



Become A Field Guide

NQF2 Nature Site Guide Course | 2027

The Wild Is Your Classroom.

Based at Olienhout Game Reserve in the Northern Cape, Kukama combines professional field guide training with an active rewilding project. Here, your learning happens where the theory comes alive — in the bush, around the fire, on game drives and in the field.

Our 1,400-hectare reserve has been transformed from a cattle farm into a growing wildlife landscape. As the reserve continues to change, students become part of a living environment where every day offers something new to observe, understand and learn from.

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NQF2 Nature Site Guide Course

Is This Course For You?

- ☒ You are 18 years or older.
- ☒ You love being outdoors and learning from nature.
- ☒ You learn best by doing, not simply by sitting in a classroom.
- ☒ You want practical skills alongside recognised training.
- ☒ You value a smaller, more personal learning environment.

If that sounds like you, Kukama could be where your guiding journey begins.

Course At A Glance

- Qualification: NQF2 Nature Site Guide
- Endorsed by: FGASA
- Accredited by: CATHSSETA
- Duration: 10 weeks, full-time residential
- SA Resident Rate: R94 999.00
- International Rate: R125 500.00
- Location: Olienhout Game Reserve, Northern Cape
- Biome: Kalahari Bushveld
- Group size: Maximum 10 students per intake

2027 Course Dates

- ☐ 3 April – 12 June
- ☐ 26 June – 4 September
- ☐ 13 September – 22 November

Why Kukama?



Beyond the Big 5

Wildlife guiding is about far more than the animals everyone knows. At Kukama, we encourage you to look closer — at predators, prey, birds, reptiles, insects, plants, tracks, behaviour and the relationships that hold an ecosystem together.

Small groups. Personal attention.

With only 10 students per intake, your training is personal and hands-on. You have space to ask questions, practise your skills and grow with the support of your trainers and industry professionals.

Learn by Doing

Guiding, ecology, bushcraft, reserve management, hospitality and professional skills are taught through a combination of classroom learning and practical experience. The aim is simple: build knowledge you can actually use.

Life at Kukama

Your learning environment extends beyond the classroom. Comfortable ensuite accommodation, wholesome meals, off-grid living, evenings around the boma and wide-open Northern Cape skies are all part of the experience.

What's Included In Your Course

Training & Accreditation

- ✓ FGASA fees and official training material
- ✓ Accredited First Aid Training, including dangerous animal encounter scenarios
- ✓ Accredited Basic Firefighting Training
- ✓ Rifle Handling Training – PFTC-accredited
- ✓ Snake Awareness Training

Field Equipment & Study Materials

- | | |
|-----------------------------|--|
| ✓ 2 x Kukama Uniform Shirts | ✓ Binoculars |
| ✓ Short | ✓ Tactical backpack |
| ✓ Trouser | ✓ FGASA course material |
| ✓ Bush hat | ✓ Field Guide / Reference Books (Birds, Trees, Mammals & Pathfinder) |
| ✓ Jacket | |

Practical Experiences

- ✓ Excursions in and around Olienhout Game Reserve
- ✓ Practical field and guiding experiences throughout the course
- ✓ 7-Day practical experience at Maloba Game Reserve, home to some of Africa's iconic Big Five

Accommodation & Meals

- ✓ Accommodation at Olienhout Game Reserve
- ✓ 3 Meals per day
- ✓ Weekly laundry and housekeeping

What's Not Included

- ❌ Transfers to and from Kukama (assistance is available)
- ❌ Personal medical aid (required)
- ❌ Toiletries & personal items
- ❌ Optional bird identification app
- ❌ Spending money
- ❌ Bank fees for international payments



How The Course Works

The NQF2 Nature Site Guide Course at Kukama has two complementary parts.

Part One — The FGASA Syllabus

The FGASA-endorsed component provides the core knowledge and guiding skills required for your qualification. The syllabus covers the natural environment, species identification, ecology, geology, weather, astronomy, animal behaviour, conservation and habitat management, as well as the cultural and historical context of Southern Africa.

Part Two — The Kukama Experience

We believe becoming a guide is about more than knowing your facts. It is also about how you communicate, how you handle pressure, how you work with people and how professionally you conduct yourself. Our additional training is designed to develop practical ability, confidence and interpersonal skills that support life in the wildlife and tourism industry.

