



MOUNTAINEERING AND CLIMBING INSTRUCTOR  
CANDIDATE HANDBOOK





## PREFACE

This booklet contains all the information needed to progress through the Mountaineering and Climbing Instructor scheme. It is designed to support the knowledge and experience of candidates, trainers and assessors whilst at the same time avoiding prescribed techniques. There are many technical manuals for climbers and mountaineers that illustrate the range of evolving techniques used by instructors; these notes are designed to complement such literature (see Appendix 2).

This handbook is divided into three parts:

- Information about the scheme from registration to assessment.
- A syllabus that lists the skills of a Mountaineering and Climbing Instructor with guidance notes that help advise candidates and their trainers and assessors of protocols and procedures.
- Appendices that provide background information.

## PARTICIPATION STATEMENT

Mountain Training recognises that climbing, hill walking and mountaineering are activities with a danger of personal injury or death. Participants in these activities should be aware of and accept these risks and be responsible for their own actions. Mountain Training provides training and assessment courses and associated literature to help leaders manage these risks and to enable new participants to have positive experiences while learning about their responsibilities.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many people have contributed to the preparation of this handbook by attending working party meetings and by making detailed and constructive comments on the draft. Grateful thanks are due to Board members, staff of the National Centres and home nation Training Boards and the Association of Mountaineering Instructors for help in the production of this publication.

Published by Mountain Training UK and Ireland  
Siabod Cottage, Capel Curig, LL24 0ES  
Tel: 01690 720 272  
Email: [info@mountain-training.org](mailto:info@mountain-training.org)  
Website: [www.mountain-training.org](http://www.mountain-training.org)  
© Mountain Training UK and Ireland  
Revised July 2019  
All rights reserved  
Design by Rock Solid: [www.rocksoliddesigns.co.uk](http://www.rocksoliddesigns.co.uk)

## CONTENTS

### THE SCHEME

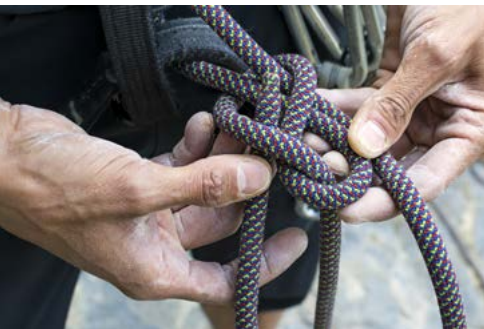
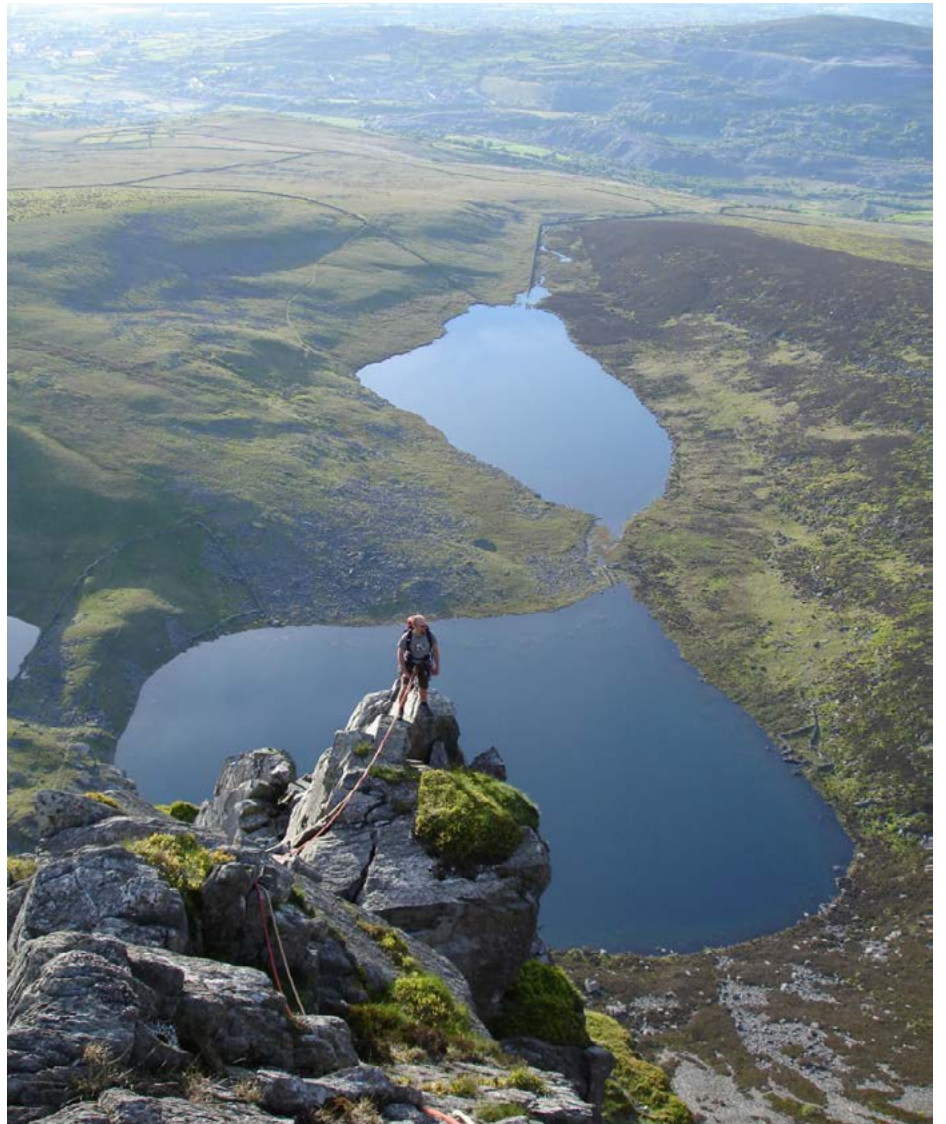
- 1 Introduction
- 2 Scope of the Scheme
- 3 Stages in the Scheme
- 4 Registration
- 5 Training
- 6 Consolidation Period
- 7 First Aid Requirements
- 8 Assessment
- 9 Reassessment
- 10 Complaints and appeals procedure

