



# **Winchester Green Badge course 2025/6**

## **Information for applicants**



Winchester Area Tourist Guides Association (WATGA) is offering this course with the aim of training a new generation of tourist guides for the city.

WATGA is an association whose members have been providing guiding services in Winchester for more than 40 years. All members are ITG (Institute of Tourist Guiding) qualified Green Badge and Blue Badge guides who are committed to conducting guided walking tours of the highest quality in Winchester. WATGA works closely with Winchester City Council's Tourism Department and offers regular tours to members of the public, as well as providing tourist guides to lead walking tours for ad-hoc groups and individuals all year round. In addition to English, WATGA is often requested to offer pre-arranged group tours in French, German, and other languages. Candidates for this course who are fluent in a foreign language would be welcome.

By running this training course, WATGA aims to provide the following:

**For the City**, a group of able and enthusiastic, well-trained Tourist Guides to ensure the continued long-term viability of WATGA

**For our clients**, a group of able and enthusiastic Tourist Guides, trained to a recognised national standard, who will welcome, inform and entertain.

**For the candidates**, to provide a Green Badge training programme, accredited by the Institute of Tourist Guiding, which will provide an entry to the profession of Tourist Guiding.

The role and function of a Tourist Guide is to welcome, organise, inform and entertain. The work may be challenging, but is also very rewarding and allows great opportunities to meet a wide range of people.

### **Programme Aim:**

To provide a Green Badge qualification for those wishing to offer flexible route tours on foot within the city of Winchester, including inside the city's visitor attractions (where permitted), to groups and individuals.

To develop the skills and qualities which will enable successful candidates to welcome, inform and entertain visitors, and prepare guides for the effective execution of scheduled and pre-booked group tours offered by WATGA.

To give students the broader perspective on the visitor economy and the business skills to underpin their guiding work.

The qualification is open to all. No specific prior education or experience, knowledge or attainment is needed. NB the course consists of academic-style lectures, private study, written and practical exams and project work which can be challenging.

### **Programme Objectives:**

By the end of the course the students will be able to:

- select a route for a tour on foot which meets the customer's needs and requirements, taking into consideration additional needs, expectations and interests.

They will be able to maintain an appropriate time schedule and demonstrate an understanding of the health and safety, comfort and wellbeing of visitors in their care

- deliver an effective commentary which demonstrates an understanding of the most important aspects of the city and its context and which coincides with the visitors' specific interests (where known). The commentary will be clear, accurate, concise, entertaining and informative
- undertake a site tour, selecting and delivering appropriate commentary and demonstrating awareness of any particular restrictions or requirements of the site and its other visitors
- have a good basis in the administrative, financial and marketing requirements for operating as a self-employed tourist guide
- demonstrate an understanding of problem solving, working alone and with Winchester Association colleagues, including dealing with late arrivals, bad weather, site closures etc
- demonstrate an awareness of responsible tourism. Students will be encouraged to consider sustainability in the sector generally, in their own tours, and in the course itself.

### **Learning outcomes:**

- ability to recall accurately and select the relevant knowledge for a given tour
- communication skills and personal qualities essential for the delivery of an effective commentary
- interpersonal skills essential for meeting visitors' needs, and for working where relevant as part of a team
- flexibility and self-motivation
- awareness of legal obligations and best practice relating to guided tours
- understanding of factors governing selection of routes, stopping places and commentary

### **Opportunities for Progression:**

The course will be followed by opportunities to join the regular CPD programme offered by WATGA to its members.

We hope that Winchester City Guides will have, from time to time, the opportunity to progress to a 'Blue-Badge' training course covering a wider region.

### **Selection:**

All those interested are invited to complete an application form, and will be informed in due course whether they have been selected for interview. Interviews are planned to take place in central Winchester on 10<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> July.

Candidates will need to demonstrate an outgoing personality, smart appearance, physical stamina, good general knowledge, organisational ability, flexibility and a genuine interest in and concern for people. Some experience in public speaking would be helpful. They should not simply be interested in local history or keen to

develop personal interests, but possess communication and interpersonal skills and be genuinely attracted to the service and business of Guiding.

All course communications, study materials and personal feedback to students will be electronic, and lectures will be available online, so students will be expected to have an up to date computer with the relevant software and adequate computer skills.

Applications are welcome from people with additional needs as long as they fulfil the other criteria. Candidates will need to be able to cope with the course and with work as a tourist guide. Course Directors should be informed of any individual needs at interview and adjustments will be made to the course where practical.

Selection for the course is also considered to be selection as an active member of WATGA.

Existing Green or Blue badge qualified guides will be welcome to apply and will be offered an interview out of courtesy, but cannot be guaranteed a place on the course. Our intention is to give priority to new guides and those who will become active members of WATGA.

