



## ESSENTIAL ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Colorado Outward Bound School (COBS) courses range from one-day teambuilding programs to 81-day semester courses with the mission of changing lives through challenge and discovery. The physical and mental health and safety of our students and staff are a top priority along with the educational quality of the course experience for all participants.

COBS values inclusion, equity, and diversity and strives to provide a positive learning environment for all participants but does not specialize in experiences for people with disabilities or significant mental, emotional, or behavioral conditions. COBS instructors are not therapists and are not trained in adaptive programming, nor are they able to provide specialized individual support for these conditions.

The Essential Eligibility Criteria (EEC) are applied to all participants on all COBS courses. **The EEC is a list of the minimum essential criteria that a participant must possess for each activity to be eligible for a COBS course, not an all-inclusive summary of what may happen on your course.** If an applicant does not meet specific criteria, COBS might be able to accommodate an applicant if it does not significantly alter the fundamental nature of the course activity, jeopardize the health and safety of COBS students or staff, or place an undue administrative or financial burden on COBS.

**ONCE ON COURSE, INABILITY TO MEET THESE ESSENTIAL ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA MAY RESULT IN REMOVAL FROM COURSE WITHOUT REFUND**

### COBS General

**These criteria apply to all COBS programs. It is essential that each participant must:**

- Be able to recognize safety hazards and effectively communicate with staff in a timely manner regarding impending danger, personal physical, medical, and/or mental health distress, or, if requiring additional support. Participants must be able to warn others in limited visibility, and/or with loud background noise such as thunderstorms or whitewater rapids.
- Be able to understand and reliably follow verbal and visual safety instructions whether supervised or not. Hazards students may receive instruction about and may need to be able to visually identify include, but are not limited to hot/cold temperatures, darkness, sunburn, lightning, cliff edges, rugged and uneven terrain, potentially hazardous animals and insects.
- Be able to refrain from self-injurious behaviors, violence, threats and aggressive or intimidating outbursts.
- Be able to perform essential self-care, including maintaining adequate nutrition and hydration, dressing appropriately for environmental conditions, maintaining personal hygiene, and managing known medical conditions.
- Be able to refrain from using alcohol, smoking, and all unapproved substances, and misuse of prescription or non-prescription drugs.
- Be able to be respectful of the various identities (such as race, ethnicity, sex, gender, sexual orientation, religion, ability, and nationality) of others; refrain from behavior that is discriminatory to other's identities, socially exclusive behavior, and language that is derogatory or harmful to others.
- Be able to contribute to a safe, inclusive social and learning environment; maintain appropriate relationships with other group members and instructors; and refrain from behavior that disrupts the learning of others.
- Be symptom-free of communicable diseases for 72 hours prior to course start and arrive at course start symptom-free of communicable diseases. Arriving with symptoms of communicable diseases may result in isolation or non-admittance to course transportation.

### Wilderness-based

**It is essential that each participant must meet the COBS General EEC (see above) and must:**

- Be able to lift at least 35% of their body weight, or 40 lbs. (18 kg) (whichever is less).



- Be able to travel and camp during periods of inclement weather and/or at night-time in a remote backcountry environment for the length of course. Course sites may require one or more days of travel to reach the nearest road or advanced medical care.
- Be able to manipulate small objects (fine motor skills) to accomplish functions (ex. knots, carabiners, zippers, buckles, etc.)
- Be able to adapt to the physical, emotional, and social demands of an expedition—traveling each day, sleeping on the ground, living and working 24/7 with others; and able to be flexible in ways of living.

## **THE FOLLOWING ARE ADDITIONAL ESSENTIAL ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA SPECIFIC TO COBS COURSE ACTIVITIES:**

### **Alpine Backpacking or Mountaineering**

#### **It is essential that each participant must meet the *COBS General EEC, Wilderness-based EEC (see above)*, and must:**

- Be able to ascend, descend, or traverse rugged, uneven, and steep (ex. 30-50°) terrain (on and off-trail) covered in snow, water, loose rocks, or thick vegetation at elevations of 12,000 ft (3650 m) for five miles or more over consecutive days while wearing a backpack weighing at least:
  - Alpine Backpacking: 35% of their body weight of 40 lbs. (18 kg) (whichever is less)
  - Mountaineering: 45% of their body weight or 50 lbs. (22 kg) (whichever is less)
- Be able to wade across cold rivers or streams lacking bridges with the assistance of others.
- Be able to maintain composure and follow instructions in environments with heights and exposure.
- Be able to wear a helmet to manufacturer specifications. [Our helmets fit head-sizes from 18.9-24.4" (48-62 cm)].
- MOUNTAINEERING ONLY: Be able to use at least three points of bodily contact to climb or descend obstacles.
- MOUNTAINEERING ONLY: Be able to fit and wear a harness to manufacturer specifications. [Our mountaineering harnesses fit waist-sizes from 23-43" (58-110 cm)].

