

Frequently Asked Questions | The Outdoor Leadership Course (OLC)

How much does the OLC cost?

- The Spring 2025 OLC costs a total of \$1,165.
 - The course cost is \$590.
 - The Wilderness First Responder (WFR) certification, which is a required wilderness medicine training, costs \$575.
 - CORE organizes a WFR course over Spring Break. If you already have a valid WFR or plan to get it elsewhere, you will not be assessed the \$575.
- [Click here](#) for more information on the OLC Grant and other potential funding options.
 - Contact Braja Smith at b.smith2@ufl.edu for more information on payment plans, which must be completed by the first class.

Can I take the class for credit? Yes, you can take the class for 1, 2, or 3 credit hours through the College of Education. You do not have to take the class for credit.

What will I learn in the class? What is it like? The OLC is an engaging course that prepares you for leading others in the wilderness through a blend of classroom and experiential, in-field learning. You will learn technical skills such as wilderness medicine, mountain biking, surfing, sea kayaking, canoe rescues, knot-tying, and backcountry gear management. You will develop interpersonal skills like conflict resolution, participant management, and mental health first aid. You will learn instructional skills, where you'll gain confidence in teaching new skills to others. You will also develop judgement and decision-making skills in the wilderness setting.

I'm a junior! Should I still apply to the OLC? If you plan to stay at UF for graduate school, absolutely! We invest significant time and resources in training our students to become Trip Leaders. We hire individuals who will be around for at least another 2-3 years enrolled as a student at UF.

When I graduate from the OLC, do I automatically become a Trip Leader? The OLC provides you with the necessary skills to become a Trip Leader. However, you must demonstrate proficiency in these skills, particularly during the final weeklong backpacking trip. Upon demonstration of proper risk management, interpersonal, instructional, and technical skills, you will be hired as a Trip Leader after finishing the OLC.

What requirements are there? I've never been camping! Is this the right job for me? No experience is necessary! We will teach you the skills, but you must bring commitment, availability, and passion. We recommend that you enjoy being outdoors, challenging yourself, and spending time with people! You also must be a current UF student and have a valid Driver's License without major violations and 3 years of driving history by Fall 2025.

How much of a time commitment is this position?

- The Outdoor Leadership Course requires a significant time commitment. It includes three hours of weekly coursework, several overnight and day training trips, and about 3-4 class projects. Here's a link to a [sample syllabus](#).
- The Trip Leader community is vibrant and full of fun traditions, which you can choose to participate in if you are available and find them fulfilling.
- After being hired as a Trip Leader, you must attend monthly Trip Leader meetings, participate in several trainings in August, and lead at least two trips per semester to maintain your role.

Why do people decide to become Trip Leaders? There are many reasons! Some people find satisfaction in working with others outdoors and appreciate the unique perspectives they gain. Many enjoy the connection to nature and the physical challenge of the job. Trip Leaders are also passionate about the Trip Leader community and the social connections it provides. Regardless of the reason, graduates often express how valuable the leadership and communication skills they learned in the OLC and as a Trip Leader have been in setting them up for success in their current careers – regardless of the field.

Do I have to go on a CORE trip to become a Trip Leader? No, but we recommend it to gain experience and decide if the job and time commitment is right for you! You can view the schedule of upcoming trips at recsports.ufl.edu/outdoor-recreation/adventure-trips/

Do I need to buy my own outdoor gear? If you are accepted into the Outdoor Leadership Course, you can borrow CORE's rental gear at no additional charge, including group gear like tents and kitchen gear and personal gear like backpacks, sleeping bags, hiking boots, trekking poles, etc. We do ask you to provide your own headlamp and your own wool socks, but you don't need to buy anything in advance and we'll give you a packing list for each training trip.

If I become a Trip Leader, what is the job like? CORE is part of the Department of RecSports in the Division of Student Life. As a Trip Leader, you will engage other students in lifelong well-being through outdoor recreation. Responsibilities include leading at least two trips per semester and maintaining high standards of professionalism, risk management, and customer service. You will need to complete mandatory online training and learn to use Office tools like TEAMS and Outlook for proper communication. Leading adventure trips involves working closely with your co-lead on planning, communicating with participants, packing gear, buying groceries, driving a 12-passenger van and trailer to the trip location, and ensuring high-quality experiences for all trip participants. It's a unique and rewarding experience!

What's the pay?

Trip Leaders make \$14/hour.

Who should I contact if I have more questions? Braja Smith, Assistant Director for Outdoor Recreation at b.smith2@ufl.edu.