



Outdoor Education General Course Year 12

Selected Unit 3 syllabus content for the

Externally set task 2026

This document is an extract from the *Outdoor Education General Course Year 12 syllabus*, featuring all of the content for Unit 3. The content that has been highlighted in the document is the content on which the Externally set task (EST) for 2026 will be based.

All students enrolled in the course are required to complete an EST. The EST is an assessment task which is set by the Authority and distributed to schools for administering to students. The EST will be administered in schools during Term 2, 2026 under standard test conditions. The EST will take 50 minutes.

The EST will be marked by teachers in each school using a marking key provided by the Authority. The EST is included in the assessment table in the syllabus as a separate assessment type with a weighting of 15% for the pair of units.

Unit 3

Unit description – Building confidence in the outdoors

Students understand planning and organisational requirements necessary for them to participate in safe, short-duration excursions/expeditions. Students participate in outdoor adventure activities where they develop and improve their technical skills, apply appropriate practices to ensure safe participation, and begin to develop survival skills. Students develop personal skills related to flexibility in coping and adapting to change and in monitoring such things as the elements in an environment, or the participation of individuals in activities and expeditions. Features and relationships in natural environments are examined. Weather components, patterns and forecasting are introduced. Students develop a greater understanding of human interactions with nature, past and present. Sustainability is introduced and local issues are examined.

Outdoor adventure activities

Within the broad area of building confidence in the outdoors, teachers are encouraged to select one or two outdoor adventure activities consistent with the interests and capabilities of students. At least one activity must be able to be used as a mode of travel.

Outdoor adventure activities are performed within the natural environment, contain some kind of risk, and are non-competitive. Suitable outdoor adventure activities include:

- abseiling
- bodyboarding
- bushwalking
- canoeing
- caving
- climbing
- kayaking
- mountain biking
- orienteering
- sailing
- scuba diving
- sea kayaking
- snorkelling
- surfing.

Unit content

An understanding of the Year 11 content is assumed knowledge for students in Year 12. It is recommended that students studying Unit 3 and Unit 4 have completed Unit 1 and Unit 2.

This unit includes the knowledge, understandings and skills described below.

Outdoor experiences

Planning

- introduction to Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs
 - physiological needs
 - safety needs
 - love/belonging needs
 - esteem needs
 - self-actualisation
- relationship between physiological and safety needs (Maslow's Hierarchy) and personal preparation for outdoor experiences
- considerations for selecting equipment relevant to expedition area
 - location
 - duration
 - terrain
 - anticipated weather conditions
 - food and fluid requirements

Skills and practices

- technique development of an increasing repertoire of skills in an outdoor adventure activity
- map/chart reading skills
 - identifying features
 - interpreting and applying scales
 - using grid references
 - using contour lines
 - taking a bearing
 - travelling on a bearing
 - calculating back bearings and magnetic variation
- purpose and elements of a simple route plan
 - destination and distances
 - times
 - terrain
 - stages/check points

Safety

- definitions of relevant risk management terminology
 - risk
 - challenge
 - hazards
 - danger
 - misadventure
 - risk management
- principles of risk management
 - identification of risks
 - causal factors (people, equipment, environment)
 - types of risk (absolute, perceived, real)

- assessment of risk (high/low likelihood; high/low occurrence)
- risk management/reduction strategies
- social and psychological factors contributing to risk
- monitoring/evaluation of risk management plan
- steps for emergency response/accident management
 - surveying the scene
 - primary survey
 - secondary survey
 - patient assessment and monitoring
 - documentation/accident report forms
- signalling methods used in an emergency
 - whistle
 - fire
 - sand drawing
 - mobile and satellite phone
 - flare
 - personal locator beacons (PLB) and emergency position indicating radio beacons (ePIRB)
 - radio
 - hand and/or arm signalling

Self and others

Personal skills

- definition of experiential learning and reasons why it is effective
- definitions of flexibility, monitoring, commitment, time-management and decision-making skills and their relevance to outdoor education
- steps in decision making
 - identifying the problem
 - gathering information
 - exploring options
 - evaluating the outcome
- personal reflective journal writing skills

Working with others

- stages within Tuckman's model of group development
 - forming
 - storming
 - norming
 - performing
 - adjourning
- skills for building group relationships
 - communication
 - active listening
 - assertiveness
 - negotiation
 - conflict resolution

Leadership

- attributes of trait, behavioural, situational, transformational, and transactional leadership theories
- characteristics of telling, selling, delegating, testing, consulting and joining leadership methods
- characteristics of task and people oriented leadership
- linking leadership styles to stages of group development
- parts of a briefing session, including full value contracting, goal setting and framing the experience
- personal skills in delivering a briefing
 - establishing authority
 - building relationships
 - listening
 - competence in speaking publicly

Environmental awareness

The environment

- features and relationships in the natural environment of the expedition area
- components of weather
 - wind
 - clouds
 - precipitation
 - temperature
 - air pressure
- identification of local seasonal weather patterns
- weather forecasting using synoptic charts and climatic averages

Relationships with nature

- changes in the ways humans have valued nature over time
- natural change and the effects it has on individuals and communities in Australia
 - day to night
 - seasonal variation
 - drought and flood
- commercial, recreational, conservational and human activities that alter places
- application of 'Leave No Trace' principles

Environmental management

- definition of sustainability
- sustainability issues
 - rare and endangered species
 - renewable resources