



# Mountain Training

## International Mountain Leader

Candidate handbook





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## Preface

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This handbook contains all the information needed to progress through the International Mountain Leader qualification. It is designed to support the knowledge and experience of candidates, trainers and assessors whilst at the same time it avoids prescribing techniques.

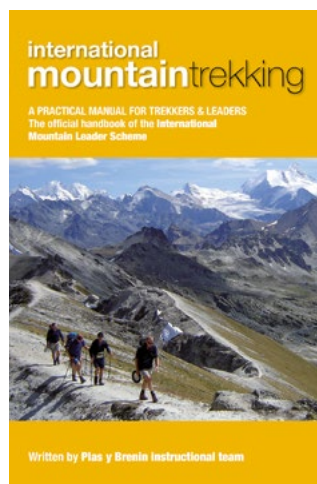
Mountain Training recognises that walking, climbing, and mountaineering are activities that have associated risks. Mountain Training provides training and assessment courses and guidance to help leaders develop the skills to manage the risks associated with the environment in which they operate and to enable new participants to have positive experiences.

All leaders owe a heightened duty of care to the people they lead, their colleagues, and the wider public who may be impacted by the leader's actions.

Mountain Training qualified leaders will act in the best interests of their group, individual group members and others, and they will always act within their competence to prevent harm to them.

## Acknowledgements

Many people have contributed to the preparation of this handbook by making detailed and constructive comments on the draft. Grateful thanks are due to Board members, staff of the National Centres, national Mountain Training organisations and the British Association of International Mountain Leaders for help in the production of this publication. Thanks to the following people whose images bring this handbook to life: Balaz Simon, Bryn Williams, Francesco Ungaro, John Cousins, Leif Blessing, Rob Johnson, Sandy Paterson and Stein Egil Liland.



## International Mountain Trekking

Throughout this handbook there are references to International Mountain Trekking by Plas y Brenin instructional team, which we publish to support people walking overseas. It is packed with essential information and techniques and we have listed the relevant chapter(s) for each syllabus area.





# 1. Qualification pathway

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## 1.1 Introduction

The International Mountain Leader qualification (IML) provides comprehensive training and assessment for individuals who aspire to work as leaders in Europe and further afield. It integrates training, experience and assessment in a variety of realistic situations.

## 1.2 Scope of the qualification

The scheme provides training and assessment in the skills required for leading and educating groups worldwide in summer conditions and also on easy snow-covered, rolling, Nordic-type terrain in the 'middle mountains' in winter conditions. The scheme does not involve the techniques and equipment of mountaineering, alpinism or glacial travel. (See Appendix 1D for definitions of these terms.)

## 1.3 Stages in the qualification

### 1.3.1 Registration prerequisites

- You must have passed Mountain Leader assessment (or another UIAA-accredited mountain walking leader qualification).
- You must have completed 20 international summer mountain days.
- You must have completed 20 quality winter days of experience in the UK or overseas (see [Appendix 1](#)).
- You must provide a reference\* from someone who is prepared to endorse the registration application, preferably a Mountaineering Instructor, Guide or training board approved provider. A long term walking partner or suitable employer could be considered as an appropriate referee.

As with all Mountain Training qualifications, these are the minimum requirements. **As a general indication, the logged walks and other experience should be a representative sample rather than a candidate's total experience.**

Guidance note: The IML is a leadership qualification and therefore it is recommended that you have used your Mountain Leader qualification to lead groups in the mountains both in the UK and overseas.



Additionally it is recommended that you have broad and recent experience in both the Alpine countries and further afield e.g. a developing country.

\*The person writing your reference should be able to endorse your suitability as a potential International Mountain Leader and vouch for the accuracy of your application. It is therefore important that potential referees have an overview of your experience in the mountains.

### 1.3.2 Summer training prerequisites

- Your International Mountain Leader registration must have been approved.

### 1.3.3 Timed navigation test

Passing the timed navigation test is a compulsory element of the International Mountain Leader summer training and must be successfully completed prior to attending the summer assessment. See [Appendix 2.2](#) for more information.

## Order of courses

At this stage candidates can choose to either progress to IML summer assessment, or IML winter training. Please note candidates must have passed the IML timed navigation test before attending the IML summer assessment.

Before the final IML winter assessment, all candidates must have passed the IML summer assessment and completed at least 30 quality winter mountain days in total, of which a minimum of ten should be overseas.

### 1.3.4 Summer consolidation

No specific minimum period is stipulated by Mountain Training UK & Ireland. However you are encouraged not to 'fast-track' the qualification and to develop experience post-training as appropriate to your needs and skill level. On average it takes 2½ years to complete the qualification. See also section 1.3.7.

Guidance note: You should address any gaps in your experience and skills learnt on the training course prior to attending the summer assessment. Prior to attending a Winter Assessment course you must have logged a minimum of 30 international summer days.

You are expected to have a broad, mountain-related general knowledge, environmental awareness and an appreciation of mountains internationally. Opportunity should be taken to practise the skills learned during training.

All but the most experienced candidates should allow a minimum of six months between training and assessment.



There is currently no time limit on the validity of a training course and some candidates may take several years to complete the qualification.



## Aspirant membership

After you have completed an IML summer training course and the course report has been processed, you will receive an email offering you complimentary Aspirant membership of BAIML until the end of the membership year. Click on the link in the email to accept the offer and your account will be updated.

### 1.3.5 Summer assessment prerequisites

- You must have completed a summer training course.
- You must have passed the timed navigation test.
- You must be familiar with the syllabus.
- You must have gained further experience since completing the summer training.

### 1.3.6 Winter training prerequisites

- You must have completed a summer training course.

### 1.3.7 Winter consolidation

As with the consolidation period following the Summer Training course, no specific minimum period is stipulated, however, you are encouraged not to 'fast-track' the qualification and to develop experience post training as appropriate to your needs and skill level. Candidates arriving for Winter Assessment must have successfully completed the Summer Assessment and logged at least 30 quality winter mountain days, including a minimum of ten overseas.

Guidance note: It is recommended that candidates gain personal experience of travel/ journeying on snow shoes across a variety of terrain/venues prior to assessment.

This experience is gained over more than one alpine season/different snow conditions.

You should also seek opportunities to observe other International Mountain Leaders working with clients on snow shoes and identify similarities and differences in their approach; use this information to develop your own practice.



### 1.3.8 Winter assessment prerequisites

- You must have passed the International Mountain Leader summer assessment.
- You must have completed International Mountain Leader winter training.
- You must be familiar with the syllabus.
- You must have logged a minimum of 60 days experience: 30 quality international summer days and 30 quality winter days (of which at least 10 should be overseas).
- You must have physically attended and completed (i.e. not online) a first aid course which involved at least two full days or sixteen hours of instruction and included an element of assessment. It is recommended that your first aid qualification includes scenarios in remote locations and altitude illnesses.