### **Course Structure:**

The course will take place on Saturday mornings and afternoons, 9.30am to 4.30pm, for 17 weeks + one Sunday. A provisional timetable is:

Saturdays 4 <sup>th</sup> Oct to 18 <sup>th</sup> Oct inclusive
<i>Half term break</i>
Saturday 1 <sup>st</sup> November
Saturday and Sunday 8 <sup>th</sup> /9 <sup>th</sup> Nov ( <i>compulsory sessions on communications</i> )
Saturdays 15 <sup>th</sup> Nov to 29 <sup>th</sup> Nov inclusive
<i>Christmas break</i>
Saturdays 10 <sup>th</sup> Jan to 14 <sup>th</sup> Feb inclusive
<i>Half term break</i>
Saturdays 28 <sup>th</sup> Feb to 14 <sup>th</sup> March inclusive

If necessary there may be an extension to 21<sup>st</sup> March.

The course will be followed by 3 Zoom lectures on business and marketing skills.

There will be approx

- 47.5 classroom hours consisting of lectures, discussions, student presentations, quizzes, mock written exam. The lectures will be recorded so that they are available to be watched again later.
- 48.5 hours of practical sessions consisting of site visits, demonstration tours, practice tours and practice for the practical exams

One 2-day seminar will concentrate on communication techniques. Classroom sessions will take place in central Winchester.

In addition, students will be expected to undertake at least 10 hours a week of private study. This might include visits to visitor attractions, research of various subject areas, homework questions, preparation of presentations on set subjects to be given during the classroom sessions, and background reading. Where appropriate students will be able to share their research online. Support and guidance will be available from the course tutors.

Work on the Tour Planning Project (see below) must be done in the students' own time.

Student support will be available via the Course Directors and tutor groups. Attendance records will be kept. Students will be given individual and collective feedback so that they can monitor their progress. Students may wish to record themselves giving presentations as an aid to self-evaluation. Student evaluation of the training programme will be invited.

### **Examinations:**

The examinations are set, conducted and marked by the national Institute of Tourist Guiding. A pass must be achieved in each of the four parts:

- **Tour Planning Project.** Students will each research and write up a 1,500 word tour planning Project. This will describe a guided walk and a site visit in the city on one of 3 themes (details to be covered in a training session). The Project should demonstrate understanding of topics of interest, selection of commentary, provision for any additional needs, cost of entry fees, keeping to a given timetable and the health and safety of the group. The Project to be handed in by 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2026.
- **Written Paper.** A two-hour written examination in two parts. Part 1 consists of 100 quick-answer questions, and Part 2 consists of "brief notes" (half a page) on three topics chosen from six.
- A typical **walk in the city.** The Institute will agree a route for the walk. Each candidate must learn the commentary for the whole walk, and on the day of the examination guides are called forward at random to guide the group to a suitable stop and give their commentary.
- **An interior tour,** possibly in Winchester Cathedral. Again, conducted in the same way as the walk.

The ITG examiners will audio record the practical examinations for internal use only in connection with monitoring or appeals. Examinations are expected to take place in Spring/early Summer 2026 on dates to be arranged in conjunction with the ITG. Existing Green and Blue badge guides may be exempt from some exams.

Examinations will all be in English, and successful candidates with English as a first language will then be qualified to guide in Winchester in English only. Guides wishing to offer tours in any language other than their first language are required to undertake further examinations as set out by the Institute of Tourist Guiding.

The examination results are usually available in about 6 weeks, and course participants should be ready to start guiding work in Winchester in the summer of 2026. If you are not successful first time, each exam may be retaken once on a date to be negotiated with the Institute. Retakes attract an additional fee.

### **Cost:**

The cost of the course to candidates has two elements:

- £1430 to be paid to WATGA for the training covering tuition, support, lectures, admissions etc and including an ITG registration fee of £135 per student
- the cost of the 4 exams to be paid to the ITG (currently totalling £638, but see ITG website for up to date fees)

Candidates will be required to pay a deposit of £715 to WATGA on being offered and accepting a place on the course. This is non-returnable unless the course does not go ahead, when it will be refunded. The remaining £715 will become due at the end of August 2025 if it is confirmed that the course is going ahead.

The exam fees will become payable to the ITG approx 2 months before the date of the exams (yet to be confirmed).

Please note that in addition students will also have to meet their personal costs eg travel to and from venues, parking charges, buying guide and reference books, refreshments during training days etc.

**No refunds can be given if a student withdraws from the course or any part of it or for non-use of services provided. The organisers will do their best to continue the course if eg Covid restrictions are reintroduced, and to make adjustments such as moving sessions online where possible, but cannot be held responsible if the timetable is affected or the whole course has to be postponed.**

### **The work:**

Winchester Green Badge Tourist Guides are self-employed – you are “engaged” for a tour, not employed. This means that you as an individual must be prepared to keep careful accounts and pay any money due to HMRC etc. The amount due will depend

on each individual's personal financial circumstances and total annual income. Basic guidance will be given during the training programme.

For a member of WATGA the work includes:

**City Walking Tours.** WATGA arranges a rota of guides to lead regular public tours of the city. Members are expected to take their turn in leading such walks as a condition of membership (approx 10 per year).

**Themed Tours.** Guides are encouraged to research new walks and to offer themed tours eg Jane Austen or railways, according to their own special interests and enthusiasms. WATGA publicises a programme of themed tours each year.

