

**Climbing Wall Instructor**

**Skills checklist**

**Introduction**

This skills checklist is designed to enable you, as a Climbing Wall Instructor candidate, to both record what you have covered as your training progresses e.g. as a technical diary and, at the close of your course, reflect on the syllabus topics covered during your training allowing you to rate yourself using the ‘learning stage’ described below.

It is hoped that this process will then assist you in completing your action plan (which you can share and discuss with your course director at your end of course debrief) which will guide you in consolidating and developing your experience and skills post training and pre-assessment.

When reflecting you might find it useful to refer back to the Climbing Wall Instructor Handbook. In addition the Mountain Training publication – “Rock Climbing” – details many of the techniques that might be used by a Climbing Wall Instructor holder and will be useful for refreshing your memory of specific techniques or skills covered at training.

**How to appraise yourself**

The syllabus is broken down into headings. Against each competency you can give yourself a ‘learning stage’ number – each number 1-3 corresponds with a description as detailed below. Learning stage 3 would very broadly equate with the degree of competency you’d expect from a qualified and experienced Climbing Wall Instructor holder.

**Learning stage descriptions**

**Cognitive or understanding phase (learning stage 1)**

In the first stage of learning performances are inconsistent and success is not guaranteed. Performing the skill requires all of the candidate’s attention and so they rely on the trainer for cues. This is a process of trial and error. Correct performances must be reinforced through external feedback.

**Associative or verbal motor phase (learning stage 2)**

Performances are becoming more consistent as knowledge and skills are being formed. While the simpler parts of the performance now look fluent and are well learned, the more complex elements require most of the candidate’s spare attention. The candidate is starting to get a sense of internal 'kinaesthetic' and ‘cognitive’ feedback when they perform or apply a skill well. They are starting to detect and correct their own errors.

**Autonomous or motor phase (learning stage 3)**

In the final stage of learning, performances have become consistent, fluid and ‘unconsciously competent’. The knowledge and skills involved are well learned and stored in the long-term memory. There is now spare attention which can be focused on group members and adapting appropriate leadership approaches and techniques as applied to situations. To retain the new skill at this level, it must be regularly practiced to reinforce the motor and cognitive programmes.

