



## INTERNATIONAL CANYONING ACADEMY ASSOCIATION (ICA)

### REGULATION FOR TRAINING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

#### **Preamble**

With the aim of ensuring the continuous training and updating of knowledge and skills of canyoning guides and practitioners who are members or wish to become members, they must attend training courses and respective periodic updates provided by the International Canyoning Academy Association (ICA) or entities recognized by this association. Given the professional demands of canyoning guides who require adequate theoretical and practical training and continuous training programs, the General Assembly approves, based on the proposal of the board, the Regulation for Training and Professional Development of ICA.

#### **CHARTER I**

#### **Objective and Characterization of Training and Professional Development**

##### **Article 1**

##### **Concept**

Training and professional development encompass a set of theoretical and practical knowledge to create the skills of professional canyoning guides. The training process involves creating experience so that professionals are equipped to perform in their profession.

##### **Article 2**

##### **Objective**

The objective of training and professional development is to provide professional canyoning guides with a set of knowledge and skills in the theoretical, practical, and ethical domains, enabling them to plan, handle, and lead canyoning activities. This path requires the continuous development of these professionals, demonstrating commitment to the discipline with the goal of keeping knowledge up-to-date and guiding skills at a high level.

##### **Article 3**

##### **Main contents**

1. The process of training and professional development should cover the following subjects: rope techniques, white water, safety, risk analysis, communication,

meteorology, first aid, environmental protection, and other subjects related to the practice of mountain activities and group management.

2. Topics related or peripheral to canyoning practice are not directly taught in canyoning courses but in modules/courses created for this purpose by ICA or partner entities, such as first aid and environmental protection.

**CHARTER II  
Training Model**

**Article 4  
Groups and levels**

The training levels are divided into 3 relevant groups by area of activity. The sports group governs practice outside the professional scope; The professional group creates profiles for technicians who work or lead canyoning activities; The training group governs the activity of professionals who can teach canyoning courses at the previous levels.

<b>GROUPS</b>	<b>SPORT</b>	<b>PROFESSIONAL</b>	<b>TRAINING</b>
<b>LEVELS</b>	Autonomy	Guide	Assessor
	Initiation	Auxiliary	Instructor

The knowledge covered at each of the presented levels is described in the document "List of Techniques, Knowledge, and Competencies" (LT2C) attached to this regulation.

Professional and training levels require physical availability for their completion and continuous work in the discipline. For this purpose, ICA recommends minimum physical fitness for the completion of the first professional group training level, the assistant guide course, which is presented below:

	Push Ups	Pull Ups	Abs	Run (mile)
Men	25	5	30	< 8m30s
Women	12	2	20	< 10m

Physical fitness should be a concern of each member, and these levels should be maintained or improved throughout the training path and professional practice.

**Article 5  
Relation between training levels**

The levels at the base of the pyramid are those that require less knowledge, and the higher levels are those that require more knowledge and skills.

Between the sports and professional groups, there is no obligation to fulfill levels, meaning that anyone with basic knowledge and who meets the prerequisites for the professional group can apply.

Between the professional and training groups, there is a level requirement, meaning that to access the levels of the training group, one must have the guide level.

Within each group, lower levels precede higher levels.

**Article 6**  
**Characterization of training levels**

1. Assessor: This role is responsible for evaluating all trainees prepared to take the final exams for the auxiliary guide and guide courses. Exams must be conducted by an individual other than the instructor who conducted the majority of the instruction and who holds the assessor level. To achieve the assessor level, one must obtain the following experience as an instructor, within the instructor progression rules, and meet the following requirements.

Level	Designation	Courses	Access Requirements
5	Assessor	Sports and Professional	21 days (Guide - leader course)

Assessors with the level obtained by previous versions of this regulation maintain the level, even if they do not meet the new requirements.

2. Instructor: This role is responsible for conducting professional and sports level training within the association's training portfolio. This qualification is divided into internal levels, corresponding to the progression of the instructor. The internal levels are detailed below.

Level	Designation	Courses	Access Requirements
0	Trainee	Sports	
1	Assistant Instructor	Sports and Auxiliary	7 days (Auxiliary Guide course)
2	Lead Instructor	Sports and Auxiliary	21 days (Auxiliary Guide course)
3	Assistant Guide Instructor	Sports and Professional	14 days (Auxiliary Guide course - leader)
4	Lead Guide Instructor	Sports and Professional	16 days (Guide course)

Progression within the instructor corps is linear, meaning it is not possible to skip levels, and instructors must gain experience in the course and in their respective roles to update their level.