## 2. Course structure

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UIMLA requires that the period of training and assessment should not exceed five years and in normal circumstances this policy will apply. In exceptional circumstances, such as illness, or for other reasons including pregnancy and maternity leave, Mountain Training UK & Ireland may allow a longer period.

### 2.1 Training

Summer training is delivered over 5 days.

Winter training is delivered over 5 days.

Results: Completed, Not yet completed, Withdrew, Did not show, Exemption.

### 2.2 Assessment

Timed navigation test is included in summer training.

Summer assessment is delivered over 4 days.

Winter assessment is delivered over 5 days.

Results: Pass, Defer, Fail, Not yet completed, Withdrew, Did not show.

There is no exemption from any element of assessment.

You may take two summer and/or two winter reassessments before being required to



take the entire summer/winter assessment again; the only exception to this is the timed navigation test, for which no limit is set.

Since reassessments will be based on information gained during the initial assessment, all reassessments must be completed within a five year period from the date of the original assessment.

## 3. Course delivery

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All International Mountain Leader courses are delivered by approved course directors from Glenmore Lodge or Plas y Brenin.

### 3.1 Summer training

Min. course size: 4, Max. course size; 16, Max. ratio: 1:6.

### 3.2 Winter training

Min. course size: 4, Max. course size; 16, Max. ratio: 1:4.

### 3.3 Summer assessment

Min. course size: 4, Max. course size; 16, Max. ratio: 1:4.

### 3.4 Winter assessment

Min. course size: 4, Max. course size; 16, Max. ratio: 1:4.

## 4. Awarding organisation

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Mountain Training UK & Ireland





# Syllabus and guidance notes

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International Mountain Leaders need a wide range of skills and knowledge in order to operate effectively. It is crucial that you have the ability to perform a combination of tasks simultaneously in both the summer and winter environments.



## 1. The mountain environment

It is essential that group leaders are competent walkers who possess the skills to do the following:

- 1.1 The IML should have a broad working knowledge of the mountain environment worldwide including geology, natural history, fauna and flora, geography and culture. This knowledge should be used to inspire, enthuse and educate the group.
- 1.2 Leaders should be able to pass on their knowledge in an appropriate and engaging way to different levels of groups
- 1.3 The IML should have an understanding of access and conservation issues including potential conflicts of interest on both local and global scales.



## Guidance

International Mountain Leaders should have a broad overview of UK issues. From this platform, they should build their knowledge to a wider international perspective in both the summer and winter environment.

You should be aware of the current legal situation with regard to access and conservation in countries you intend to visit. Additionally you should appreciate the impact of group activities on the mountain environment compared with individual use.

Walking is only one of the demands on the mountain environment. You should be aware of other uses in both summer and winter, some of which may have conflicting interests. As an International Mountain Leader you need to be sensitive to the lives, interests, customs and culture of the countries you visit and in which you work.

You need to be fully aware that any careless use of the mountain environment can conflict with conservation interests. These interests may well differ from country to country. The upland landscape can contain habitats which are very fragile and can be easily damaged. You need to be familiar with best practice with reference to conservation for the country in which you are operating.

An International Mountain Leader should have a keen interest in all aspects of the environment. This may include, in summer: flora, fauna, culture, traditions, language, history and physical landscape. In the winter: flora, fauna, tracks and signs, winter adaptations, snow, culture, traditions, history, language and physical landscape. You should be able to demonstrate how this knowledge is interconnected within the mountain environment.

Information on this range of areas is widely available via the internet and dedicated books on flora and fauna, as well as local sources of information on regional history, tradition, culture and language.



### Chapter 3 Environmental issues

## Key practice points

- Experiment with different methods of engaging groups with the landscape in both summer and winter.
- Increase your environmental awareness and knowledge through further training on



courses and workshops.

- Read widely from the many books and sources on the internet that are available on environmental topics.



## 2. Legal and economic knowledge

- 2.1 An International Mountain Leader should understand and comply with the legal matters of regulation of activities, taxation, social security and public responsibilities.
- 2.2 Leaders should have an awareness of both the economic environment and the marketing of hill walking activities and the importance of these factors in promoting an international business.

### Guidance

The International Mountain Leader should have a broad overview of the legal responsibilities of a Mountain Leader within the UK. This should act as a platform on which to build an awareness and basic understanding of the differences between countries worldwide.

In particular you should pay attention to both the legal and professional obligations





required to work as an IML in other countries, which can differ greatly to the UK and from country to country. Some countries require by law that any person operating as an IML needs to hold not only the recognised IML qualification but also fulfil other legal requirements to be allowed to work.

Some of these additional requirements may be linked to taxation, social security, transport or sport and recreation departments. These may not be immediately obvious and should be researched.

You need to develop a clear understanding of the moral and legal implications of your management of risk when working with children, adults and mixed groups. You should understand the concepts of risk management that underpin the legal framework within the country in which you are working. Additionally you must appreciate that you may be legally bound to the laws of the country in which any contracts have been agreed.

Concepts such as 'duty of care' and principles such as 'in loco parentis' or the 'volenti non fit injuria' clause have practical implications when working in the UK and overseas. You should understand these at both a personal and professional level.

Case law draws heavily on written precedents so it is important for a leader to know where to access printed regulations and guidelines. These will vary from country to country. The Professional Mountaineer magazine is a regular source of informative articles and Mountain Training's publications such as International Mountain Trekking, the National Guidelines, Hill Walking and Winter Skills are recommended reading for all International Mountain Leaders.

The importance of keeping accurate records during and after leading groups overseas should be recognised, particularly in relation to incidents or accidents.

You should understand what insurance requirements are necessary to lead groups overseas. You should also understand European Community reciprocal health care agreements and the appropriateness of overseas adventurous activity holiday insurance both for the leader and group members.

You should have an understanding of the profession of International Mountain Leaders in overseas countries, how this may differ to that in the UK and be sensitive to these differences when working overseas.

You should be aware of and have a basic understanding of other regulations that affect your profession e.g. the package travel, package holidays and package tour regulations, or minibus driving regulations. Where these affect you, it is your responsibility to expand your knowledge.

You should have an elementary understanding of the business environment and marketing



relating to summer and winter walking activities. You should be able to present and market yourself appropriately and professionally within the international marketplace without undermining your own profession or that of other mountain professionals.

As an International Mountain Leader you may be engaged within an organisation as a Technical Advisor. Local Authorities and organisations are increasingly calling upon the services of International Mountain Leaders to act in this role. In addition, courts may occasionally require their services as an expert witness. It is of the utmost importance that as an International Mountain Leader you fully appreciate the responsibilities and possible repercussions of your work in this role.



Chapter 2 Planning your trip

Chapter 11 Dealing with problems while travelling

## Key practice points

- Spend time researching current relevant legislation. Engaging with other International Mountain Leaders/BAIML members can be really beneficial.
- Remain current on accidents and incidents through the Health and Safety Executive and overseas test cases.
- Research the practical implications of the legal concepts of 'duty of care', 'in loco parentis' and 'volenti non fit injuria' whilst operating outside the UK.