Payment for the City Walking Tours and Themed Tours is averaged between those guides undertaking the tours in that month.

**Tours of the city for private groups.** Some private tours come via the Visitor Information Centre to WATGA members, and others are arranged by individual guides via their own contacts. Such tours may be at any time, in any part of the city, and sometimes cater for special interests. The group may be up to 25 people eg school children (to tie in with National Curriculum), new University students, students at local Language Schools, family groups or members of any kind of club or society. The current payment to guides is £110 for a standard 90 minute tour in English.

There are also opportunities to give illustrated lectures to local clubs and societies.

Most guiding work is during the day time, and often at weekends or during holiday periods. Apart from the regular City Walking Tours (dates for which are allocated randomly but can be swapped with other guides), you are free to take on or refuse other tours. This means that being a Winchester guide can fit well round family or other work commitments. How much you earn as a guide will also depend on external circumstances eg the economic climate, but the total earnings of a Winchester Green Badge guide are likely to be in the hundreds rather than thousands of pounds a year.

WATGA is an association of active guides and honorary members. It organises the regular City Walks and Themed Tours, publicity for the tours, the payment process, CPD and social events for all members and deals with external bodies on behalf of members. All these aspects are organised by volunteers taken from among the membership. WATGA would hope that successful applicants would, in due course, be able to contribute in some way to the running of the organisation.

### **Guiding in another language:**

Those who can guide in another language will almost certainly be offered more work than those who can only offer English, and are paid at a slightly higher rate.

Anyone wishing to guide in any language other than their own mother tongue will need to pass an Oral Proficiency Interview. A guide may be asked to work in a

foreign language for several hours at a time, so the required level of spoken language and knowledge of the country concerned is very high. There is an extra fee for these exams.

NB All study and examinations/assessments for this Winchester course will be conducted in English. If English is not your first language, you must be sure that you are comfortable working in English and that your spoken English is clear enough for groups of all nationalities to understand your commentary. **If English is not your first language and you wish to work in English you will need to take an Oral Proficiency Interview in addition to your other tourist guiding examinations. There will be an extra fee for this.**

### **A few caveats:**

Whilst the following is in no way intended to put you off, we feel we should point out that:

- Guiding can be very enjoyable, but please do not turn to it as a way of making a great deal of money.
- Guides meet a great variety of people of different ages and nationalities, to whom they need at all times to be courteous and helpful.
- Tours go ahead in all weathers and in all sorts of conditions. You must be physically able to cope with every aspect of practical guiding, from managing a group of up to 25 people, to climbing a hill or a flight of steps, or talking over passing traffic.
- You are responsible for the health and safety of your customers, as well as their education and entertainment. You therefore need to be alert, unflappable and able to cope with the unexpected.
- Guides have a commitment to their customers and colleagues. Once you have been given an assignment you must be relied on to turn up on the day. Sometimes you may need at short notice to step into the breach if a fellow guide is sick. Guides are generally understanding and supportive of each other, and WATGA organises regular social events.

### **Training team:**

**Training Provider:** British Guild of Tourist Guides

### **Course Directors:**

**Karen Dagwell.** BA (Hons), BEd, National Professional Qualification for Headship. 40 years in education, mostly in London secondary schools including Deputy Headteacher of a very large 11-18 secondary school for 12 years. Then Headteacher of a large secondary school in Southampton for 12 years. Also Regional Leader and Education Consultant for Hampshire, IoW and the Channel



Islands. Winchester Green Badge Guide (2016) and Winchester Cathedral Guide. Previously Chair of the Winchester Tourist Guides Association for 5 years and now Secretary. Also Liaison Officer with oversight of the Winchester Cathedral Trainee Guides Programme. Member ITG.

**Clare Dixon.** BA (Hons), MA. Winchester Green Badge guide (2005) and South/South East Blue Badge guide (2011). Course Director for Winchester Green Badge course 2015/6 and South Central Blue Badge course 2022/3. Past Chair of Winchester Tourist Guides.

The Course Directors can be contacted via the course email address:  
[winchestergbcourse@gmail.com](mailto:winchestergbcourse@gmail.com)

Additional tutors and lecturers will be Blue/Green badge tourist guides, or local specialists.

A Steering Committee with representatives of tourism and Winchester bodies will give guidance to the Course Directors to help them plan and run the course.

Applications:

An application form can be obtained by emailing [winchestergbcourse@gmail.com](mailto:winchestergbcourse@gmail.com) or from [www.winchestertouristguides.com](http://www.winchestertouristguides.com)  
Completed forms should be returned by email to [winchestergbcourse@gmail.com](mailto:winchestergbcourse@gmail.com) no later than 5pm on Monday 16<sup>th</sup> June 2025.

Depending on the number of applications received, we may not be able to interview all those interested in the course. Any applicants not selected for interview will be informed promptly.

Selected applicants will be interviewed in central Winchester on 10<sup>th</sup> or 14<sup>th</sup> July with successful candidates having the offer of a place confirmed shortly afterwards.

The organisers reserve the right to cancel the course if insufficient applications are received. If for this or any other reason the course does not run, all monies paid will be returned.