### SYLLABUS & GUIDANCE NOTES

- 1 Personal Skills
- 2 Teaching and Learning Skills
- 3 Summer Mountaineering Instruction
- 4 Rock Climbing Instruction
- 5 Mountain Training
- 6 The Mountain Environment
- 7 Development and History of Mountaineering and Rock Climbing
- 8 Assessment of Risk and its Application

### APPENDICES

- 1 Definitions
- 2 Suggested Reading List
- 3 Course Programmes
- 4 Mountain Training UK and Ireland
- 5 Mountain Training Qualification pathways



## THE SCHEME

### 1 INTRODUCTION

The Mountaineering and Climbing Instructor (MCI) scheme provides comprehensive training and assessment in the skills required to instruct all aspects of rock climbing and mountaineering in summer conditions. It is designed for individuals who aim to work as instructors in rock climbing and mountaineering activities in environments as diverse as sea-cliffs, mountain crags, ridges and in gorges.

The Winter Mountaineering and Climbing Instructor (WMCI) is a separate qualification that is gained after the Mountaineering and Climbing Instructor and is focused on the instruction of winter climbing and mountaineering.

### 2 SCOPE OF THE SCHEME

The scheme builds on the skills acquired in the Mountain Leader scheme, which candidates must have completed and the syllabus includes multi-pitch rock climbing, scrambling and other mountaineering skills. Also included are elements of training and assessment that are necessary for those directing and working on Mountain Training's entry level schemes.

The Mountaineering and Climbing Instructor scheme is designed specifically for conditions encountered within the United Kingdom and Ireland. There is an opportunity for Mountaineering Instructors to work overseas, subject to further training, a qualifying period of two years and within a set of terrain-specific definitions. For further information contact the Association of Mountaineering Instructors (AMI).

### 3 STAGES IN THE SCHEME

The scheme consists of the following stages:

- 3.1 Pass Mountain Leader assessment and gain appropriate post-assessment Mountain Leader experience.
- 3.2 Complete DLOG with relevant experience including reference.
- 3.3 Register for Mountaineering and Climbing Instructor and have your registration approved.
- 3.4 Attend a Mountaineering and Climbing Instructor training course.
- 3.5 Gain further experience during a consolidation period.
- 3.6 Pass Mountaineering and Climbing Instructor assessment.

### 4 REGISTRATION

Applicants must:

- 4.1 Have successfully completed the Mountain Leader qualification.
- 4.2 Have completed 20 quality mountain days as a leader in sole charge of a mixed ability group. These days should be undertaken after completion of the Mountain Leader assessment.
- 4.3 Have substantial climbing experience and provide evidence of 30 named multi-pitch rock climbs in at least three main climbing areas of the UK. These must be climbs which the candidate has completed leading at least the crux pitch, which must be VS 4c standard or above. These routes should illustrate the applicant's breadth of climbing experience.



4.4 Have personal experience of leading 10 sport climbs at 6a or above on natural rock (not necessarily in the UK).

4.5 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 climbing partner or suitable employer would also be considered as an appropriate referee.

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

Candidates who have only the bare minimum of experience will find the training and assessment less worthwhile than candidates who have a broader and more extensive mountaineering background.

Most Mountaineering and Climbing Instructor trainees have completed training and/or assessment for the Rock Climbing Instructor. While this is not a requirement for registration, candidates who have not entered the Rock Climbing Instructor scheme should familiarise themselves with its content.

Applications may be further strengthened by including details of other relevant mountaineering experience logged in other sections of DLOG. For example, experience as a winter climber or alpinist and details of long, easier climbs ascended in big boots or poor conditions might be relevant.

## **THE REFEREE**

The referee should be able to endorse the candidate's suitability as a potential Mountaineering Instructor and vouch for the accuracy of the application. It is therefore vitally important that potential referees have an overview of the climbing and work experience of an applicant.



## ROCK CLIMBING EXPERIENCE AT REGISTRATION

The Mountaineering and Climbing Instructor scheme is UK and Ireland orientated and the experience recorded should reflect this. While experience gained trekking or climbing in the High Atlas Mountains, for example, is undoubtedly valuable, it is not necessarily the most appropriate experience for the scheme. The Board is looking for both depth and breadth of experience since candidates who have only the minimum experience are unlikely to benefit fully from either the training or assessment course.

- In general terms, successful applicants will have climbed at least 100 multi-pitch routes.
- Candidates should bear in mind that the 30 routes must be multi-pitch (described as such in the guidebook and climbed as such) and must be at least VS 4c.
- As a general rule, at least two-thirds of the routes should fall into the mountain/major sea cliff category. Moss Ghyll Grooves, Dream of White Horses and The Clean Sweep are examples of the type of route expected rather than short, contrived climbs that may be more technically difficult, for example, Merlin Direct at Tremadog.
- There should be evidence of recent climbing experience.

## 5 TRAINING

In order to attend a Mountaineering and Climbing Instructor training course, candidates must first have their application for registration approved by Mountain Training UK and Ireland. Providers will not accept bookings for a Mountaineering and Climbing Instructor training course unless candidates are registered with Mountain Training UK and Ireland for this scheme.

Currently there are three providers of Mountaineering and Climbing Instructor training approved by Mountain Training: Glenmore Lodge, Plas y Brenin and Tollymore. Mountain Training UK and Ireland are keen to support appropriate course programmes from their providers. Currently courses are delivered in a continuous nine day block or split into two five day blocks. Course dates are available from Mountain Training and from the providers directly (see Appendix 4 - National Mountain Centres).

At the end of the training course feedback and advice on consolidation will be given individually. In order to assist this process, candidates must make sure their DLOG is accurate and up to date at the start of the course. Some aspects of the syllabus may not be covered during the training course and candidates are expected to deal with these items themselves.

The training course includes knowledge and skills not assessed on the final course. For this reason there is no exemption from training.