### 3. Group management and the responsibilities of the group leader

An International Mountain Leader should:

- 3.1 be capable of leading and enthusing a group in the mountain environment whilst considering and managing subjective and objective dangers.
- 3.2 be able to develop and adapt suitable itineraries for a range of groups.
- 3.3 be able to lead, organise and control the group appropriately at all times, in all conditions.

#### Guidance

You should have a mature approach to the skills and responsibilities of group leadership. As a leader, your primary role is the safety and wellbeing of the group throughout a journey.

It is not possible to separate the skills of party management and leadership from the technical skills and experience that are required to be an International Mountain Leader. You need to be aware of the various styles of leadership applicable to many varied situations. The overall responsibilities of a leader in the UK and overseas are the same; however, the setting is often more challenging and remote. Differences in terrain, climate, wildlife, language, food and customs as well as coping with developing world variations in transport and communications will all add to the challenge outside the UK.

Skills in the local language will help. Multi-lingual IMLs are not only able to give their clients a more informed experience but also have the ability to communicate with local agents, service providers and residents. This ability could be important when dealing with group-related incidents.

You will normally have overall responsibility for the group members for an extended period whilst travelling and will need to ensure all relevant safety considerations have been addressed. You will also have responsibilities to parents, employers and the environment. It is important that you are fully aware of these responsibilities as well as the laws relating to them operating in that country.

It is crucial that you are aware of your group's strengths and weaknesses and have the ability to care for all members appropriately in the many different environments they may experience. It is important that you are able to draw on previous experience when leading groups in difficult situations or conditions.



## Key practice points

### Summer

- Select appropriate equipment and be proficient at using the equipment to manage clients in the summer environment e.g. rope, slings and karabiners.
- Set an appropriate pace to manage clients efficiently through the day and appropriately to the terrain.

### Winter

- Set an appropriate winter track on snow shoes selecting an appropriate angle and terrain for the client group.
- Understand and be able to apply the principles of 'safe travel' through winter terrain.
- Select appropriate equipment and be proficient at using the equipment to manage clients in the winter environment e.g. rope, ice axe, transceiver, probe and shovel.





## 4. Teaching

An International Mountain Leader should be able to:

- 4.1 teach and educate groups in a variety of ways to pass on skills, knowledge and understanding.
- 4.2 communicate in a coherent and a well-planned manner.
- 4.3 demonstrate the teaching of basic skills which will help groups enjoy the mountains safely.

### Guidance

It is important that International Mountain Leaders have an awareness of the different approaches to teaching and learning in order to communicate effectively. There are a number of different styles of delivery depending on the client's learning needs. The ability to communicate effectively is just as important as the possession of knowledge for effective leadership.

Communication is achieved in a variety of ways including facial expressions, illustrations, hand signals and voice. In the outdoor environment communication can be a real challenge and needs an effective and practised approach.

You should choose appropriate teaching styles according to the group, ranging from demonstration or instructions through to discovery-based learning and coaching.

You should be confident, experienced and effective with the delivery of both outdoor and indoor sessions.



See all Leader's Information boxes

### Key practice points

- All subject areas should be well researched, prepared and structured and delivered in a confident style that engages and educates the audience.





## Summer:

- Seek opportunities to observe experienced IMLs working with clients on summer trekking routes.
- Develop techniques to coach clients on their movement skills in mountainous terrain, including negotiating sections of fixed equipment, summer snow patches and scree.

## Winter:

- Practise and become proficient at delivering a fifteen-minute transceiver, probe and shovel (TPS) session to a novice group on snowshoes.
- Seek opportunities to observe experienced IMLs working with clients in the winter on snowshoes.
- Develop techniques to coach clients on their movement skills on snowshoes, using walking poles, TPS and GPS units.





## 5. Anatomy and physiology

- 5.1 An IML should have an understanding of anatomy and physiology and how it relates to walking activities in mountainous country.
- 5.2 Particular reference should be paid to physical preparation, diet, characteristics of mountain exercise, tiredness and recuperation, and the effects of altitude.

### Guidance

You should have a clear understanding of the effects of exercising in both winter and summer mountain environments. Both physical and environmental factors contrive to sap the body of its resources, and you should have the knowledge to keep yourself and your clients physically and mentally well during and after an excursion.

You should have a reasonable knowledge of injury prevention such as foot, ankle and knee care and avoidance of sunburn and dehydration in the summer conditions. However, in winter, there are additional issues such as hypothermia, frostnip and snow blindness.

Tiredness can be a result of many factors. You should be able to advise clients on the appropriate journey for their experience and fitness levels. Management of rests, food, fluids and pace is essential. You must be aware of the energy wastage associated with heavy and inappropriate equipment and be able to inform and advise on alternatives.

Knowledge of nutrition and hydration for exercise in different climates is essential. Balancing nutrition intake at the right times, before, during and after exercise, along with the suitability of liquids enables clients to continue performing over long periods of time. Managing this intake and being sympathetic to individual diets requires good coaching and leadership.

A good knowledge of the effects of altitude and the prevention of altitude-related conditions such as Acute Mountain Sickness (AMS) is required. Sound planning within modern protocols prevents almost all altitude problems. However, the early recognition of signs and symptoms with immediate preventative measures can avoid further deterioration of the condition, and is a crucial factor in successful recovery.

Other environments can also require specialised knowledge, such as prevention of infection in tropical climates and an awareness of hazards presented by local wildlife.



Chapter 4 Staying healthy

Chapter 5 Trekking at altitude





## Key practice point

- Attend CPD or additional training opportunities organised by the relevant professional association e.g. BAIML.



## 6. Physical ability

- 6.1 An International Mountain Leader should be capable of travelling with a high degree of skill and agility over a variety of mountain terrain.
- 6.2 They must be capable of sustained physical effort over approximately six hours, whilst carrying a 10kg rucksack and gaining between 1300-1600m of ascent at the rate of 400-500m per hour.

## Guidance

It is essential that you have a high degree of mountain fitness and the ability to move smoothly through mountainous terrain in a range of conditions in both the summer and winter. As a leader you are required to be able to move with confidence and agility across a variety of terrain including scree, rock, mountain vegetation and exposed slopes with or without snow on the ground. In winter, you should move over a range of snow conditions in your snowshoes with confidence and agility. You need to be able to inspire and lead



groups across this terrain and be able to move quickly and efficiently in case of safety concerns or to deal with incidents.

The test of fitness is assessed on an ongoing basis during the assessment courses. In summer the assessment may take place up to an altitude of approximately 3,000m. Therefore you should be mindful of the effect of altitude on your performance when preparing for these assessments.

The test of agility is assessed on an ongoing basis throughout the assessment courses. You are expected to show consistent, balanced and agile performance on all terrain within the International Mountain Leader remit. You should clearly be operating well within your personal competency throughout the assessment. Practical guidance and demonstration of this ability is given during the training courses.



