

**UNIVERSITY OF GLASGOW**  
**Exploration Society**

**Guidance Notes for Expeditions**

**TEAM SELECTION**

Selecting the best possible team for an expedition can be critical to the expedition's success. This Guidance Note provides advice on good team selection practice.

**a) Factors to consider**

- 1. Age and stage** It can be very helpful to include older students in the team; they may have useful experiences from part careers e.g. vehicle maintenance, language skills. Also, in some countries, vehicle hire may be impossible for drivers below the age of 25.

Although it is likely that expeditions will be made up of mainly L3/L4 students, you are recommended to include some L1/L2 candidates if they are suitable. This is very helpful to the sustainability of expeditions: those who gain some experience at L1/L2 are in a good position to take responsibility at L3/L4.

- 2. Gender balance** In some field locations, it can be important, for safety reasons, to have an even number of males and females on the team. Since the sex ratio of biological science and geography students (who make up the majority of applicants) is skewed towards females, it can sometimes be difficult to find enough well qualified males.
- 3. Ex Soc membership** All expedition members must also be Ex Soc members: if anyone you select is not yet a member, make sure they sign up.
- 4. Expertise/background knowledge** Ex Soc membership is open to all students in the University and you should not discriminate against non-science students in choosing your team. Clearly, you should select people who have relevant expertise, skills and interests, but it is generally not essential to have everyone on a team possess knowledge relevant to the scientific aims of the expedition. Language, first aid and driving skills can be very useful too.
- 5. Health problems** You should not discriminate against students with health problems in choosing your team. But you need to use common sense: if an applicant has to check in weekly with a highly qualified medical specialist, that person may be unsuitable for certain expeditions. Getting to know people's serious health problems (on a confidential basis) is therefore a legitimate part of the selection process.
- 6. Academic progress** We do not wish to be too prescriptive about this: taking part in an expedition can be such a stimulating activity that students who have previously struggled academically can turn round their progress as a result. However, you also

need to remember that preparing for and taking part in an expedition involves a considerable investment of time. Students who are struggling with their work may not be able to put in enough effort during term time, and/or may need to study for resits during the expedition itself: that is a highly undesirable situation.

- 7. Current students and staff** Expedition members should normally be current students and staff of GU. You may occasionally have a need to take a graduate who has left the University, but only if that person brings particular qualities to the team. In calculating the grant from the University Court, people who are no longer at the University of Glasgow will not be counted.

It is a normal requirement of GU expeditions that one or more members of the team is a member of staff. This requirement is only waived when the expedition organisers can convince the Exploration Council (which has the power to approve expedition proposals) that an excellent alternative arrangement to the participation of staff has been made. This usually means the existence of a person (or persons) at the expedition site who is prepared to substitute for the roles performed by staff members on an expedition.

It is best that staff are present throughout the duration of the expedition (and take part in planning), but, if staff can only be present part of the time, arrangements need to be made to cover for their role when they are gone.

- 8. Application process** It is good practice for expedition applicants to submit (by a strict deadline) an application form: a model application form is available on the Ex Soc website. Applicants are then interviewed. It is not good practice for a group of friends to get together and propose an expedition composed entirely of themselves and not open to other Ex Soc members.

When submitting the expedition prospectus to the Exploration Council for approval, expedition teams will be expected to submit a covering letter including information on the number of applications received and the criteria used for selection.

- 9. Interview** Once applications have been submitted, interviews for candidates should be arranged. If you have a very large number of candidates, you may feel it necessary to exclude some on the basis of the application form alone, but, ideally, each applicant (as long as they have completed the form competently) should be interviewed, and informed of the result as soon as possible.

It is sensible to have a number of **reserves** on your team list, since good candidates are often chosen by more than one expedition, and may have a difficult decision to make over which offer to accept.