

FAQs for NOLS Instructor Course Applicants

Instructor Course FAQs

[What is NOLS?](#)

[What is the purpose of the NOLS Instructor Course?](#)

[How is an IC different than an Outdoor Educator Course?](#)

[What is the job of a NOLS field instructor?](#)

[How will this Instructor Course advance my career?](#)

[How much experience does an average Instructor Course \(IC\) applicant have?](#)

About the Application

[How do I apply?](#)

[What does the application look like?](#)

[What are the options for tuition reimbursement?](#)

[Are scholarships available to help with the cost of tuition?](#)

[Will my scholarship request impact my application?](#)

[Do I need certain certifications to apply for the IC?](#)

[When are Instructor Course applications due?](#)

[When will I hear back from the selection committee?](#)

[Is the Instructor Course selection process competitive?](#)

[What does NOLS look for when selecting IC candidates?](#)

[What is the evaluation process during the IC?](#)

[Which Instructor Course should I apply to? There are so many!](#)

[Who should I ask to fill out my three letters of recommendation?](#)

[I completed my application before the deadline, why has it disappeared?](#)

Working at NOLS: Skill types

[What kinds of courses can I teach?](#)

[Can I use the IC to be able to teach an advanced technical skill?](#)

[How does teaching different skill types work?](#)

Teaching at NOLS

[What does teaching look like at NOLS?](#)

[How is NOLS different than a guiding service?](#)

[How much advanced technical experience do I need to be a NOLS instructor?](#)

[I think I need more experience ... how do I get more outdoor, leadership, and teaching experience?](#)

[What qualifications do I need to apply for the Professional Instructor Course \(PIC\)?](#)

[What is the role of equity and inclusion at NOLS?](#)

[What is the NOLS instructor community like?](#)

[What does NOLS mean by "leadership"?](#)

Working at NOLS: Locations and Evaluations

[Once I am working for NOLS, what is the evaluation process for field instructors?](#)

[Can I work at international NOLS locations?](#)

[Does my home location make a difference in my eligibility?](#)

Working at NOLS: Seasons and Availability

[How much can I expect to work as a NOLS field instructor?](#)

[Do I have to work in the boreal summer season? \(June - August\)](#)

[I want to work one course a year, is that possible?](#)

[I want to work year-round for NOLS, is that possible?](#)

[How much does the typical NOLS field instructor work in a calendar year?](#)

[Am I required to work for NOLS following my IC? Will I be guaranteed work with NOLS following my IC?](#)

[What's the process for working field courses?](#)

[How much can I expect to be paid?](#)

[Is my transportation paid when I travel to teach a field course?](#)

What is NOLS?

NOLS is a multifaceted, global wilderness school that supports thousands of students each year who seek to develop the skills and experience to reach their potential as leaders in wilderness medicine, wilderness skills, risk management, and leadership.

We teach wilderness expedition courses, wilderness medicine courses, leadership seminars, and risk management workshops and consultations.

By successfully completing a NOLS Field Instructor Course, you are eligible to teach wilderness expedition courses based out of our domestic and international locations. Please visit our [website](http://www.nols.edu) for more information: www.nols.edu

What is the purpose of the NOLS Instructor Course?

The purpose of the NOLS Instructor Course is three-fold: the opportunity to participate in a NOLS wilderness expedition; training to be an effective, aware, and adaptable wilderness instructor; and an assessment of skills. Above all, we hope that the IC is a positive learning experience. Ideally, the course provides an opportunity to learn from your instructors and peers, to challenge yourself in a supportive community, and to gain understanding and an ability to teach the NOLS curriculum which includes the NOLS leadership model in an extended wilderness expeditionary context.

How is an IC different from an Outdoor Educator Course?

The primary function of the Instructor Course is to train people to be qualified to work as NOLS field instructors. The curriculum and activities are specific to working NOLS field courses. There is a selection process to gain admission to an Instructor Course. This is the way to become qualified to be considered for hire as a NOLS field instructor.