### **Canyon Backpacking or Canyoneering**

#### **It is essential that each participant must meet the *COBS General EEC, Wilderness-based EEC (see above)*, and must:**

- Be able to ascend, descend, or traverse rugged, uneven, and steep (ex. 30-50°) terrain (on and off-trail) covered in slickrock, water, loose rocks, or thick vegetation at elevations up to 7000 ft. (1800 m) for four miles or more over consecutive days while wearing a backpack weighing at least:
  - Canyon Backpacking: 35% of their body weight, or 40 lbs. (18 kg) (whichever is less)
  - Canyoneering: 40% of their body weight or 45 lbs. (20 kg) (whichever is less)
- Be able to wear a helmet to manufacturer specifications. [Our helmets fit head-sizes from 18.9-24.4" (48-62 cm)].
- Be able to travel through moving or stationary water with assistance.
- Be able to maintain composure and follow instructions while in dark, tight, or enclosed quarters in a slot canyon.
- Be able to use at least three points of bodily contact to climb or descend obstacles.

### **Climbing**

#### **It is essential that each participant must meet the *COBS General EEC, Wilderness-based EEC (see above)*, and must:**

- Be able to use at least three points of contact to climb or descend obstacles.
- Be able to wear a helmet to manufacturer specifications. [Our helmets fit head-sizes from 18.9-24.4" (48-62 cm)].
- Be able to fit and wear a harness to manufacturer specifications. [Our climbing harnesses fit waist-sizes from 23-43" (58-110 cm)].



- Be able to maintain composure and follow instructions in environments with heights and exposure.

## **Ropes Course**

**It is essential that each participant must meet all of the COBS General EEC (see above) and must:**

- Be able to wear a helmet to manufacturer specifications. [Our helmets fit head-sizes from 18.9-24.4" (48-62 cm)].
- Be able to fit and wear a harness to manufacturer specifications. [Our full-body harnesses fit waist-sizes from 18-55" (45-140 cm)].
- Be able to maintain composure to follow safety instructions at heights of up to 40 ft (12 m).
- Be able to manipulate safety devices above head level.
- Weigh less than 270 pounds to be able to ascend to element height. Other participants can still assist and participate from the ground level.

## **Water-based (Rafting, Canoeing, or Kayaking)**

**It is essential that each participant must meet the COBS General EEC, Wilderness-based EEC (see above), and must:**

- Be able to wear a Personal Flotation Device (a.k.a. lifejacket) according to manufacturer specifications. [Our PFDs fit chest-sizes from 24-58" (61-147 cm) and a minimum of 50 lbs (22 kg)].
- Be able to wear a helmet to manufacturer specifications. [Our river helmets fit head-sizes from 20.9-24.4" (53-62 cm)].
- Be able to remain seated and balanced while holding a paddle with two arms.
- Be able to control a paddle and move it through the water to steer and propel a boat forward in or out of current for up to 8 hours for consecutive days.
- Be able to maintain composure to follow instructions while in cold or turbulent water.
- Be able to orient self in the water while wearing a PFD to face downstream with head and feet above the water.
- Be able to actively make 20 ft (6 m) of progress while immersed in water and wearing a PFD.
- Be able to ascend, descend, or traverse rugged, uneven, and steep terrain (on and off-trail) covered in slickrock, wet surfaces, loose rocks, and/or thick vegetation.

## **Winter (Nordic skiing, Snowshoeing, Ski/Snowboard)**

**It is essential that each participant must meet all of the COBS General EEC, Wilderness-based EEC, and must:**

- Be able to independently ascend, descend, or traverse rugged, uneven, and steep terrain (on and off-trail) covered in snow, ice, loose rocks, or thick vegetation at elevations of 11,000' (3350 m) or more while moving gear weighing at least 50 lbs. (22 kg) or 45% of their body weight (whichever is less) over consecutive days using a sled, backpack, or a combination of the two.
- Be able to shovel snow for periods of at least 15 minutes.
- Be able to maintain composure, dress for the environment, and manage nutrition, hydration, hygiene at 0° F/-18° C or colder for consecutive days.
- Be able to learn and independently perceive and differentiate visual signals from an avalanche transceiver.
- DOWNHILL SKIING/SNOWBOARDING COURSES ONLY: Be able to descend slopes with a blue square rating at ski resorts with comfort and control.