



Skills Schemes

Quality Manual

Mountain Training Cymru

Mountain Training England



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Introduction

Mountain Training administers personal skills training for individuals and award schemes for leaders, instructors and coaches working with climbing, hill walking and mountaineering groups. Mountain Training and their providers educate, offer advice and promote good practice.

Mountain Training manages the quality assurance of their national schemes through individual Mountain Training national training organisations. This manual outlines how Mountain Training England and Mountain Training Cymru work collaboratively with their skills scheme providers and course tutors to achieve this.

Mountain Training coordinates skills scheme course delivery through its network of approved providers. These courses are a practical introduction to the skills required to get started in hill and mountain walking and climbing activities. The skills scheme courses form no part of the leadership award schemes and do not include any measure or assessment of competence.

Providers must sign (digitally) and adhere to the obligations outlined in the provider agreement.

1. Provider responsibilities

Providers are approved and supported by their national training organisation for each scheme they deliver.

A provider can be an individual or an organisation, and in many cases is the same person with dual responsibilities. The provider account held on Mountain Training's Candidate Management System (CMS) has an individual 'owner'. This individual is the primary link between the provider and their national training organisation.

Provider responsibilities include:

- Ensuring participants are registered for the scheme before attending a course.
- Ensuring course programmes achieve the minimum contact time for the skills scheme.
- Sending course programmes and information to participants in advance of their course.
- Appointing an approved nominated tutor for each course.
- Ensuring that minimum participant numbers are met for each course.
- Disseminating Mountain Training update information to all course delivery staff.
- Payment of fees to their Mountain Training national training organisation.
- Ensuring that appropriate professional indemnity insurance is in place.
- Ensuring appropriate first aid provision is in place.
- Ensuring an AALS licence is in place if required.

Providers may nominate an administrator who has a thorough understanding and knowledge of the skills scheme and course content. This role can be used for managing the creation of courses and course bookings on Mountain Training's Candidate Management System (CMS). However, it still remains the responsibility of the nominated tutor to complete the course reports and act as the link between the course provider and Mountain Training.

Exceptional circumstances can affect a provider's ability to deliver a course in line with this quality manual. Mountain Training understands this, and in these circumstances the provider must contact their Mountain Training national training organisation for the necessary support.

2. Course administration (providers)

In communicating directly with participants, providers are ambassadors for Mountain Training. To support providers in this role, regular dialogue with Mountain Training is encouraged.

Provider promotional material should be reviewed regularly to ensure it reflects current syllabi and guidance. Mountain Training's website is a definitive resource for

all skills scheme information. Providers must adhere to the [Marketing and Logo Use Guidelines](#).

Different courses with overlapping dates offered by the same provider must have different nominated tutors. It is the provider's responsibility to employ other appropriate tutors to work with their nominated tutor. Please read 5. *Course Tutor Requirements* and 9. *Course Delivery and Ratios* for tutor qualifications and skills scheme ratio requirements.

To avoid participants booking onto a course for which they are either not registered or is inappropriate for their needs, providers must ensure potential participants receive relevant skills scheme information before accepting their booking.

Once their booking is confirmed, participants must be added to their course on CMS in advance of the course beginning. Joining instructions and a course programme must also be sent to participants. Mountain Training has model templates for providers to use.

Providers must ensure that minimum participant numbers are met and recorded on CMS in advance of a course commencing. If minimum numbers for a course are not achieved 5 days in advance of a course commencing, the provider should contact the technical officer of their Mountain Training national training organisation. This officer will assist the provider in making appropriate decisions to give the best possible service to participants.

Mountain Training wish to give special consideration to participants who suffer temporary illness, injury or indisposition during courses. If this occurs providers should contact the relevant national training organisation for further support. Examples of eligibility might include a sudden onset of an illness, bereavement or domestic emergency.

Please refer to the [CMS Guidance](#) page.

3. Tutor responsibilities

Tutors are approved and supported by their national training organisation to deliver a skills scheme for a specific provider. Tutors are ambassadors for Mountain Training and are expected to act in a professional manner.

Tutors may work for other providers but must be added to the provider's account in advance of the course.