Chapter 4 Staying healthy

Chapter 5 Trekking at altitude

## Key practice points

### Summer

- Identify the types of terrain over which you could improve your efficiency and visit such terrain during your consolidation period.
- Evaluate your level of fitness against 6.2 above, and allow time to improve this if necessary.

### Winter

- Gain personal experience of a range of snow conditions throughout a winter season(s).
- Practise breaking trail in deep snow or dealing with a breakable crust; a high degree of mountain fitness is required.
- Monitor, and if required, improve your level of fitness in order to move at a comfortable pace in all snow conditions.



## 7. Navigation

- 7.1 It is essential that an IML can navigate competently using a variety of maps in all conditions and situations.
- 7.2 The skills of the IML should include the following:
  - 7.2.1 Maps, scales and signs, legends and symbols, and international variations.
  - 7.2.2 Relating map to the ground and vice versa
  - 7.2.3 Measuring distance on the map and the ground
  - 7.2.4 Navigating with map alone
  - 7.2.5 Use of a compass and altimeter and other navigational aids, including GPS.
  - 7.2.6 Methods for identifying features and position
  - 7.2.7 Methods of relocation
  - 7.2.8 Route planning and methods of recording routes
  - 7.2.9 Skills to navigate quickly and efficiently under a time constraint



7.2.10 Skills to navigate in poor visibility and darkness

7.2.11 General route-finding skills on the ground in poorly-mapped terrain

## Guidance

### Timed navigation test

In addition to the navigational skills required within the everyday leadership of groups, all International Mountain Leader candidates, regardless of existing qualifications, are required to pass the Timed Navigation Test prior to attending the Summer Assessment course. This is an integral part of the UK Summer Training course, but may be taken separately if necessary, for example if a reassessment is required. You should be able to navigate efficiently, competently and confidently at Mountain Leader standard (see Appendix 3A).

The timed navigation test requires you to move efficiently and at speed across mountainous terrain. You should be physically fit to complete the test and with well-practised micro navigation techniques.

You should be capable of navigating effectively and efficiently in a range of weather conditions in both the summer and winter environment.

You should have the knowledge to set up a GPS unit for the country you are visiting and be aware of their uses and limitations.

The quality and accuracy of a map can vary from country to country. You should have the skills to navigate effectively and efficiently according to the range of maps available.



## Chapter 6 Navigation

### Key practice point

- Continue to practice your micro and macro navigational techniques in both summer and winter environments. Skill fade will occur unless these skills are practised regularly.





## 8. Weather

- 8.1 The IML should have an elementary understanding of weather and its effects.
- 8.2 The IML should be able to interpret basic synoptic charts and forecasts, be able to use basic instruments such as altimeter and thermometer and be able to use natural signs helpful to weather forecasting.

### Guidance

An International Mountain Leader needs to consider the implications of different weather patterns and how these may affect route choice and group care issues in both the summer and winter environments. This should include having knowledge of both continental and maritime climates and how these can affect mountain weather patterns.

International Mountain Leaders should be able to source up-to-date relevant information and re-evaluate this on the hill, from observations and other information gathered from a variety of suitable media.

You should be capable of interpreting the weather and avalanche forecasts and applying this information to safe route choices. In addition, you should understand the effects of the weather on snow conditions and stability under foot with the aim of providing a positive experience for your clients.





### Key practice points

#### Summer

- Source weather forecasts for different mountain regions and practise interpreting them and designing appropriate, enjoyable journeys for a variety of groups.
- Increase your awareness of websites and apps that are widely available to help you monitor current in-country weather conditions.

#### Winter:

- Consider
  - The effect of weather and snow conditions on the overall snowpack stability.
  - The application of weather and snowpack information to allow safe route choice, recognising starting zones, avalanche tracks and deposition zones.
- Follow the snow and weather conditions throughout the winter season, tracking the history of the snow pack.
- Familiarise yourself with different countries'/continents' variability in avalanche forecasting and the common avalanche danger patterns.
- Make sure you are aware of the various websites and apps that are widely available to help monitor current in-country avalanche conditions.





## 9. Security in mountainous terrain

- 9.1 The International Mountain Leader should have the skills, knowledge and techniques to safeguard groups in the varied terrain found in the mountains, particularly in relation to real and objective dangers such as steep/exposed ground and stone fall.
- 9.2 This should enable leaders to avoid the need to use a rope in all but the most exceptional circumstances.

### Guidance

In exceptional circumstances situations may arise where the rope is required to safeguard either members of the group or other persons encountered on the mountain. This relies on your ability, as the leader, to make accurate risk assessments for the terrain, conditions and the risk to group members and/or others, combined with an awareness of the use and limitations of a rope.

In summer, you should be familiar with and demonstrate efficient application of:

- suitability and limitation of different types, sizes and lengths of rope
- appropriate knots and friction hitches
- choice of safe anchors and appropriate methods of belaying
- use and limitations of a sling and screw-gate karabiner and a rope
- different types of fixed equipment and ways in which these can be safeguarded
- safeguarding short, rocky steps in ascent or descent with or without fixed equipment
- safeguarding a short section of traverse with or without fixed equipment
- safeguarding a section where the fixed equipment is broken or missing
- safeguarding a traverse, ascent or descent, of an unexpected snow patch
- the ability to confidence-rope one group member and the judgement of when this is appropriate
- improvisation with limited equipment to safeguard the group



In winter, you should be familiar with and demonstrate efficient application of:

- suitability and limitation of different types, sizes and lengths of rope
- appropriate knots and friction hitches
- choice of winter anchors and appropriate belaying methods
- safeguarding short snow slopes in ascent and descent using roped and un-roped methods
- improvisation with limited equipment to safeguard the group

Environmental mountain factors including loose rock, animals, flooding and lightning are all potentially hazardous. You should be able to use careful judgement to avoid these and know how to deal with them as required.

As an International Mountain Leader you may encounter a variety of water hazards including rivers, streams, marshes, lakes and flash-flood zones. Although you should endeavour to avoid these hazards, you should still be familiar with and demonstrate the skills and safety procedures to safeguard yourself and others.



## Chapter 7 Trekking hazards

### Key practice points

- Consider attending CPD events or additional courses to enhance your understanding.
- Gain experience on a wide variety of different types of fixed equipment.
- Develop safe and efficient techniques to safeguard clients in summer and winter.
- Be proficient and confident at handling the rope, slings and karabiners.



## 10. Emergency procedures

10.1 In order to be able to work unassisted in remote and wild places, International Mountain Leaders should be familiar with, and be able to take effective control of, the following requirements:

- 10.1.1 First aid provision.
- 10.1.2 Procedures in the event of an accident to the group or leader.
- 10.1.3 Management and organisation of a rescue.
- 10.1.4 Methods of getting assistance such as calling a hut, use of radios and Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacons – EPIRBs.
- 10.1.5 Appreciation of the difficulties of communicating with limited in-country language abilities and also problems of dealing with incidents in remote locations.

### Guidance

It is imperative that you have a clear plan of action when it comes to managing a rescue.





