

MORE
FIELD GUIDE
COLLEGE

Guide Experience Course

Duration: 80 Days
Dates: January and July

This course prepares you to qualify as an NQF2 Nature Site Guide (FGASA), with a strong focus on vehicle-based guiding. Students will gain the confidence and skills to lead guests through the bush, interpreting their environment in a way that is both professional and inspiring.

Throughout the course, you will develop a solid understanding of geology, history, and ecology, while learning to identify and explain the rich diversity of plants and animals—birds, mammals, reptiles, and more. Training is rooted in observation, supported by both scientific and cultural perspectives, ensuring you leave with the ability to create meaningful and memorable guest experiences.

In addition to your guiding qualification, you will also complete a Wilderness First Aid Level 2 certification, giving you the ability to act with confidence in the field and provide a safe experience. Whether your goal is to share the magic of nature with others or simply deepen your own understanding of the natural world, this course provides the perfect foundation.

1. GUIDE EXPERIENCE CONTENT

- NQF2 Nature Site Guide (FGASA)
- Wilderness First Aid Level 2
- Birding (ID of birds and sounds)
- 4X4 Driving
- Hospitality in a 5-star environment
- Rifle Competency
- 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 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. SYLLABUS WILDERNESS FIRST AID LEVEL 2

a. Principles of First Aid and Safety and Emergency Scene Management
b. Artificial Respiration (AR)
c. Single Rescuer Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR)
d. Choking (Foreign Body Airway Obstruction – FBAO)
e. Wounds and Bleeding
f. Shock, Unconsciousness and Fainting
g. Fractures
h. Burns
i. Head and Spinal Injuries
j. Environmental Emergencies
k. Envenomation
l. Patient Transportation

5. PRACTICAL 4X4 DRIVING

a. General Safety
b. When to use high- and low-range
c. Differentials, hubs and traction control
d. Tyre Pressure
e. Descents/ Ascents
f. 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 nature guiding are
- Have an understanding of guiding ethics in the natural environment
- Have been introduced to a set of guiding principles and a code of conduct for 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 the meaning of Geology
- 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