## 6 CONSOLIDATION PERIOD

The period between training and assessment varies in length for each person and it is recommended you allow a minimum of twelve months. Consolidation is an opportunity to develop your skills, paying particular attention to any weaknesses identified during the training course. You can use the excuse 'I'm preparing for assessment' to have as many mountain adventures as you like, so get out there and explore this beautiful country of ours! The minimum DLOG experience that needs to be gained during the consolidation period is listed below, but it should be noted that most successful candidates will have far in excess of this. In addition, they will have a robust and realistic action plan that ensures no aspects of the syllabus are forgotten. Many candidates will also seek the support of a mentor, or look for opportunities to shadow experienced Mountaineering and Climbing Instructors. By joining the Association of Mountaineering Instructors there is also access to workshops and a community of practice.

The minimum requirements during this period are:

- 6.1 20 quality mountain days as a leader in sole charge of a mixed ability group.
- 6.2 20 rock climbing teaching days with students.
- 6.3 20 multi-pitch climbs at VS 4c or above, a large proportion of which should be on mountain crags and major sea cliffs
- 6.4 Familiarity with all aspects of the syllabus
- 6.5 A valid first aid certificate



In exceptional circumstances, a reduction in the consolidation period is possible for very experienced candidates, who can demonstrate considerable experience prior to the training course. Under no circumstances will candidates be allowed to progress from training to assessment in less than three months.

## 7 FIRST AID REQUIREMENTS

Prior to the assessment candidates 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. Candidates are further expected to undertake such additional elements of first aid training as are consistent with



their work in wild and remote country, including emergency assistance and evacuation techniques. It is the responsibility of the instructor and/or their employers to evaluate their likely work and the type of situations that they can reasonably expect to encounter and to maintain current appropriate first aid training and qualifications.

## 8 ASSESSMENT

Candidates must be familiar with all aspects of the syllabus before assessment. The assessment course lasts for five days. A panel of at least three assessors (including the course director) will be involved in deciding each candidate's result. At the end of the course the course director will record the outcome on CMS in one of three ways:

**PASS:** awarded where the candidate has demonstrated a proper knowledge and application of the course syllabus and has shown the necessary experience and attributes for mountaineering and climbing instruction.

**DEFER:** awarded where the candidate has generally performed well and shown the necessary experience and attributes but where complete proficiency has not been attained. Recommendations for further experience will be given and recorded in CMS, along with details of the proposed reassessment.

**FAIL:** awarded where the candidate's performance has been generally weak, or the necessary experience and attributes have not been shown.





## 9 REASSESSMENT

Reassessments cannot be more than two days in length and cannot take place within three months of the previous assessment. A candidate may take two reassessments before being required to take the entire assessment course again. Since the reassessment will be based on information gained during the initial assessment, all reassessments should be completed within a five year period.

## 10 COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS PROCEDURE

If you would like to give feedback about a course, complain or appeal a result you should:

- make contact with the course director, explain your concerns and seek clarification.
- if this does not resolve your concerns, contact the Chief Executive Officer of Mountain Training UK and Ireland. The decision of the Board will be final.

The Mountaineering and Climbing Instructor scheme is subject to continuous monitoring, culminating in periodic reviews.

## 1 PERSONAL SKILLS



### SYLLABUS

- 1.1 Choose and lead multi-pitch rock climbs at a minimum of VS 4c in a safe, competent and assured manner.
- 1.2 Demonstrate practical and theoretical currency in a wide range of mountaineering/rock climbing techniques and skills.
- 1.3 Navigate with speed and efficiency in all conditions.
- 1.4 Demonstrate efficient movement over all types of mountain terrain.
- 1.5 Assess an incident on a crag or mountain to determine a safe, efficient and effective solution
- 1.6 Apply a variety of problem-solving and improvised-rescue techniques using normal climbing equipment, to include abseiling, lowering, hoisting, escaping from the system and prusiking.
- 1.7 Demonstrate effective communication, leadership, instruction and teaching.

### GUIDANCE

Personal skills are the foundation of an effective Mountaineering and Climbing Instructor. Developing these skills through a breadth of experience that has been gained in a variety of environments and terrain is essential. This allows you to move efficiently, have an ability to assess risk, look after others, be an inspirational role model and demonstrate good practice.

By modern standards climbs of VS4c are a relatively straightforward proposition in good conditions. However, the ability to 'cruise' at this grade whilst focusing on safeguarding your second(s) and creating learning opportunities requires plenty in reserve.



Confidence in your ability to perform well at this grade is required; many Mountaineering and Climbing Instructors gain this confidence by climbing at higher grades. The experience requirements for the scheme are listed as a minimum; therefore any additional experience you gain will contribute towards your overall development and be of great benefit.

You are expected to be able to demonstrate appropriate navigation techniques with the skill of a practised and experienced Mountain Leader.

You need to be operating at a standard where you are aware of the likely consequences of any particular course of action by you or your clients. This will allow you to be able to make decisions that ensure the smooth flow and quality of the session and avoid compromising safety.

If an incident does occur you should have the ability to choose and implement a solution that is no more complicated than the minimum required to maintain safety and to deal with the incident. Attention to personal safety at all times is vital.

Your knowledge of improvised rescue techniques should be thorough and well-practised. A knowledge of pulleys, ascenders and other specialist equipment is important but you should be able to deal with a problem using normal rock climbing equipment. The importance of pace and efficiency in both decision making and application of solutions, particularly in situations involving serious injury or unconsciousness should not be underestimated. You should know when a situation requires outside assistance and how to attract it. Equally you should have the ability to deal with a situation without outside help that may, for example, involve a multi-pitch crag evacuation with the need to re-belay.

## KEY PRACTICE POINTS

Gain lots of climbing experience with both series and parallel rope techniques on a variety of rock types.

Your navigation practice should focus on micro navigation in steep complex terrain and include poor visibility and darkness.

It can be valuable to seek out personal experience of associated activities such as sports climbing, sea-level traversing, coastering, aid climbing and ropes courses.

Practise problem solving by mentally running through 'what if' scenarios whilst climbing and mountaineering.

Practise technical rescues in a controlled and safe way, initially using a weighted rucksack as a casualty. When practising with a 'live' casualty it is best practice to have them safeguarded by an additional rope.

