



Phi Kappa Psi Leadership Experience Equipment List

Welcome to NOLS! It's important to choose the right equipment for any outdoor adventure. We fundamentally believe that you don't need to own a lot of expensive gear to live and travel comfortably in the outdoors. We recognize that the process of getting ready for a course can be an intimidating experience, especially if you have never done anything like it before. This list is designed to help you make decisions about what you take on your course and hopefully help you feel confident about entering your course.

When you arrive, your instructors will look through the equipment you've brought and help you decide what to take into the field. You'll then go into our Outfitting Department to rent or purchase any remaining items. We've made every effort to ensure that this equipment list is reflective of what you will need on your course, but your actual needs will vary depending on season and instructor judgment. *We encourage you to keep the tags on all clothing, and the receipt at home, so that you may later return any unneeded items.*

Here are some thoughts to guide you as you pack:

- **First, use gear you already own!** You'll be comfortable in tried-and-true clothing. Bring more clothing than you think you'll need; your instructors will help you choose your best options. You can always leave items in storage at the campus. You may not think you have some of the clothing items on the list, but it is really common for sports and athletic wear to fit the bill. As long as it meets the description of the item, it will probably work.
- **Second, rent what you can from NOLS.** We recommend that you rent items when possible, especially items that tend to be expensive. While you are not obligated to rent gear from us, there are several reasons why we suggest it. Our rental gear is high quality, chosen specifically for the heavy use it receives on courses. Rental prices are reasonable, so you can try out gear and make informed decisions on future adventures.

Phi Psi will be covering the cost of the following rental items:

- Backpack
- Sleeping Bag
- Compression Sack
- Sleeping Pad
- Ground Cloth
- Trekking Pole

After your course, you may purchase any of the items you rented at a reduced cost; this is a great way to begin building your personal system if you intend to keep exploring the outdoors.



- **Third, purchase specific items from our Outfitting Department.** To make shopping simple, we offer camping essentials and personal care items. The items we sell in our Outfitting Department are tailored to what works well on our courses. Approximate price ranges for the items we sell are listed below - you can use these price ranges to help you decide whether to purchase items ahead of time.
- **Fourth, go shopping before your course.** A few options:
 - **REI or a local outdoor store**
 - Pro: Employees often have some sense of what you will need
 - Con: Gear at these locations is often expensive
 - **Department stores**
 - Pro: The active wear and camping sections can have inexpensive options
 - Con: Employees are unlikely to be able to offer suggestions
 - **Thrift stores**
 - Pro: Likely the least expensive option
 - Con: Can take a lot of time to find what you need
 - **Online**
 - Pro: Can find a wide variety of options
 - Con: The variety of options can be overwhelming to sort through
- If you're shopping ahead of time, it may be helpful to call someone at NOLS to chat through your plan for packing and purchasing so you can get some guidance. There is contact info at the bottom of this list.

Equipment Allowance

Phi Kappa Psi is providing each participant with select items (listed below) and a \$150 equipment allowance. Your allowance can be used towards pre-expedition gear rentals or purchases. The prices listed below will help you estimate your costs. If you wish to purchase NOLS souvenirs after your expedition, please bring a personal debit/credit card to pay for these items. Souvenir items will not be covered by your equipment allowance.

How to Use This List

Items under the **Required** heading are items that you **must** either bring yourself or rent or purchase from NOLS as available. Items under the **Optional** heading are not required, and you may bring them from home, buy, or rent from NOLS as available. If you see an **X** in the price column, that means that an item is not available for rent or for purchase as indicated.

Prices provided are approximate costs when purchasing from a NOLS Campus.



Upper Body Layers

Your clothing will form a layering system of base layers, mid-layers, and shell layers. The base layers are designed to wear close to your skin and provide moisture management, light insulation, and sun protection. Warmer mid-layers are for insulation and need to fit well together to give you options as conditions change. On the outside, wind and rainproof jackets prevent heat loss by cutting wind, rain, and snow. Look for synthetic materials that dry quickly and retain their warmth when wet, which cotton does not do.