3. Guide: This level enables a person, according to association standards, to lead groups in professional and sports canyoning activities; This is the professional reference profile of the association and the promoted standard. In addition to rope techniques, this professional will be equipped with communication skills, activity preparation, risk analysis, among other skills that will allow them to conduct a commercial canyoning activity safely.

4. Auxiliary Guide: This level enables a person, according to association standards, to work as a canyoning technician under the leadership of a guide qualified for this purpose. This technician will be able to install and operate fundamental systems for the commercial practice of canyoning. To obtain this level, it is necessary to successfully complete two courses:
  - Auxiliary Guide - Rope Techniques
  - Auxiliary Guide - White Water
5. Autonomy: This profile gathers the skills to carry out canyoning activities, in the sports aspect, without the need for supervision; with the acquired skills, the individual can assess which routes they can or cannot undertake, depending on the level of difficulty.
6. Initiation: This profile gathers skills to carry out canyoning activities, in the sports aspect, but needs to be part of an organized descent, led by someone with recognized experience.

### **Article 7**

#### **Constant update requirement**

1. Levels within the professional and training groups are obligated to continuous update processes through periodic update actions.
2. The update process follows the following principles:
  - a. Update and renewal of the title validity every 3 years;
  - b. Periodic update actions can be developed by instructors with the title of lead instructor of the level (auxiliary or guide) or higher;
  - c. At the end of the periodic update action, the member receives feedback from the instructors and their respective recommendations;
3. Calendar:
  - a. Periodic update actions must be scheduled at the beginning of the year, along with the activity plan, to allow members to balance their personal and professional lives with the completion of the action;
4. Expiration of title validity:
  - a. The title only expires in cases where the member lets the validity period expire without attending update actions and without justifying the absence;
  - b. To recover an expired title, it is necessary to undergo an update action with an assessment exam;
5. Justification of absence:
  - a. For members who cannot attend periodic update actions, they can justify this absence to obtain an extraordinary period to complete the action;

6. For members in regions where access to periodic update actions is difficult, a customized methodology will be developed for action completion.

### **Article 8 Logbook**

1. Levels within the professional and training groups are required to use a record book to register all canyoning activities and training.
2. ICA will provide the "logbook" computer system.
3. In the absence of the "logbook," the member must maintain their own record for later upload to the ICA system.

### **Article 9 Professional development**

ICA's mission is to promote actions that allow the professional development of its members and the construction of a portfolio of world-class skills. For this purpose, ICA should promote its own actions or partnerships in various domains described below:

- First aid;
- Pre-hospital emergency care and traumatology;
- Environmental prevention;
- Mountain meteorology;
- Biology and environment;
- Communication and leadership;
- Other matters considered relevant;

ICA members can acquire these skills from entities not related to the association, as long as they have the necessary competencies recognized by ICA.

## **CHARTER III Organization of Courses**

### **Article 10 Characterization of Courses**

The training model consists of a formative path to develop skills and knowledge in canyoning. This path allows the trainee to go through various stages of knowledge in the sport, either reaching the levels of professional activity or acquiring the necessary skills to provide canyoning training. The general characterization of each course is presented in the following articles, with detailed information about each training program.

### **Article 11 Assessor Course**

This course consists in a workshop, dedicated to the evaluation process, in order to ensure equity and justice.

**Article 12**  
**Instructor Course**

The concept of this course focuses on the training, pedagogical, technical, and safety skills of guides who aspire to become association instructors. This training requires a high level of dedication and demands above-average proficiency. The candidate's diverse skills are tested on various topics related to the training of professionals in this modality, including regulations and conduct, pedagogy and evaluation criteria, meteorology, risk analysis, technique execution, error analysis, among others. The course includes theoretical modules with autonomous work time and assessment sessions, production modules for lessons and content delivery (both theoretical and practical), and a safety module involving error analysis. It concludes with practical assessments for students who succeed in the preceding modules. Access to this course requires meeting the following requirements:

Guide Level	Diversity of Experience	Training Skills	First Aid and Emergency
250 canyoning activities in the last 5 years 50% or more must be commercial canyoning activities Only activities after completing the Guide Level are counted	Experience in canyoning activities in 4 different countries	For residents in Portuguese territory: Certificate of Pedagogical Competencies (CCP)  For non-residents in Portuguese territory: proof of experience or certification in adult education	Training/Certification in Basic Life Support  Training/Certification in First Aid

Exceptionally, and by unanimous decision of the Director's Instructor Body Coordinator, trainees from regions where the association is developing and lacks instructors may be admitted to this course. This decision is strategic and must be well-founded and approved in a board meeting. Candidates through this pathway must have recognized experience and competence in their region of influence.