Escape routes, points of communication and a robust system of informing the authorities, company and next of kin need to be in place. The organising and protection of groups with respect to helicopters and the knowledge of international distress signals must be second nature.

Organising a rescue in a foreign country with limited language is a real challenge. Prior preparation is essential. A good understanding of a country's protocols for rescue is needed. Some countries have different types of rescue service for specific types of incidents, and awareness of these differences will save a lot of time.

A good knowledge of how to raise the alarm in different countries is a priority. This could be anything from contacting the nearest hut guardian, direct communications by mobile phone or radio to the rescue coordination centre or by sending a runner to the nearest point of contact, which could be days away. Preparation again is the key with all essential phone numbers, protocols and key rescue words translated.

Be aware of other communication systems that could be used in more remote places e.g. radios, satellite phones, Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacons (EPIRBs), SPOT devices etc.

A candidate's understanding of emergency procedures and protocols can be developed through experience of working for a range of expedition providers in different countries in both summer and winter.



Chapter 7 Trekking hazards

Chapter 11 Dealing with problems while travelling

## Key practice points

- Practise managing and organising a search using a transceiver, probe and shovel.
- Set up a transceiver for the day by conducting a transceiver function check and group check:
  - You should be capable of completing a timed transceiver search test in 8 minutes. The timed search test requires candidates to be out of range (>50 metres) with 2 transceivers buried in a rucksack/bag to a depth of 1m, 10m apart. You need to locate both rucksacks with a transceiver and probe only (digging out is not part of the timing). You should carry your rucksack during the test. Whilst the time period is important, you need to demonstrate a good methodical process.



## 11. Bivouac and survival skills

The International Mountain Leader should be able to:

- 11.1 organise and care for the wellbeing of the group without support or backup.
- 11.2 organise an improvised bivouac.
- 11.3 look after a group in difficult and challenging conditions.

### Guidance

You should have a rounded set of survival and bivouac skills in order to cope with the wide-ranging scenarios which International Mountain Leaders may face. These skills include planned and unplanned bivouac situations in summer conditions and unplanned emergency bivouacs in winter conditions. This may involve the construction of emergency snow shelters appropriate to the terrain and prevailing conditions.

You should be able to construct an emergency shelter to protect the party from wind and precipitation. Construction of snow hole and shovel-up shelters should be practised at training, and you should be able to demonstrate the ability to make effective use of a combination of a snow shelter and emergency equipment during an assessment.



It is strongly recommended that you obtain logged experience of bivouacking in summer and winter conditions before attending the winter assessment and should be prepared for this eventuality during the assessment. However, it is at the discretion of the assessor and course director to decide how much time needs to be spent in the shelter in order to assess this competence satisfactorily. Candidates should be aware of the hazards posed by snowholes in thaw conditions and significant snow fall whether due to wind and/or current precipitation. In the context of this award snow holing should be regarded as a last resort rather than as an activity in its own right.



## Chapter 10 Snowshoeing

### Key practice points

- While gaining experience in summer and winter conditions, practise constructing different types of shelters in a range of environments, including emergency snow shelters.

## 12. Expeditions

The International Mountain Leader should be able to:

12.1 organise multi-day trips

12.2 have the ability to coordinate logistics, equipment, transport and food requirements

### Guidance

The IML should be competent in the organisation of multi-day trips and journeys, whether hut-based or using alternative accommodation. This may involve arrangement of transport, equipment, food requirements and accommodation. Consideration of the possible lack of ability to speak the native language should be considered. This may involve the use of crib cards or phrasebooks. In organising expeditions one should give sympathetic consideration to cultural differences within the chosen country.



## Key practice points

- Plan a journey and make ongoing avalanche assessments throughout the duration of the journey, adjusting your decisions and route choice in order to avoid avalanche-threatened terrain.
- Plan a journey, taking into consideration the local weather conditions, the trekking season and the altitude ascent profile.



## 13. Snow-covered terrain

- 13.1 The IML should have a good knowledge of operating in snow-covered terrain and the additional hazards this can present.
- 13.2 The IML should have understanding of snow and avalanche conditions in order to lead groups safely on the appropriate terrain as defined in 13.3.
- 13.3 The IML must be capable of conducting a group on easy-rolling, Nordic-type, snow-covered ground situated in the 'middle mountains'. This will include:
  - 13.3.1 awareness of other hazards such as hidden water hazards, cornices and medical conditions associated with winter e.g. frostnip, frostbite, snow blindness





13.3.2 route-planning, choice and preparation of itineraries

13.3.3 the ability to lead groups in difficult conditions which may become extreme  
e.g. cold, wind, darkness

13.3.4 a knowledge of the equipment needed for winter activities

13.4 The IML should be capable of organising an improvised bivouac for a possible emergency.

## Guidance

You should be competent on appropriate snow-covered terrain both in summer and winter seasons. You should have a clear understanding of the risks and hazards of moving over and leading a group in snow-covered terrain. You will be able to make decisions about group safety based on assessments of the clients' ability, conditions, weather, and route choice.

In winter

Candidates should be well practised and experienced in the alpine winter environment. You should have a good understanding of snowpack and avalanche risk in the winter environment and will know where to obtain and how to interpret weather and avalanche forecasts. You will be able to use this information to plan a journey and make ongoing avalanche assessments to adjust your decisions and route choice in order to avoid avalanche-threatened terrain.

You should have the skills to lead a group in snow-covered terrain, dealing with common winter hazards and using safe travel techniques to ensure the safety of the group at all times.

You should be able to navigate effectively and consistently in winter snow-covered conditions including poor visibility and darkness. An IML's ability should be sufficient to lead a group out of the mountains in worsening weather conditions, which are sometimes encountered by a fast or early change in forecast conditions.

You should be able to deal with common incidents and emergency scenarios including assisting or organising an avalanche search. You must be proficient in the use of, and training of, avalanche transceivers and organising a search, including the use of probes. This will include a timed transceiver search test (see Guidance notes in syllabus section 10).



You should have a good general knowledge of the winter mountain environment to complement your summer knowledge. This will include identification and interpretation of bird and animal tracks and signs. In addition, you should have a basic understanding of snow pack types and transformations. You should be able to identify common snow grains/structures e.g. graupel, wind slab, melt-freeze layer, depth hoar, surface hoar, neve, sastrugi. You should understand their formation and the implications of finding these in terms of a persistent weak layer and their stability with regards to snow/weather forecast/avalanche forecast and terrain.

You will have excellent personal movement skills on snow, in winter conditions, with and without an axe, including the use of snowshoes. This movement should be exemplary and inspire confidence in your clients. You should also be able to instruct basic movement to clients using snowshoes.

You should be familiar with a range of snowshoe designs on the market and understand the advantages and disadvantages for personal and group use.

You should understand the role and remit of an IML in the winter environment.

You should not plan to overnight in improvised shelters in winter conditions. However, you should, in exceptional circumstances, be able to construct emergency winter shelters or bivouacs, sufficient to shelter a group from poor weather or in darkness.



