

# Essential Eligibility Criteria

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We are so excited that you are considering a La Vida Expedition! Most La Vida participants have rarely, if ever, gone on a camping trip before and may find that this experience will stretch them. That opportunity for growth through challenge is exactly what makes an expedition so unique and powerful! With that being said, the location and activities of a La Vida Expedition are remote and exposed to outdoor elements. Due to the rigorous nature of the activities, we invite you to thoughtfully review the criteria below regarding various challenges associated with a La Vida Expedition:

The health and safety of our students and staff are a top priority, along with the educative quality of the program experience for all participants. The Essential Eligibility Criteria are applied to all students on a La Vida Expedition. If an applicant does not meet the specific criteria, La Vida may be able to make some modifications to the Expedition only if they do *not*:

- Jeopardize the health and safety of the other program participants or staff
- Place an undue administrative or financial burden on La Vida
- Severely alter the programmatic goals and methods used

Requests for modifications to the Expedition must be discussed with La Vida staff **at least one month prior**. Modifications are not guaranteed; La Vida will work with the requestor to determine the feasibility of the request. A final plan must be reviewed and approved by La Vida. Requests that are sent in within a month of the Expedition start date are less likely to be approved given the challenges in making late modifications to the Expedition.

Each individual La Vida participant, and guardian, if participant is a minor, are responsible for reviewing the relevant Essential Eligibility Criteria below.

**Gordon College Students Only:** If La Vida is unable to modify the Expedition, the student will be invited to participate in the Discovery program.

## General Eligibility Criteria for all La Vida Expeditions:

As you read the criteria below, consider your ability to meet these requirements from a physical, mental health, cognitive, and emotional perspective.

### **Participants should be able to...**

- Understand and follow verbal and visual instructions individually, and in a group setting.
- Comprehend hazards and safety concerns when explained, and adhere to safety policies and procedures even when staff and trip leaders are not immediately present.
- Identify hazards posed by the environment (steep terrain, sun, cold, etc.) and other participants (fatigue, state of mind, etc.).
- Effectively communicate to others personal distress, injury or need for assistance.
- Stay properly hydrated and nourished, and learn skills for self-care, including proper hygiene and use of clothing and equipment.
- Refrain from the use of alcohol, tobacco, controlled substances, and any misuse of prescription or over the counter drugs.
- If using prescription drugs, self-administer medications under staff supervision according to New York State Department of Health regulations.

- Contribute to a safe social and learning environment and maintain appropriate relationships with other group members and instructors.
- Refrain from harassment, bullying, and all other behavior that disrupts the learning of others or the cohesion of the group.
- Abstain from cell phone use for the duration of the program.
  - La Vida staff carry communication devices for emergency situations but, otherwise, a La Vida Expedition is a cell phone-free program
- Wear a climbing harness, helmet and any other safety gear correctly after instructed.
- Live and function in an outdoor camp setting without access to electricity for up to 12 days.
  - *No prior camping experience is expected nor necessary. This criterion is meant to address students who have medications or other medical interventions that require access to electricity.*
- For participants bringing a personal medical device (i.e. glucose monitor, hearing aid): function in a wilderness environment, knowing it is at risk of water damage.

### **Backpacking Activities: Participants should be able to...**

- Walk continuously for up to 2 miles at a moderate pace (2 mph) over steep and uneven terrain unassisted while carrying a backpack weighing 30-50 pounds, and then repeat following 5-15 minutes of rest (up to 9 miles total in one day).
- Not have immediate access to advanced medical care facilities for the duration of the backpacking portion of a program. Participants may be up to an 8-hour hike from definitive care.

### **Water Activities: Participants should be able to...**

- In the event of a capsize, independently get out from under capsized canoe, remain face-up in water with personal floatation device, and identify, make progress to and ascend shoreline with or without instruction.
- Carry a canoe with another person ( $\approx$  75lbs) over uneven terrain for up to 1.5 miles with periodic breaks.
- Get in and out of a boat from the shore or from the water independently or with a reasonable amount of assistance.
- Swim in water, while wearing a personal flotation device.

If you have any questions on these Essential Eligibility Criteria or about your ability to meet one or more criteria, please contact La Vida at [Nate.Hausman@gordon.edu](mailto:Nate.Hausman@gordon.edu).