

**Bouldering Wall Instructor**

**Skills checklist**

**Introduction**

This skills checklist is designed to enable you, as a Bouldering 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 Bouldering Wall Instructor Handbook. In addition the Mountain Training publication – “Rock Climbing” – details many of the techniques that might be used by a Bouldering 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** |
| Bouldering Wall Instructors will have a broad knowledge of bouldering. They will be able to identify and evaluate appropriate artificial bouldering venues and demonstrate their use to individuals during a bouldering session. They will be personally competent in a range of bouldering techniques and be able to provide clear demonstration and effective tuition to novice climbers. Bouldering Wall Instructors will be able to provide effective supervision and safe management of bouldering participants. They will be able to: |
| **1 Personal bouldering skills** | **Learning stage** | **Notes** |
| 1.1 Choose, practice, climb and descend problems suited to personal ability, proficiently (minimum V2).  |  |  |
| 1.2 Demonstrate a good understanding of bouldering safety.  |  |  |
| 1.3 Understand how to read simple boulder problems.  |  |  |
| 1.4 Move with confidence on appropriate boulder problems. |  |  |

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| **2. Background knowledge** | **Learning stage** | **Notes** |
| 2.1 Describe the context of bouldering within the history, traditions and ethics of climbing in the UK and Ireland.  |  |  |
| 2.2 Describe the role and philosophy of Mountain Training and its qualifications, the mountaineering councils, climbing clubs and the NICAS schemes.  |  |  |
| 2.3 Describe the structure of competition bouldering.  |  |  |
|  2.4 Describe the bouldering grading systems used in the UK and Ireland. |  |  |

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| **Management and decision-making** |
| Bouldering Wall Instructors should be able to independently organise, plan, manage and deliver sessions to a wide range of participants, from novices to improving climbers, often with support from an assistant. They should be able to: |
| **3. Instructor responsibilities** | **Learning stage** | **Notes** |
| 3.1 Explain their general responsibilities to the group and, where appropriate, to parents/guardians, the organising authority, manager of the activity, other participants and the general public |  |  |
| 3.2 Explain their specific responsibilities to choose appropriate aims and objectives, to plan the session and to ensure that the group is adequately prepared and briefed for the activity.  |  |  |
| 3.3 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. |  |  |
| 3.4 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. |  |  |
| 3.5 Be able to signpost individuals towards further participation. |  |  |

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| **4. Leadership and decision-making** | **Learning stage** | **Notes** |
| 4.1 The instructor demonstrates adaptable behaviours and decision-making. They should be able to:  |  |  |
| 4.1.1 Monitor the group, environmental conditions (including when operating on outdoor artificial structures) and activity, and adapt their behaviours and decisions to meet ongoing safety, group and task requirements.  |  |  |
| 4.1.2 Be consistent and confident in their decision making to achieve positive outcomes and communicate these clearly to the group.  |  |  |
| 4.2 VISION – The leader is a positive role model and aims to inspire others.  |  |  |
| 4.2.1 Articulate clear and agreed values for their group; lead by example; and behave how they want the group to behave. |  |  |
| 4.3 SUPPORT – The leader creates a positive and supportive environment for the group.  |  |  |
| 4.3.1 Recognise, respect and adapt to individual needs, differences, strengths and abilities.  |  |  |
| 4.3.2 Encourage independent learning; establish an environment where mistakes are seen as learning opportunities and provide clear and positive feedback to support this.  |  |  |
| 4.4 CHALLENGE – The leader provides relevant and appropriately challenging experiences.  |  |  |
| 4.4.1 Agree group goals and calibrate the level of challenge to individual abilities and motivations.  |  |  |
| 4.4.2 Encourage and support the group and individuals to be part of the decision-making process and encourage them to solve their own problems.  |  |  |
| 4.5 The leader understands the Mountain Training ethos of leadership and has developed their own. They should be able to:  |  |  |
| 4.5.1 Articulate their own leadership ethos and beliefs along with those of Mountain Training.  |  |  |
| 4.5.2 Acknowledge and describe a range of leadership approaches, models and associated ethos. |  |  |