All courses must have an approved nominated tutor, their responsibilities include:

- Course coordination (incl. choice of venues, syllabus content to be covered)
- Managing other course tutors.
- Opening and closing each course.
- Tutors are expected to work the full duration of a course.

- Debriefing at the end of each course.
- Submitting a completed course report form (incl. incident report form if required).

Please refer to the [CMS Guidance](#) page.

4. Course administration (tutors)

Tutors cannot present themselves as a provider, such as advertising courses they are going to tutor; only providers are permitted to do this. Please refer to the [Marketing and Logo Use Guidelines](#) for further details.

Nominated tutors must ensure that all additional tutors working on a course are familiar with the relevant handbook applicable to the skills scheme they are tutoring and possess the necessary skills to deliver the course. Nominated tutors should be mindful of the strengths and weaknesses of additional tutors and support them appropriately. Nominated tutors should create a positive experience for participants, as well as meeting the prescribed contact hours for each skills course.

Alongside advice given during a course, each participant should receive guidance on how to develop appropriate experience and where to gain further support from.

5. Course tutor requirements

Mountain Training recognises that the quality of the tutor is fundamental to the participant's experience of a course.

Each provider must have nominated tutor who is approved by Mountain Training to run that specific skills scheme. This tutor will be responsible for the course delivery and choosing appropriate venues for course delivery.

It is highly desirable that each individual tutor is a member of an appropriate association e.g. Mountain Training Association (MTA), Association of Mountaineering Instructors (AMI), British Association of International Mountain Leaders (BAIML) or British Mountain Guides (BMG). It is expected that all tutors are committed to their own Continued Personal and Professional Development.

Tutor Status Requirements

All approved tutors must fulfil the following requirements to remain active:

- Mountain Training tutor workshop update (at least every 3 years).
- Have appropriate first aid and insurance cover.
- Commitment to on going Continued Personal and Professional Development.
- Maintain communication with Mountain Training by having a valid email address on their CMS profile.
- Work or assist on at least one course per year.

6. Maintaining Approval

Mountain Training expects providers and tutors to be committed to the long-term delivery and promotion of skills schemes. Mountain Training works in partnership with providers and tutors to maintain national standards.

Providers are required to agree to the conditions set out in the Provider Agreement, to pay an annual fee, to inform Mountain Training of all course dates and changes to course dates and to report all courses.

All providers/tutors are required to attend the 3 year update workshop, and work on a complete course once a year to retain their status. Tutors who do not comply with these requirements will be deemed to have lapsed and will no longer be able to run courses. If any of these obligations are not met, or any administration fees remain outstanding, annual approval for providers will not be granted. Mountain Training retains the right to cancel the Provider Agreement if the concerns raised are not satisfactorily addressed.

7. Professional conduct

Providers and tutors are expected to behave in such a way as to not bring Mountain Training into disrepute. Behaviour raising concerns could include serious course delivery short comings, the safety and well-being of participants, public criticism of other providers or inappropriate postings on social media.

Providers and tutors may become aware of potential conflicts of interest. Mountain Training consider a conflict of interest to be where an individual is negatively influenced in their decision making due to potential personal benefit. If providers or tutors become aware of an issue that could be perceived as a conflict of interest they should notify the relevant national training organisation. Mountain Training records potential conflicts of interest.

Providers and tutors who behave in such a way as to bring Mountain Training into disrepute may be required to account for their actions. This may merit further action.

8. Observers

Mountain Training recognises the value to volunteers and professionals in observing courses for their own personal development, such as those wishing to work on Mountain Training skills and award courses in the future. Observation opportunities are at the discretion of the nominated tutor in all cases. Observers should not negatively impact on the course delivery. They must be recorded on the course report (i.e. added as an 'Observers') highlighting which aspects were observed (i.e. within the 'Confidential Comments').

9. Course delivery and ratios

Only Mountain Training approved tutors can deliver skills scheme courses.

Tutors must be familiar with current skills scheme information. This will include skills scheme registration processes and individual skills schemes and handbooks. Mountain Training's website is continually updated and should be viewed as the definitive source for skills scheme information and FAQs. To answer common participant questions, course tutors must possess a broad understanding of Mountain Training's skills and awards schemes and their scope, the role of the Mountaineering Councils and how Mountain Training can support participants' personal skills development.

