



# Field Staff Experience

## Background

In an effort to better reflect the changes in the industry and the growth (pre-Covid) and what growth may occur in the future, IAATO has held many in-depth discussions revolving around the percentage of staff on any given team that best manages a safe and environmentally responsible travel program in Antarctica. Given the breadth of activities offered has expanded as has the range of operations, requiring a broader range of skills, IAATO Members have agreed to the following requirements of experience for Field Staff; 80% relevant experience and 50% Antarctic experience and successful completion of the relevant IAATO Field Staff Assessment annually. Details of these requirements are further defined below.

## IAATO's Definition of Field Staff Experience. (March 2, 2021)

The purpose of this document is to define and provide clarity for expedition staffing requirements of IAATO vessel and land-based operations. It is acknowledged that each operator has their own employment procedures and responsibility to define the roles within their teams. Internal job descriptions will vary according to each operator needs and roles. The purpose of defining staff experience is to ensure that our obligations under domestic legislation, the Antarctic Treaty System (ATS) and IAATO are kept, and that we continue to deliver high quality educational programs and the continuance of safe, environmentally sound and effective operations.

It is mandatory that all Expedition Team members pass the relevant IAATO Field Staff Assessment annually to increase knowledge and understanding of IAATO, ATS guidelines and other relevant procedures, prior to arriving in Antarctica or South Georgia.

### 1. Experience

#### 1.1 Experience and Relevancy

This term will be applicable to Field Staff (see Section 3 below) and is to recognize their prior field-based experience, academic, science-based and or policy-based Antarctic experience. This may be from expedition cruising in other remote and or sensitive tourism-based environments and or other experience in roles relevant to their intended position.

**1.2** At least 80% of Field Staff are to have experience relevant to their specific role. This is defined in Section 3, below. The remaining 20% will be determined at operator discretion.

**1.3** At least 50% of Field Staff should have relevant experience in the Antarctic or Sub-Antarctic area.

## Definitions of Team Members

### 2 Expedition Team

**2.1** The expedition team consists of numerous specialties or roles. Members of the expedition team are those engaged in a function that involves direct facilitation of the expedition activities in a guest interaction role. Expedition operations can be diverse thus individual expedition team member responsibilities can be categorized as pertaining to one, or more, of the roles detailed below.

**2.2** Members of the expedition team are those engaged in a function that involves direct facilitation of the expedition activities in a guest interaction role and may include any of the following.

- Field Staff (see Section 3 below) and other specialist skills (e.g. Zodiac drivers, kayak guides, stand up paddle boards, leading walks and hikes and managing groups of guests on shore etc.)
- Yacht Crew
- Interpreters (Translators)
- Doctor/Nurse/Medical Team
- Trainee Field Staff
- Dedicated 'shore-teams'
- Educational Lecturers
- On board expedition team members for cruise only operations
- Crew Drivers on some vessels.



**2.3** Members of the expedition team, as detailed in 2.1 and 2.2 above will be regarded as 'Staff' for Post Visit Site reporting purposes provided they are expedition team members as noted in 2.2.

**2.4** The IAATO requirement of passenger to staff ratio of 20:1 is required for managing groups of guests on shore landings. Operators should ensure as part of their risk and environmental management procedures that all guests are properly managed ashore, during all activities and inexperienced team members are supervised and taught effective management procedures by an appropriately experienced member of field staff.

**2.5** The Expedition Team will not include those onboard as:

- Observers (Government representatives, IAATO or otherwise unless a separate agreement is in place)
- Guest lecturers or special guests if they are not included in the core expedition team or who have not had previous experience managing guests on shore.
- Tour leaders or escorts acting on behalf of respective guests or groups and not directly involved in facilitation of the expedition. While they are not considered officially as part of the expedition team, experience has shown over decades that tour leaders can be very experienced, and instrumental in assuring landings are well managed to ensure no more than a minor or transitory impact.
- Members of staff or crew who are outside of the expedition team by virtue of their engagement. Note, on some vessel crew Zodiac/Small boat drivers are fully incorporated into the expedition team and on other vessels they are not.

All guest lecturers and Observers where appropriate report to the Expedition Leader when assisting with landings or boating or land-based operations to assure competent management as noted above.

### 3 Field Staff

**3.1** Field staff are those who report directly or indirectly to the Expedition Leader and will have many different skills and backgrounds.

**3.2** The Field Staff have direct contact with guests and are responsible for the educational programs on board as well as off-vessel operations, on land and/or in small boats. Field Staff are responsible for guests' safety during off-vessel operations, (e.g. leading hikes on shore and small boat/Zodiac cruising, kayaking, diving, stand up paddleboards, camping etc.)

**3.3** During 'off' ship operations, their duties include, but are not be limited to: disembarking and embarking small boats (Zodiacs or similar), emergency actions and management, first aid response, group and site management, education and interpretation, small boat navigation, compliance to guidelines and policies.

### 4 Specialist Field Staff

**4.1** The staff engaged within this category are part of the Field Staff complement onboard, with the following exception.

**4.2** Specialist Field Staff may be exempted from the Field Staff experience requirements in situations where their activities are subject to separate permit approval by the relevant competent authority. This will be done at the discretion of the operator on a case by case basis. However, all roles as noted below in 4.3 should be required to take the IAATO Field Staff Assessment exam prior to the season.

**4.3** Specialist Vessel Field staff roles may include but are not limited to:

- Helicopter pilots, engineer(s) and support staff
- Submersible pilots and crew
- Hovercraft pilots and support staff
- Fixed Wing pilots, engineer(s) and support staff
- Wheeled or Tractor vehicles, mechanic(s) and support staff

### 5. Non-Compliance

Should an operator have an emergency situation (e.g. Field Staff member has to disembark due to medical or family or other emergency resulting in experienced staff ratios not being met, and/or a staff member had to be replaced at the last minute due to an emergency), the operator needs to remedy the situation for the following trip (s). If a less experienced expedition team member is hired as a replacement, they should pass the IAATO Field Staff assessment at earliest convenience. Staffing decisions and staff ratios could be audited if there was a substantive concern that an operator was consistently not meeting appropriate ratios.