## 2 TEACHING AND LEARNING SKILLS



### SYLLABUS

- 2.1 Communicate effectively and appropriately with individuals in a range of situations, checking for understanding.
- 2.2 Actively appraise and manage session delivery, maximising both lifelong learning and experience opportunities for participant(s).
- 2.3 Understand and utilise a variety of suitable learning and teaching strategies to ensure development of appropriate knowledge, skills and experience over time.
- 2.4 Observe and analyse individual performances to provide appropriate, effective and timely feedback for participants.
- 2.5 Evaluate a session and its outcomes to inform the planning of future sessions.

### GUIDANCE

Your ability to develop the skills, knowledge and understanding of others is a key competency of a Mountaineering and Climbing Instructor. This may be in the context of a formal teaching session or as a means to an end when participants require some additional skills to ensure the smooth and safe running of the activity.

Effective communication is essential to maintain safety and promote enjoyable learning. Mountaineering and Climbing Instructors need to quickly build rapport, gain trust and inspire confidence. You should be flexible in your approach and able to respond to the individual needs of participants. Skilful use of questioning is often necessary to confirm understanding and promote learning.

Your ability to give quality feedback is essential to skill development and maintaining motivation. This needs to be as individualised and specific as possible to maximise its impact.

Every session you deliver will be different due to the nature of the participants, its aims and the conditions you encounter. Each should be reviewed and reflected upon to consider changes of style or content that can be taken forward to improve future sessions.

### KEY PRACTICE POINTS

Increase your awareness of your own preferences in terms of communication, learning and receiving feedback. This will provide a good foundation from which to be flexible in your approach.

Experiment with different learning and teaching strategies, particularly those that are different to your own preferences.

Continually analyse your sessions to ensure they are progressive and meeting the needs of all participants.

Seek opportunities to observe other Mountaineering and Climbing Instructors and identify similarities and differences in their approach; use this information to develop your own practice.



## 3 SUMMER MOUNTAINEERING INSTRUCTION



### SYLLABUS

- 3.1 Effectively teach and lead a variety of mountain-related activities, skills and techniques to participants, who range from novice to committed hill walker, scrambler and rock climber.
- 3.2 Demonstrate appropriate care and leadership of a party on scrambling terrain including the use of various rope techniques in ascent and descent.
- 3.3 Demonstrate suitable choice of venue and route taking into account the ability and aspirations of the party and the likely weather and conditions.
- 3.4 Effectively present mountain-related topics, promoting learning and encouraging discussion.
- 3.5 Teach and demonstrate all aspects of hill and mountain navigation.
- 3.6 Structure, plan and run a variety of indoor technical sessions for both novice and experienced climbers.
- 3.7 Assess the ability of the participant(s) or group in order to give a safe, enjoyable and educational mountain journey.

### GUIDANCE

Your ability to safely manage the movement of those in your care over a wide range of mountain terrain is a key skill. Only when this can be achieved in a fluid and unconscious way can you truly concentrate on education and the quality of the experience.

You need to be able to plan, structure and deliver safe and educational sessions in a wide range of mountain environments. These will often take the form of mountain journeys where the nature of the terrain, aims of the session and make-up of the group will inform the appropriate method of safeguarding them.

The decision as to when and when not to use a rope can be crucial to the safety of the group and the smooth progression of your journey. You should develop a methodology for appraising each situation and adapting your approach as necessary.

When making use of a rope, the techniques and belays used should be appropriate to the terrain you are operating on and provide an appropriate level of protection for you and your group. This often calls for good judgement and technical dexterity that have been developed from practical experience. Clear communication and appropriate briefings remain important once the rope is deployed. You should be attentive to the movement and behaviour of those on your rope and respond accordingly.

A successful session requires a detailed and accurate understanding of the ability of the participants, the demands of a particular route or venue and the appropriate use of safeguarding techniques. It is important to plan ahead and also to remain flexible to changing circumstances.

The teaching of navigation may take place as part of a broader session or journey or may be the explicit aim. You should have a wide range of well-practised approaches and techniques that can be utilised. This should allow you to deliver a logical skill development of participants ranging from novices to competent navigators. Refer to the Mountain Leader handbook for a full list of skills and techniques.

You should be confident, experienced and effective with the delivery of both outdoor and indoor sessions. Being able to deliver indoor sessions allows you to be more flexible in your delivery and have more options on foul weather days. Indoor sessions could range from the delivery of climbing and technical skills in a climbing wall to a more formal presentation or lecture in a classroom setting. All should be well researched, prepared and structured and delivered in a confident style that engages and educates the audience.

## KEY PRACTICE POINTS

Run sessions with definite aims in mind, these should be decided in conjunction with participants and from your own understanding of the best next step.

Practise a wide range of rope techniques and consider how best to use each one.

Efficient route finding with and without a guidebook is a crucial skill, practise both.

Seek out opportunities to lecture, voluntary organisations and climbing clubs often welcome guest speakers.



## 4 ROCK CLIMBING INSTRUCTION



### SYLLABUS

- 4.1 Prepare and organise an instructional session appropriate to the needs of the participant(s).
- 4.2 Assess the ability of the participant(s) in order to deliver a safe, appropriate, enjoyable and educational day.
- 4.3 Effectively teach a broad range of skills, developing novice to committed and experienced participant(s).
- 4.4 Select suitable venues, routes and activities appropriate to the needs of the participant(s).
- 4.5 Actively appraise and manage session delivery, maximising the learning and experience opportunities for participant(s).

### GUIDANCE

Your instruction of rock climbing may range from the introduction of novices on a single pitch crag to the guiding of experienced climbers on adventurous sea cliffs or mountain crags. Each session will have its own specific requirements in terms of equipment, planning and judgement.

Good decision making will be required to choose a venue or route that is appropriate to the ability and aspirations of your group. It is important that practical learning opportunities are created that are differentiated to the needs of individual participants and are progressed logically. Priority should be given to teaching skills and techniques that are transferrable to other contexts and that the participant will utilise repeatedly as they develop as a climber.

You should endeavour to give those in your care a quality climbing experience that inspires and motivates them to do more.