Skills scheme courses can be run in the following formats:

- x 2 full day events (e.g. a weekend)
- x 3 day events (e.g. including an evening session)

Either format must achieve at least the minimum course time. Ideally these days should be together, to form a single block, however if necessary these days can be done on different dates, no more than 4 weeks apart. Additional evening sessions can be included as part of the course programme, however practical time for each course must exceed 5 hours per day.

All courses must be independently identifiable and not 'hidden' within a longer scheme of training, for example during a college course.

Hill Skills

- Course length: 16 hours (minimum)
- Tutor ratio: 1 tutor to 8 participants
- Minimum course size: 2 participants
- Maximum course size: 16 participants (with 2 approved tutors)

Mountain Skills

- Course length: 18 hours (minimum)
- Tutor ratio: 1 tutor to 8 participants
- Minimum course size: 2 participants
- Maximum course size: 16 participants (with 2 approved tutors)

10. Equipment

Any equipment provided to participants must be fit for purpose. Where participants provide their own safety critical equipment, tutors should ensure this too is fit for purpose. Participants must be made aware of good practice regarding the retirement of safety critical equipment. As such, tutors should themselves be role

models with respect to their own equipment used on skills courses.

An important learning outcome for participants is to appreciate the variety of suitable and commonly used equipment for specific activities. Tutors should enable this process to occur, directing participants to supporting resources where appropriate.

11. Base facilities

Skills scheme courses can be based residentially with participants being accommodated at a suitable venue, which must have adequate accommodation, amenities and briefing facilities. If not residential, then the premises used as the course base must have proper indoor briefing facilities available for theory sessions and adequate 'comfort' facilities. If providers choose to use public areas (such as cafes) for lectures, briefings/debriefings, then they must ensure that this does not infringe in any way the delivery of those aspects of the course.

Whatever the domestic circumstances, the course base must allow easy and convenient access to appropriate venues which are conducive to the fulfilment of the skills course with minimal travel time. Should access to appropriate venues be considered too lengthy, then the provider is required to ensure that additional course time is made available to accommodate this without infringing on the minimum course time required to deliver the course syllabus.

12. Venues

When planning courses providers need to ensure that suitable venues are used. These areas should present good opportunities for the syllabus to be covered effectively.

Hill Skills

Hill Skills courses can be run in a variety of hill, moorland and countryside areas of the UK and Ireland. This course is aimed at beginner walkers. Good examples of such terrain include:

- Peak District
- North Yorkshire Moors
- Pennines
- Cheviots
- Clwydian Hills
- Pentland Hills
- Lammermuirs
- Dartmoor

It is also possible to deliver a Hill Skills course on the borders of mountainous areas providing that the terrain used fits within the scope of the Hill Skills scheme. Tutors need to ensure that the Hill Skills course does not venture into mountainous terrain.

Mountain Skills

The Mountain Skills course is a progression from the Hill Skills course and is aimed at people who have already done some hill walking. It is expected that the Mountain Skills course will be using steeper, rockier terrain during the course. To achieve this Mountain Skills courses need to take place within the key mountain regions of the UK or Ireland:

- Snowdonia
- Brecon Beacons
- Lake District
- Mountains of Mourne
- Scottish Highlands
- Galloway Hills

Providers and tutors need to be confident that areas chosen show a clear terrain progression for those who have already completed a Hill Skills course. Should providers or tutors be unsure as to the suitability of any particular venue then they should contact their national training organisation for further guidance.

13. Adverse Weather Conditions

Mountain Training recognises that providers and course tutors frequently operate in adverse weather conditions, running courses year round. Frequently a flexible approach to course programming creates good learning opportunities for participants. Occasionally adverse conditions become severe and it becomes impractical or impossible to run courses effectively.

Adverse weather conditions include:

- Wide spread flooding
- Storm force winds
- Winter conditions

In the case of adverse weather conditions negatively affecting course delivery providers should consider rescheduling part/all of the course. Providers may contact Mountain Training for additional support if required.

Winter Conditions

The planning of course dates throughout the winter period needs careful consideration. Should heavy winter conditions be forecast or present, providers need to be fully prepared to reschedule courses to a later date. Ideally this should be done in advance to avoid fragmenting the course delivery. Pre course information for participants should clearly outline that courses may be cancelled/postponed during the winter period.