The FGASA Syllabus

Includes the following key modules

Guiding in the Natural Environment:

Deliver informative, engaging and responsible guided experiences.

Geology:

Understand the earth beneath your feet and how it influences landscapes and life.

Climate & Weather:

Understand weather patterns and their influence on ecosystems.

Astronomy:

Explore the Southern Hemisphere night sky and our place within it.

Ecology:

Understand ecosystems, energy flow and nutrient cycles.

Taxonomy:

Learn classification and the language used to identify species.

Plants:

Develop practical botanical knowledge and identification skills.

Historic Human Habitation:

Understand the human history that forms part of Southern Africa's landscape.

Arthropods:

Discover the often-overlooked creatures that keep ecosystems functioning.

Fish:

Understand their diversity, identification and ecological roles.

Amphibians:

Understand their diversity, identification and ecological roles.

Reptiles:

Understand their diversity, identification and ecological roles.

Birds:

Develop identification skills and an understanding of bird behaviour.

Mammals:

Explore classification, characteristics, behaviour and ecological roles.

Ethology (Animal Behaviour):

Learn to interpret animal behaviour and understand its relevance to ethical guiding.

Conservation and Habitat Management:

Explore habitat management and ecological restoration.

Biomes of Southern Africa:

Explore the characteristics of Southern Africa's major biomes.



The Kukama Syllabus

The Kukama Difference

At Kukama, we believe becoming a field guide is about more than earning a qualification. Our programme combines FGASA-aligned training with practical experiences, personal development and real-world exposure to help students grow in confidence, awareness, professionalism and their understanding of the wildlife industry.

The bush never follows a syllabus — and neither does real life. Activities and experiences may vary according to the group, guests, weather, wildlife and opportunities that arise during each intake.

Practical Field Skills

4x4 driving and vehicle awareness, mechanics, track and sign, birding, snake awareness, basic maintenance and opportunities to develop wildlife photography skills during field activities.

Safety & Emergency Training

Accredited First Aid and firefighting training, additional first-aid scenarios involving dangerous animal encounters, and practical field safety awareness.

Firearm Proficiency Training

Accredited firearm proficiency training through an approved training provider, providing students with relevant training for future guiding roles where a firearm may form part of their professional responsibilities.

Bush & Night Experiences

Sleep-outs, bushcraft, bush cooking, stargazing, nocturnal wildlife viewing, storytelling around the fire and practical experiences in the natural environment.

Hospitality & Guest Experience

Practical exposure to bush cooking, guest service, teamwork, camp operations and Front of House and Back of House responsibilities as opportunities arise.

More Than A Qualification

The qualification is important. But so is the person who earns it.

Personal & Professional Development

Emotional Intelligence, personality awareness, communication, teamwork, conflict management, professionalism, career preparation, CV guidance and interview preparation, with ongoing individual support throughout the course.

Rewilding & Reserve Experience

Experience life on Olienhout Game Reserve, a landscape undergoing rehabilitation and rewilding. Students may have opportunities to experience wildlife management, monitoring and other reserve activities as they arise.

Industry Excursions

Experience different aspects of the wildlife industry through selected excursions and activities, which may include Kalahari Wildlife Project, Pangolin.Africa, Witsand Nature Reserve and other wildlife and tourism destinations.

Optional Add-On: Cybertracker Track & Sign

Take your tracking skills further with an additional 6-day CyberTracker Track & Sign certification opportunity after the course. This is an optional add-on at an additional cost. Contact Admissions for details, dates and availability.

