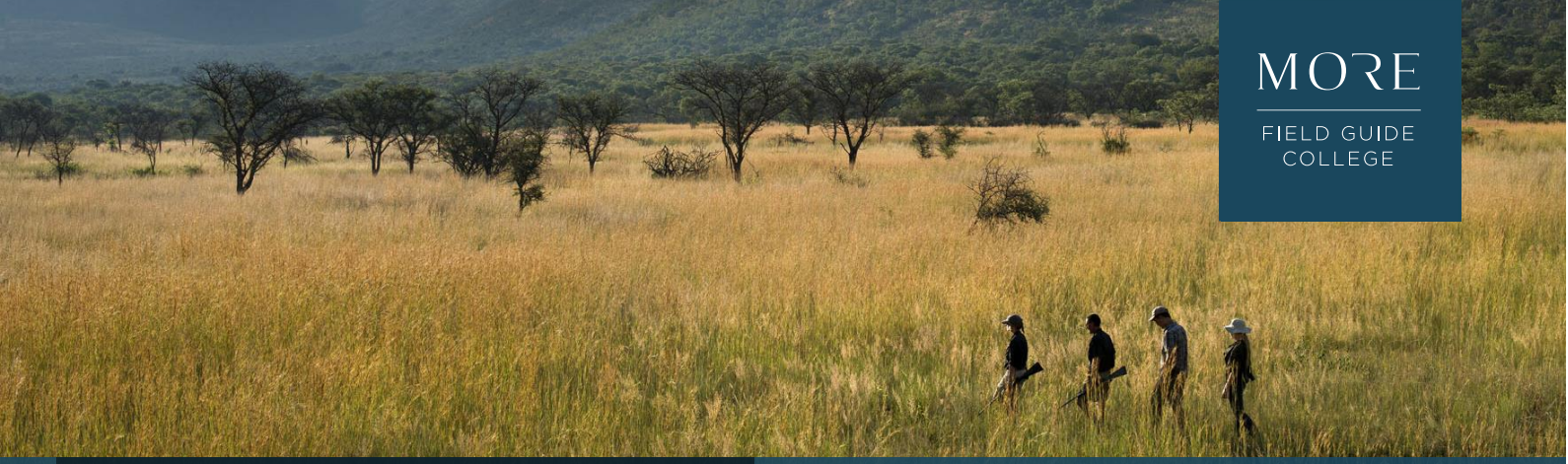


MORE
FIELD GUIDE
COLLEGE

Career Course

Duration: 1 Year
Dates: January and July

Acquire the skills needed to become one of the best in the industry.

This comprehensive year-long programme provides in-depth bush knowledge, sharpens your ability to create unforgettable guest journeys, and equips you with sought-after field guiding qualifications. Built on the principles of conservation instilled by MORE Collection, this course marks a crucial step on your journey to becoming a distinguished professional field guide.

The Career Course is a 12-month programme, comprising six months of structured training followed by a six-month placement at one of the MORE Collection lodges. This hands-on experience bridges theory and practice, offering workplace training under the mentorship of some of the industry's finest field guides. You will hone your guiding and hospitality skills, build confidence, and gain the ability to independently and confidently conduct safaris.

1. 6-MONTH COURSE CONTENT

- NQF2 Nature Site Guide (FGASA)
- FGASA Apprentice Trails Guide Mentorship Programme
- Rifle competency (PFTC) and FGASA Advanced Rifle Handling
- Wilderness First Aid Level 1 and 2
- Tracks & Signs
- Trailing
- Birding (ID of birds and calls)
- Navigation and Orientation
- 4x4 Driving
- Principles of Reserve Management and Anti-Poaching
- Wildlife Photography
- Basic Mechanics
- Hospitality in a 5-star environment
- Emotional Intelligence

2. SYLLABUS NQF2 NATURE SITE GUIDE (FGASA)

The Nature Site Guide should be able to identify the major living and non-living features of the natural environment in which she/he operates and interpret them at a level based mainly on observation and from an elementary scientific and cultural perspective. As a general guideline, a field guide must have sound knowledge of the history, geology, plants and animals (i.e. birds, mammals, reptiles, etc.) in the specific area of operation.

