

KEEN Essential Eligibility Criteria for Outdoor Adventures

KEEN’s Essential Eligibility Criteria (EEC) is applicable for all guided adventure participants.

KEEN’s Outdoor Adventures have been developed to connect adults and children to the power of the outdoors, create community through place-based education, and engage them in the fight to protect it. KEEN’s goal is to inspire and educate people at all skill and ability levels through thoughtfully designed, expertly led, and accessible opportunities.

To help you identify the skills you will need to successfully participate in your outdoor adventures program, KEEN has developed the following Essential Eligibility Criteria (EEC). If you are unable to meet certain criteria, please contact us; we may be able to assist you with a reasonable accommodation unless it would change the fundamental nature of the program, would compromise your safety and the safety of other participants or staff and volunteers, or would place an undue financial or administrative burden on KEEN.

Use the following table to help you determine the eligibility criteria for the type of program you are participating in:

If you are participating in...	Read the following sections of this document
A classroom or urban program (paved pathways, accessible entrances and facilities, electricity/water/internet services)	Universal EEC
A field-based, rural or wilderness program (uneven travel terrain of varying steepness and obstacles, little or no accessible facilities, no electricity or reliable cell service, no potable water)	Universal EEC and, Field Program EEC and/or, Minor Program EEC and/or, Activity-specific EEC , that applies to the activity of the program you’re participating in, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Backpacking • Rock climbing • Paddling • Snowsports • Swimming

Universal EEC (pertains to all programs)

Each participant must be able to:

- Perceive and comprehend the inherent risks of the activity, including, but not limited to the ones previously identified by KEEN staff or volunteers.
- Stay alert and focus attention for the duration of the program.
- Effectively signal or notify KEEN staff or volunteers or other participants of personal distress, injury, or need for assistance.

KEEN Essential Eligibility Criteria for Outdoor Adventures

- Manage all personal care or activities of daily living independently or with the assistance of a companion, excluding KEEN staff and volunteers (exceptions: see Minor Program EEC).
- Participate without harassing or abusive behavior toward others for any reason.
- Follow verbal and/or visual presentation independently or with assistance of a companion or adaptive equipment.
- Carry your own personal health and care items such as an inhaler, allergy pen, or other required items and if taking prescription medications, have the ability to maintain proper dosage by medicating independently (exceptions: see Minor Program EEC).
- Practice the 7 Leave No Trace principles.
- Adhere to all rules, laws, and regulations put forth by the governing body, land management agency, or Tribal authority.

Field Program EEC (pertains to programming mostly outdoors and in areas without easy access to urban amenities)

Each participant must be able to:

- Access and exit venue locations independently or with the assistance of a companion. Ease of access and exit might be impacted by weather changes.
- Adapt to venue terrain changes brought on by inclement weather and changing light conditions. This may include rain, snow, ice, cold, tree cover, etc.
- Meet the physical demands of the program within the time limits set by the program.
- Independently, or with assistance of a companion, understand and follow directions and instructions given by KEEN staff, volunteers, or other participants to avoid hazards and/or manage risks, including following emergency procedures.
- Withstand environmental conditions associated with the program (i.e., temperatures below freezing, temperatures above 80F, variable water temperatures, etc.)

In order to use KEEN transportation:

- Participant must be able to enter and exit vehicle independently or with the assistance of a companion.

Minor Program EEC (pertains to any program where most participants are under the age of 18)

Each participant must be able to:

- Perform necessary self-care tasks, including personal hygiene, adequate hydration, dressing appropriately for weather conditions and responsibility for personal gear independently or with assistance from a companion or KEEN staff or volunteers.

KEEN Essential Eligibility Criteria for Outdoor Adventures

- Be willing and able to follow rules and guidelines set by KEEN staff and volunteers and treat them with respect and as having managing authority over programming facilitation.
- Carry your own personal health and care items such as an inhaler, allergy pen, or other required items and if taking prescription medications, work with KEEN staff and volunteers to maintain proper dosage as designated on health documentation.
- Work effectively as a member of a team, including taking responsibility for personal and assigned belongings, behavior, and language, utilizing appropriate communication of ideas and concerns, accepting differences, and possessing a willingness to learn and grow.
- Tolerate changes in diet, group living, long days filled with mentally and physically challenging activities, and a routine that is likely different than your routine at home.