The Maloba Training Experience

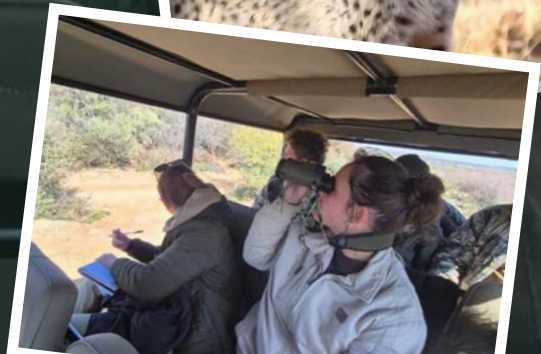
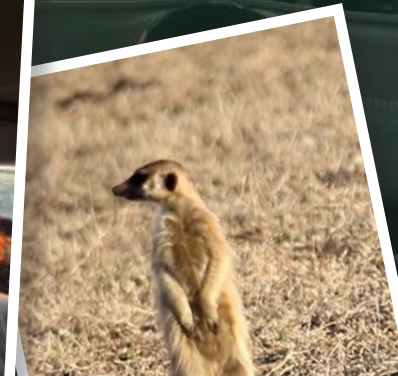
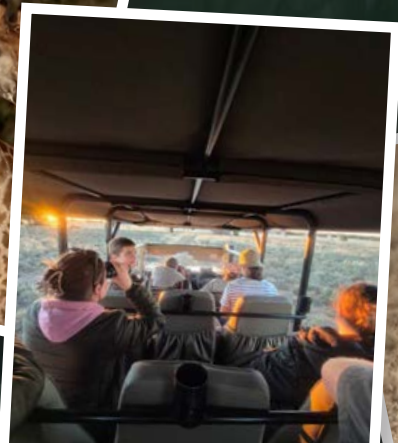
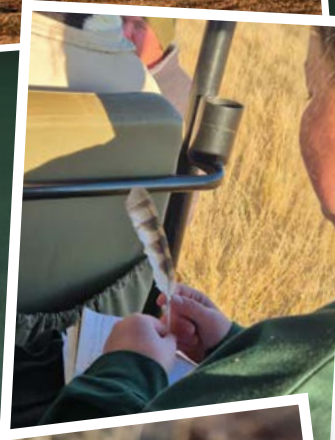
Kukama students are heading to Maloba Private Game Reserve for the final phase of their course, an immersive, real-environment training block that prepares them for life as professional guides. Maloba offers diverse habitats, free-roaming wildlife and authentic working-reserve conditions, making it the ideal place for students to apply their skills beyond the classroom.

The reserve is home to some of the Big 5, including species such as rhinos and buffalos, as well as endangered wildlife like cheetahs, giving students the opportunity to develop awareness, safety understanding and responsible conservation practices around high-profile animals.

During your time at Maloba, you will:

- Participate in reserve-based activities.
- Complete practical assessments in the field.
- Build confidence in real guiding situations.
- Experience how a functioning private reserve operates.
- Develop observation, tracking and safety awareness.

This practical experience helps bridge the gap between training and the professional guiding environment.





Life On Campus

Ten weeks is intensive. You will be learning, practising and preparing for a professional career, so commitment and active participation are important.

There is also time to breathe. Scheduled downtime gives you the opportunity to rest, explore the reserve, spend time with your group and enjoy the experience of living in the bush.

The goal is not simply to leave with a qualification. We want you to leave capable, confident and ready to take your next step.





Life At Kukama

- ✓ Modern, furnished two-bedroom cottages with ensuite facilities
- ✓ Three wholesome meals each day
- ✓ Lecture hall, library and Wi-Fi hotspot
- ✓ Student chill area
- ✓ Boma evenings, night drives and stargazing
- ✓ Time to rest, study and explore the Northern Cape







Make Every Day Count

This is a fully accredited and professionally structured field guide course, designed to prepare you thoroughly for work in the industry. Because of this, the 10-week programme is intensive and requires commitment, focus, and active participation.

Students should expect a full and engaging learning schedule — this is part of the value of the training you are investing in.

We believe the best way to learn guiding is through real, hands-on experience in nature — not only in a classroom. Your days in the field, practical exercises, and guided learning sessions are what build true competence and confidence.

With the support of our trainers, clear guidance, and good time management, the workload is manageable and rewarding. There is also scheduled downtime to rest, enjoy the reserve, connect with fellow students, and have fun along the journey.

Ten weeks is a short window in a remarkable environment. Our aim is for you to leave not only qualified, but capable, confident, and with unforgettable memories of your time at Kukama.

Make the most of every moment.

Making Your Dream A Reality

We've partnered with Capitec Bank to make studying at Kukama accessible.

The call of the wild is strong, and at Kukama Wildlife College, we believe that financial barriers should not stand between you and your conservation journey. That's why we have partnered with Capitec Bank to help make your dream a reality.

This exciting partnership offers a straightforward financial solution, allowing you to focus on what truly matters: your hands-on, immersive training in the heart of the Kalahari.

