

Essential Eligibility Criteria (EEC)

For participants on Wilderness Medical Society (WMS) Electives, Adventure CME, Diploma in Mountain Medicine, Diploma in Diving and Marine Medicine programs.

Wilderness Medical Society programs and experiences occur in both traditional classrooms and in remote, dynamic wilderness environments over days to weeks. Living and learning in these environments is challenging and is physically, cognitively, and emotionally demanding. Participants will be exposed to potentially unfamiliar environments and must be fully engaged in self-care and responsibility while committing to the needs and goals of both the group and the program. The Wilderness Medical Society strives to foster an inclusive environment where each program member has an opportunity to contribute and feel respected.

The following outlines the minimum requirements for participation. A qualified person is one who meets the EEC for participation in the program activity. If you have specific questions, please contact the program organizer to explore these criteria in more detail.

All WMS Programs

Each participant must:

- Perceive and understand educational material and instructions in the language of course delivery. The most common language used in programs is spoken English.
- Be active and engaged in all lessons, curriculum and activities.
- Contribute to a positive program environment free from inappropriate physical or verbal behaviors.
- Dress appropriately for the environment and adjust clothing and footwear as necessary.
- Independently maintain hydration, nutrition and environmental protection.
- If taking prescription medications, must be able to self-administer at the prescribed dose and frequency without assistance (except in an emergency).
- Utilize available modes of transportation for up to eight hours a day during the program including entering and exiting the transportation and utilizing all provided safety equipment.
- Adapt to local or regional expectations and services when traveling within and outside of the United States.

The following EEC are specific to program activities.

Wilderness Medicine and Rescue Instruction

Each participant must:

- Actively participate in program activities while contributing to a positive learning environment.
- Be able to stay alert and focus for four to twelve hours a day for up to 14 consecutive days in an outdoor environment.
- Perform all tasks related to patient assessment including, but not limited to, a physical examination of a patient. This includes perceiving and assessing a patient's verbal and non-verbal responses to the examination, rolling a patient, performing a medical history, assessing vital signs, and for Diploma in Mountain Medicine programs using diagnostic tools such as a stethoscope and pulse-oximetry.
- Care for simulated patients in remote and austere environments, including providing protection from environmental hazards and moving or carrying patients over uneven terrain.
- Communicate with a patient regarding their care and assessment and communicate with team

members. Diploma in Mountain Medicine programs require the use of voice and radios to communicate patient care information.

- On mountaineering and climbing courses, carry/move a patient in a litter or improvised litter as a litter team member, move patients on snow with a team, perform basic patient assessment and care while attached to a safety rope in a near vertical or vertical environment.

Risk Management/Emergency Procedures

Each participant must:

- Use good judgment and exhibit professional behavior in high-stress environments and situations.
- Have the cognitive ability to perceive, learn, understand and retain risk management and emergency procedure instructions from instructional staff, contractors, emergency personnel, and other group members.
- Recognize and take appropriate actions to minimize the risk of environmental hazards to oneself and others. Hazards will vary with location and environment and may include but are not limited to mountain conditions such as uneven terrain, rockfall, avalanches, crevasses, precipices; water conditions such as moving water, rapids, surf, and currents; animals, marine life, and insects; severe weather and temperatures; or vehicle encounters.
- Be able to identify in oneself and others and take corrective action to minimize the risks created by stress, fatigue, hunger or thirst, anxiety, fear, poor group dynamics, and impaired decision-making and judgment.
- Communicate and warn others of dangerous situations in a variety of conditions including reduced visibility, darkness, loud environments, open water, and out of line of sight.
- Put on and wear all appropriate safety equipment.
- Operate multi-directional emergency communication tools such as radios, cell phones, avalanche transceivers, signaling flares or flare guns, and audible signaling devices.

Camping

Each participant must:

- Perform all aspects of personal hygiene including dressing, washing, and toileting.
- Live and sleep outdoors for up to 14 days at a time in a group setting. This may include a range of wilderness environments ranging from desert to high altitude (up to 18,000 ft/5486 m), temperatures from 0F/-18C to 90F/32C, low and high humidity environments, open ocean, sun, rain, snow, and high winds.
- Utilize camping equipment to erect shelters, sleep, prepare and cook meals, clean cooking and eating equipment, disinfect drinking water, and properly dispose of waste.
- Independently move around the living site as needed for classes, meals, sleeping, and toileting.

Wilderness Hiking and Backpacking

Each participant must:

- Be able to navigate in an austere environment using a map, compass, GPS and/or terrain navigation.
- Be able to travel in and negotiate varied wilderness terrain while carrying up to or in excess of approximately 35% of body weight. Terrain may include developed and undeveloped trails, thick mud and sand, dense vegetation, steep slopes, snow and ice, loose rocks and boulders, creeks and rivers, open ocean, and dry or wet narrow canyons.
- Have sufficient endurance to travel for a few hours up to twelve hours in a day. Travel distances and difficulties will vary, 3-10 miles/5-16 km is common for hiking or mountaineering programs.