Activity-Specific EEC (pertains to any program that includes any or all of the following activities)

Hiking Specific EEC

Each participant must be able to:

- Walk for the prescribed tour duration and complete the program as explained by KEEN staff and volunteers.
- Independently navigate rough terrain, including safely maneuvering around and across rocks, slippery and uneven surfaces, under low branches, and around vegetation. This includes the ability to maintain your balance near precipitous ledges or cliffs.
- Walk and maintain your balance on hiking trails, including trails with rocks, roots, and low branches.
- Carry your own water, snacks, or “group gear” as prescribed by program description or KEEN staff or volunteers.
- Carry your own personal health and care items such as an inhaler, allergy pen, or other required items and if taking prescription medications, have the ability to maintain proper dosage by medicating independently (exceptions: see Minor Program EEC).
- Independently, or with assistance of a companion, wade across and/or swim (defined as safe and timely forward progress while keeping head above water) through bodies of water, even those with a strong current.

Backpacking Specific EEC

Each participant must be able to:

- Independently travel over and negotiate varied terrain for duration of program while carrying all personal equipment (i.e., pack, gear, shelter, etc.)

Rock Climbing Specific EEC

Each participant must be able to:

- Wear all required protective equipment, including a climbing harness (seat, chest, or full body) and climbing helmet.
- Independently, or with the assistance of a companion, communicate necessary climbing signals. These signals may include spoken signals, hand signals, or a rope tug.
- Independently, or with the assistance of a companion, tie a series of knots and hitches and have the cognitive ability to apply them within the rock-climbing system as directed by guides, staff, and volunteers.
- Independently maintain one's position on a climbing wall to attempt ascending.
- Maintain balance on uneven surfaces and keep an upright position independently or with the use of personal adaptive equipment.

In order to belay [in any program] each participant must be able to:

- Independently and reliably manipulate a climbing rope through a belay device.
- Independently maintain a firm grip on the climbing rope for the time it takes the climber to ascend and descend the climbing wall.

In order to attempt ascending the climbing rope each participant must:

- Independently and reliably manipulate a climbing rope through a belay device.
- Independently move from a seated position to a standing position.

Padding Specific EEC

Each participant must be able to:

- Hold their breath while under water and, while in the water wearing a properly fitted life jacket, be able to independently turn from a face down to a face up position keeping their head above water.
- Independently remain in an appropriate and safe body position, while in/on the paddle craft, for the duration of the program:
 - Canoe – upright and seated or kneeling position
 - Kayak – upright and seated position
 - Raft - upright and seated or kneeling position
 - Stand-Up Paddleboard – standing, upright and seated, or kneeling position
- Independently, with a companion or with the use of adaptive equipment, enter and exit the watercraft on shore.
- Independently exit from the watercraft in the event of a capsize and perform an appropriate self-rescue or cooperate with an assisted rescue.
- Independently propel the watercraft with the use of a paddle or other adaptive piece of equipment.

KEEN Essential Eligibility Criteria for Outdoor Adventures

In order to attempt self-rescue entailing re-entry of the craft while in deep water, each participant must be able to:

- Maintain a swimming position while manipulating equipment (such as a boar, paddle, or safety equipment).
- Maneuver body and manipulate equipment to re-enter the craft.

Snowsports Specific EEC

Each participant must be able to:

- Independently, or with the assistance of a companion, put on and take off equipment.
- Independently travel over and negotiate varied terrain for duration of program (e.g., different snow depth & density encountered while snowshoeing or cross-country skiing).

Swimming Specific EEC

Each participant must be able to:

- Hold their breath while underwater and be able to independently turn from a face down position to a face up position keeping their head above water.
- Independently remain in an appropriate and safe body position in the water
- Independently or with a companion enter and exit the water.
- Independently swim away from potential hazards.