The grade of climb that you operate on, and the number of pitches climbed should take into account the aims of the session, the experience and ability of the climbers, your own ability and the conditions on the day.



When appropriate your instruction may also include the teaching of lead climbing. This will require careful judgement, the confirmation of many key climbing skills and an informed desire to lead from the participant. The teaching of leading should be a considered decision rather than just the 'next step'. Mountaineering and Climbing Instructors should have a range of strategies for teaching the components of lead climbing while a participant is seconding.

Throughout your sessions you should demonstrate good practice and behave as a role model. Parallel, series and double rope techniques should be applied as appropriate and stance management should be effective and efficient. You should have an understanding of how long stances, pitches and descents take and plan your day with this in mind.

## KEY PRACTICE POINTS

Develop a range of verbal and practical methods for establishing the current ability of participants.

Develop awareness of non-verbal indicators of anxiety, boredom and lack of understanding etc.

Practise creating practical learning opportunities for those you climb with, rather than doing things for them.

Predict and review how long pitches take to get the whole party up.

Critically review your stance management and look at ways of improving efficiency.

Develop an awareness of time management strategies while working with climbers and mountaineers to get the most out of the day.



## 5 MOUNTAIN TRAINING



### SYLLABUS

- 5.1 Demonstrate a detailed understanding of the role, philosophy and structure of Mountain Training and its schemes, the mountaineering councils, climbing clubs and the National Indoor Climbing/Bouldering Award Scheme.
- 5.2 Demonstrate the ability to instruct and supervise aspects of Mountain Training's walking and climbing skills and qualification courses.
- 5.3 Demonstrate a generic understanding of the standards required for all the above qualifications and suitable methods to train and assess for them.

### GUIDANCE

Mountaineering and Climbing Instructors should be able to discuss and advise others regarding the role of Mountain Training and its qualifications and skills schemes. You should be familiar with information available on the Mountain Training and mountaineering council websites and be able to direct your participants to them.

A key role of Mountaineering and Climbing Instructors is the delivery of Mountain Training qualifications. You should have the ability to train and assess to a standard as defined by a syllabus.

### KEY PRACTICE POINTS

Seek out opportunities to observe and deliver on Mountain Training courses.

Spend time researching the content of Mountain Training and the mountaineering council websites.

## 6 THE MOUNTAIN ENVIRONMENT



### ACCESS

#### 6.1 Source current access information and act accordingly.

You should be familiar with many sources of access information such as climbing guidebooks, online material, mountaineering councils' websites etc.

As a Mountaineering and Climbing Instructor you have a responsibility to respect landowners with regards to access. As a minimum, any supervised group should conform to codes of good practice and comply with relevant access legislation, which may differ between the nations of the UK and Ireland along with local restrictions or guidelines.

### KEY PRACTICE POINTS

Research the differences in access legislation between England, Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland.

### CONSERVATION

- 6.2 Have a broad working knowledge of the mountain environment including geology, natural history, flora and fauna.
- 6.3 Operate in such a way as to minimise impact on the environment.
- 6.4 Pass on environmental knowledge in an appropriate and engaging way to educate and enthuse.
- 6.5 Manage individuals and groups so that they have minimal impact and leave the crags and mountains in an improved condition where possible.

Knowledge about the environment your group is visiting is always valuable; it can be used to enhance the experience and initiate further interest. Your understanding should go beyond the naming of individual species and features and allow you to interpret the landscape.

Being able to explain how a mountain area has been formed can add depth to the activities taking place in them. You should then be able to highlight how an ecosystem is inter-related and explain the links between rock type, soil type, flora, fauna and human use.



As an indication of the level of understanding expected of a Mountaineering and Climbing Instructor you should generally be able to identify common species and interpret the landscape without the need for further research or access to resources.

Participants who understand the fragility of the environment you are operating in are more likely to act responsibly and avoid any negative impact. Your sessions should be delivered in such a way that minimises impact on the environment and sets an example to others.

## KEY PRACTICE POINTS

Increase your environmental knowledge through further training on courses and workshops. Research into specific areas you visit will highlight what makes them unique.

Read widely from the many books that are available on environmental topics.

Experiment with different methods of engaging groups with the landscape.

Attend local area meetings of the mountaineering councils to stay current on local environmental issues.

## ETIQUETTE AND ETHICS

- 6.7 Demonstrate a broad working knowledge of your responsibilities to the general public, other users, environmental agencies, local residents, landowners and the wider climbing and mountaineering community.
- 6.8 Demonstrate a broad working knowledge of local and national rock climbing and mountaineering ethics.
- 6.9 Operate a flexible and imaginative programme of activities so as to accommodate other users where possible.

As a Mountaineering and Climbing Instructor you should operate as a role model for the instructional community and the wider climbing public. You should have a good understanding of relevant ethics and operate in a way that takes them into account. It is important to make participants aware of climbing ethics and their practical implications.

Your sessions should be managed in a way that creates minimum impact on other users.

## KEY PRACTICE POINTS

Stay current on ethical considerations by reading magazines and online information.

Experiment with different ways of managing sessions to minimise your impact on others.

Engage with other climbers to minimise disruption to one another.

## 7 DEVELOPMENT AND HISTORY OF MOUNTAINEERING AND ROCK CLIMBING



### SYLLABUS

- 7.1 Demonstrate a broad knowledge of mountaineering and rock climbing history and ethics.
- 7.2 Demonstrate knowledge of a wide range of mountain literature including instructional books, guidebooks, biographies and online material.

### GUIDANCE

Mountaineering and rock climbing have a rich history that has been recorded in many fine books. Biographies inform us of the characters that have shaped traditions and cultures. Narratives capture significant and poignant events. Both can enrich a session through their links to the past.

Guidebooks, in addition to information about routes, also have a wealth of historical information in them. Instructional books inform and develop us. As a Mountaineering and Climbing Instructor you should be well read, including the plethora of online material that is available.

This will allow you to educate and inspire others as well as being able to recommend appropriate books for them.

### KEY PRACTICE POINTS

- Develop an active interest in the history and traditions of mountaineering and rock climbing.
- Seek out additional sources of historical knowledge such as lectures, films and other climbers.



