



ActionQuest Student Essential Eligibility Criteria

ActionQuest's mission is to deliver outstanding experience-based adventures for young adults. Through a supportive yet challenging course design, we create environments that promote self-discovery as well as social, emotional, and intellectual growth.

AQ Adventures are non-competitive, adventure-based, and most are run full-time aboard sailing vessels. Life aboard is a core component because, beyond the fun, living and learning aboard a yacht offers a perfect environment to develop leadership and communication skills. While most trips are only moderately physically challenging, all trips are designed to provide an intense emotional and interpersonal experience. Students are sometimes asked to do things they may not believe they are capable of doing. Part of our risk management process is to develop confidence that these activities can be accomplished. This confidence is based on our 40-year record of risk management and the skills of our instructors along with the measured expectation that the student applicant is fully committed to and capable of working hard, taking responsibility for him or her self to work effectively in the group to achieve the goals of the program.

While we welcome participants of varying experience as well as those with differing interests, backgrounds, beliefs, and perspectives, one of our most important responsibilities is to make sure that the program is a good fit for the student and vice versa. The environment we create is appropriate for most, it is not suitable for all. Successful AQ students are in good physical, and emotional health and have an interest in immersing themselves fully in our community. AQ is not a therapeutic program, so our experience is inappropriate for those experiencing behavioral, motivational, mental health, substance abuse, self-harm, or eating disorder issues (Please contact us prior to applying if you have experienced any of the above within 12 months of the scheduled program start date.) AQ students are excited to learn new skills, experience new places and are capable of working positively within a close-knit team even when tired. They are enthusiastic, well mannered, and have a healthy dose of curiosity.

The Essential Eligibility Criteria are applicable for all ActionQuest students, and a qualified person is one who can meet the EEC for participation.

Physical and Mental Health Requirements

- Be in good general health and physical condition.
- Have maintained good mental health standing for 12 months preceding the program. Our experience is not appropriate for those undergoing regular counselling or intensive treatment.
- Tolerate being several hours or up to a day away from medical facilities.
- Accept changes in diet
- Accept changes in living conditions and routine, which is likely to be very different from home
- Demonstrate basic water skills, including swimming 200 meters unaided and without stopping, followed by floating or treading water for 10 minutes.
- Be able to exit a capsized boat, fend for self while in the water away from the boat, attain and maintain correct body position if out of a vessel in rough seas, exit out of the water to shore, grab onto another boat or line as necessary for rescue purposes, and perform self-rescue and/or cooperate with an assisted rescue.

Attitude

- Come with an open mind and a willingness to try new things.
- Maintain a positive attitude, even when challenged physically, mentally, or emotionally.
- Display tolerance, respect, and compassion towards others.
- Participate in tasks that support the group living environment aboard a sailing vessel.

Safety and Judgment

- Be able to identify and recognize hazards independently, including, but are not limited to, rough water, reefs, collision, falling, capsizing, and other risks associated with the marine environment.
- Recognize and understand the hazards and risks posed by other crew members, which include, but are not limited to, fatigue, state of mind, and actions that may influence judgment and decision-making.
- Recall and understand the hazards and risks previously explained by instructors.
- Be able to effectively alert and warn others of potential or impending dangers such as broken equipment, shifting wind or sea states, falling objects, or other environmental hazards.
- Be able to signal effectively or notify instructors or other student crewmembers of personal distress, injury, or need for assistance.
- Be able to do the preceding warnings and notifications up to a distance of 70 feet and in conditions with limited visibility such as in darkness or inclement weather or with loud background noise, such as high winds or waves.
- Act reliably around the above-stated hazards to minimize risk even when not directly supervised.
- Independently perceive, understand, and follow directions and instructions given by others to successfully execute appropriate and perhaps unfamiliar, techniques to avoid hazards and /or manage risks.
- Be able to stay alert and to focus attention for up to several hours at a time while on watch, attending classes, or receiving instructions.
- If taking prescription medications, be able to maintain proper dosage by self-medicating without assistance from instructors or others (except possibly in emergencies).

Leadership and Expedition Behavior

- Work effectively as a member of a team despite potentially stressful and challenging conditions. This may require problem-solving on an interpersonal or group level as well as a willingness to accept differences.
- Contribute to a safe learning environment—no verbal or physical inappropriate behavior of others is tolerated for any reason.
- Be able to willingly and equally share responsibility with crewmates in daily group chores. Each student may not do an equal share each day, but each student should do a proportionate share over several days. All students are learning the skills and being challenged by the conditions and activities; there can be no expectation that any other student will be able to continually assume a greater share of the work or that an instructor can continually focus a greater share of his/her energy and time on one student.
- Effectively communicate ideas and concerns on an individual and group level.
- Have the cognitive ability to learn necessary skills given standard time limitations of an ActionQuest experience.

Criteria for specific Activities

Sailing

- Be able to move around the vessel as necessary to perform tasks such as sail setting and striking and /or avoid hazards on board, such as avoiding the boom during a change in tack.
- Be able to secure oneself to the appropriate hardpoints on deck if necessary, so as not to fall overboard.
- Be able to observe and assess sail trim, the surrounding navigational environment, and the hazards that are inherent in the operation of a vessel at sea.
- Be able to exit a capsized boat, fend for self while in the water away from the boat, attain and maintain correct body position if out of a boat in rough seas, exit out of the water to shore, grab onto another boat or line as necessary for rescue purposes, and perform self-rescue and/or cooperate with an assisted rescue.
- Have the ability to have a third point of contact for balance purposes, such as with hand(s) or to hold a walking stick.

Scuba Diving / Snorkeling

- Meet any eligibility and medical requirements as specified by PADI (Professional Association of Diving Instructors).

Hiking

- At a minimum, be able to travel over and negotiate through varied terrain with a daypack.
- Be able to hike in conditions that may include, but are not limited to, rough, rugged, uneven steep and sloping terrain; human-made and animal made trails; rocky terrain; ascending, descending, or traversing slopes covered in rocks or vegetation. Any and all travel can occur during periods of inclement weather.
- Be able to travel distances that can range from less than one mile to more than five miles in one day.
- Be able to hike for durations ranging from less than one hour to more than 4 hours in one day.
- Have average strength, endurance, balance, and agility to safely travel through such terrain with a daypack.
- Be able to stay alert and to focus for several hours at a time while traveling.

Community Service Projects

- Be open and willing to interact with new and unfamiliar cultures.
- Engage in service-learning projects (for example, building, digging, lifting, painting, construction, and clean-up) for 6-8 hours per day with tools such as shovels, rakes, and axes.
- Possess the strength, fitness, balance, and agility to accomplish the above tasks.