Your dream of becoming a safari guide is closer than ever.

Only for RSA Students

[Click Here to Apply](#)

A fast track to your future

We understand that investing in your future is a big decision. Kukama has partnered with Capitec Bank to provide RSA students with an education-finance option that may help make the course more accessible.

Eligible students can apply for finance towards their course fees. Approval and terms are subject to Capitec's assessment and lending criteria.

The aim is to help you focus on your training and your future while managing the financial commitment responsibly.

How it works

Securing your place at Kukama is now simpler than ever. With this partnership, you can apply for an education loan that covers your course fees.

The loan repayments are calculated at a competitive 11% interest rate.

This means you can begin your training and start changing the world without having to pay for the course upfront.

The Capitec application process is straightforward:

[Click here to apply online.](#)

Capitec reviews your application and provides a speedy decision, with applications approved within 90 minutes. Once approved, the funds are paid directly to Kukama Wildlife College, securing your spot.

You begin your repayment plan only once your studies are complete, giving you the time to find employment and start your career as a conservation leader.





Finance Your Studies with Student Hero

Your future in conservation may be closer than you think

At Kukama Wildlife College, we believe that financial uncertainty should not stop you from exploring a future in the wildlife industry.

That's why Kukama has partnered with Student Hero to help prospective students and their families explore suitable study finance options.

Student Hero is a student finance facilitator that allows you to learn about, apply for and compare funding options from multiple major banks and alternative finance providers — all through one platform and at no cost to you.

How Student Hero Can Help

- ✓ Explore available student finance options.
- ✓ Complete a pre-qualification assessment.
- ✓ Compare funding options from different providers.
- ✓ Receive guidance throughout the application process.
- ✓ Find a repayment option suited to your financial circumstances.

Who Can Apply?

If you are studying full-time, your finance application will generally require a sponsor — someone who applies for the funding on your behalf and is responsible for the repayments while you study.

Your sponsor could be a parent, family member or another person willing to support your studies, provided they have a South African bank account, a steady income and meet the relevant finance provider's affordability and credit requirements.

Funding approval is subject to the individual finance provider's qualifying criteria.

What will you need?

Depending on the funding provider, Student Hero may request documents such as

From the Student

- ID document
- Latest academic results or
- National Senior Certificate
- Letter of acceptance
- Kukama course fee schedule or pro forma invoice

From the Sponsor

- ID document
- Recent bank statements
- Recent payslips
- Proof of residence

Start Early

You do not need to wait until you are fully registered before exploring your options.

If you may require financial assistance, we recommend contacting Student Hero as early as possible. This gives you time to understand your options, determine whether you qualify and complete the necessary application process before your course begins.

Ready to Explore Your Options?

Take the first step towards financing your studies and find out what options may be available to you through Student Hero.

Explore Student Finance

Student Hero facilitates applications with third-party finance providers. Funding is subject to affordability, credit assessment and the individual provider's terms and approval criteria.

Explore finance with

STUDENT

HERO

[Click Here to Apply](#)



Will I Be Employable?

LET'S TALK OPPORTUNITIES

"As a former field guide myself, I understand the mix of excitement and nerves that comes with the job search after graduation. The good news? The industry is bigger than you think. From rustic bush camps to award-winning five-star lodges, they are always looking for well-trained guides. As founder of Wild Dreams Hospitality, one of the most respected recruitment companies in the industry, we work directly with the lodges that you aspire to join. From CV guidance to interview prep and job placement, we're here to help you turn your qualification into a career." – Hayley Cooper

The NQF2 Nature Site Guide qualification gives you a recognised foundation for entering the guiding industry. Completing the course does not guarantee employment, but we support students in preparing for the next step.

- Connections with lodge and reserve partners.
- CV development workshops.
- Interview preparation.
- Guidance with job applications.

"Your qualification is the foundation. Your attitude, professionalism, practical ability and continued development will help shape where your career goes next." – Nikki Venter





Getting Here

-  **Kimberley Airport:** approximately 2 hours / 180 km.
-  **Upington Airport:** approximately 3 hours / 260 km.
-  **Johannesburg (O.R. Tambo):** approximately 7 hours by road.
-  **Cape Town:** approximately 10 hours by road.