3. THE NQF2 NATURE SITE GUIDE (FGASA) SYLLABUS INCLUDES THE FOLLOWING MODULES:

a. Introduction to guiding in the natural environment
b. Creating a guided nature experience
c. Geology
d. Astronomy
e. Weather and Climate
f. Basic Ecology
g. Basic Taxonomy
h. Introduction to the Biomes of Southern Africa
i. Botany and Grasses
j. Arthropods
k. Amphibians
l. Reptiles
m. Fish
n. Birds
o. Mammals
p. Conservation Management and Historical Human Habitation

4. FGASA APPRENTICE TRAILS GUIDE MENTORSHIP PROGRAMME

A FGASA Apprentice Trails Guide (Back-up Trails Guide) is an individual who is in training (in an apprentice programme) to become a Trails Guide and will learn how to function as 2nd rifle and later as 1st rifle during the training phase. The apprentice programme is a stepping stone in the process for a field guide to attain a FGASA Trails Guide qualification and is not yet qualified to conduct trails or walks in areas with dangerous game in absence of a FGASA Trails Guide (NQF4), Professional Trails Guide, or SKS (DG).

5. SYLLABUS ANIMAL TRACKS AND TRACKING/TRAILING

- Track & Sign interpretation and assessment
- Trailing interpretation and assessment
- Gaits
- Track & Sign interpretation and evaluation by Cyber-Tracker for the Tracker qualification

6. SYLLABUS NAVIGATION AND ORIENTATION

- Compass and maps
- Global positioning system
- Celestial indicators
- Natural phenomena

7. SYLLABUS 4X4DRIVING

- General safety
- When to use high- and low-range
- Differentials, hubs and traction control
- Tyre pressure
- Descents/ Ascents
- Driving on or through sand, grass, mud, rocks, and water

THE NQF2 NATURE SITE GUIDE (FGASA) SYLLABUS MODULES:

MODULE 1

Guiding in the Natural Environment and Creating a Guided Experience

On completion of this module, you will:

- Have an understanding of what a professional nature guide does and where s/he fits into the tourism guiding industry
- Know what the aims of field guiding are
- Have an understanding of field guiding ethics in the natural environment
- Have been introduced to a set of principles and a code of conduct for field guides from
- a FGASA and a Dept of Environmental Affairs and Tourism (DEAT) point of view and have an understanding of legal requirements
- Be able to carry out a pre-briefing before embarking on a guided experience
- Be aware of determining any medical considerations of your clients
- Be able to determine if your clients have any special interests before departing on the guided experience
- Have the ability to involve all of your clients as individuals in the guided experience
- Take into consideration the environmental factors when it comes to the comfort of your clients
- Have enhanced communication skills for guiding in the natural environment
- Be able to carry out research on potentially interesting sights
- Approach animals taking into consideration all the client and animal factors which will affect the approach
- Be able to orientate yourself during the day and at night making use of a number of methods to do so
- Know what procedures to follow when lost and have the ability to find water and edible food in the natural environment
- Be able to interpret all aspects of the natural environment to enhance the experience of your clients

MODULE 2

Geology

On completion of this module, you will:

- Know what the meaning of Geology is
- Have a basic understanding of what the Earth consists of
- Know how rocks are classified
- Understand how igneous, sedimentary and metamorphic rocks are formed
- Know what a mineral is and be able to give a few examples
- Have an understanding and knowledge of a few common rock types
- Know the weathering properties of some common rock types
- Have an understanding of the interrelationships between rocks, soil, climate, vegetation and animals

MODULE 3

Climate and Weather

On completion of this module, you will:

- Know the difference between weather and climate
- Understand the process of cloud formation
- Know the different types and names of clouds and what weather conditions are associated with these different cloud types and how this may affect the guiding experience
- Know the different types of local wind conditions that may apply to the area of guiding operation
- Be able to describe the four major influences on the South African climate
- Understand the general Summer and Winter conditions of Southern Africa

MODULE 4

Astronomy

On completion of this module, you will:

- Be able to understand by definition what is meant by a universe, galaxy and solar system
- Know the position of the nine planets in the solar system in terms of their distance from the Sun
- Be able to point out the constellations of Orion, Scorpio and the Southern Cross
- Be able to determine a southerly direction making use of the Southern Cross
- Be able to describe the phases of the moon as it is viewed from Earth
- Know what is meant by an eclipse and how to differentiate between a lunar and a solar eclipse in terms of the positioning of the Sun, Earth and Moon
- Know how the ocean tides are affected by the Moon

MODULE 5

Ecology

On completion of this module, you will:

- Know what Ecology is and how important an understanding of ecology is for the nature guide
- Have an understanding of the major components of ecosystems
- Be able to explain the different levels of organisation in ecology
- Know what trophic pyramids, food chains and food webs are and how to give an explanation of these
- Be able to give an explanation of the nutrient cycle
- Be able to give an explanation and examples of symbiotic relationships
- Know what predation is and the various types of competition that occurs in the natural environment

MODULE 6

Biomes of Southern Africa

On completion of this module, you will:

- Know what a biome is
- Be able to name the seven major biomes in Southern Africa
- Be able to explain the biomes in terms of the amount of seasonal rainfall and temperature
- Know what the main indicator species are for each of the biomes in terms of animals and dominant vegetation types

MODULE 7

Taxonomy

On completion of this module, you will:

- Know what the meaning of taxonomy is
- Have an understanding of why and how living organisms are classified
- Be able to name the six kingdoms of living organisms
- Be able to place living organisms into the hierarchical order of classification

MODULE 8

Plants – Trees, shrubs, forbs, and grasses

On completion of this module, you will:

- Know the anatomy of plants
- Know how to identify a tree and thus be able to apply this knowledge to identify any tree in Southern Africa
- Be able to give some interesting facts about trees in terms of general uses, and traditional beliefs associated with specific trees
- Know the anatomy of a grass plant
- Know how to identify a grass plant and thus be able to apply this knowledge to identify any grass plant in Southern Africa
- Know the differences between sweet and sour veld
- Be able to explain grassland succession
- Understand what is meant by the ecological status and the grazing value of grasses
- Understand the basics of plant processes
- Understand leaf structures and how leaves are attached to a plant

MODULE 9

Arthropods

On completion of this module, you will:

- Know what both invertebrates and arthropods are
- Know what the characteristics of insects are
- Be able to explain the three different types of insect life cycles and give examples of each
- Understand why insects are so successful and the ecological importance of insects
- Have a basic understanding of insect flight and their feeding behaviour
- Be able to identify common insect orders
- Be able to explain the difference between insects and spiders
- Know what the characteristics of the arachnid are and be able to place spiders two main sub orders
- Know how to recognise the venomous spiders in South Africa which are of medical importance to human beings and know what type of venom they have
- Know what the characteristics of scorpions are and how to distinguish between the two main types of scorpions
- Know what the differences are between millipedes and centipedes and their particular feeding behaviour

MODULE 10

Fish

On completion of this module, you will:

- Know the classification of fish
- Be able to label the external anatomy of a fish
- Understand the ecological importance of fish
- Be able to explain how fish reproduce and grow
- Know the different types of fish feeding behaviour
- Understand how fish move through water
- Be able to explain the concepts of neutral buoyancy and the swim bladder
- Know how the lateral line system works in fish and why it is important
- Be able to identify common species of fish

MODULE 11

Amphibians

On completion of this module, you will:

- Know the characteristics of the class of amphibians and be able to explain the differences between frogs and toads and their calls
- Understand the life cycle of frogs and toads and be able to explain metamorphosis
- Be able to explain mating postures, nests and types of eggs of frogs and toads
- Be able to name and explain the different types of frog calls
- Be able to identify some of the more common frogs by their calls

MODULE 12

Reptiles

On completion of this module, you will:

- Know the characteristics of the class of reptiles
- Be able to identify the features of the three reptile orders
- Be able to identify the features of turtles, tortoises and terrapins
- Be able to identify the features of skinks, lizards, agamas, geckos, chameleons, monitors and snakes
- Know how to identify the more common species of snakes as well as the potentially lethal families and species of snakes
- Be able to name the different types of snake venom, symptoms and effects
- Be able to classify snakes in terms of the different teeth structures
- Know the different types of reproduction in snakes
- Have a basic understanding of the senses of snakes
- Know some interesting facts about reptiles
- Be able to talk interestingly about the Nile crocodile