An Outdoor Educator course is an open enrollment course that is for people interested in working in the outdoor industry but not necessarily NOLS. Often when applicants don't have enough experience to be accepted onto an Instructor Course the IC review committee might recommend taking an Outdoor Educator course as a way to gain a little more experience. Being a NOLS graduate is not a requirement for being a NOLS instructor. Approximately 50% of IC participants are graduates of a NOLS student course.

What is the job of a NOLS field instructor?

NOLS field instructors teach students ages 14-65 (a few courses have students who are 12-13, and older than 65). Courses range in length from 1 week to 6 weeks, as well as semesters as long as 130 days with multiple, distinct skills sections. Please make sure to visit the [NOLS website](#) to familiarize yourself with our course offerings.

Instructors teach leadership, expedition behavior, environmental studies, first aid, outdoor living skills, navigation, Leave No Trace principles, and the technical skills related to the course type. Instructors are expected to create and maintain an inclusive learning environment, build excellent rapport with students and co-workers, support student learning and growth, invest in their professional development as educators, and manage risk appropriately.

On any given day in the field you could be: working with a student one-on-one to help them increase their self-awareness; planning curriculum with co-instructors; supervising student leaders as they scout a rapid; debriefing a challenging hiking day; presenting a skit about Leave No Trace; cooking dinner in a snowstorm; managing an injury or illness; playing games; or enjoying a hot drink under the stars.

At the end of the day, a NOLS instructor is an educator who is invested in the student experience and passionate about facilitating transformative educational experiences.

How will this Instructor Course advance my career?

Successful completion of a NOLS Instructor Course (IC) means you are ready to be considered to be hired on a contractual basis for NOLS in the skill types you are assessed in. For example, if you take a backpacking IC, you would be ready to work wilderness backpacking courses; if you take a river IC, you may be assessed as a raft, kayak, and/or canoe instructor.

It's important to note that we prioritize selecting individuals who intend to teach expedition courses with NOLS. This is because NOLS makes a significant investment of resources into the Instructor Course and Instructor Course participants, and we want those individuals, in turn, to serve NOLS' students in the field.

How much experience does an average Instructor Course (IC) applicant have?

It's hard to say who the “average” applicant is—there are so many different types of people who are drawn to teaching outdoor experiential education courses.

Within that range, people applying for an IC must possess the following:

- Comfort and competence living and traveling in remote areas for extended periods of time, be that mountains or ocean or desert or rivers;
- A desire to teach and facilitate transformative educational experiences for our students.

People applying for an IC usually possess some or all of the following:

- Experience working in outdoor experiential education, wilderness therapy, guiding, or on trail crews;
- Experience working in traditional education as a classroom teacher or tutor;
- Personal expedition experience;
- Leadership experience as a supervisor, trainer or in a public service role.

How do I apply?

The first step of applying involves submitting an application. **The application process will open on August 1, 2024.**

You'll find the application for your course on the corresponding page on our [Instructor Course webpage](#).

What does the application look like?

The application is made up of the following sections:

- Resume
- Trip Log
- 3 References
- Questionnaire
- CPR/Med Cert upload
- Applicant Information
- Scholarship Form

All of these sections are fairly simple except for the questionnaire. The questionnaire is the most weighted part of the application so please take your time answering these questions. [Here](#) is a sample of the FY24 questionnaire to read over before you consider applying. If you wish to apply please fill out the entire application and submit it on our website.

What are the options for tuition reimbursement?

This policy was canceled as of January 1, 2024. Please reach out to the field_faculty_development_department@nols.edu if you have pertinent questions about tuition. We accept scholarship applications until the start date of your Instructor Course and if your financial circumstances have changed please reach out to apply for a scholarship.

Are scholarships available to help with the cost of tuition?

Yes! Please fill out the scholarship application within the online IC application. The vast majority of applicants apply for, and receive, some assistance with tuition. We do our best to use our scholarship money to make the IC accessible. Please be realistic and honest when applying for a scholarship—ask for what you need and remember that there are others out there who need financial assistance as well.