Equipment	Rent	Buy	Notes
Required Items			
Base layer (long underwear)	X	\$70	Mid-weight long underwear top, wool or synthetic (e.g. Patagonia Capilene series, Icebreaker Body Zone)
Middle layer	X	\$50-160	Fleece jacket (e.g. Patagonia Regulator and Mountain Hardwear Microchill) or a wool sweater
Insulated Jacket (1-2)	\$20 each	\$165-250	A warm, synthetic-fill “puffy” or down jacket that fits over your base layers (e.g. Mountain Hardwear Compressor, Montbell Thermawrap, Patagonia Nano Puff). You may want 2 puffy jackets: a lighter one and a heavier one.
Wind shirt/anorak	\$12	\$70-110	A lightweight, breathable, durable nylon wind shell.
Rain jacket	\$25	\$100-150	Durable, waterproof, non-insulated jacket with hood. Waterproof-breathable fabrics (e.g., Gore-Tex, H2No, etc.) are both acceptable. It is important that your rain jacket fits well over all your base and insulating layers.
Sports Bra	X	\$40	Lightweight bras that offer adequate support. Synthetic/natural materials that dry quickly are preferable.
Optional Items			
T-shirt	X	\$25-50	A lightweight synthetic or wool t-shirt
Sun Hoody	X	\$60-75	A lightweight synthetic, wool, or bamboo hoody that provides both sun protection. For some, this will be their primary layer.



Our advice? Bring the non-cotton sweaters, fleece jackets, and synthetic layers you think might work. We'll advise you on the best combination for your trip, depending on the conditions.

Lower Body Layers

You will need 1–2 synthetic insulating layers (usually a base layer and, in early summer, a pair of fleece pants). All must fit comfortably over each other so that they can be worn at the same time. If you tend to get cold easily, add a middle layer of midweight bottoms to the base layer and fleece pants.

Equipment	Rent	Buy	Notes
Required Items			
Base layer (long underwear)	X	\$70	Mid-weight synthetic or wool bottoms (e.g. Patagonia Capilene, Icebreaker Bodyfit Zone). Cotton and cotton blends are not acceptable.
Middle layer (fleece pants)	\$12	\$60-150	Mid- or heavy-weight bottoms that fit comfortably over the base-layer bottoms. Fleece pants or insulated (puffy) pants are both acceptable.
Wind pants/hiking pants	\$12	\$70	Nylon shell pants. These should fit comfortably over all lower-body layers. Side-zippers allow the pants to be put on over boots. Soft-shell fabrics are acceptable, but lightweight “running pants” are not durable enough.
Underwear (2 pairs)	X	\$20-35	Clean underwear is essential for backcountry hygiene. Though you will have opportunities for laundry, having a supply of underwear for your semester is helpful. Synthetic or natural fibers (non-cotton) are great options.

Optional Items

Rain pants	X	\$80-110	Although not required, some people like to use rain pants in conjunction with a rain jacket.
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Our advice? Bring the synthetic base layers, rain gear, and exercise clothing you think might work. We'll advise you on the best combination for your trip, depending on conditions.

Head, Neck, and Hand Layers

Equipment	Rent	Buy	Notes
Required Items			



Baseball cap or wide-brim sun hat	X	\$16-30	Lightweight headwear to protect ears and face from the sun. We sell a variety of visors, trucker hats, and running hats.
Warm hat	X	Phi Psi Provides	Thick enough to keep your head and ears warm on a chilly night. Wool or fleece hats are ideal.
Liner gloves	X	\$15	Lightweight, synthetic glove that can be layered under heavier-weight gloves for added warmth.
Mosquito head net	X	\$5	A light, nylon head net. Can also double as a hair net.
Warmer gloves/ mittens	X	\$18-65	Fleece or wool, can be combined with a thin liner glove and/or mitten shell.
Optional Items			
Neck Gaiter/ Buff	X	\$22	Neck gaiters are synthetic pieces of multi-functional headwear (hat, bandana, neck warmer, etc.). Buff is a common brand.
Religious Headwear	X	X	Headwear associated with religious custom (Hijab, Pagri, Chunni, Yarmulke, etc.)
Hair Care Headwear	X	\$5-10	Wave cap, hair wrap, or bonnet whatever you are used to. Cotton, satin, or synthetics are all good.
Mitten shells	\$12	\$38-45	Lightweight, waterproof nylon shells that fit over mittens or gloves. Recommended for May/June courses.
Packs and Bags			
Equipment	Rent	Buy	Notes
Required Items			
Backpack	Phi Psi Provides	\$250	Our packs are large expedition models with a volume of 80 –100 liters. We recommend you rent one of our packs. If you bring a backpack, your instructors will examine it to determine its suitability for your course and route. It must have a volume of 80 –100 liters.
Plastic trash bag (2-3)	X	\$1	2–3 heavy-duty lawn-and-garden/contractor bags (33 gallon, 3mm thick) for waterproofing
Small stuff sack (2-3)	\$2 each	\$10-20	Small nylon sacks for organizing items in your pack



Our advice? An expedition backpack is a major purchase. If you don't already own one, we think you should rent ours, gain some experience, then make an informed decision after your course.