## Chapter 9 Snow - a seasonal approach

## Chapter 10 Snowshoeing

## Key practice points

In winter:

- Be proficient at the timed transceiver search test (see Key Practice points in syllabus section 10), demonstrating up to date techniques and good role modelling.
- Understand and be proficient at using a range of modern transceivers; using group check and mark functions.
- Be familiar with the differences between typical Scottish and alpine snow packs, as well as keeping track of snowpack changes through a season.



In summer:

- Practise moving with agility and confidence over summer snow patches and be able to demonstrate a range of techniques to manage summer snow patches to safeguard the group. This may include using the ice axe and/or the rope.
- Understand the remit of the qualification with regards taking the group onto summer snow patches.

Training on how to safeguard a group on firm summer snow patches may take place during the summer assessment and/or winter training depending on the conditions.

This area of the syllabus is assessed during the winter assessment.





## Appendix 1 - Definitions

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### Quality International Summer Mountain Day

A quality international summer mountain day should be a mountain day outside of the UK and Ireland and include more than half of the following criteria:

- In an environment below 3000 metres, the day should include a height gain of approximately 1,000 metres.
- In an environment above 3,000 metres the day should include a height gain of approximately 300 metres.
- A journey of a minimum of five hours.
- Navigational skills should be used including the use of a map, compass, altimeter or GPS.
- Decision-making about route choice and judgement of terrain.
- Planning involving the use of a weather forecast.
- Ascending and/or descending steep broken ground.
- Negotiating sections of fixed equipment and/or small sections of snow as part of the normal mountain journey.
- Appreciating the environment and increasing one's environmental knowledge.

### Quality UK Winter Mountain Day

A quality winter mountain day in the UK or Ireland should follow all the normal criteria for a quality winter day for the Winter Mountain Leader qualification, outlined below.

Although it is difficult to define such a unit of experience there are a number of common characteristics:

- The adversity of weather conditions, the changeable nature of the underfoot conditions, the requirement to navigate accurately and carry greater amounts of equipment etc all affect speed of movement and distance travelled.
- Winter quality mountain days are likely to be strenuous and reasonably demanding and will involve over five hours walking and/or climbing.





- Any winter climbing should be part of a longer mountain day and not the sole reason for the excursion.
- Winter quality mountain days should involve elements of planning, exploration of an unfamiliar locality, map reading/navigation and more than likely require the use of ice axe and crampons for security.
- Above all the experience should lead to feelings of accomplishment and satisfaction, even if enjoyment may occasionally be in retrospect!
- The ascent of a substantial peak would normally be included in the day.

The time of year alone, such as a January day when no snow or ice is present, or the presence of snow patches (e.g. on the Cairngorm plateau) on a sunny day in May do not qualify as quality winter mountain days, even though the day may satisfy the elements of length, navigation and exploration. The use of an axe and crampons on snow or ice does not necessarily constitute a winter quality mountain day.

## Quality International Winter Mountain Day

A quality international winter mountain day should be a mountain day outside of the UK and Ireland, and include more than half of the following criteria:

- Must involve movement and travel on snow
- Must include ascent and/or descent
- A journey of a minimum of five hours
- Planning involving the use of weather and avalanche forecasts
- Navigational skills should be used, including the use of a map, compass, altimeter or GPS
- Making progress in poor or worsening weather conditions
- Decision-making about route choice and judgement of terrain
- Evaluating the snowpack and avalanche hazard throughout the day and making ongoing decisions based on these
- Appreciating the winter environment and increasing one's environmental knowledge
- Summer Alpine conditions on snowy terrain will not normally qualify as fulfilling enough of these criteria, apart from in exceptionally bad weather conditions.



## Summer and winter conditions

The term 'summer conditions' is used to describe any conditions not covered by the term 'winter conditions'.

'Winter conditions' can be defined as when winter conditions, including snow and ice, prevail or are forecast. This cannot be defined by a portion of the year, but appropriate weather conditions (e.g. cold air) should prevail. As a general principle the presence of snow patches does not in itself constitute winter conditions.

## Mountaineering and Alpinism

Mountain Training UK & Ireland believe that for the walking leader the most helpful way to define the activity is provided by the equipment and skills required to adequately safeguard other members of the party against the hazard. If harness, ice axe, crampons, rope or perhaps helmet are foreseeable requirements at the planning stage then the activity is defined as mountaineering and therefore "Alpinism". A rope is carried by the party for emergency use rather than an anticipated necessary item for managing safety. If the leader chooses to carry an ice-axe this should be regarded as a similar emergency tool. The decision to carry crampons implies a mountaineering expedition that is beyond the scope of this qualification.

## Glacier travel

For the purposes of this award a glacier is defined as any permanent snowfield. Because snow and ice are drastically affected by climatic changes (both short and long term) it is not possible to apply a generic classification to specific glaciers or sections of glacier as this may change even over the course of a single trekking season. However there are a number of permanent ice-fields that generally lack characteristic glacial hazards. These hazards include the following:

- All wet glaciers i.e. a glacier with full or partial snow covering
- Any hazard that requires mountaineering equipment in order to safely manage, i.e. rope, ice-axe, crampons or harness.
- Any crevassed glacier where these cracks are anything more than very minor (less than a boot- width across). This would include a dry glacier with small but unavoidable neve-covered patches since these might conceal crevasses.
- Threat from serac avalanche.



- Steep sections of ice that can be anticipated to require step cutting e.g. in some seasons the terrain between Arolla's Pas de Chevre and the Dix glacier can represent a significant and predictable hazard.
- Way-marking is not in itself a satisfactory solution to negotiating a route threatened on either side by the above hazards since these are transient and can be misleading if conditions suddenly change.
- Surface water can be a significant hazard on dry glaciers. If the route crosses any water-course this might well require mountaineering tools (e.g. ice screws) in order to manage safely and this should therefore be regarded as out of remit. In any case the water-course should be treated as white-water with significant hazards associated with loss of footing, particularly moulins (plunge-holes).

## Appendix 2 – Course Delivery

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### 2.1 Summer training

The purpose of the IML training course is three-fold:

- to expose candidates to the skills, techniques and knowledge needed for safe, legal and professional operation as a walking leader overseas
- to prepare candidates for the IML summer assessment
- to explain the role of the British Association of International Mountain Leaders and the Union of International Mountain Leader Associations.

Candidates should come to the training course prepared to contribute to a structured learning experience in a supportive group environment. IMLs often work in isolation. Therefore courses like the IML summer training, which bring together candidates from different leading and instructional backgrounds, offer unrivalled opportunities for exchanging ideas and discussing techniques and teaching methods. The Board considers this to be a major strength of the International Mountain Leader qualification.

The course aims to cover those aspects of the syllabus that candidates usually find most problematic and which are difficult to practise in isolation. Therefore areas such as marketing and business will receive less in-depth coverage than subjects such as environmental knowledge and fixed-equipment hazards. If there is any broad area that candidates would like to cover in greater depth, they should raise this with the instructors. However, it must be recognised that not all of the syllabus can be covered within the training course.