## 8 ASSESSMENT OF RISK AND ITS APPLICATION



### SYLLABUS

- 8.1 Demonstrate an awareness of responsibility to any authorising organisation, parents/guardians, the participant(s), Mountain Training and others.
- 8.2 Carry out dynamic risk assessments and evaluate the needs and requirements of individuals and groups to ensure a suitable level of adventure, risk and safety.
- 8.3 Be familiar with Mountain Training's National Guidelines as well as the implications of current relevant legislation and accreditation/inspection regimes.
- 8.4 Understand the Mountaineering and Climbing Instructor's role as a technical advisor.

### GUIDANCE

As a Mountaineering and Climbing Instructor you can potentially be operating in a range of hazardous locations that demand mature judgement and experience to protect participants from unnecessary risks. Learning to manage risk in an acceptable way is a cornerstone of adventure activities. Instructing in the mountain environment requires a balance between the aims and abilities of participants and the limitations imposed by weather conditions and terrain hazards, all of which are dynamic in nature.

Mountaineering and Climbing Instructors need to develop a clear understanding of the moral and legal implications of their management of risk when working with children and adults.

You should understand the concepts of risk management that underpin the legal framework within which you operate. The role of Technical Advisor often requires expertise outside the scope of the Mountaineering and Climbing Instructor qualification. Where necessary, additional training and experience should be gained. The Association of Mountaineering Instructors is a useful resource.

### KEY PRACTICE POINTS

Research the practical implications of the legal concepts of 'duty of care', 'in loco parentis' and 'volenti non fit injuria'.

Read Mountain Training's National Guidelines.

Research current relevant legislation and accreditation/inspection regimes.

Remain current on accidents and incidents through the Health and Safety Executive, mountaineering councils, Mountain Training and Membership organisations' updates.

## APPENDIX 1 - DEFINITIONS

### **Short Roping**

This is the generic term used to describe the planned use of the rope to safeguard one or two individuals on mountaineering or scrambling terrain. It may be used on the approach to or descent from a climb (e.g. Idwal Slabs), for long sections of a mountaineering route (e.g. a traverse of the Cuillin), or on a graded scramble (e.g. Pinnacle Ridge, St Sunday Crag). It encompasses a variety of techniques, including short pitching and moving together (see below). The common theme, as suggested by the name, is that of a short length of rope between the individuals, and from the individuals to the instructor. This improves communication as well as facilitating safe, snug and efficient management of the rope on loose and complex terrain.

### **Short Pitching**

This technique is used on exposed terrain where a slip could have serious consequences. This is not continuous rock climbing but there may be short sections of V Diff graded rock that are anything from a few metres to 20m or more long. The instructor will climb the section first leaving the individuals secure, possibly belayed, on a ledge. The instructor will sometimes place runners to safeguard themselves and/or the individuals according to the nature of the pitch, and conditions on the day. Once at the next suitable ledge the instructor will select an appropriate belay method to safeguard the individuals, who will normally climb the pitch at the same time, tied a short distance apart. The whole party will move at the same time between sections of difficulty and in less exposed situations (see Moving Together below). Occasionally in descent it may be appropriate to lower the clients, either together or individually.

### **Moving Together**

In the context of the Mountaineering Instructor scheme this refers to sections of a journey where it is appropriate for the whole party to move at the same time, normally between sections of trickier short pitching. At times this ground will be straightforward or non-serious, in which case it can be considered as a type of confidence roping, or merely as an efficient method to transport the rope between harder sections. However, moving together may also take place on consequential ground with the purpose of preventing a slip from becoming a fall. In this case, the decision to move together should not be taken lightly, and the potential seriousness cannot be overstated. Considerable practise in safe areas is essential.

### **Alpine Style Moving Together**

The party will travel at the same time over terrain that presents a combination of exposure and technical difficulty or extreme exposure alone. Most commonly this technique is linked with moving along alpine type ridges or mixed climbs where speed, with a degree of safety, is important. A competent and compatible rope of two peers will move together, arranging running belays between each climber. On arriving at anything of greater difficulty the party will stop and initiate 'normal' climbing procedures. This technique is not normally used by Mountaineering Instructors to safeguard clients.



## SUMMER AND WINTER

**Winter:**

When winter conditions, including snow and ice, prevail or are forecast. This cannot be defined by a portion of the year.

**Summer:**

Any conditions not covered under winter.



## APPENDIX 2 - SUGGESTED READING LIST

### Books:

Rock Climbing, *L. Peter, Mountain Training UK, Revised 2nd Edition 2011*  
 Hill Walking, *S. Long, Mountain Training UK, Revised 3rd Edition 2014*  
 Navigation in the Mountains, *C. Forte, Mountain Training UK, 2012*  
 The Complete Rock Climber, *M. Creasey, et al, 1999/reprinted 2003*  
 The Handbook of Climbing, *A. Fyffe & I. Peter, Pelham Books, 1997*  
 Mountain Skills Training Handbook, *P. Hill & S. Johnston, David and Charles, 2000*  
 Mountaineering and Leadership, *E. Langmuir, Revised 3rd Edition MLTE/MLTS, 2004*  
 A Manual of Modern Rope Techniques, *N. Shepherd, Constable, 1998*  
 One Move Too Many, *T. Hochholzer & V. Schoeffl, Lochner-Verlag, 2003*  
 Classic Rock, *K Wilson, Granada, 1981*  
 The Games Climbers Play, *K Wilson, Baton Wicks, 2006*  
 Leading and Managing Groups in the Outdoors, *K. Ogilvie, IOL, Revised 2nd Edition, 2005*

### Magazines:

Summit, Scottish Mountaineer, Irish Mountain Log, Climb, Climber

### Free downloads:

National Guidelines, *Various, Mountain Training UK, Fifth Edition 2014*  
 Care and Maintenance, *BMC, 2001*  
 Ropes; a guide for climbers and mountaineers, *BMC, 2014*  
 Belaying and Abseiling Guide, *BMC*  
 Green Guide to the Uplands, *BMC, 2009*  
 Climbing Wall Manual, *BMC, 2010*

