



## THE WILDERNESS GUIDE APPLICATION PROCESS

### Introduction

This document outlines the W.G.A. guide levels, the steps that the Applicant needs to take, the steps the application will go through and the steps that will be taken in the event of a dispute. Applications will be treated with professionalism, fairness, equality and transparency, whilst maintaining the high standards that have been set by the W.G.A.

### W.G.A. Guide Levels

The W.G.A. has developed three levels of guide in order to give clients and employers a clear level of experience and competency.

The Levels are:

#### **Level I: Front country**

Competences:

- Can guide autonomously on established trails in territory with which they are familiar, where evacuation does not exceed 6 hours.
- Can act as assistant guide in off trail under the direct supervision of a Level II or Level III guide.
- Knows about his/her limitations and possibilities as a Level I guide and his/her responsibilities towards nature and customers. He/she can make risk assessments, safety plans and provide solutions to problems for a variety of basic activities in different environments and can guide a group in all semi remote areas. All activities are organised within the capabilities, experience and specialized training of each guide in a Front Country environment.

Qualification Assessment

- At Least 28 days (224 hours, counting 8 hours a day) of training.
- At least two specialisations (See WGA Standards)

- A minimum of 28 days of (assistant) guiding<sup>1</sup>

*Please refer to WGA Standards for a list of specialisations and required Skills and Knowledge.*

## **Level II: Backcountry**

There are 4 modalities of Level II that are classified according to the ecoregion where they develop:

- Boreal/Nemoral Forest
- Tropical/Jungle
- Arctic
- Desert

Even though several skills may seem common across all eco regions, the particularities of each environment may require additional learning.

### Competences

- Can guide autonomously off trail in territory with which they are familiar, where evacuation does not exceed 12 hours.
- Can act as an assistant guide in unfamiliar territory with evacuation time exceeding 12 hours under direct supervision of a Level III.

### Qualification assessment

All Level I Skills and experience should be set as a base.

### General requirements:

- 28 days of extra training (224 hours, counting 8 hours a day) from which 14 days in Remote/Backcountry areas with in the corresponding ecoregion.
- A minimum of 28 days of extra guiding with Level II competences<sup>2</sup>
- At least 4 specialisations (See WGA Standards)
- Valid Advanced Wilderness First Aid Certificate (revalidated every 3 years-minimum 40 Hours) by a recognised provider.

### Ecoregion Specific requirements:

Boreal	-To Include at least 3 expeditions of 7 continuous days or longer in the Boreal region
Desert	-To Include at least 3 expeditions of 7 continuous days or longer in the sand/bush
Tropical	-To include at least 3 expeditions of 7 continuous days or longer under tropical canopy

<sup>1</sup> Any documented and suitable guiding experience with references either from employer/supervisor or from the clients, supervised and signed off by a Level II or III WGA guide or another experienced guide from a suitable organisation or association. At least 14 days should be under direct supervision.

<sup>2</sup> Documented and suitable guiding experience under the direct supervision of a Level III WGA specialist in the eco region OR someone with comparable experience and skills. In case the supervisor is not a Level III WGA guide, adequate information about the supervisor must be included.

Arctic	To include at least 3 expeditions of 7 continuous days or longer in winter conditions
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*Please refer to WGA Standards for a list of specialisations and required Skills and Knowledge.*

### **Level III: Expert Guide**

There are 4 modalities of Level II that are classified according to the ecoregion where they develop:

- Boreal/Nemoral Forest
- Tropical/Jungle
- Arctic
- Desert

#### Competences

- Can guide autonomously off trail in unfamiliar territory where evacuation may exceed 12 hours
- Can train Level I & II aspirant guides if requirements are met (See WGA Standards)

#### Qualification assessment

All Level I & II skills and experience of the corresponding ecoregion should be set as a base.

#### General requirements

- A minimum of 120 days (960 hours) of guiding at Level II competences from which at least 60 days (480 hours) in Remote/Backcountry Areas from which at least 75% should be within the corresponding ecoregion.
- Valid Advanced Wilderness First Aid Certificate (revalidated every 3 years-minimum 40 Hours) by a recognised provider.
- Search and Rescue fundamentals (NASAR)