The following training course outline gives an approximate breakdown of the course content. Candidates should realise that this is only an outline and MTUK&I recognises the freedom of each provider to run a training course that:

- satisfies the requirements of the Board
- satisfies the requirements of the majority of course members
- makes best use of prevailing conditions and weather

All specialist equipment for the course, including ropes, will be available from the provider.

Skills are not taught in isolation. They are transferable through all syllabus areas. Therefore an integrated approach to the syllabus material will be taken. Candidates are recommended to take a holistic approach to subject matter and not assume that because a specific technique was taught in one situation this is the only situation for which it is appropriate.

### **2.1.1 Summer training course programme**

This is normally a five day course run in the United Kingdom at one of the National Centres. The programme may vary due to the time of year, weather conditions and facilities available.

#### **Example programme**

##### ***Day one***

**Introduction:** Introduction to the IML qualification and BAIML, incorporating its history and origins. Explanation of a professional award and the diverse work of an IML.

**Role of BAIML:** Lecture to explain the role of the association within the practice of the profession of IML.

**Environmental and Teaching skills:** A session explaining the level of environmental knowledge and teaching skills required to be an IML. Trainers will demonstrate the practical levels of environmental knowledge both in broad themes and specifics. The ability to communicate this knowledge, engage and animate a group, and nurture an inquisitive nature in different client groups will also be covered.

This session will draw from specific local examples and then make direct parallels to different international mountain environments. For example, local access issues will be discussed and related to the diversity of National Park regulations and other protection designations that are to be found around the world. Mountain tourism and sustainability





(including uplift developments and eco-tourism issues) should be discussed and related to other land uses such as mountain and upland farming (including transhumance and nomadism), forestry and woodland, military training etc. Areas of potential conflict and possible resolutions should also be debated.

Other areas of knowledge and understanding that should be covered within this session include:

- Flora and Fauna
- Geological and geomorphological history, including glaciation
- Indigenous peoples and language, customs and cultures

### ***Day two***

Security in mountainous terrain: Practical session looking at use of the rope in both steep ground/fixed equipment application and small snow patches. Ideally a 'craggy' venue that relates to steep scrambling-type terrain within the remit will be used. Where possible fixed equipment will be used or simulated to allow candidates the opportunity to experiment with security in this environment.

Anatomy and physiology: A presentation on the long-term effects of regular work with groups in the mountains. Physiological considerations for leaders, including nutritional issues and the effects of high altitude.

### ***Day three***

Mountain day: A full day in the mountains with on and off path and scrambling terrain to mirror the varied terrain found in mountains overseas. Course tutors may use modified maps to facilitate discussion on the problems of foreign maps and guides. Feedback will be given to candidates about their personal movement and fitness skills relative to the standard at assessment.

There will be an emphasis on the difference between "worst-case" micro-navigation, linking subtle features, and the techniques which may be more appropriate overseas, where there may well be a focus on ground shape, fast and efficient "macro" navigation and confident navigation on paths over terrain that is more mountainous than the UK.

Discussion and use of navigational aids such as guidebooks, altimeters, sketches and GPS.



UK environmental knowledge is discussed and compared with the level of awareness necessary at IML. This is demonstrated by role-modelling and practised through the delivery of “on the hill” talks prepared by trainees.

### ***Day four***

**Law and insurance/Professionalism:** An interactive session to raise awareness about the implications of holding a professional award, plus the legal and moral responsibilities and obligations that this entails.

A presentation to outline legal requirements and the consequences of working professionally outside the UK. A discussion about the legal responsibilities involved in commercial activities as an IML.

**Use of technology – GPS units/Spot devices:** Access to maps, guides and environmental information

A workshop looking at differences and difficulties of using unfamiliar and/or less reliable maps and the wide variety of scales that may be encountered. Interpretation of guidebooks, and the use of environmental guide books or similar resources. The use and limitations of the GPS unit

**Water hazards:** A practical session looking at managing groups at the water margins

**Weather:** A lecture aimed at the understanding and accessing of weather information when outside the UK. Understanding the weather systems that affect the Alps and Greater Ranges including Continental weather systems. Strategies for interpreting bulletins from other countries in other languages. Compiling a glossary of weather terms in other languages.

### ***Day five***

**Marketing:** A lecture to highlight marketing strategies and profiling to enhance the image and commercial prospects of the IML.

**Keeping people healthy:** An interactive session concentrating on International issues. This will be in the form of lectures and discussions focussing on safety, hygiene, culture and traditions, good environmental practices and management of staff and resources on trekking expeditions.



Expedition planning: A session looking at the logistics associated with expeditions, including information from the EPA (Expedition Providers Association)

Action planning for future courses: Summer assessment and winter training

## 2.2 Timed navigation test

- This is a half-day timed navigation assessment in mountainous terrain on a 1:25000 scale map.
- Each candidate has an individual course and corresponding time limit.
- Each candidate has a pre-marked map with checkpoints indicated with numbered circles.
- Checkpoints are indicated on the ground with an orienteering marker.
- A punch at each marker is used to prove the candidate has navigated to it.

This test requires you to maintain an average speed of 4 km/h and to gain height at a rate of 10m/minute while navigating over a period of two to four hours. Faster movement will be required in order to compensate if it becomes necessary to make up lost time due to errors, inefficient route choice or lengthy hesitation.

A pass is gained by completing the course within the allocated time and correctly visiting all the controls. Candidates who fail the timed navigation test can repeat the test as many times as required until successful completion.

## 2.3 Summer assessment

This four day course takes place outside of the UK to provide the realistic context of an appropriate mountainous environment. It is a hut-based course with some nights being spent in appropriate mountain huts. Candidates are assessed in groups comprising a maximum of four to one assessor. Each candidate will be assessed by a minimum of two different assessors.

A number of elements make up the assessment. These may be:

- Performance during the assessment course
- Experience detailed in the presented logbook



- Presentation of two short environmental talks (given “on the hill”)
- Home preparation paper
- Leader’s resource
- Route planning exercise

### Hill talks

Candidates are required to research and deliver two short presentations aimed to be delivered on the hill, these can be environmental, local history/cultural but need to be informative and relevant to your peer group.

To accompany these, candidates are expected to produce a ‘crib card’/resource for other members.

### Home preparation paper

Candidates are required to complete a home research paper in advance of the assessment and present it to the course director at the start of the course. The aim of this paper is to prepare you for the assessment.

### Leader’s resource

Each candidate must produce a Leader’s Resource Pack which details relevant information for them operating as a leader in the area of assessment. It should include information that would assist the leading of a group in the assessment area, such as transport information, hut information, emergency information and environmental facts relating to the area. This should be in a format that allows it to be carried during the assessment.

### Performance during the assessment

The assessment is holistic and aims to cover most summer aspects of the syllabus.

Candidates are expected to prepare by arriving at the start of the assessment with all the knowledge and information necessary to lead a group of clients in the assessment region.