We do not look at scholarship applications when selecting applicants for an Instructor Course. Selection onto the IC is a need blind process.

You can also use 529 Education plans and/or AmeriCorps awards to pay for your Instructor Course. Currently two Instructor Courses (Rocky Mountain Hiking Instructor Course and Canyon Instructor Course) are approved for VA benefits use.

Will my scholarship request impact my application?

No. The selection process and admission to any Instructor Course do not include access to financial information. This means we do not consider scholarship applications until after we select candidates. Our advice is to ask for the amount of scholarship money you need in order to make the Instructor Course possible for you (see above for scholarship information).

Do I need certain certifications to apply for the IC?

We require a minimum of a **70-hour** Wilderness First Responder (WFR). A current Wilderness EMT (WEMT) is more than adequate; a Wilderness First Aid (WFA) or Wilderness Advanced First Aid (WAFA) certification is NOT adequate.

We also require a current adult CPR certification to apply for an Instructor Course. The training must include a hands-on component.

Your medical certification (WFR or WEMT and CPR) must be current through August 31 following your IC. This means that you will have a current medical cert in order to work for NOLS the summer following your IC, which is a non-negotiable qualification. If you do not have a WFR/CPR yet, or if it expires soon, you can submit proof of registration for a course or recertification course, so long as your certifications would be valid from the start of your IC through August 31.

When are Instructor Course applications due?

We will open the application process on **August 1, 2024** and all application materials will be due on **November 1, 2024**.

Note that, at a minimum, you'll need to have **at least two** References who've **completed** their Letter of Recommendation by the deadline. Any Letters of Recommendation we receive after the deadline will not be considered. It is **your responsibility** to make sure your References have sufficient time to complete their end of the process **prior to the materials deadline**.

The Instructor Course application is available online. Please use the current online application. Do not mail or fax any paper material!

When will I hear back from the selection committee?

First round decline letters and invitations to interviews will be sent out on **December 8, 2023**. We will be sending out acceptance, waitlist responses and any other declines on **January 19, 2024**.

This year we will be conducting zoom interviews. These interviews will happen between **December 11, 2023 and January 12, 2024**. We will reach out to schedule these interviews with you on December 8th. If you cannot make the interview, we will discuss other options for this process.

Is the Instructor Course selection process competitive?

Yes. Most years we receive over 300 applications, and most years over half will not be enrolled in an Instructor Course in the first round.

What does NOLS look for when selecting IC candidates?

The IC selection committee is looking for well-rounded, culturally competent individuals who are excited to teach and mentor students to facilitate exceptional educational experiences.

When selecting candidates, we look for the following:

- Experience working in outdoor experiential education
- Backcountry or outdoor skills from personal trips
- Experience teaching in traditional or nontraditional settings
- Leadership experience—volunteer service, community engagement, military service, or leadership training
- Strong recommendations based on your leadership, communication, teaching, and mentorship from colleagues or supervisors
- A willingness to receive feedback and build awareness surrounding diversity, inclusion, and equity best practices
- Investment in the student experience

What does NOLS not see?

On the first read of all of the Instructor Course applications, we remove protected class statements related to race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, genetic information, disability unrelated to admission requirements, or veteran status. This is a step that helps balance the potential subjective biases of the NOLS application readers. Names and contact information are reintroduced to the selection committee once applicants have made it past the first qualifying round for the purpose of scheduling phone interviews.

If you have any questions about this, please contact us at field_faculty_development@nols.edu

What is the evaluation process during the IC?

The IC is primarily a field-based course, with a two-day in-town classroom based leadership and education component. Throughout the course, you will have the opportunity to receive instruction, coaching, and feedback from senior NOLS instructors and peers. You will receive both informal, and verbal feedback during the course as well as a written evaluation at the end of the course.