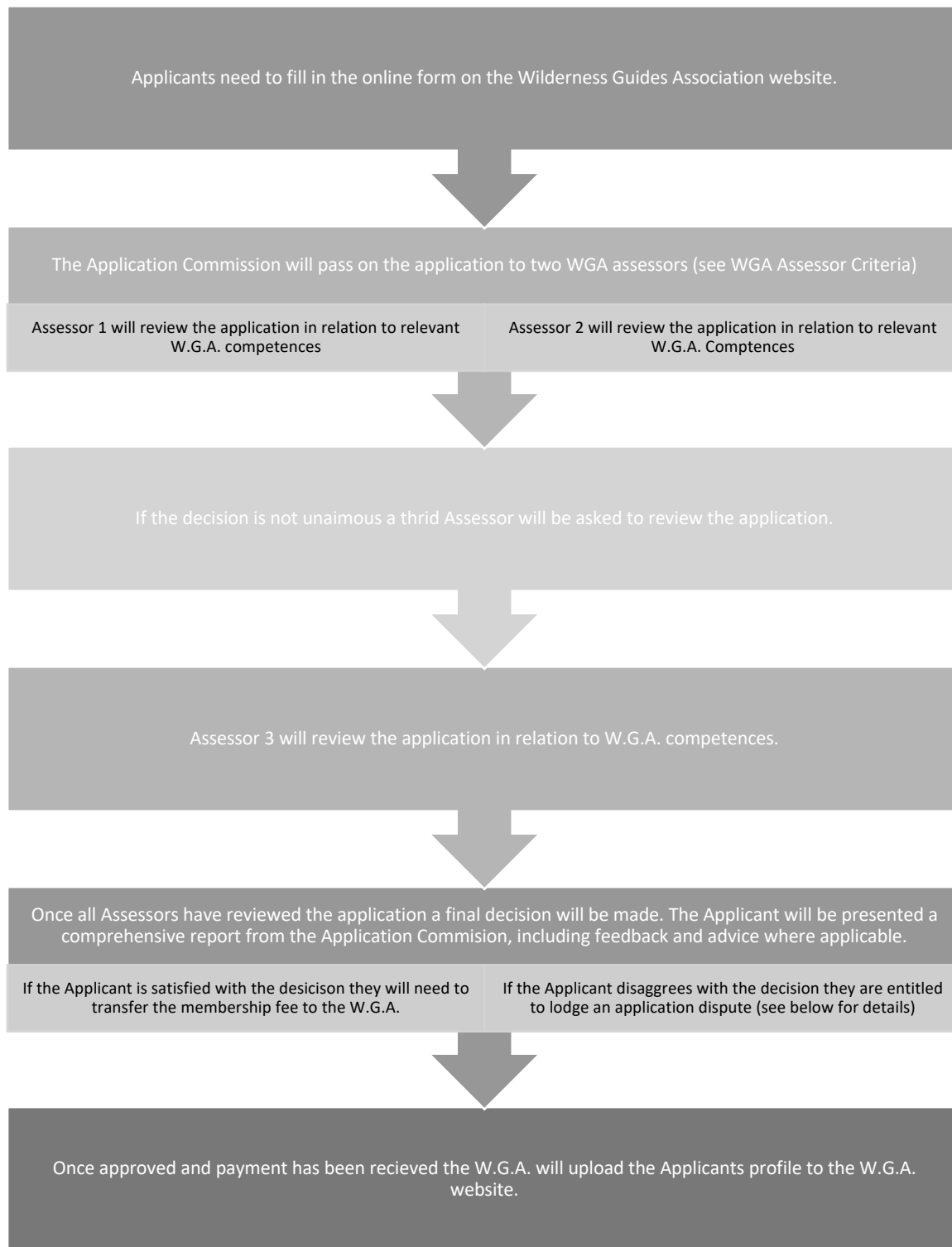
#### Ecoregion specific requirements:

Boreal	At least one 10-day expedition, sleeping in wild Boreal regions, travelling by foot, canoe, snowshoe, dogsled or combination
Desert	-At least one 10-day expedition, sleeping in wild desert/bush veldt -Valid recognised 4x4 off-road driving qualification
Tropical	-At least one 10-day expedition, sleeping in hammocks under tropical canopy. -Valid Swift Water, Canyoneering or White-Water rescue qualification by a recognised provider
Arctic	-At least one 20-day expedition, sleeping in wilderness

*Please refer to WGA Standards for a list of specialisations and required Skills and Knowledge.*

## Application Process

It is important that all applicants apply for a level that best reflects their experience and current level of knowledge. The Application Commission aims to complete application within two weeks. This may be delayed due to the fact that applications will be reviewed by active guides who may be out of communication, or a delay in response from supplied referees.



### Additional measures for Level III applications

Due to the high standard of a Level III W.G.A. guide, extra steps will be taken in the application process:

1. Three Level III guides will assess the application form. If there is not a majority decision two more Level III guides will be asked to assess the application.
2. All referees will be contacted by assessors to discuss applicants experience.
3. Applicants will be required to have a video call with at least one assessor, who will ask questions on past experiences, specialisations and qualifications.

### W.G.A. Assessor Criteria

The Application Commission will seek to find the most experienced and relevant Assessors to the application. The Assessors are selected on the following criteria:

1. The Assessor will have an in-depth and current expertise in the ecoregion and/or specialisations of the Applicant.
2. The Assessor will be known to the W.G.A. and be deemed fair, responsible and reliable.
3. Where possible the Assessor will not know the Applicant, but due to the size of the guiding community, this cannot be guaranteed. In the event that the Applicant is known the Assessor will inform the Application Commission, which will decide on how to proceed.