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| **Technical competence** |
| Climbing Wall Instructors will have a sound knowledge of climbing. They will be able to identify and evaluate commonly used indoor climbing equipment and demonstrate its use to individuals during a climbing session. They will be personally competent in a range of indoor climbing techniques and be able to provide clear demonstration and effective tuition to novice climbers. Climbing Wall Instructors will be able to provide effective supervision and safe management of climbing participants. They will be able to: |
| **1 Equipment** | **Learning stage** | **Notes** |
| 1.1. Select and fit suitable climbing equipment for personal and group use. |  |  |
| 1.2. Demonstrate an ability to evaluate the condition of personal climbing equipment and ensure appropriate use, care and maintenance in line with manufacturer’s guidance. |  |  |
| 1.3. Demonstrate an ability to evaluate the condition of climbing wall equipment and ensure appropriate use of: |  |  |
| 1.3.1. In-situ ropes. |  |  |
| 1.3.2. Auto-belays. |  |  |
| 1.3.3. Fixed matting. |  |  |
| 1.3.4. Holds, features and volumes |  |  |
| 1.3.5. Anchors/lower offs and fixed equipment. |  |  |
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| **2 Belaying** | **Learning stage** | **Notes** |
| 2.1. Tie into the rope. Attach group members to the rope. |  |  |
| 2.2. Demonstrate the use of different belay systems and choose the most appropriate for a given situation. |  |  |
| 2.3. Set up bottom rope systems and choose the most appropriate for a given situation. |  |  |
|  2.4. Demonstrate the skills of a competent belayer including holding falls and controlling lowers. |  |  |
| 2.5. Supervise others belaying. |  |  |
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| **3 Personal climbing skills** | **Learning stage** | **Notes** |
| 3.1. Choose and lead routes suited to personal ability (minimum F4). |  |  |
| 3.2. Demonstrate a basic understanding of the safety chain and fall factors. |  |  |
| 3.3. Move with confidence on appropriate routes and boulder problems. |  |  |
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| **4 Background knowledge** | **Learning stage** | **Notes** |
| 4.1. Describe an awareness of the history, traditions and ethics of climbing in the UK and Ireland. |  |  |
| 4.2. Describe the role and philosophy of Mountain Training and its schemes, the mountaineering councils, climbing clubs and the NICAS schemes. |  |  |
| 4.3. Describe the development of climbing walls in the UK and Ireland. |  |  |
| 4.4. Describe the structure of competition climbing. |  |  |
| 4.5. Describe the grading systems used in the UK and Ireland. |  |  |
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| **Management and decision making** |
| Climbing Wall Instructors should be able to independently organise, plan, manage and deliver sessions to a wide range of participants, often with support from an assistant. They should be able to: |
| **5 Instructor responsibilities** | **Learning stage** | **Notes** |
| 5.1 Explain their general responsibilities to the group and, where appropriate, to parents/guardians, the organising authority, committee or manager of the activity, facility users, local residents and the general public. |  |  |
| 5.2 Explain their specific responsibilities to choose appropriate aims and objectives, to complete detailed preparations and ensure that the group is adequately equipped and briefed for the activity. |  |  |
| 5.3 Demonstrate an understanding of current legislation and the legal responsibilities that relate to the duty of care to individuals and groups under their charge, including safeguarding issues specific to supervising young people and vulnerable adults. |  |  |
| 5.4 Demonstrate an awareness of the variety of barriers to participation, including mental and physical disability, ethnicity, fitness/health and be aware of the impact of various medical conditions. |  |  |
| 5.5 Describe how to access national guidance on instructor responsibilities and good practice. |  |  |
| 5.6 Be able to evaluate the experience and signpost towards further participation. |  |  |
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| **6. Leadership and decision-making**  | **Learning stage** | **Notes** |
| 6.1 The leader demonstrates adaptable leadership behaviours and decision-making. |  |  |
| 6.1.1 Monitor the group, environmental conditions and activity, and can adapt their behaviours and decisions to meet ongoing safety, group and task requirements. |  |  |
| 6.1.2 Be consistent and confident in their decision making to achieve positive outcomes and communicate these clearly to the group.  |  |  |
| 6.2 VISION – The leader is a positive role model and aims to inspire others. |  |  |
| 6.2.1 Articulate clear and agreed values for their group; lead by example; and behave how they want the group to behave. |  |  |
| 6.3 SUPPORT – The leader creates a positive and supportive environment for the group. |  |  |
| 6.3.1 Recognise, respect and adapt to individual needs, differences, strengths and abilities. |  |  |
| 6.3.2 Encourage independent learning; establish an environment where mistakes are seen as learning opportunities and provide clear and positive feedback to support this. |  |  |
| 6.4 CHALLENGE – The leader provides relevant and appropriately challenging experiences. |  |  |
| 6.4.1 Agree group goals and calibrate the level of challenge to individual abilities and motivations. |  |  |
| 6.4.2 Encourage and support the group and individuals to be part of the decision-making process and encourage them to solve their own problems. |  |  |
| 6.5 The leader understands the Mountain Training ethos of leadership and has developed their own. They should be able to: |  |  |
| 6.5.1 Articulate their own leadership ethos and beliefs along with those of Mountain Training. |  |  |
| 6.5.2 Acknowledge and describe a range of leadership approaches, models and associated ethos. |  |  |
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| **7. Knowledge and demonstration of techniques**  | **Learning stage** | **Notes** |
| 7.1. Deliver technical instruction to individuals and the group including: |  |  |
| 7.1.1. Choice and fitting of suitable harnesses. |  |  |
| 7.1.2. Attaching the rope to the harness. |  |  |
| 7.1.3. Effective belaying. |  |  |
| 7.2. Demonstrate the use of bouldering activities with groups, using appropriate games and activities, including setting simple boulder problems. |  |  |
| 7.3. Teach and demonstrate fundamental climbing movement skills. |  |  |
| 7.4. Supervise a group of novice climbers in the following activities: |  |  |
| 7.4.1. Belaying and tying-in. |  |  |
| 7.4.2. Climbing |  |  |
| 7.4.3 Bouldering |  |  |
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| **8. Hazards and emergency procedures** | **Learning stage** | **Notes** |
| 8.1 Identify appropriate and inappropriate areas of a wall for group use. |  |  |
| 8.2 Describe the hazards presented to other wall users by the actions of a group, and act in such a way that these are minimised. |  |  |
| 8.3 Demonstrate an understanding of warming up and injury avoidance techniques. |  |  |
| 8.4 Avoid common roped climbing problems. |  |  |
| 8.5 Solve common problems if they occur. |  |  |
| 8.6 In the case of an incident describe how to call for relevant assistance. |  |  |
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| **9. Managing/supervising other staff** | **Learning stage** | **Notes** |
| 9.1 Explain the role and scope of an assistant. Describe the opportunities and liabilities presented by using an assistant in a session. |  |  |
| 9.2 Manage an assistant. |  |  |
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| **Teaching and learning skills** |
| Climbing Wall Instructors will frequently need to give tuition and support to a range of climbers from novices to experienced practitioners in a range of climbing related techniques. They should be able to: |
| **10. Teaching and learning skills** | **Learning stage** | **Notes** |
| 10.1 Demonstrate an ability to adapt the teaching style to meet group needs. |  |  |
| 10.2 Identify and use appropriate tasks to develop safe group activity. |  |  |
| 10.3 Demonstrate an understanding of the reasons for evaluating a session and success of the outcome. |  |  |
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| **The climbing environment** |
| Climbing Wall Instructors should be informed and experienced in the indoor climbing wall environment, including both small and large scale (commercial) venues. They should be able to:  |
| **11. Etiquette and ethics** | **Learning stage** | **Notes** |
| 11.1 Operate a flexible programme of activities to accommodate other facility users. |  |  |
| 11.2 Describe the site-specific requirements and agreements relating to different climbing walls and artificial structures. |  |  |

