

CHANGES TO THE NNAS GOLD NAVIGATOR AWARD

Background

The NNAS Gold Navigator award is the highest NNAS award, supported by the Bronze and Silver awards to allow a sequential progression and development for candidates. Like all the NNAS Navigator awards, it is not a leadership award. However, the Gold Navigator award is considered to be the same level of navigation required of a Mountain Leader (Summer) or Hill and Moorland Leader.

Gold Award Consultation

A consultation process was held with NNAS Course Directors delivering Gold Navigator regarding key aspects of the Gold award. The results showed an overwhelming desire to introduce two new elements to the syllabus and reduce the course length to two complete days.

The distance learning approach has been successfully used by Mountain Training in the form of question-and-answer papers that require candidates to research a range of topics relating to particular aspects of the relevant award.

Guidance and advice regarding what should be included in education for environmental sustainability has been taken from Prof P Higgins and Dr B Christie from the School of Education University of Edinburgh. Dr Christie is the lead on Education for Sustainability, while Prof Higgins is Chair of the Scottish Government National Implementation Group on 'Learning for Sustainability'. A full text of their letter of support for the NNAS' initiative is available through the NNAS webpage.

Gold Conversion workshop

There was considerable consensus among course directors upon the value of attending a Gold Conversion workshop. These are run periodically across the UK by Gold Navigator course directors who have been authorised by the NNAS Board of Directors and the NNAS Development Officer.

The delivery of Gold Conversion workshops remains under central NNAS control and is not devolved, i.e. scheduling of these workshops is decided by NNAS.

CONSULTATION RESULTS

Two new topics will be introduced:

- Environmental sustainability.
- Use of electronic aids to navigation

The remainder of the learning outcomes will remain unchanged.

In order to reduce contact time to two days and also add two new educational elements, we will be introducing a distance learning element to the Gold Navigator Award.

Gold Award Revision

Duration

The revised Gold Navigator award will take two six-hour days of contact time and one eight-hour day of non-contact time. The non-contact day will be delivered by Course Directors via pre and post course papers achieved with distance learning.

The minimum time required as part of the distance learning from *participants* is six hours split between two papers, with one-hour contact per four students from *Course Directors*, pre and post course achieving a total of 8 hours distance training and assessment

The practical contact time of the course is reduced to two days for training and assessment.

Assessment style

To allow a shorter contact time of two days, course directors will have to vary assessment processes as the learning outcomes of the Gold award remain largely unchanged - in other words, vary *how* you assess rather than *what* you assess.

The pre-course paper serves to lead participants to the right areas of knowledge to ensure that they arrive well prepared for their Gold course. The post course paper aims at evaluating their retention of key learning outcomes.

Examples such as: “*Give advice on choosing a map prepared for use during a mountain navigation day*” would allow participants to research this and apply the results of their research to their own pre course preparation. Thus, participants who answer “waterproof, small, scaled, attachable to me or pocket size, foldable etc.” would be expected to demonstrate this practically during the two-day course.

Retention of evidence of assessment and training is good practice within a teaching and learning environment. Course directors will have their own teaching materials and may wish to continue to use them.

The new pre and post course assessment papers are designed to provide basic materials covering the new parts of the syllabus rather than those areas which are already adequately supplied.

Example papers are given at the end of this document and Course Directors are welcome to use these. While you are welcome to alter these to relate to local areas, any significant alteration would need to be approved by the NNAS Technical Advisor in advance.

To obtain copies of the example papers with suggested answers included, please contact [James Woodhouse](#), NNAS Technical Advisor.

How distance learning will be fitted into the Gold Navigator Award:

- A total of 8 hours distance training and assessment needs to be included in the course. This includes **both** the pre and post course papers.
- The amount of time each candidate should spend researching and answering questions is about three hours per paper, allowing the course director an hour to review and feedback.
- The medium candidates use to answer the questions is up to the course director and candidate and should be agreed upon before starting.
- The pre course paper should be sent out at least one month before the practical course.
- The post course paper must be completed within a month of the end of the course.
- The Gold Navigator course is not complete until all aspects of the course are completed, including the distance learning papers, regardless of an adequate practical performance.

Requirements to deliver Gold Navigator award

Full details of the requirements are held at NNAS office. To be a course director of the Gold award you should be working for an existing registered Provider and have completed a minimum of five Silver & five Bronze Navigator courses, completed the NNAS Tutor Award, and have completed a Gold Conversion workshop.

Further Recommended reading

Below are suggestions of recommended reading to help candidates and instructors. The NNAS has three core texts which are available through NNAS, Harvey or other. Copies of Capra can be obtained from the NNAS Development Officer.

- Capra, F (2007) Sustainable Living, Ecological Literacy, and the Breath of Life. Canadian Journal of Environmental Education, 12.
- Cliff, P (1991). Mountain Navigation
- Hawkins, P (2019) *Navigation: Techniques and Skills for Walkers*. Second Edition. Cicerone.
- Mee, P and B (2010). *Outdoor Navigation Handbook for Tutors*. Harvey.
- McNeil, C (2019). *Outdoor Discovery Active exploration with a map*. Harvey
- Williams, N (2018). *Teaching Navigation Practical ideas for outdoor tutors*. Harvey.

Conclusion

Including sustainability education in our premier award is ambitious, ground-breaking and much required. In light of recent climate change protests, this sees the NNAS at the tip of the spear. Climate change is a real issue for everyone. Harnessing the power of navigation to allow all of us to find better futures for our planet has the potential to make a significant contribution to changing behaviours and improving sustainability for all life on earth.

ANNEX A

NNAS GOLD NAVIGATOR AWARD PRE-COURSE PAPER

1. What are the major influences and effects of anthropogenic (human) climate change?
2. What practical steps can you (candidate or provider) take to ensure that your enjoyment of navigation is sustainable?
3. Why is it inappropriate to leave banana skins/apple cores and other biodegradable things out in the countryside?
4. Using your chosen digital mapping software prepare a suitable Gold NNAS assessment route through the terrain agreed with your assessment provider.
5. Write a suitable list of equipment, clothing and first aid kit for walking in remote weather in all conditions.
6. What are the symptoms of hyper and hypothermia and what may be their impact on decision making?
7. What food would you select for a day walk in Gold navigation terrain?
8. How much liquid should you carry for a day of activity in Gold terrain?

PLEASE NOTE – These are sample questions that also include some existing aspects of the syllabus often overlooked. You are welcome to amend these and include particular environmental issues that are relevant to your locality.

ANNEX B

NNAS GOLD NAVIGATOR POST-COURSE PAPER

1. What is slope aspect?
2. How is the use of slope aspect an aid to relocation?
3. How fast would you expect to travel in Gold terrain?
4. How would you adjust your navigation technique in mist/ fog or poor visibility?
5. Describe a basic search technique that you would employ to find a point feature.
6. Explain your understanding of expected error?
7. Under what circumstances might you choose to vary your route choice in Gold terrain? Give examples from your own personal experience...
8. What are the advantages and disadvantages of using a mobile phone app to navigate?
9. Give five practical applications of digital mapping software and how you would employ them in Gold NNAS terrain.

PLEASE NOTE – These are sample questions. You are welcome to amend these and include particular environmental issues that are relevant to your locality.