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| **5. Knowledge and demonstration of techniques** | **Learning stage** | **Notes** |
| 5.1 Plan a structured and engaging bouldering session for a range of participants.  |  |  |
| 5.2 Introduce and demonstrate a range of bouldering activities, using appropriate games and activities, including setting appropriate boulder problems.  |  |  |
| 5.3 Teach and demonstrate basic bouldering movement skills:  |  |  |
| 5.3.1 Awareness of the concept of their centre of gravity.  |  |  |
| 5.3.2 Balanced movement, with accurate use of the feet.  |  |  |
| 5.3.3 Efficient use of the skeleton to support the body’s weight.  |  |  |
| 5.3.4 Appropriate contact with holds and features.  |  |  |
| 5.3.5 Safe falling and landing.  |  |  |
| 5.3.6 Safe topping out where necessary. |  |  |

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| **6. Hazards and emergency procedures**  | **Learning stage** | **Notes** |
| 6.1 Demonstrate an ability to risk assess the use of bouldering walls and their fixtures, evaluate their condition and ensure appropriate use of:  |  |  |
| 6.1.1 Floor surfaces, including fixed and mobile matting.  |  |  |
| 6.1.2 Holds, features and volumes and their fixings.  |  |  |
| 6.1.3 Bouldering surface angles.  |  |  |
| 6.1.4 General site use.  |  |  |
| 6.2 Have an awareness of the effects of youth development, pre-existing injuries, body types and poor technique and training on injury potential and be able to signpost to further information on these.  |  |  |
| 6.3 Demonstrate an understanding of warming-up and injury avoidance techniques.  |  |  |
| 6.4 Identify common bouldering hazards and prevent or solve common bouldering problems.  |  |  |
| 6.5 Demonstrate the role of spotting or support and how to provide this if required.  |  |  |
| 6.6 In the case of an incident describe how to treat minor sports injuries and how to call for relevant assistance.  |  |  |
| 6.7 Supervise a group of boulderers safely |  |  |
| 7. Managing/supervising other staff  | **Learning stage** | **Notes** |
| 7.1 Explain the role and scope of an assistant. Describe the opportunities and liabilities presented by using an assistant in a session.  |  |  |
| 7.2 Manage an assistant. |  |  |

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| **Teaching and learning skills** |
| Bouldering Wall Instructors will frequently need to give tuition and support to a range of boulderers from novices to experienced practitioners in a range of bouldering related techniques. They should be able to: |
| **8. Teaching and learning skills** | **Learning stage** | **Notes** |
| 8.1 Demonstrate an ability to adapt the teaching style to meet group needs.  |  |  |
| 8.2 Identify and use appropriate tasks to develop effective and safe boulderers.  |  |  |
| 8.3 Demonstrate an understanding of the reasons for evaluating a session and success of the outcome. |  |  |

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| **The bouldering wall environment** |
| Bouldering Wall Instructors should be informed and experienced in the indoor bouldering wall environment, including both small and large scale (commercial) venues. They should be able to: |
| **9. Etiquette and ethics** | **Learning stage** | **Notes** |
| 9.1 Operate a flexible programme of activities to accommodate other site or facility users.  |  |  |
| 9.2 Describe the site-specific requirements and agreements relating to different climbing walls and artificial structures. |  |  |

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| **A black and grey text  Description automatically generated****Bouldering Wall Instructor****Action plan** |
| What is the timescale for doing your assessment? |  |
| How many visits to bouldering walls have you logged? At assessment you should have a minimum of thirty visits to three different man-made bouldering walls.  |  |
| Have you assisted with the supervision of 10 instructed sessions on at least two different walls including a large public facility? |  |
| Can you boulder proficiently at V2 or above?  |  |
| 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 Bouldering Wall Instructor skillset? |  |
| Given your answers to the above briefly outline your way forward for becoming a Bouldering Wall Instructor: |  |