MODULE 13

Birds

On completion of this module, you will:

- Know the characteristics of the class of birds
- Understand the difference between passerines and non-passerines
- Be able to give explanations of the various feeding methods and type of food that birds eat
- Be able to point out examples of prominent bird species' nests
- Be able to give a basic explanation of commonly displayed bird behaviour
- Know how to identify birds making use of various identification pointers
- Be able to identify the prominent and common bird species
- Be able to describe both altricial and precocial birds
- Be able to explain “brood parasite” and provide some local common examples

MODULE 14

Mammals

On completion of this module, you will:

- Know the characteristics of the class of mammals
- Know the characteristics of the sub-classes of mammals
- Be able to explain the foot structure and digestive systems of ruminants and hindgut fermenters
- Be able to give the basic physical characteristics, social and feeding habits, habitat and distribution of the common species of mammals
- Be able to differentiate between males and females and common mammal species
- Have basic behavioural knowledge of the main indicator species (“flagship”)

MODULE 15

Ethology (Animal behaviour)

On completion of this module, you will:

- Know what animal behaviour is
- Understand the different grouping behaviour of animals
- Be able to explain the different forms of animals' communication making use of relevant examples
- Have an understanding of various types of animal protective behaviour
- Be able to explain the differences between animal home-ranges and territories
- Be able to identify and interpret animal signs and sounds

MODULE 16

Conservation and Habitat Management

On completion of this module, you will:

- The conservation practices that are used in the natural environment
- Fire as a management tool including controlled burning techniques
- Soil erosion types and erosion control
- Road siting and maintenance
- Bush encroachment
- Alien plant invasion
- The concepts involved in the continued clearing of encroaching and invading vegetation
- The management of numbers of mammal browsers and grazers
- Why and how all these conservation practices are carried out
- What a Transfrontier/Peace Park is and be able to give some examples
- What a Biosphere Reserve is, why they are established, and be able to give some examples of working Biosphere Reserves

MODULE 17

Historic Human Habitation

On completion of this module, you will:

- Have a basic knowledge of the early human inhabitants of southern Africa
- Be able to explain the three Stone Age periods that are found in southern Africa and be able to discuss some of the more interesting Stone Age sites in your area and their significance
- Be able to explain the characteristics of the Iron Age sites in southern Africa and their significance
- Have a basic understanding of the distribution of traditional southern Africa cultures

FGASA APPRENTICE TRAILS GUIDE MENTORSHIP PROGRAMME: SECTION A - TRAILS GUIDE

MODULE 1
Protocols: Dangerous Game Walking Qualifications

On completion of this module, you will:

- These qualifications apply to walking guides, walking in areas where dangerous game occur and are gained through experience (logged hours and encounters) training and mentorship.

MODULE 2
Dangerous Animal Knowledge

On completion of this module, you will:

- Know what animals are considered potentially dangerous from a guiding perspective.
- Know the general statistics of the potentially dangerous animals.
- Have an understanding and knowledge of the potentially dangerous animals

MODULE 3
Animal Comfort Zones

On completion of this module, you will:

- Have an understanding of animal comfort zones and personal space

MODULE 4
Planning for Trails Guiding Experience

On completion of this module, you will:

- Know what a trails guiding experience is
- Be able to carry out guest checks and prepare guests
- Know how to plan the experience based on guest information
- Be able to communicate planning with Apprentice Trails Guide/Tracker

MODULE 5
Trails Guiding Equipment

On completion of this module, you will:

- Know why it is important to select the right equipment
- Have an understanding of different types of trails guide backpacks
- Know what should be included in the contents of the trails guide backpack
- Know what navigational equipment you should take with you on a walking trail
- Know what you should carry on your belt for easy and quick access if the need arises

MODULE 6
Rifle Etiquette and Safety during Walks

On completion of this module, you will:

- Have an understanding of the correct handling of a rifle during walks
- Have an understanding of muzzle awareness at all times

MODULE 7
Conducting a Guided Walking Experience

On completion of this module, you will:

- Be able to carry out a pre-trail briefing
- Know the ground rules for conducting walking trails
- Know how to apply skills for guided walking experiences
- Have an understanding of the role of the Apprentice Trails Guide
- Know what an ethical encounter is with dangerous animals
- Know the important guidelines when approaching dangerous animals
- Know what to be constantly aware of when approaching dangerous animals
- Know the general rules for animal reactions to your presence
- Know when to make use of own discretion when walking in various types of terrain

MODULE 8
Specific Animal Charges and Field Guide Actions

On completion of this module, you will:

- Understand what a serious charge is and how to deal with it in terms of making use of the rifle
- Know how to respond to the charge by different dangerous animals based on interpretation of their behaviour
- Know where in terms of anatomy to place a shot if required to shoot a charging dangerous animal

MODULE 9
Shot Placement

On completion of this module, you will:

- Know where in terms of anatomy to place a shot if required to shoot a charging dangerous animal

MODULE 10
Backpack and Primitive Trails

On completion of this module, you will:

- Backpack or primitive style trails can either be sleeping under the stars or in a tent. Regardless of the type, there are certain ethics that should be considered by all, to ensure the least impact on the environment and also the wildlife.

MODULE 11
Evacuation of Guests from Trail

On completion of this module, you will:

- Whilst on trail, there may well be situations of medical emergencies that will require one or more of your guests to be treated or evacuated.

MODULE 12
Orientation Skills

On completion of this module, you will:

- Know what is meant by the term orientation skills
- Know what a map is and how to orientate and read a map
- Know what contour lines are
- Know what is meant by the scale of a map
- Know how to determine distance on a map
- Know how to take compass bearings
- Know what the cardinal points are
- Know how to orientate yourself making use of the Sun
- Know how to find direction at night
- Know how to find direction making use of natural indicators
- Know what to do when you are lost
- Know how to find water and food from the bush
- Know how to recognise and test poisonous plants

MODULE 13
Incident and Crime Scene Management

On completion of this module, you will:

- Understand basic management of an incident or of a crime scene
- Know how to approach a crime scene (poaching incident)
- Know how to report a crime scene
- Know how to protect the crime scene
- Know how to manage the situation in which you have had to shoot an animal in self-defence

FGASA APPRENTICE TRAILS GUIDE MENTORSHIP PROGRAMME: SECTION B - RIFLE HANDLING

MODULE 1
Rifle Handling for Dangerous Animals

On completion of this module, you will:

- Understand the state of readiness and the rifle operation in dangerous situations
- Know how to carry a rifle for quick action responses
- Know the difference between loading and cocking a rifle
- Know the loading sequence for different dangerous animals
- Understand all the rules of rifle safety

MODULE 2
The Basic Actions of a Bolt-Action Rifle

On completion of this module, you will:

- Know and be able to name the parts of a rifle
- Know the parts of a Bolt-Action mechanism
- Know the basic actions of a Bolt-Action rifle
- Know and be able to name the parts of a cartridge
- Understand the barrel making process
- Understand cartridge designation and calibre
- Know the different types of bullets

MODULE 3
Rifle Ballistics

On completion of this module, you will:

- Have knowledge of internal ballistics including the functions of all the parts of the rifle
- Have knowledge of external ballistics with particular reference to the effects on the bullet's ability to hit the target
- Have a good knowledge of terminal ballistics in terms of stopping power, hydrostatic shock theory and the relevant types of bullets used

MODULE 4
Rifle Cleaning and Maintenance

On completion of this module, you will:

- Know how to clean the bore
- Know how to clean the bolt
- Know how to clean the magazine and chamber
- Know how to clean the stock
- Know how to clean the ammunition

MODULE 5
Legal Aspects of Guiding with a Rifle

On completion of this module, you will:

- Understand the legal requirements pertaining to the use of a rifle for guiding purposes
- Know what the Firearms Control Act is
- Know what the SASSETA requirements are for use of a rifle