### Websites:

Coachwise1st4sport                      [www.1st4sport.com](http://www.1st4sport.com)

### Useful resources for clients:

Climbing Outside, *BMC, 2005 (FREE download)*  
 Safety on Mountains, *BMC, 2010*  
 Rock Climbing Essentials DVD, *BMC*  
 Climbing Wall Essentials DVD, *BMC*



## APPENDIX 3 - COURSE PROGRAMMES

### TRAINING

The purpose of the Mountaineering and Climbing Instructor training course is three-fold:

- to expose candidates to the skills and techniques needed for safe operation as a climbing and mountaineering instructor in the United Kingdom and Ireland under summer conditions
- to make candidates aware of the standard required at, and format of, assessment
- to explain the role of the Mountaineering and Climbing Instructor in other Mountain Training schemes

Training courses are usually quite large, with eight to twelve students involved. Candidates should come to the training course prepared to contribute to a structured learning experience. Much of the time Mountaineering and Climbing Instructors work in isolation. Therefore courses like this, which bring together candidates from different climbing and instructional backgrounds, offer unrivalled opportunities for exchanging ideas and discussing techniques and teaching methods.

The course aims to cover aspects of the syllabus that candidates usually find most problematic and which are difficult to practise in isolation. Therefore areas such as technical climbing will receive less in-depth coverage than subjects such as improvised rescue and belay skills. 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 during the training course.

The following training course outlines give an approximate breakdown of the course content for a nine day course and a ten day (two x five day) course. These are 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 across 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.



9 Day Course	
Day	Main topic
1	Teaching people climbing - single pitch
2	Improvised rescue one
3	Taking people climbing - multi-pitch
4	Teaching people climbing - multi-pitch
5	Improvised rescue two
6	Mountaineering one
7	Mountaineering two
8	Group adventure
9	Navigation

10 Day Course (two five day blocks)	
Day	Main topic
1	Risk assessment
2	Single Pitch Climbing
3	Multi-pitch climbing
4	Multi-pitch climbing
5	Mountain day
Break	
6	Problem solving
7	Navigation
8	Coaching climbing
9	Teaching leading
10	Training and assessing

**Evening Sessions** – Throughout the course, there will be a variety of evening sessions, which may include subjects such as prusiking, use of climbing walls, the work of the training boards, teaching navigation, climbing equipment, future developments in climbing, ethics, professional codes of conduct and planning.

**Feedback** – At the end of the course there will be a review process during which candidates will be made aware of what they need to do before presenting themselves for assessment.

More detailed course programmes can be obtained from your chosen provider. Both course types will cover the following:

### **Taking People Climbing - Single Pitch**

The organisation of single pitch climbing sessions and bouldering sessions will be examined, along with the introduction of novices to climbing, group abseiling sessions, solving common single pitch climbing problems, teaching progressions, choice of venues and safety considerations. The Rock Climbing Instructor scheme and the Mountaineering and Climbing Instructor's role within it will also be explained.

### **Improvised Rescues and Problem Solving**

Practical problem solving in multi-pitch situations is covered and there will be opportunities to practise new techniques and to experiment with the skills required in order to solve common crag problems and more difficult scenarios.

It is important to realise that the purpose of including improvised rescue in the Mountaineering and Climbing Instructor syllabus is to encourage competence and confidence in instructors, rather than to equip the instructor with the skills needed to solve any problem, in any situation, anywhere in the world!

### **Taking People Climbing - Multi Pitch and Teaching Leading**

Trainees will learn about belays and rope systems, route choice and supervision of students in real multi-pitch climbing situations. Little time will be spent on technical climbing with the focus instead being on examining belays, belay construction and methods of handling students in a variety of multi-pitch situations. The emphasis will be on teaching progressions. Similarly, trainees will be introduced to the various methods of teaching leading, concentrating on methods which keep both the instructor and the students safe.

### **Mountain day(s)**

Short-roping techniques, concentrating on route choice and direct and indirect belays are covered. A topic



for discussion will be the judgement required to use short-roping techniques to safeguard people on mountain scrambles and steep ground, for example when approaching or descending from crags like Pillar Rock in the Lake District. This element provides skills training and is an opportunity for candidates to measure their own judgement against that of others. This session also includes environmental content, which should run through all of the Mountaineering and Climbing Instructor's work.

## **Navigation**

Trainees will be given opportunities to hone navigation skills and illustrate the standard expected at Mountaineering and Climbing Instructor assessment. You will also be given some useful coaching input on how navigation can best be taught to others.

## **Group Adventure**

With the increased demand for adventure activities that do not fall into the strict definitions of climbing or mountaineering, it is important that Mountaineering and Climbing Instructors should be able to contribute to the running and organisation of such activities. The activities covered may include gorge walks, sea-level traverses and any other situations where the skills and techniques of climbing are used to make activities safe (e.g. the use of bottom ropes on high ropes courses).

The purpose is to encourage awareness of the dangers involved in these activities and the instruction that must be given before adventure activities are undertaken. The specific skills of group management and the ways in which the activities can be enhanced in terms of both education and enjoyment will also be covered.

## **Other areas covered**

Training and assessing others is an integral part of the Mountaineering and Climbing Instructor syllabus and part of the course will involve discussing and/or practising techniques.

## **ASSESSMENT**

A typical five day Mountaineering and Climbing Instructor assessment will usually include the following elements:

### **Taking People Climbing**

Candidates will be assessed on their personal ability to climb multi-pitch routes at VS 4c. They need to be able to demonstrate that they can climb confidently and fluently at the grade and they should show that their skill level allows them to look after their own personal safety and the safety of those climbing with them. They should be able to protect routes effectively, choose appropriate rope techniques and construct belays safely and efficiently. They may also be asked to perform an abseil retreat from the crag. During this day their whole approach to climbing will be assessed.

If candidates do not pass this day it is unlikely that they will be successful on the other days. If the course director decides that a candidate's lack of ability would put themselves or other candidates at risk, they may be asked to withdraw from the rest of the course. It is therefore most important that candidates arrive for assessment climbing well and confidently at the required standard.