14. Candidate Management System and Digital Logbook

The Candidate Management System (CMS) is a database and online tool, managed by Mountain Training and used by participants, providers, tutors and Mountain Training to administer skills schemes.

The digital logbook (DLOG) is part of the CMS. DLOG can be used by participants to record their personal experience, and by Mountain Training, providers and tutors to consider participant experience.

Please refer to the [CMS Guidance](#) page.

15. Moderation visits

Moderation visits are one important part of Mountain Training's quality assurance system, providing an opportunity for one-to-one dialogue between Mountain Training moderators and participants, providers and tutors.

Mountain Training staff will prioritise visits based upon participant feedback, frequency of courses and locations, with the aim of gaining a valuable insight into the national standard of the scheme.

The moderator will observe part of a course and support providers and tutors in maintaining national standards for the skills schemes they deliver. It is the moderator's role to observe, carefully consider and positively influence course delivery by meaningfully communicating with all delivery staff, during and after the course.

Mountain Training also uses moderation visit as an opportunity to engage with participants, verifying that skills schemes meet participant needs and identifying areas where Mountain Training can improve the service provided to them.

The moderation process will examine all aspects of a course. These include pre-course communication with participants, the course programme, course delivery, choice of venues, experience of participants and delivery staff currency.

A written moderation report will be uploaded to CMS for the course provider and tutor to read. Any action points raised within the report must be completed within the given time scale.

16. Continuing Professional Development

For all skills scheme delivery staff, further continuing professional development may be achieved by attending workshops and training events. Many are offered by the four associations, MTA, AML, BAIML and BMG, as well as by other organisations. Providers and tutors are expected to continue their professional development and maintain technical competence through this medium.

17. Equality

Mountain Training is committed to promoting the principles of equality with its skills schemes open to all. Mountain Training works with the Mountaineering Councils and other key partners to remove barriers to participation.

Providers and tutors should be aware of obligations in respect of compliance with gender, race and disability discrimination legislation and undertake the delivery of skills in accordance with the Equality Act 2010.

Providers and tutors have the discretion to adjust training and course delivery methodology to enable participants to fully access and benefit from the skills scheme.

18. Incidents and near misses

Developing an understanding of risk management is a key outcome for participants attending Mountain Training skills scheme courses, yet facilitating this process requires participants and tutors themselves potentially being exposed to risk. In rare circumstances this can result in an incident or near miss.

What is an incident?

Mountain Training would consider an incident to be an unplanned occurrence or event resulting in a fatality, injury, loss or damage to persons or property. This includes events giving rise to physical, emotional or psychological harm. An incident may result in a participant withdrawing from their skills course.

What is a near miss?

Mountain Training would consider a near miss to be an event, or sequence of events, which could have led to an incident.

Providers and tutors must report incidents and near misses that occur during Mountain Training courses, as outlined in the [Incident & Near Miss Reporting](#). The sharing of such information enables Mountain Training to identify recurring issues and disseminate information appropriately to support skills scheme delivery.

Incident and near miss reporting is a confidential process. Information is not shared widely unless the way to achieve this is agreed by all concerned.

19. Annual audit

An audit of providers and tutors is undertaken annually. Providers and tutors who do not meet the minimum requirements outlined within this manual and accompanying policies are at risk of having their provider and tutor status removed.

In the case of a provider wishing to withdraw their provider status they should contact the relevant national training organisation. Please be aware Mountain Training is not responsible for any financial losses incurred as a result of a provider choosing to withdraw.

20. Support for providers, tutors and participants

Mountain Training recognises the vital contribution made by providers and tutors in maintaining our excellent reputation.

Mountain Training provides a range of services to support providers, tutors and participants, including:

- Sharing of updates and good practice through a variety of mediums.
- Provider and course staff resources on Mountain Training's website.
- Maintenance and development of the Candidate Management System.
- Opportunity to talk face-to-face with technical staff at Siabod Cottage.
- Telephone and email support.
- Immediate online participant registration process for skills schemes.
- Promotion of skills schemes on Mountain Training's website, at events and via stakeholders.
- Dealing with appeals and complaints in a sensitive and timely manner.