Sleeping Bags and Pads

Equipment	Rent	Buy	Notes
Required Items			
Sleeping bag	Phi Psi Provides	\$220-350	Synthetic-fill bags (e.g. Thermolite, Thermal.Q, APEX, etc.) perform well in the variety of conditions we encounter on courses. A bag rated to 5°-15°F.
Compression Sack	Phi Psi Provides	\$40	Stuff sack with compression straps designed to compress your sleeping bag when not in use
Sleeping pad	Phi Psi Provides	\$35-110	Used for padding and insulation between sleeping bag and ground. Foam pads, which we rent, should be closed-cell and at least 3/8-inch thick and have at least an R-Value of 2.0. Inflatable pads, which we don't rent, work as well; Therm-a-Rest and REI are reliable brands.
Optional Items			
Ground cloth	Phi Psi Provides	X	Waterproof nylon sheet to layer between sleeping pad and ground for extra warmth. Helps protect your gear from sand, dust, and dirt.

Our advice? A sleeping bag is another major purchase. If you don't already own one, we think you should rent ours, gain some experience, and then make an informed decision after your course.

Footwear

Equipment	Rent	Buy	Notes
Required Items			
Boots	X	\$170-250	Sturdy, expedition backpacking footwear with adequate support for extended wilderness courses. See information at the end of the equipment list for more ideas about boots.
Wool socks (3 pairs)	X	\$13-30	Mid- to heavyweight wool socks



Camp shoes	X	\$30	Running, tennis, or cross-training athletic shoes, closed toe required
Gaiters	\$5	\$50	Nylon boot attachment that protects the ankle from snow and dirt. Must be durable and large enough to fit over boots. Lightweight trail-running gaiters are not recommended
Optional Items			
Liner socks (2-3 pairs)	X	\$6-8	Lightweight wool or synthetic “wicking” socks. You will need at least two pairs if you are using a liner sock/wool sock combination in your hiking boots.
Our advice? Your boots will be a critical piece of gear. If they’re not sturdy, don’t provide enough support, or don’t fit properly with wool socks, we won’t let you use them. If you have any doubts about boots, feel free to give us a call.			
Toiletries			
Self-care in the outdoors is an essential component of any expedition. Whatever systems you use to take care of yourself in your daily life can often be modified to the appropriate size/quantity for your course. Any starred (*) item is something that we sell at NOLS.			
Equipment	Rent	Buy	Notes
Required Items			
Lip balm	X	\$3-5	Stick, cream, or tube-type moisturizing balm, SPF 15 or greater. Products with zinc provide superior protection.
Sunscreen	X	\$5-10	At least 3-6 oz., SPF 30 or greater. Products with zinc provide superior protection.
Dental Care	X	\$3-6	Whatever your oral hygiene system is (toothpaste*, toothbrush*, floss*, retainer, etc.), you can likely adapt it to your course using trial or travel size versions.
Skin Care	X	\$7	You may want to consider lotion* (preferably unscented) or Vaseline in 3-5 oz travel-sized bottle, wash cloth-sized pack towel for backcountry bathing, and ointment for scrapes if you are prone to scarring.
Hair Care	X	X	You may want to consider a comb* or brush*, bands*, chopsticks, headwrap, ties, or whatever your system is.



Menstrual products	X	\$5-35	Required if you menstruate. Bring the products which work well for you, and bring slightly more supplies than you think you might need. This might mean tampons, pads, a menstrual cup, or some combo thereof.
Personal Medications	X	X	Any prescriptions/supplements that are part of your system should be brought in sufficient quantities.
Our advice? Bring what you think will support your health on course, minimizing bulk and extra quantity where possible. Travel-size containers can be helpful in this process.			
Miscellaneous Items			
Equipment	Rent	Buy	Notes
Required Items			
Bowl	X	\$11	A plastic bowl with a screw- or snap-on lid is handy.
Spoon	X	\$1-10	Lexan spoons are light and durable. We also sell plastic and titanium sporks
Water bottle (2)	X	\$18 each Phi Psi Provides 1	Wide-mouth, hard sided Nalgene work well. We recommend that everyone have 2 liters of capacity.
Lip balm	X	\$3	Stick, cream, or tube-type moisturizing balm, SPF 15 or greater. Products with zinc provide superior protection.
Bandana (1-2)	X	\$2	A few of these are always handy
Headlamp	X	\$30	Durable and lightweight. Bring spare batteries.
Disposable lighter	X	\$2	For lighting your camp stove
Watch	X	\$25	A watch with an alarm is a nice feature.
Trekking Poles (2)	Phi Psi Provides	\$60	Sturdy, telescoping poles that can be used for increased stability while walking and minimize impact on your legs
Pen/pencil	X	X	For journaling and taking notes during classes