### **Problem Solving**

Candidates will be assessed on their ability to solve problems, in particular those commonly experienced in multi-pitch climbing. They may well be climbing again at VS 4c and problems set will be realistic and carefully explained. Any efficient and safe solution will be acceptable.

As well as their ability to solve crag problems, candidates will also be assessed on their personal climbing, ropework and belay selection and methods. Typical problems may include rescuing a fallen leader or evacuating an injured climber from the crag. They will also be expected to solve some common simpler problems e.g. a student

climbs past a runner or cannot do a particular move on a climb. A very important part of the assessment is the ability to solve problems safely, simply and effectively.

### **Mountaineering Day**

This day will be an assessment of candidates' all round ability as mountaineers and their ability to cope with the irregular terrain so often found in the mountains. It will also consider environmental input, navigation, time keeping and the appropriate use of roped and un-roped skills for moving with a group on different types of terrain.

### **Teaching Rock Climbing**

For this day candidates will teach students. These may be novices who want to learn to rock climb or more experienced climbers who want to improve their skills. Candidates will need to make sure their students are properly equipped and then plan a day appropriate to their abilities, aspirations and to the conditions. This should allow candidates to demonstrate their skills and provide their students with a constructive and enjoyable day out. The emphasis of the day will be on the candidate's ability to teach rock climbing and to make the most of conditions for the students. Candidates will be assessed on their choice of venue, their ability to structure an effective teaching day and on their professionalism. Ropework, belaying and all other climbing skills will also be assessed.

### **Theory Paper**

During the assessment course there will be a written theory paper which will attempt to cover the syllabus areas not readily assessed in a practical way, e.g. the history of climbing.

### **Navigation**

The navigation assessment will look at the candidates' personal skills and their ability to teach navigation. Candidates have experienced considerable difficulty with this element of the assessment, usually because their personal navigation is not of a sufficiently high standard. They must make sure that they can navigate effectively. Candidates will be expected to teach navigation at Mountain Leader level and this requires a high level of personal proficiency.

### **Lecturettes**

There will be an opportunity for candidates to demonstrate their ability to prepare, present and answer questions on a mountain-related topic of their choice.





## APPENDIX 4 - MOUNTAIN TRAINING UK AND IRELAND

### MOUNTAIN TRAINING UK AND IRELAND

The main aim of the Mountain Training boards is to promote awareness of mountain safety through its formal leader training schemes and skills courses.

Mountain Training UK and Ireland promotes, coordinates and assists the national Mountain Training organisations in the provision of this training and is directly responsible for the Mountaineering and Climbing Instructor and Winter Mountaineering and Climbing Instructor schemes, the Coaching scheme and the International Mountain Leader scheme. The other qualifications are coordinated by the other national Mountain Training organisations (England, Scotland, Wales and Mountain Training Board Ireland which covers the whole of the island of Ireland).

Mountain Training UK and Ireland also maintains a centralised national Mountain Training database, which holds records of these qualifications throughout the UK and Ireland.

#### **Mountain Training UK and Ireland**

Siabod Cottage, Capel Curig, Conwy LL24 0ES

Tel: 01690 720272

Email: [info@mountain-training.org](mailto:info@mountain-training.org)

Website: [www.mountain-training.org](http://www.mountain-training.org)

### PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

#### **Association of Mountaineering Instructors**

[www.ami.org.uk](http://www.ami.org.uk)

#### **Mountain Training Association**

[www.mountain-training.org/mta](http://www.mountain-training.org/mta)

#### **British Association of International Mountain Leaders**

[www.baiml.org](http://www.baiml.org)

#### **British Association of Mountain Guides**

[www.bmg.org.uk](http://www.bmg.org.uk)

### NATIONAL MOUNTAIN CENTRES

#### **Glenmore Lodge**

Glenmore, Aviemore, Inverness-shire PH22 1QZ

Tel: 01479 861256

Email: [enquiries@glenmorelodge.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@glenmorelodge.org.uk)

Website: [www.glenmorelodge.org.uk](http://www.glenmorelodge.org.uk)

**Plas y Brenin**

Capel Curig, Conwy LL24 0ET

Tel: 01690 720214

Email: [info@pyb.co.uk](mailto:info@pyb.co.uk)

Website: [www.pyb.co.uk](http://www.pyb.co.uk)

**Tollymore Mountain Centre**

Bryansford, Newcastle, Co Down BT33 0PT

Tel: 02843 722158

Email: [admin@tollymore.com](mailto:admin@tollymore.com)

Website: [www.tollymore.com](http://www.tollymore.com)

**ASSOCIATED ORGANISATIONS**

**Adventure Activities Licensing Service**

AALS, 44 Lambourne Crescent, Llanishen, Cardiff CF14 5GG

Tel: 02920 755715

Email: [info@aals.org](mailto:info@aals.org)

Website: [www.hse.gov.uk/aala/](http://www.hse.gov.uk/aala/)

**Health and Safety Executive (HSE) Information Services**

Caerphilly Business Park, Caerphilly CF83 3GG

Website: [www.hse.gov.uk](http://www.hse.gov.uk)



APPENDIX 5 - QUALIFICATION PATHWAYS







**The Association of Mountaineering Instructors (AMI) is the professional representative body for qualified Mountaineering and Climbing Instructors in the UK and Ireland.**

**Benefits include:**

- Representation at MTUKI/other national organisations
- Use of the AMI logo/badge for Full Members
- Trainee Workshops and Mentoring schemes
- Quarterly Magazine and e-newsletters
- Access to Promotional and Marketing resources
- Discounted Civil Liability Insurance
- Brand and Retail partnerships
- Membership of BMC/MCofS/Mountaineering Ireland
- Full programme of CPD workshops
- Welfare and Support package for members
- Trainee members receive a year's free membership following completion of the MCI training course



**To join AMI visit:**

[www.mountain-training.org/membership/ami](http://www.mountain-training.org/membership/ami)





Mountain Training, Siabod Cottage, Capel Curig, Conwy, LL24 0ES

Tel: 01690 720272

Email: [info@mountain-training.org](mailto:info@mountain-training.org)

Website: [www.mountain-training.org](http://www.mountain-training.org)