Mountaineering, Ice Climbing, or Climbing

Each participant must:

- Be able to move over snowy and glaciated terrain with crampons, ice axes, snowshoes or skis both uphill and downhill while carrying a full pack.
- Put on and wear appropriately fitting safety equipment to include climbing style helmets, safety glasses, climbing style harnesses, protective gloves, boots, and ear plugs.
- Be able to use climbing ropes, safety equipment, and tools to ascend and descend through steep and vertical terrain.
- Independently manipulate ropes to tie knots, manipulate climbing and safety equipment such as carabiners, pulleys, belay devices, ascending and lowering devices, and progress capture devices.
- Be able to receive and share communications over distance (150 feet/45 m) specific to climbing signals, emergency procedures, and rescue instructions.
- Be able to excavate snow to construct a shelter.
- Be able to operate an avalanche transceiver.

Aquatic Environments

Each participant must:

- Be able to inflate, put on, and wear a personal flotation device (PFD) and other safety equipment such as a helmet.
- Be able to swim continuously, unassisted, without a flotation aid for at least 650 feet/200 meters.
- Independently swim with mask/snorkel/fins continuously for at least 985 feet/300 meters.
- Be able to, without the use of a flotation device or swimming, remain afloat and protect their airway for at least 10 minutes in open water conditions.
- Be able to locate, grasp and hold on to a rope, line or thrown flotation device and either self-rescue or assist other crew with their rescue, should they fall overboard.

Sailing

Each participant must:

- Be able to navigate in a marine environment using a nautical chart (paper or electronic), compass, chart plotter.
- Be able to move around the cockpit and cabin of a sailboat while moored and underway using a combination of stairs and ladders to move between levels.
- Be able to move independently around watercraft to avoid hazards including quick position adjustments to redistribute weight or avoid moving components.
- Be able to secure themselves within the cockpit to avoid falling overboard.
- Be able to exit a capsized watercraft and maneuver in the water to self-rescue or participate in an assisted rescue. Self-rescue requires sufficient upper and lower body strength and flexibility to board a craft that is floating approximately 1-2 feet/0.3 m-0.6 m above the water level in open water conditions.
- Be able to exit a capsized or sinking boat. This could include egressing through a hatch, sizes vary but are commonly 18 inches x 22 inches/46 cm x 56 cm or 16.75 inches x 16.75 inches / 42.5 cm x 42.5 cm. Participants must be able to pull themselves up through the hatch.
- Be able to assist with overboard recovery rescue efforts including throwing flotation devices and ropes, communicating with the crew, lifting, pulling, and operating winches.
- Independently manipulate ropes to tie knots commonly used for water-based activities, including but not limited to figure eight, bowline, square knot, clove hitch.
- Be able to transfer between a dinghy or sailboat and the dock or shore or between a sailboat

and a dinghy while carrying a backpack, luggage or shopping bag. This requires balancing, bending at the knees and waist, stooping, kneeling, grasping, stepping on or off of moving objects at different heights through surf, packed or soft sand or using stairs, ramps or a dock.

- Be capable of operating boat equipment such as winches, clutches, fenders, dock lines, sheets and safety equipment in moderate weather conditions including seas up to 8 feet/2.4 m, winds up to 25-30 knots, for up to 6 hours. This includes lifting, pulling, throwing, grasping, communicating, using sight/sound cues, and moving around the vessel underway.
- Be able to act as a spotter, not losing visual contact during crew overboard procedures if a member of the crew goes overboard.
- Be able to operate a fire extinguisher.

Diving

Each participant must:

- Independently move about the deck of a dive boat.
- Be able to clear ears in order to descend to a depth of up to 60 feet/18 meters and in response to depth/pressure changes during the dive.
- Independently carry and don/doff dive gear. This includes carrying approximately 50 pounds/23 kg of gear over uneven surfaces for at least 820 feet/250 meters.
- Be able to discern, acknowledge and follow directions from a dive boat's captain and other dive professionals (on land, aboard a boat, and in water). This may include verbal instructions and audible/visual signals.
- Be able to independently use scuba equipment. This may include breathing compressed air via regulator for up to 45 minutes; controlling buoyancy; controlling ascent/descent rates; reading, understanding, and monitoring gauges; using signals to communicate with dive professionals/dive buddy; inflating/deflating buoyancy control device; maintaining neutral buoyancy.
- Be able to remain calm and perform self-rescue in open water including but not limited to using an alternate air source at depth and overcoming vertigo.
- Be able to recognize swimmers/divers in distress, signal for assistance, and initiate emergency/rescue procedures.
- Be able to perform first aid including giving rescue breaths while remaining afloat, administering oxygen to a breathing or unresponsive diver and providing CPR, including breaths and compressions, on a boat, dock or on shore.