all activities

It is important that *all* parts of the organisation are aware of and prepared to meet the needs of users. This means that *all* practice, whether directly related to learning or not, should be regularly reviewed, maintained and updated. Essential written policies and procedures in relation to all aspects of the organisation should be dated, reviewed/updated regularly and made available to all paid and unpaid staff (e.g. code of conduct, education policy, staff handbook, teachers' guidelines, education programme, performance appraisal procedures, risk management policy, health & safety guidelines, etc.)

c) My organisation has an understanding of sustainability issues and the impact of activities and shares this with users

Learning outside the classroom should enable the learner to place themselves and their knowledge and skills in a wider context. Therefore the provider should attempt to ensure that the user is aware of the wider environmental context of the learning experience. There might be a website or leaflet providing information on sustainability issues and practices associated with the site/organisation and/or the experience itself (e.g. impact on the local community, impact on natural environment, recycling practices, energy/water conservation, etc.). Where appropriate, there might be an element to educational activities which addresses issues of sustainability in relation to the learning taking place. There might be a written environmental policy for the organisation which is made available to users.

d) My organisation has a process in place to monitor the overall quality of provision across its site (or sites - if multiple sites) and make changes where necessary

The provider should endeavour to ensure that the quality of learning provision and the experience of the visit as a whole is consistent for all new and repeat users. This might be achieved through central training procedures (e.g. health & safety, front of house/guiding, etc.) for all staff at all sites or through regular central review of all practices at sites/parts of a single site (meetings, formal review process). This might be covered by quality assurance processes overseen by the person responsible for learning, including a review of all programmes, processes and policies.

Description of 'good' practice

All of a provider's structures and processes are monitored, reviewed and adapted with the user in mind. Good practice is upheld in written policies and procedures which provide structure and support to the learning experience and where necessary, detail action taken in regard to environmental sustainability. These documents are regularly updated and shared with the user via the website, at the site itself or on request. By operating a transparent organisation with structures and processes which

endeavour to meet the needs of users, the organisation demonstrates a commitment to learning outside the classroom.

Description of practice that is 'not good enough'

The provider monitors, reviews and adapts its structures and processes on a regular basis and written policies and procedures (including an environmental policy) are updated regularly to reflect this. Individual teams and sites are evaluated separately and the provision of learning is not considered in reviews of teams other than the learning team. By not considering or communicating with the user in the development of organisational structures and processes, the organisation does not demonstrate sufficient understanding of or commitment to learning outside the classroom and the value of working in partnership with the user.

6. The provider has safety management processes in place to manage risk effectively.

a) My organisation has safety management procedures in place so that risks are identified and appropriately managed. These are shared with users.

In order that all parts of the organisation are aware of and prepared to meet the needs of users, the provider will have in place the following:

- A risk management policy, with systems in place and operating
- Risk assessments for specific activities
- A process for reviewing and updating these risk assessments
- A process for recording and acting upon near misses, accidents, incidents, etc.
- Appropriate first aid provision
- Emergency procedures and/or an action plan
- A review of written health and safety policies (links to indicator 5b above).

b) My organisation complies with all external regulation relating to it e.g. Health & Safety at Work Act.

In order to meet this indicator, a provider will need to sign and submit a declaration form i.e. a signed statement which confirms compliance to all external regulation relating to the organisation.

c) My organisation has appropriate/agreed public liability insurance cover.

In order to meet this indicator, the provider will need to sign and submit a declaration form i.e. a signed statement which confirms the organisation has an appropriate level of cover.

d) My organisation has relevant safeguarding procedures in place e.g. maintains Child Protection Standards and provides child secure venues.

The provider should have evidence to show that they provide child secure venues. This evidence should include:

- An up-to-date and regularly reviewed safeguarding policy
- Documentation to show that all members of staff who come into contact with children are CRB checked and cleared.

Description of 'good' practice

A provider manages risk effectively. The organisation ensures that risks are identified and appropriately managed and that essential safety management procedures are in place, are regularly monitored, reviewed and updated and there is evidence that this is an active and ongoing process. These processes support and enable effective learning. The organisation's safety management procedures are shared appropriately with all users via a website and/or programme planning/booking information and/or during a pre-visit, and at the venue itself.

Description of practice that is 'not good enough'

A provider manages risk effectively and ensures that risks are identified and appropriately managed. Essential safety management procedures are in place, but there is little or no evidence that these are regularly monitored, reviewed and updated. The organisation does not always share these safety management procedures with users. As a consequence, the organisation does not enable the user to plan effective learning.