

THE SELECTION PROCESS

Considering that we are always oversubscribed, there has been a ranking / rating system in place for many years, that has served us well, but has never been fully explained to those outside the process. Below is an explanation of the process which will explain why we ask for extra information on the PLTU application forms, and why this information is important.

It must be noted that PLTU is a unique course as far as scouting goes and it is a **challenge award, not an interest badge**. We attempt to be an aide to Scouters, in training their PLs, but we are not, and cannot be the only training in this regard! The aims and objectives have remained constant and can be viewed at <http://www.scouting.org.za/capewest/pltu/>.

Summary:

Acceptance on PLTU is not on a first come, first served basis. We can only accept 40 scouts on the course due to time, equipment and staff constraints. Age plays an important role in acceptance as the participant needs to be mature enough to grasp adult concepts, but young enough to be able to put these into practice within their troops. Advancement levels imply competence in particular skills, thus allowing us to spend less time on basic scouting skill and to concentrate on other and more advanced skills. Being a PL means that scouts have some experience to draw on, and are thus favoured in selection. For participants to have attended PLTC means that we are able to take a deeper dive into concepts, and not have to start from the beginning. As the skills learned on PLTU are by their nature spread to other scouts, we try and have as many different troops represented on each course within reason.

Why only 40 scouts?

As one of the main objectives is to be an aide to Scouters to train their Patrol Leaders, each participant needs to have the opportunity lead a patrol, as well as see how others lead, and through this learn different techniques that can be applied in different situations. Everything we do on course as theory also gets reinforced by putting it into practice in some way.

We only have 9 days with the scouts, and if each of them gets 1 full day to lead (and considering the first and last days as half days) we can accommodate 8 scouts in each patrol. We have equipment and can get enough staff (it's almost a 1:1 participant to staff ratio) to cater for 5 patrols, which means that we are only able to accept 40 scouts. By adding more, it will infringe on the learning experience of each participant. Making the course longer means that we need staff for longer, and scouting already tends to take up a large portion of most staff's leave from work as it is.

Age:

We would like to see each participant take what they have learned, apply it, and pass it on to other scouts in their troop. However they also need to be mature enough to listen to their peers criticism, suggestions and advice without taking it personally, and grasping some very adult leadership concepts. To this extent we favour applicants that are 16, will have opportunity to test and apply different ways of working, but are mature. Very rarely will we accept a participant over the age of 17 and a half (as they won't be able to apply what they have learned) or someone under 15 as they are rarely mature enough and would take more away from the course if they are a little older (and they have the opportunity to apply for the next course).

Advancement:

As we only get to spend 9 days with the participants, we don't have much time to spend teaching basic scouting skills. The higher the scout's advancement, the less time we spend teaching basic skills, the more time we can devote to other skills. We prefer the participant to hold a minimum of First Class, as it implies a certain level of camping, pioneering, and other skills.

Current Rank:

If a scout is already a Patrol Leader, they will have had some experience in a leadership position. This gives them some background to draw on when we have discussions. If they are currently a Patrol Second, they don't have as much to draw on, and if they are a patrol member they have even less to draw on. So we favour applicants in that order (PL, APL, Patrol Member)

Having Attended PLTC:

Having attended PLTC means that they have already had some exposure to a lighter weight version of some of the concepts we try to impart. This means that we can take a steeper dive into the concepts as they have some background already.

Other members of the troop accepted

As the scouts should ideally become valuable help within each troop, and in turn pass on their knowledge to others in the troop, we make every attempt to have as many troops represented. If we have to choose between scouts in a particular troop, and are not sure, we often phone the Troop Scouter and ask, as we don't know the scouts as well as they do, and can advise us.

For those of you still reading at this point, we hope this explains some of the rationale behind how we go about selection. We welcome any suggestions, and constructive criticisms that you may have to offer on this or any other aspect of PLTU / PLTC.