The goal of these evaluations is for us and you to get a sense of your strengths and areas for growth. If you are selected to participate in an IC, we want you to be an instructor and work with students in the field. The IC is meant as training and not a “job interview.” Some people can feel stress or anxiety in an evaluative environment. We hope the IC is a rich educational experience to welcome new instructors into the NOLS community.

Which Instructor Course should I apply to? There are so many!

When applying to an Instructor Course, you should apply to the course(s) for which you are most qualified. If you have gone sea kayaking for one day in Prince Williams Sound, Alaska and totally love it—you probably are not qualified for the Sea Kayak Instructor Course. However, if you have spent three seasons as a sea kayak guide, then you are probably qualified to apply for the Sea Kayak Instructor Course!

The majority of our applicants are most qualified to apply for a hiking IC. That’s great because we run a lot of backpacking courses, and need instructors to work those courses!

Who should I ask to fill out my three letters of recommendation?

We encourage applicants to request recommendations from a professional and/or relevant source. This could be a supervisor, professor, co-worker, etc.

I completed my application before the deadline, why has it disappeared?

Fully complete applications are moved in our database from the "assembling materials" holding space (ICAP) to the "pending review" holding space (ICRV). If your application has been moved from ICAP to ICRV, you will no longer be able to see it/access it. This is not a cause for concern, it simply means your application has been moved along to the next step. If you want to edit something before the deadline but can no longer see your application, please email admissions@nols.edu

What does teaching look like at NOLS?

On expeditions, we teach formal classes and activities on topics like building climbing anchors, ecological concepts, map reading, river dynamics, and leadership skills. We also spend lots of time coaching students on their technical skills, cooking delicious meals, leadership, and participating in the group. We work with groups to develop a positive and inclusive group culture, explore conflict productively, work effectively with people who are different from us, problem-solve in challenging situations, and set and achieve goals. Instructors are expected to build rapport with each student and create an inclusive learning environment. When we talk about "teaching," we're talking about all of this.

We value instructors who have:

- Environmental and biological studies knowledge;
- Experience teaching or facilitating diversity and inclusion curriculum;
- Taught in a classroom setting;
- Taken on a leadership role in another career—business, military, search and rescue, supervision, etc.;
- Experience with facilitation and debriefing;
- Experience teaching outdoor skills in the front country and/or the backcountry;
- Experience teaching wilderness medicine;
- Passion for facilitating transformational learning experiences on NOLS courses.

How is NOLS different than a guiding service?

NOLS is a leadership school. By the end of a NOLS course, we expect our students will be proficient in a variety of outdoor living and travel skills and have leadership and communication skills they can apply to their everyday lives. A NOLS course isn't so

much about reaching the summit, as it is about the journey and the attempt. Many students may never go mountaineering again after their NOLS course, but they will certainly work on a team and use the leadership skills they learned in their course.

How much advanced technical (mountaineering, climbing, whitewater boating) experience do I need to be a NOLS instructor?

If you are applying for a sea kayaking, mountaineering, or river Instructor Course, you need to have significant experience in that skill area in order to be accepted onto that IC. However, if you are applying for a backpacking IC, the technical skills you need to have are solid outdoor living and travel skills.

NOLS instructors do not need to climb 7,000-meter peaks in order to be effective educators for our students. If you want to work wilderness backpacking courses for NOLS, we are looking for people who are comfortable and competent living and traveling in the backcountry for extended periods of time, and who are excited about teaching and mentoring individuals and groups in leadership, environmental studies, and outdoor skills.

I think I need more experience ... how do I get more outdoor, leadership, and teaching experience?

There are many paths to take in order to gain the experience necessary to qualify for an Instructor Course. Here are some ideas:

- **Take a course** with NOLS, or another organization geared towards training outdoor educators. NOLS offers [outdoor educator courses](#) and [semesters](#) that provide great outdoor skill training, as well as experience in facilitating group learning.
- **Work in outdoor education.** There are lots of schools and companies that do great work out there: the Student Conservation Association, Outward Bound, Teton Science Schools, Wilderness Adventures, Deer Hill Expeditions, etc. Find more information at
 - Association of Experiential Education Jobs Clearinghouse: www.aee.org
 - Outdoor Ed jobs site: www.outdoored.com
 - NOLS Alumni Jobs Network announcements. Sign up at [this](#) link.
- **Go on a personal expedition.** Plan a trip with friends or family to spend more time in the backcountry.