**Article 13**  
**Canyoning Guide Course**

The canyoning guide course is the second level of training within the professional path in the modality. This course is divided into two major components:

- Training days, which consist of 8 days.
- Final evaluation exam, which takes place on 1 day.

The concept of this course focuses on guide competencies, as the auxiliary guide is a prerequisite for this course. It is expected that a canyoning guide course participant has mastery over the techniques and knowledge of the auxiliary guide. Training days involve descents in different canyoning routes, where preparation, communication, anticipation, and rescue techniques are practiced. An overnight stay in the river (canyon) is also mandatory. The course's contents must follow the training program, and all necessary

documents, such as the observation grid for continuous assessment and exam of this course, must be complied with.

To be eligible for this course, the following mandatory requirements and recommendations must be considered:

- **Mandatory requirements:**
  - Valid Assistant Canyoning Guide Level by ICA
  - Certification in Basic Life Support and First Aid
- **Recommendations:**
  - Professional practice experience as an Auxiliary Guide, with a minimum of 30 descents, 20 of which are commercial
  - Attend a course outside their normal operating region

#### **Article 14** **Auxiliary Canyoning Guide - Rope Techniques Course**

The auxiliary canyoning guide (rope techniques) course is the first level of training within the professional path in canyoning. This course is divided into two identified components:

1. Autonomous learning module of fundamental knowledge (C2ACF).
2. Rope techniques module, consisting of:
  - 7 days of training
  - 1 final exam day

The contents taught must follow the course's training program, and compliance with all necessary documents, such as the observation grid for continuous assessment and the exam of this course, must be ensured.

#### **Article 15** **Auxiliary Canyoning Guide - White Water Course**

The auxiliary canyoning guide (white waters) course is a complementary module to rope techniques, enabling trainees to analyze white waters in canyoning practice and acquire fundamental techniques for progressing with above-average flows or in emergency situations. This course is divided into three identified components:

1. Autonomous learning module of fundamental knowledge (C2ACF).
2. Application module of white waters in canyoning: 2 days

#### **Article 16** **Autonomy Course**

This course is continuously evaluated. Trainees can be approved or not approved based on their overall performance in the course. The course consists of 4 days of training, which can be grouped into 4 consecutive days or in a 2 + 2 day format. This training is qualitatively assessed. The focus of this course is consolidating introductory content and creating skills for students to achieve autonomy in practicing the modality without supervision. The candidate

must demonstrate experience and competencies from the previous level or have attended the Initiation course.

### **Article 17 Initiation Course**

This course is continuously evaluated, and trainees can be approved or not approved based on their overall performance in the course. The course consists of 4 days of training, which can be grouped into 4 consecutive days or in a 2 + 2 day format. This training is qualitatively assessed. The focus of this course is to introduce the student to the modality, allowing them to be autonomous within a supervised group. The competency profile for this course also includes the ability of the student to perform certain maneuvers under supervision.

### **Article 18 Evaluation methodology**

This evaluation methodology applies only to courses within the professional group, as characterized in Article 4.

#### **1.1 - Practical Evaluation (quantitative):**

Trainee evaluation is carried out by applying a scale of 1 to 5 for each parameter, where 1 is the best result and 5 is the worst result (only 0.5 can be applied for differentiation between integer values).

The trainee's evaluation is conducted as follows:

- Daily Assessment (AD);
- Continuous Assessment (AC);
- Final Exam (EF);
- Final Grade (NF) =  $(AC + EF) / 2$ ;

Definition:

- AD – Daily Assessments;
- AC – Continuous Assessment;
- EF – Final Exam;
- NF – Final Grade;

Evaluation application:

Daily, the instructor provides assessments for each trainee on the designated grid. These grades are applied to each assessment parameter, and whenever a negative grade is assigned, the instructor must justify it. The instructor cannot evaluate the content taught on the same day; in other words, the instructor must evaluate the content after the trainee has had time for learning and practice.

#### **1.2 - Practical Evaluation (qualitative):**



Trainee evaluation is carried out by the instructor's analysis, and the trainee is informed of their performance status based on the course's expectations. This evaluation regime applies to sports and white water courses.

## **2-Theoretical Evaluation:**

Theoretical knowledge is essential for understanding the modality and solidifying practical knowledge. Trainees are required to take one or more theoretical knowledge tests in professional training courses.

To pass the theoretical exam, the trainee must have a success rate of 80% or higher for each component.