Transfers can be arranged from Kimberley or Upington. Students using transfers should arrive before 14:00. Transfers start from R2,500 one way.

Health & Safety

Kukama is situated in a malaria-free area. As with any natural environment, there are potential field risks, including ticks, and students receive an introduction to appropriate safety procedures.

Students are required to have medical coverage before arrival. Kukama also has Wi-Fi, insurance arrangements and contingency procedures in place, with a duty manager available to support students during their stay.





The Kukama Story

Kukama Wildlife College was founded by Christiaan & Nikki Venter from a shared love of nature, education and the outdoors.

At the heart of Kukama is Olienhout Game Reserve — a 1,400-hectare property that was once a cattle farm and is now being rewilded into a growing wildlife landscape. The college was built around a simple idea: students should not only learn about nature from a textbook. They should experience it, question it, observe it and understand their place within it.

As Olienhout continues to change, students have the opportunity to learn within a living rewilding project — a place where the landscape itself becomes part of the classroom.

Testimonials

Mia Fourie



"Kukama Wildlife College. The best place if you are considering to do your NQF 2 !! They have gone above and beyond in everything they provide, teach and do all from day 1! Accommodation and food is amazing can't get any better. The course itself is also amazing, perfectly planned so you can understand and enjoy it to the fullest! To the whole Kukama Team, thank you for making my time there so special!"



Rohan Britz



"My time studying at Kukama was excellent. I've learned a lot, not only about nature guiding and the natural environment but about myself as well. The trainers are patient and their knowledge is top class. The staff are friendly and super helpful. The course offers a great balance between theory and practical work in the field. At Kukama you're not just training to become a Nature guide, your training to become an ethical nature guide. Thank you to everyone at Kukama for the amazing experience, and all the lessons I learned along the way."



Anlea Du Plessis



"Where to begin! Kukama is definitely one of the best colleges to go and study at, if you are interested in becoming a great and ethical Field Guide then join the Kukama family. I'm so glad I chose them to do my studies at. Amazing people and great accommodation and training, very good quality, definitely recommend going here."



Partners



Capitec Bank offers a dedicated education finance option to help eligible students fund their studies with a simple, straightforward application process.



Student Hero helps students and their families explore, apply for and compare study funding options from a range of major banks and alternative finance providers. Their service simplifies the funding process by providing guidance and access to multiple finance options through one platform, at no cost to the student.



The professional body for nature guides and trackers in Southern Africa, FGASA sets certification standards, supports career development, and upholds ethical practices in guiding and conservation.



CATHSSETA promotes skills development and training in the culture, arts, tourism, hospitality, and sport sectors through grants, oversight of accredited training providers, and quality assurance.



An additional reserve our students have the privilege to explore, with the possibility of future opportunities opening up after their course.



A non-profit organisation dedicated to conserving Africa's pangolins through awareness, protection, rehabilitation, and collaborative efforts across the continent.



A South African emergency medical service specialising in helicopter air ambulance, air rescue, and rapid response, with a subscription-based outreach (ROCKET Connect) and 24/7 operations.

Your Bush-Ready Checklist

- ☐ Clothes & toiletries
- ☐ Medical aid details
- ☐ Pocket money for personal treats
- ☐ A good sense of humour
- ☐ Curiosity for the wild

If you've got these, you're set for an unforgettable adventure!

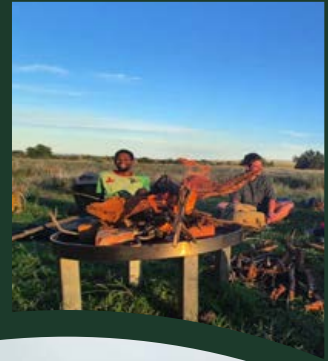
Ready To Take The Next Step?

This is more than a course. It's your chance to be part of a rewilding legacy. At Kukama, you won't just study the bush — you'll live it.

Ready to take the first step? Apply today.

How To Apply

-  Email info@kukamacollege.co.za for your application form.
-  Complete and return the Application form.
-  Receive your invoice, pay the deposit and email the proof of payment to us.
-  Receive your Welcome Pack with a packing list, directions and schedule.
-  Maximum 10 students per intake — spaces are limited!



**Come learn where the wild
is still writing its story.**