**Appendix:**

**Assessment requirements**

Before you book onto a Climbing Wall Instructor assessment, make sure you have done the following:

* You must be at least 18 years old.
* You must have attended a Climbing Wall Instructor (or Climbing Wall Award) training course (or have been granted exemption).
* You must be familiar with the syllabus.
* You must have logged a minimum of 30 visits to at least three different climbing walls.
* You must have led a minimum of 40 climbs on indoor walls.
* You must be confident at leading routes at French grade 4 (or equivalent).
* You must have assisted in the supervision of at least 15 instructed sessions on at least two different walls including a large public facility in a variety of contexts. At least five of these sessions must have personal reflective comments recorded on DLOG.
* You must have physically attended and completed (i.e. not online) a first aid course which involved at least one full day or eight hours of instruction and included and element of assessment.

The Climbing Wall Instructor assessment is a minimum of 6 hours.

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| **A black and grey text  Description automatically generated****Climbing Wall Instructor****Action plan** |
| What is the timescale for doing your assessment? |  |
| How many visits to climbing walls have you logged? At assessment you should have a minimum of thirty visits to three different climbing walls.  |  |
| Have you assisted with the supervision of 15 instructed sessions on at least two different walls including a large public facility in a variety of contexts?  |  |
| Have you led a minimum of 40 climbs? How many climbs at French Grade 4 have you led?  |  |
| List three syllabus areas that you feel/think particularly confident or practised in. |  |
| List three syllabus areas that you feel/think require further practice. |  |
| What opportunities can you foresee for gaining experience to develop your Climbing Wall Instructor skillset? |  |
| Given your answers to the above briefly outline your way forward for becoming a Climbing Wall Instructor: |  |