



# Guidelines, Qualifications and Governance in Expedition Medicine in the United Kingdom: A Review

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## Introduction

- The field of expedition and adventurous travel is becoming increasingly popular.
- Consequently, expedition medicine has also evolved, encompassing a huge variety of climate specific diseases and injuries, often practiced in remote and austere environments.
- The growing need for effective governance in this area demands appropriate guidance and training of expedition medics to provide quality, evidence-based care.

## Aims

- Examine the current UK governance structure within expedition medicine.
- Explore the responsibilities of an expedition medic.
- Analyse current UK guidelines, qualifications and courses to identify areas that would benefit from improved governance.

## Methods and Results

- Literature search of Medline, Web of Science and Embase. 45 papers were identified.

### Exclusion Criteria      Inclusion Criteria

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Military research</li> <li>• Paediatric specific data</li> <li>• Outdated guidelines from the same organisation where a more current version is available.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UK based</li> <li>• Papers in English</li> <li>• Full text available through Queen Mary's or Bristol University</li> </ul> |
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## Current Guidelines and Governance.

- There is no centrally agreed comprehensive centralised UK guidance covering all expeditionary environments for expedition medics.
- The prevalence of information varies depending on the expedition environment.
- Prominent UK sources provide an important matrix to suggest the level of experience of an expedition medic but little guidance for specific environments and competencies.

## Courses and Qualifications

- No standardised, GMC approved expedition medicine training programme in the UK.
- CPD hours are available for course attendance, and assessment tools for work in remote and global health environments from some organisations.
- Qualifications centred around a single specific expedition location are well established in the UK and likely to be very beneficial e.g. Diploma in Mountain Medicine
- Commercial courses also exist providing varied content, faculty and expertise.
- Charitable and commercial expedition companies do not have a standardised requirement for expedition medic qualifications and experience.

### Deserts and Grasslands

- Heat related illness
- Exertional illness
- Vector borne diseases (e.g. tick-borne diseases)
- Envenomation

### Polar

- Cold injuries (e.g. frostbite)
- Hypothermia
- Cold water immersion

### Altitude

- AMS
- HAPE
- HACE

### Marine

- DCS
- AGE
- Barotrauma
- Envenomation

### Jungle and Tropical

- Envenomation
- Vector borne diseases (e.g. Schistosomiasis, Malaria, Leishmaniasis)
- Heat related illness

## Examples of post graduate UK qualifications relevant to expedition and remote medicine

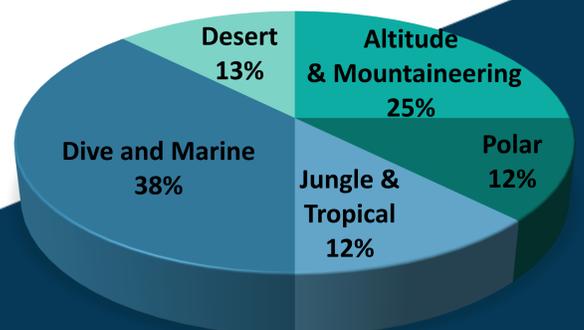
Qualification	Institution
Diploma in Remote & Offshore Medicine	Faculty of Pre Hospital Care, RCSEd
Diploma in Retrieval & Transfer Medicine	Faculty of Pre Hospital Care, RCSEd
Extreme Medicine MSc	University of Exeter
International Diploma in Expedition & Wilderness Medicine	Faculty of Travel Medicine, RCPSG
International Diploma in Mountain Medicine	University of Central Lancashire
MSc/Diploma in Expedition & Wilderness Medicine	University of South Wales
PGCert in Remote & Rural Medicine	University of Central Lancashire
MSc/ Diploma in Tactical Military Austere & Operational Medicine	Queen Mary's University
Diploma in Tropical Medicine & Hygiene	London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine/Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine

Does not include specific Global Health programmes

## Prehospital Emergency Medicine: A Comparison

- Prehospital emergency medicine curriculum encompasses elements of expedition and wilderness medicine.
- There are overlapping skills practiced out of hospital in both these medical fields however variation in type of remote environment and availability of resources
- Prehospital emergency medicine has the subspecialty recognition that expedition medicine does not, allowing for a curriculum framework, guidelines and expected competencies to hold practitioners accountable to.

Specific expedition medicine guidelines found in literature search



## Conclusions

- Current expedition specific guidelines differ creating an imbalance in the appropriate evidence-based standards for an expedition medical officer to follow.
- The governance structure within expedition and wilderness medicine in the UK is variable, with no centralised institution affiliated with the GMC or medical college to provide an acceptable standard of care threshold.
- Could subspecialty recognition by a governing body such as the GMC allow for an improved governance structure, provide accredited training programmes with a focus on environment specific competencies and well evidenced guidelines.