- **Develop your leadership skills.** Seek out more training through a leadership workshop, a community organization, or a volunteer opportunity.

What qualifications do I need to apply for the Professional Instructor Course (PIC)?

*******We are not running a PIC in 2026.*******

To qualify for the PIC, you need to have **50 weeks** working in the field as a wilderness guide or instructor on multi-day expeditions. Most people who apply for the PIC have been working for a number of seasons for other comparable outdoor education organizations like Outward Bound, Wilderness Adventures, the Student Conservation Association, or a wilderness therapy company like Second Nature. We value individuals who have a diversity of experience in the programs and demographic with which they have worked.

As a frame of reference, some of our more experienced traditional IC applicants have between 20 - 30 field weeks when they apply for an IC.

Please do not include weeks as a participant or trainee in your 50 weeks (e.g., taking a Wilderness EMT course does not count towards professional field weeks).

What is the role of equity and inclusion at NOLS?

Creating an inclusive culture and celebrating the inherent diversity of a group is an integral part of leadership. In order to lead others and be effective team members, we must have the self-awareness to understand who we are and where we come from, as well as show openness and empathy about others' experiences.

At NOLS, we believe that an effective leader is able to leverage the diversity within a group to create a team that is dynamic, supportive, and honoring of different cultures and styles. When we talk about "inclusion," this means we work to maintain course environments that support individuals being their authentic selves and engage difference for productive, agile teams.

At NOLS, we endorse a systemic approach to understanding the ways that oppression (racism, sexism, classism, homophobia) impacts individuals and groups. Systems of power and privilege exist on NOLS courses, just as they do in society; we expect our instructors to engage in a process of learning and exploration of these topics in order to

serve students and co-instructors and to role model equitable leadership through this lens.

What is the NOLS instructor community like?

NOLS instructors comprise a tightly-knit but dispersed community. Some instructors live a nomadic lifestyle of seasonal outdoor work, while others live in one place and have another job (or jobs) in addition to working for NOLS part-time. Relationships formed while on courses may turn into lasting friendships, or be picked up again summer after summer when returning to a NOLS location for work.

What does NOLS mean by “leadership”?

NOLS believes that leadership is a skill that can be taught and developed. We define leadership as “situationally appropriate action that directs or guides your group to set and achieve goals.”

We teach leadership through seven skills and four roles. The seven leadership skills are expedition behavior, competence, communication, judgment and decision-making, tolerance for adversity and uncertainty, self-awareness, and vision and action. The four leadership roles are designated, peer, self-leadership, and active followership. At NOLS, we expect our students and instructors to learn to demonstrate all seven skills and to appropriately move between the four roles. Every individual has their own authentic leadership style that they will cultivate on a NOLS course.

Once I am working as a NOLS Instructor, what is the evaluation process for field instructors?

After every course you teach, you will receive a written evaluation based on your self-assessment, feedback from co-instructors, and feedback from students.

Can I work at international NOLS locations?

It’s complicated. Labor and immigration laws vary from location to location. For example, it is generally easy for non-U.S. citizens to obtain a J-1 visa to work in the United States. Conversely, due to labor laws in New Zealand, it is challenging to obtain a work permit for non-New Zealand or Australian citizens.

We need to take citizenship and eligibility to work into account when staffing courses. This is especially true at our location in New Zealand. We need Australians and Kiwis to work in New Zealand.

Newer instructors can expect to work in their country of origin and/or the United States during the boreal summer.

Does my home location make a difference in my eligibility? (Home location refers to where you live or where you are based, not necessarily citizenship.)