In case of failure in one or more components, it is the instructor's responsibility to develop a recovery plan for the trainee on the relevant topics. This plan must be approved by the coordinator of the instructor group or by another instructor substituting in case of unavailability.

### **Article 19 Ratio**

For ICA training courses, a ratio of 1 to 4 applies, meaning one instructor can lead a maximum of 4 trainees. The lead instructor of a course can adjust this ratio based on a risk analysis for each training day.

### **Article 20 Appointment of Instructors and Assessor for a Course**

The authority to appoint one or more instructors, as well as the assessor for a particular course, lies with the association's Board after consulting the instructor body coordinator.

### **Article 21 Satisfaction Evaluation**

To ensure data for evaluating the quality of provided training, all courses must have respective satisfaction assessment surveys for both students and instructors. While other methods are used to analyze training satisfaction, these surveys are among the primary indicators for improvement processes.

### **Article 22 Specific Changes**

The instructor body coordinator has the authority to make specific changes that do not alter the substance of this regulation. These changes must be approved by the board.

## **Chapter IV Direct Access**

**Article 23**  
**Direct Access**

Direct access is a method designed to allow candidates with proven experience to apply directly for the ICA canyoning guide course, without having to complete the previous levels. This method was created with the aim of providing conditions for outstanding professionals to join the ICA, complying with current regulations and maintaining the mandatory requirements for those reaching the guide level. Access through this route eliminates the need to fulfill the prerequisite of obtaining the Auxiliary Guide level.

**Article 24**  
**Requirements for Direct Access**

The candidate must meet the following requirements to apply for the direct access methodology:

1. Letter of recommendation from an ICA member with the Guide level or higher.
2. A written curriculum with proven experience as a canyoning guide, leading commercial groups.
3. Completion of the technical leveling action consisting of 3 days (2 days of training and 1 day of simulated exam).
4. Completion of the white water training outlined in this regulation.
5. Payment of fees according to the current fee tables.

**Chapter V**  
**Instructors Body**

**Article 25**  
**Definition**

The instructors' body is defined as the group of members who hold the Instructor or Assessor level within the ICA training model.

**Article 26**  
**Coordination of the Instructors Body**

1. The coordination of the instructors' body consists of two individuals: a coordinator and an assistant.
2. The election of the instructors' body coordination is carried out by association members with the instructor and assessor levels.
3. The term is for 3 years. The electoral process is managed by the association's board.
4. Responsibilities:
  - a. Manage the activities of the instructors.
  - b. Ensure constant updates of the contents and competencies of the training process.
  - c. Promote the annual meeting of instructors to analyze the training process and review/update contents and competencies.

- d. Manage and cooperate in coordinating training with the Training Manager and Pedagogical Managers.
- e. Manage and coordinate training courses in cooperation with the Board.

**Article 27**  
**Instructor's obligations**

1. Promote the association and its quality standards, making necessary efforts for the success of training activities.
2. Contribute proactively to the construction of a sustainable training model oriented towards the challenges of the profession.
3. Collaborate in the development of content, manuals, regulations, or other documents necessary for the association's smooth operation.
4. Work loyally towards the association, trainees, members, and the community in general, contributing to a spirit of mutual assistance and well-being for all.
5. Maintain exclusivity as an instructor in canyoning activities in the ICA or partner entities, with the association's consent.
6. Ensure multimedia coverage (photos and videos) of the courses taught, as well as the respective authorization from trainees for their use in the association's marketing actions.

**Chapter VI**  
**Final Provisions**

**Article 28**  
**Equivalence with Other Training Models**

Equivalence processes with other training models are possible and must meet the following requirements:

1. Report with a favorable opinion from 3 association instructors, where one of the members must be the coordinator of the instructors' body.
2. The report must be unanimously approved by the association's board.
3. The training model to which equivalence is sought cannot contradict any of the association's principles and this regulation.

The committee responsible for this process must be appointed at the beginning of the coordinator of the Instructors' Body's term, based on information from the various involved bodies and a decision of the Board.

**Article 29**  
**Doubts or Omissions**

1. Any doubts or omissions in this regulation are clarified by the board with the opinion of the coordinator of the instructors' body.

2. Urgent situations that require a decision and cannot wait for a general assembly are addressed by the ICA board in agreement with the coordinator of the instructors' body.
3. All decisions or changes within this article must be compiled and submitted to the General Assembly for approval.

**Article 30**  
**Revision**

This is the 3rd revision of the regulation and revokes all previous revisions.

**Article 31**  
**Effective Date**

This Regulation shall enter into force on the day following its approval at the General Assembly.