Notepad	X	Phi Psi Provides	A small, lightweight pad is fine.
Sunglasses	X	\$50-100	Good-quality sunglasses with 100-percent UV protection; lenses should be dark. If you wear prescription lenses and have limited vision without them, bring your own prescription sunglasses or look for a quality pair of clip-on polarized shades at an outdoor store. We sell Suncloud, Spokiz, and Optic Nerve.
Prescription glasses/ contacts	X	X	Bring a spare pair of glasses or lenses. Contact-lens wearers should also bring a pair of glasses as backup.
Optional Items			
Insect repellent	X	\$5-8	Small bottles; no aerosol spray cans. Optional
Book or e-reader	X	X	A small paperback reading book or lightweight e-reader, such as a Kindle; bring a protective case. Tablet-style e-readers (e.g. Kindle Fire) are not acceptable.
Camera	X	X	GoPros and lightweight digital or 35mm cameras are acceptable; bring a protective case. Avoid elaborate lenses and heavy SLRs. (Please note: you may not bring your smartphone or tablet into the field to use as a digital camera.)
Camp chair	X	\$30-50	Crazy Creek–style, or a sleeping-pad adapter.
Hydration system	X	\$30-50	An alternative hydration system, whether a Camelbak, Platypus, etc.
Sunglasses retainer	X	\$5	Chums or Croakies for keeping track of your glasses or sunglasses. Available with NOLS logo
Pocketknife	X	\$25-35	One small knife is sufficient; simple folding knives are popular.
Our advice? Keep the toiletries, pocketknife, camera, optional items and other gear to small sizes. We work to keep our pack weight as low as possible. Saving every ounce is essential!			

Shared Group Equipment—NOLS will supply



Expedition members share both the use of and the responsibility for the group gear that NOLS issues. NOLS charges only for group equipment lost or damaged. Keep in mind that NOLS evaluates gear from a number of perspectives beyond those that an individual user might consider. Performance, durability and simplicity are all contributing factors towards our gear selection.

Shelters

Trowel

Stoves, fuel bottles and fuel

Pots and pans

Maps and compasses

Equipment repair kits

Reference books

Binoculars

First aid kits

Boot Recommendations

NOLS has been outfitting students with boots for many years and our priorities have remained the same: we want your footwear to provide adequate protection for your feet, be durable enough to withstand extended rugged wear, and be comfortable! Many boots available on the market do not meet these criteria, and footwear that is good for weekend day-hiking use may not be a good boot for your NOLS course.

Medium-weight, off-trail backpacking or lightweight mountaineering boots provide good support for extended hiking with heavy packs and usually require less break-in time than heavyweight mountaineering boots. Here are some features to look for:

- Durable outer material, such as leather or thick nylon, that will withstand hiking among sharp boulders and dense vegetation. Full mesh is not appropriate.
- A Gore-Tex liner can be beneficial, but is not required. Your foot will get wet when water comes in over the top of your boot. A Gore-Tex liner will also slow drying time once the boot is wet.
- A sole that provides good traction, like Vibram® or other lugged sole
- 1/2- to 3/4-length shank or full poly mid-sole stiffener within the sole to provide foot support and protection.
- Mid-top or high-top ankle coverage. Trail running shoes and below-the-ankle hiking shoes are not encouraged.
- Comfortable fit with your preferred hiking socks. Boots that are even slightly too small commonly cause blisters.



The following list of acceptable boots is not exhaustive and is to be used for suggestions only. It is fine to substitute a similar boot for one of those listed here.

- Altra: Lone Peak Hiker
- Asolo: TPS series, Equalon, Altai, Finder, Fugitive,
- Keen: Targhee II/III Mid
- HOKA ONE: Anacapa Mid, Kaha
- La Sportiva: TX4, TXS GTX
- Lowa: Camino, Ranger, Trekker, Mauria, Explorer, Lady Light
- Merrell: Moab Mid, Forestbound Mid, Siren Traveller
- Oboz: Sawtooth
- Salomon: X Ultra Mid, Quest 4D GTX
- Scarpa: Kailash, Mescalito
- Vasque: Talus

Note that boot manufacturers often rename their product lines. Visit the manufacturer's website or contact us if you have questions.

Feedback?

NOLS is trying to update this list to be more welcoming and effective. If you are willing to provide some feedback to help our effort please take this [survey](#).

Questions?

Contact your Admission Officer if you have any questions or would like further information about the equipment list.