Yes. We select individuals for Instructor Courses who are strong candidates who will teach exceptional courses. One of the factors we take into serious consideration is whether an individual is close to a NOLS operating location, and possesses the experience to work in those skill types. For example, if you live in Chile or Argentina (Patagonia location), you need to be able to work glacier mountaineering or sea kayaking. If you currently live in Taiwan (regardless of citizenship), there is not a NOLS location that is close by, and therefore it is much less likely that we would be inclined to enroll you in an IC.

As a school, we need to take both travel costs and carbon footprint into account when selecting individuals.

If you have a question about whether your home location will impact your application to the Instructor Course, please contact us.

How much can I expect to work as a NOLS field instructor?

Many field faculty start their NOLS careers by working only in the boreal summer (June through August) for the first two years before beginning to work in the fall and spring. There are far fewer courses in the fall, winter, and spring than in the summer. This is especially true for backpacking (hiking) courses. You are much more likely to be offered work in the fall and spring if you are assessed in multiple skill types, such as rock climbing, winter, mountaineering, or sea kayaking. In the summer a higher percentage of our courses are backpacking, but in spring and fall a higher percentage are in these more technical skills.

Over 50% of all field instructors work less than four weeks per year and solely during the boreal summer. We share this information in order to set up realistic work expectations as a field instructor. You do not necessarily need to want to work full time, year round as a NOLS instructor in order to be a viable IC applicant. In fact, we are very interested in having people amongst our pool of applicants who are only interested in field work in our summer peak season.

Do I have to work in the boreal summer season? (June - August)

Yes. There are exceptions to this, but they are few and far between. (Largely based on skill types that only happen in the fall and spring.) This is our peak season as a school, and July is our peak enrollment month. We need approximately 300 field instructors to work courses during this time period. Also, we prioritize work offers in fall and spring for those instructors who have worked in the summer season. That goes for people who have worked for NOLS for one year or 20 years.

I want to work one course a year, is that possible?

Absolutely! There are many NOLS instructors who work one course per year for many years while maintaining other jobs throughout the year.

I want to work year-round for NOLS, is that possible?

Yes, there are instructors who work full-time, year-round (20-25 field weeks per year) or part time year round (10 to 18 weeks per year.) The vast majority of these instructors have built up seniority over time, work in multiple skill types, and/or have a history of teaching excellent courses. It is unusual for new instructors to work 20+ weeks per year early in their careers. The vast majority of these instructors work in at least two skill types.

How much does the typical NOLS field instructor work in a calendar year?

Over 50% of our field faculty work between 0-5 field weeks per year. This translates to working one field course per summer. The average hiking course is between 14-30 days (17-33 contract days including briefing and debriefing). Another 20% of field faculty work between 5-10 weeks per year. This realistically translates to one summer course (30 days) and one fall or spring course (25-day hiking course, or 20-day climbing course).

Am I required to work for NOLS following my IC? Will I be guaranteed work with NOLS following my IC?

You are not required to work for NOLS following your IC. NOLS is an at-will employer. This means that we offer work to NOLS Expedition instructors on a seasonal, contractual basis. You can accept or decline any work that is offered to you.

For the summer of 2024, IC graduates who meet the NOLS Field Instructor Qualifications to be hired will be offered work post-IC. If newly hired instructors have full summer availability, they will be offered a minimum of 2 weeks of work. “Full availability” means 6 weeks of contiguous availability between June 1 - August 15.

We are only able to offer contracts following your successful completion of the IC. We know this level of uncertainty can be hard for some people and appreciate your flexibility and patience with this process.

This is true for all IC graduates who are available during the above-noted times.

What’s the process for working field courses?

The Field Staffing Office staffs courses on a seasonal cycle. We have three seasons: Summer (late May/June - August); Fall (late August - December); Winter/Spring (January - late May).