Areas of assessment will typically include:

- Navigation and route selection
- Planning including the use of weather forecasts
- Fitness test
- Party management and education
- Security on steep ground





- Dealing with mountain hazards and fixed equipment
- Emergency incidents and scenarios
- Foreign language skills
- Environmental knowledge
- Teaching skills
- Use of huts, lifts and local transport
- Professionalism and attitude
- Research and preparation

## 2.4 Winter training

The purpose of the IML winter training course is three-fold:

- to expose candidates to the skills, techniques and knowledge needed for safe winter-walking leadership overseas in snow-covered rolling Nordic-type terrain.
- to expose candidates to the skills, techniques and knowledge needed to lead a group over snow or ice hazards found in summer walking conditions.
- to prepare candidates for the Winter IML assessment.

Candidates should come to the training course prepared to contribute to a structured learning experience in a supportive group environment. IMLs often work in isolation. Therefore courses like the IML training course, which bring together candidates from different leading and instructional backgrounds, offer unrivalled opportunities for exchanging ideas and discussing techniques and teaching methods. The Board considers this to be a major strength of the International Mountain Leader Qualification.

The course aims to cover those aspects of the syllabus that candidates usually find most problematic and which are difficult to practice in isolation. If there is any broad area that candidates would like to cover in greater depth, they should raise this with the instructors. However, it must be recognised that not all of the syllabus can be covered in the five-day training course.

The following training course outline gives an approximate breakdown of the course content. Candidates should realise that this is only an outline and Mountain Training recognises the freedom of each provider to run a training course that:



- satisfies the requirements of the Board
- satisfies the requirements of the majority of course members
- makes best use of prevailing conditions and weather

Skills are not taught in isolation. They are transferable through all syllabus areas. Therefore an integrated approach to the syllabus material will be taken. Candidates are recommended to take a holistic approach to subject matter and not assume that because a specific technique was taught in one situation this is the only situation for which it is appropriate.

This is a five day course run in the European Alps. The programme may vary due to the date within the winter season, weather conditions and the facilities available. The course is predominantly practical in nature during daylight hours. Indoor evening sessions will be used to cover theoretical aspects of some subjects. Typically the course will aim to cover the following areas:

- General winter leadership skills
- Personal movement on foot using an axe
- Personal movement on snowshoes
- The teaching of safe movement on snowshoes
- Avalanche awareness, snowpack interpretation and safe-travel techniques
- The teaching and use of avalanche transceivers, probe and shovel
- Route planning including the use and interpretation of weather and avalanche forecasts
- Winter navigation including poor weather and darkness.
- Organising and managing a group for night time snowshoeing
- Group use of ski-resort facilities including uplift
- Personal and group equipment
- Winter hazards
- Emergency snow shelters and winter survival techniques (which might include igloos, snow holes and “shovel-ups”)
- Environmental knowledge in the winter mountain environment



- Construction and use of snow belays
- Emergency scenarios including safeguarding a group over short steep sections of hard snow/ice

## 2.5 Winter assessment

This five day assessment course is run outside of the UK to provide the realistic context of a genuine mountainous environment, typically in the European Alps during the winter season.

The winter assessment takes place during the winter months but also assesses candidates' competency and skills to safeguard a party in summer snow conditions, when it may be necessary to negotiate short snow or ice hazards.

Candidates are assessed in groups comprising a maximum of four to one assessor. Each candidate will be assessed by a minimum of two different assessors during the course.

A number of elements make up the assessment. These may be:

- Performance during the assessment course
- Experience detailed in the presented logbook
- Presentation of two short environmental talks (given on the hill)
- Home preparation paper
- Leader's Resource

### Hill talks

Candidates are required to research and deliver two short, winter-specific presentations aimed to be delivered on the hill, these can be environmental, local history/cultural but need to be informative and relevant to your peer group

To accompany these candidates are expected to produce a 'crib card'/resource for other members. Suggested subjects areas are discussed at training.

### Home preparation paper

Candidates are required to complete a home research paper in advance of the assessment and present it to the Director of Assessment at the start of the course. This will cover winter aspects of the qualification. The aim of this paper is to prepare you for the winter assessment.



## Leader's resource

Each candidate must produce a Leader's Resource Pack which details relevant information for them operating as a leader in the area of assessment. It should include information that would assist the leading of a group in the assessment area, such as transport information, hut information, emergency information and environmental facts relating to the area. This should be in a format that allows it to be carried during the assessment.

## Performance during the assessment

The assessment is holistic and aims to cover most winter and snow aspects of the syllabus. Areas of assessment will typically include:

- General winter leadership skills
- Personal movement on foot with an ice axe
- Personal movement on snowshoes
- The teaching of safe movement on snowshoes
- Avalanche awareness, snowpack interpretation and safe travel techniques
- The teaching and use of avalanche transceivers, probe and shovel
- Avalanche transceiver search test for two buried transceivers
- Route planning including the use and interpretation of weather and avalanche forecasts
- Winter navigation, including poor weather and darkness
- Organising and managing a group for travel at night
- Group use of ski resort facilities including uplift
- Personal and group equipment
- Winter hazards
- Emergency snow shelters and winter survival techniques
- Environmental knowledge in the winter mountain environment
- Construction and use of snow belays
- Emergency scenarios including safe guarding a group over short, steep sections of hard snow/ice
- Foreign language skills
- Professionalism and attitude



## Appendix 3 - History of BAIML and UIMLA

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In 1993 the first British holders of the European Mountain Leader Award (EML) established the British Association of European Mountain Leaders (BAEML). A national association was required in order to fulfil responsibilities, including a code of conduct and insurance provision, to the Commission Européenne des Accompagnateurs en Montagne (CEAM). Only through membership of BAEML would British EML holders be validated to practise and have their qualification recognised within Europe.

UIMLA: In 2003 the various member countries of CEAM decided that for the qualification to gain greater unity and universal recognition it should have a more unified carnet, badge and identity. It was decided that a change of title from European to International would remove the barrier for non-European countries to join and also reflect the increasing number of qualified people leading treks in the Greater Ranges.

In 2004 at Plas y Brenin, The National Mountain Centre, CEAM changed its title to the 'Union of International Mountain Leader Associations' (UIMLA) and accepted a new constitution which included the adoption of a universal qualification name, carnet and badge. These changes were ratified at a ceremony held in Chambéry, France on Saturday 27 November 2004 and signed by eight countries: Andorra, Belgium, France, Italy, Poland, Spain, Switzerland and the United Kingdom.

BAIML: Following the formation of UIMLA, each member country agreed consequently to change its name and constitution. In the UK this was done in 2005 by a change in title for the British qualification and association from European Mountain Leader (EML) to International Mountain Leader (IML) and from British Association of European Mountain Leaders (BAEML) to British Association of International Mountain Leaders (BAIML). In 2012 – The revised UIMLA Standard,

Standard for access to and practice of the profession of the International Mountain Leader," was accepted at the Annual General Assembly of UIMLA.