### Notes to Applicants

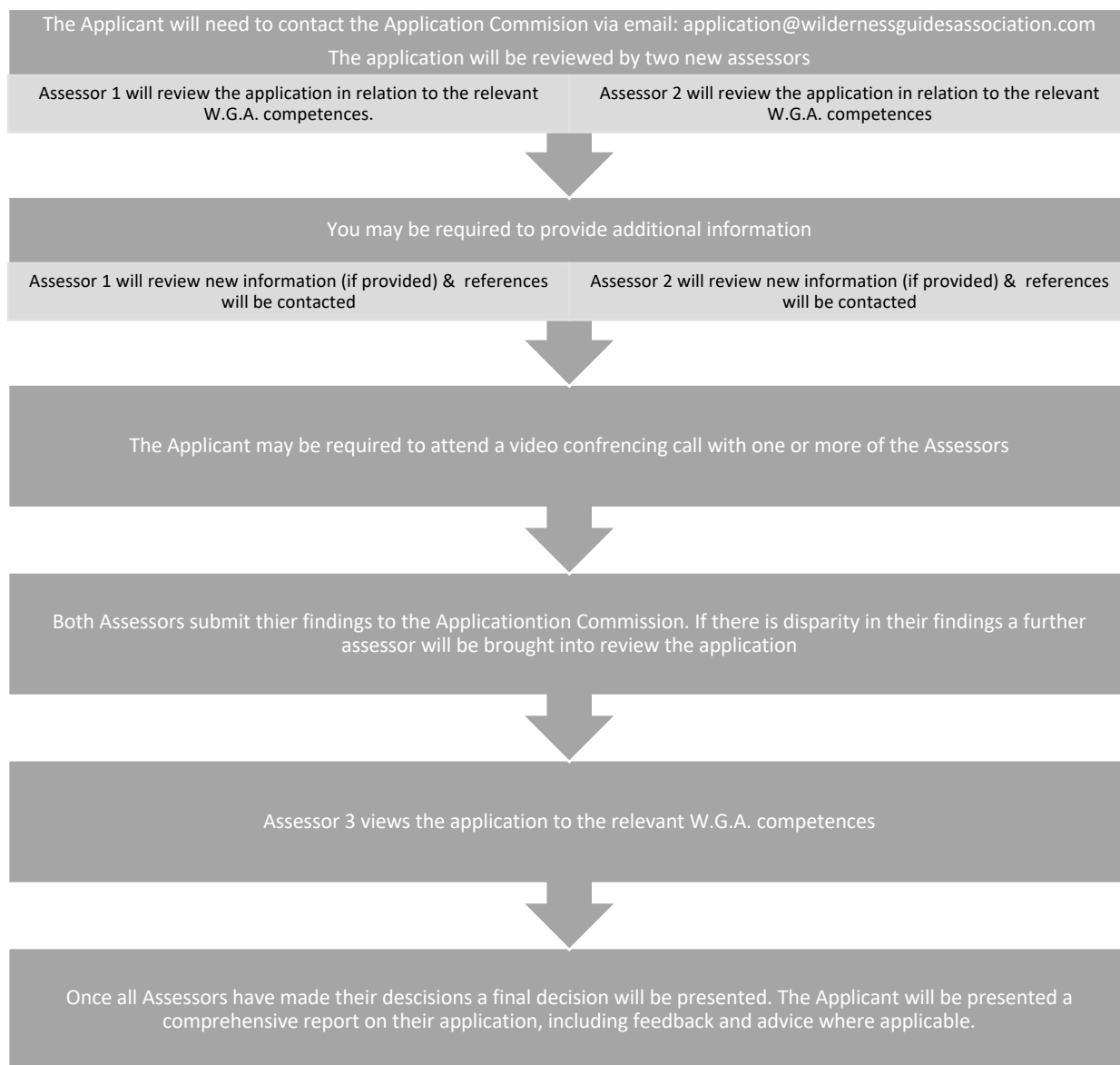
In order to make the application process as quick and easy as possible, please give thought to the following points:

1. Please tell us as much information as possible about your experience and expeditions. This should include length of trip, group composition & size, your role, locations & eco regions visited.
2. Make sure qualifications are still valid.
3. Make sure you have a valid Wilderness First Aid Certificate.
4. Please choose referees that you have worked with within the last few years and where possible can give an accurate and fair assessment of your work. Please refrain from providing referees that you have a personal connection with unless absolutely necessary e.g. spouses or family members.
5. Please inform your referees that the W.G.A. may contact them.

## Application Dispute Process

If the Applicant is unhappy with or disagrees with the decision of the Assessors they are entitled to challenge the decision by contacting the Application Commission. Each applicant is entitled to one application dispute and the decision made will be final. Applicants are entitled to resubmit their applications after they have gained more experience or followed feedback from the Applications Commission.

An application dispute will follow the following procedure:



*The W.G.A. understands that no selection or application process is perfect and due to the nature of the guiding industry, experience can be gained in many different ways. Assessors will take a holistic approach to assessments and deal with each one on an individual basis. Leeway and flexibility will be given if agreed by all Assessors and the Application Commission.*