Approximately six months before the start of a season the Field Staffing Office will send out an email asking faculty to submit a WRAP sheet (Work Request and Plan). This is where you can share your preferences for skill type and location of work (e.g. backpacking in Wyoming), or alert us to any blackout dates you are unable to work during (“my brother is getting married October 11-13”). Then, the Field Staffing Office will take all of those WRAP sheets (between 350 and 500) and write a seasonal staffing plan for all of our locations worldwide. Then, approximately 3 months before the season starts, the Field Staffing Office will send out work agreement offers to field faculty.

NOLS is an enrollment-based school. The amount and type of work we offer differ from season to season depending on student enrollment.

How much can I expect to be paid?

New faculty are paid between \$126-137/day for their first contract, depending on season and assessment level. Our current pay scale for experienced NOLS field instructors caps at \$232/day.

The NOLS field faculty pay scale is based on position (there are lead instructors and assistant instructors), and on the total field weeks you have worked in your career. (A brand new instructor is at 0 field weeks; you accrue 4.7 field weeks for a 30-day hiking course.)

Is my transportation paid when I travel to teach a field course?

Travel reimbursement for your first course following your IC is a bit unique compared to how the process will work for all your other subsequent future employment. NOLS will not reimburse the cost of getting to the IC itself. NOLS can begin to cover travel once you have been offered a contract.

If you are offered a course that is contiguous with your IC, then NOLS can reimburse your travel home following the course. Courses at the same location with less than 21 days in between are considered contiguous.

If you are offered a course that is isolated from your IC, then NOLS can fully reimburse your travel to the course and back home from the course location. Courses separated by 21 days or more or courses at different locations are isolated. NOLS will not cover travel expenses to the IC or back home from the IC.

When you are planning your travel, it is strongly encouraged that you reach out to the Travel Logistics Coordinator at field_travel@nols.edu. This will help ensure that you don't miss out on any travel reimbursements that you are eligible for.

What kinds of courses can I teach?

Upon successful completion of your IC, you will be assessed to work in the skill area(s) in which you have demonstrated competency. For example, on a sea kayaking IC, you

have the opportunity to be assessed to work sea kayaking courses (but not backpacking or climbing—even if you have experience doing those activities). If you want to work in other skill areas, you will then need to take a NOLS field instructor seminar in that skill area (10-14 days) to be assessed.

NOLS offers field seminars for every skill type we teach. These seminars can be developmental for people newer to those skills (for example, a 5-day winter training trip to introduce folks to winter camping and ski touring), or for people who have significant experience and are seeking assessment in order to teach courses in that skill type (for example, a 10-day rock climbing seminar geared towards assessment). There is a basic seminar application process and we run technical seminars every year to ensure opportunities for development within skill types.

Can I use the IC to be able to teach an advanced technical skill?

People who are selected to participate in a technical Instructor Course, such as the River Instructor Course, have significant personal or professional experience in that skill type. These Instructor Courses are designed for participants to demonstrate their previous skills and experience, and to introduce instructors to teaching that course type in the NOLS context.

How does teaching different skill types work?

Many of our instructors work just one course type, such as backpacking or sea kayaking. In addition, a number of instructors work multiple skill types, to create more opportunities to work on more courses. Instructors that work in multiple skill types are more versatile, and therefore more likely to be employed.

To be assessed to teach a new skill, you can take an 8-20 day seminar. NOLS offers extensive, highly subsidized in-house training related to everything we teach: sea kayaking, caving, facilitation and debriefing, mountaineering, whitewater paddling, avalanche education, etc. Once you are an instructor actively working field courses, those training opportunities are available to you.

For example, in order to be assessed to work as a sea kayaking instructor, you would take a sea kayak seminar to demonstrate your skills and experience and to learn how NOLS teaches sea kayaking courses. These one- to two-week seminars are generally

NOLS

designed for instructors to demonstrate their previous skills and experience, not to be trained from square one.

NOLS does offer some developmental seminars and some developmental spots on seminars. However, if you want to become a rock climber, and you have minimal experience, you can expect to be tasked with taking personal trips to gain experience. Don't expect to be 100% trained by NOLS in a skill area.