

# Professional Profile: Experiential (outdoor) Educator

## Responsibilities and Tasks

The key responsibility and task of experiential educators is to design and implement focused, professionally sound experience-oriented learning opportunities that ideally are placed in nature and implemented in interaction with nature.

Experiential educators set up individually challenging, out of the ordinary, holistically focused learning environments that allow for developmental and educational experiences. These will predominantly support the development of personal and social competencies.

During the design, facilitation and evaluation of the learning events the experiential educator will consider essential structural characteristics such as self-determination, personal responsibility, freedom of choice, resource awareness, process orientation and the realm of social interaction.

Besides adhering to the current safety standards, the physical, psychological and social safety of the participant is of utmost importance. Along the ethics of sustainable development nature and the environment are guarded and treated with care and consciousness.

Experiential educators use different methods for debriefing and reflection of learning and experience in order to support the transfer of learning and development into life and work realities. Theories and specific learning and teaching models guide them.

## Learning environments and activities

The classic offerings of experiential outdoor education are physical activities in nature such as hiking, sailing, rock climbing, canoeing, overnight trips into the wilderness as well as interactive initiatives and activity oriented projects. Solo times, creative rituals and city bound activities are part of the broader spectrum of the work.

## Scope and area of practice

Experiential educators work within the area of '*Pedagogy*' for example in child & youth care and development, in schools, afterschool programs, in higher education/tertiary and adult education as well as therapeutic pedagogy.

In the area of '*Business*' experiential educators are predominantly engaged in process facilitation and training within the framework of personal and organizational development.

Within the area of '*Health Promotion*' experiential educators work in prevention and rehabilitation.

'*Therapy*' is another area of practice for the experiential educator within which he or she will support therapeutic processes of a multi-disciplinary team

By extension of scope experiential educators find themselves in the areas of environmental and nature education as well as sustainability development education. They also practice within tourism as well as after-school and leisure-time programming with a focus that will be mostly action- or adventure based.

### **Competencies and Training**

Throughout their training experiential educators acquire pedagogical and psychological competencies in order to adequately and responsibly facilitate individual and group processes as well as the necessary technical qualifications to safely facilitate the relevant experiential activities.

The foundation of this work is orientated along a humanistic understanding of the human being, an appreciating approach towards human diversity und a value system that is based on human rights. Professional, personal and social competencies are necessary to master these requirements and to implement them with consciousness and professionalism. This can be acquired through an eligible pedagogical training and a well-founded experiential education qualification as devised by the *Bundesverband Individual- und Erlebnispädagogik e.V. (be)*. In addition different learning environments and activities require their own (sport-specific) relevant qualifications.

This professional profile was developed over the period of three years by *„Hochschulforum Erlebnispädagogik“* and the *Bundesverband Individual- und Erlebnispädagogik e.V.* (Task group for "Training and Further Education") and signed off on 13 March 2015. It is reviewed and updated regularly.

