



Hill and Moorland Leader

Candidate handbook





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Preface

This handbook has been designed to support candidates through Mountain Training's Hill and Moorland Leader qualification. It contains useful information about the qualification as well as the syllabus and guidance notes.

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

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

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

Acknowledgements

Mountain Training would like to thank all the staff members and volunteers involved in the Walking Schemes Review 2019-2022.

Thanks also to the following whose photographs bring the handbook to life: George McEwan, Guy Jarvis and Passionfruit Pictures.



Hill Walking

Throughout this handbook there are references to Hill Walking by Steve Long which we publish to support all walkers and campers. It is packed with essential information and techniques and we have listed the relevant chapter(s) for each syllabus area.



1. Qualification pathway

1.1. Introduction

The Hill and Moorland Leader qualification enables experienced hill walkers to lead groups on day walks in the hills and moorlands of the United Kingdom and Ireland in summer conditions.

1.2. Scope of the qualification

A qualified Hill and Moorland Leader can lead others on day walks in hill and moorland environments. Qualification holders are able to manage groups safely during this activity.

1.2.1 Terrain

Hills and moorlands in the UK and Ireland meeting the following criteria:

- Open, uncultivated, non-mountainous high or remote country known variously as upland, moor, bog, fell, hill or down.
- Areas enclosed by well-defined geographical or man-made boundaries such as classified roads.
- Areas of remoteness that are easily exited in a few hours, returning to a refuge or an accessible road.
- Areas where movement on steep or rocky terrain is not required (in either a planned or unplanned situation)

Such areas may often be subject to hostile weather conditions and require an element of self-sufficiency. This is reflected in the syllabus of this qualification.

1.2.2 Exclusions

The qualification does not cover:

- Areas that merge with mountain regions and do not have well defined boundaries.
- Walks undertaken in winter conditions. This qualification does not provide training or assessment of the skills required to cope with the hazards of winter conditions, particularly lying snow and ice. 'Summer conditions' are defined by the conditions prevailing and not by the calendar.



1.3 Stages in the qualification

1.3.1 Registration prerequisites:

- You must be 18.
- You must have a year's personal experience of hill walking.
- You must have a genuine interest in hill walking and leading groups in this terrain.
- You must be a member of a mountaineering council (British Mountaineering Council, Mountaineering Ireland, Mountaineering Scotland)

1.3.2 Training prerequisites:

- You must be registered on the qualification.
- You must have an up to date logbook (preferably DLOG) with evidence of 20 varied Quality Hill Days minimum (see Appendix 1 for definition).

1.3.3 Consolidation period:

During the period between training and assessment, candidates are expected to gain personal hill walking experience. This should preferably include some practise in leading parties in easy hill terrain. Working under the guidance of a suitably experienced leader in more difficult terrain is also recommended. Every opportunity should be taken to practise the skills learned during training.

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

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



Our association can help you as you work towards one of our qualifications. We are building a community of confident and expert leaders, instructors and coaches, that we hope you will join.



1.3.4 Assessment prerequisites:

- You must have attended a Hill and Moorland Leader training course (or have been granted exemption)
- You must be familiar with the syllabus
- You must have an up to date logbook (preferably DLOG) with evidence of;
 - 40 varied Quality Hill Days in three different regions of the UK and Ireland (see Appendix for definition). This is a minimum requirement. Other personal walking and leadership experience is useful but not essential.
- You must have a current first aid certificate, gained by completing an in-person (not online) course which involved at least two full days or sixteen hours of instruction and included an element of assessment.

2. Course structure

2.1 Training

Training will involve a minimum of 30 hours contact time delivered over a minimum of 3 days.

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

Candidates who have completed Mountain Leader training may progress straight to assessment following Hill and Moorland Leader registration.

Candidates with other relevant prior training may apply for exemption from Hill and Moorland Leader training and, if granted exemption, progress straight to assessment. Further details of the exemption process are in the appendix and on the Mountain Training website.

2.2 Assessment

Assessment will involve a minimum of 30 hours contact time delivered over a minimum of 3 days.

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



There is no exemption from any element of the assessment.

Practical reassessments cannot take place within three months of the initial assessment to allow sufficient time for practice and preparation. All deferral reassessments must be completed within five years of the original assessment. Candidates may undertake two short reassessments after a defer result. Subsequently a full assessment must be undertaken.

3. Course delivery

3.1 Training

The course director must hold the Mountaineering and Climbing Instructor/ International Mountain Leader (or higher) plus national Mountain Training organisation requirements.

Additional staff must hold the Hill and Moorland Leader or higher plus national Mountain Training organisation requirements.

Min. course size: 2, Max. course size: 12, Max. ratio: 1:6.

3.2 Assessment

Course director must hold the Mountaineering and Climbing Instructor/ International Mountain Leader (or higher) plus national Mountain Training organisation requirements.

Additional staff must hold the Hill and Moorland Leader (or higher) plus national Mountain Training organisation requirements.

Min. course size: 2, Max. course size: 12, Max. ratio: 1:4.

4. Awarding organisations

Mountain Training Board Ireland

Mountain Training Cymru

Mountain Training England

Mountain Training Scotland



Syllabus and guidance notes

Management and decision making



Hill and Moorland Leaders have responsibilities as a group leader with regards to the care and safety of the group. This includes safety management, their own leadership behaviours and ethos as well as dealing with hazards and emergencies. They will be able to:

1. Leader responsibilities

- 1.1 Explain their general responsibilities to the group and, where appropriate, to parents/guardians, the organising authority, committee or manager of the activity, the outdoor user and the general public.
- 1.2 Explain their specific responsibilities to choose appropriate objectives, to complete detailed preparations and ensure that the group is adequately equipped and briefed for the activity.
- 1.3 Demonstrate an understanding of current legislation and the legal responsibilities that relate to the care of groups under their charge, including safeguarding issues specific to supervising young people and vulnerable adults.



- 1.4 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.
- 1.5 Be able to evaluate the experience and signpost towards further participation.

Guidance

As a walk leader you have a clear duty of care to your groups, the level of which will vary according to the group members' age and experience. You owe a greater duty of care when you are acting in loco parentis with people under eighteen years of age. The countryside presents hazards that may not be apparent to novice walkers, so participants and parents of children participating in this activity should be made aware of and accept these risks.

Many of your responsibilities as a leader will be identified through preparation and planning and will likely include: parental consent (if participants are under 18), authority clearance (if required), personal and medical information, finances, insurance and transport. Employing/deploying organisations such as schools, Scouts, Girlguiding and local education authorities will have their own procedures in place to ensure that appropriate preparation has been undertaken. Your understanding of and ability to adapt to these procedures and underlying principles will enable you to independently prepare appropriate walking trips.

The ability to prepare and motivate any group prior to the trip is important and you should seek opportunities to assess the participants in terms of their physical abilities as well as in terms of any equipment needs. It may be that there are many other factors to consider in the preparation and conduct of any walk. If needed, a progression of walks may be used to develop participants' fitness and personal capabilities.

Your position of responsibility extends beyond the journey itself and participants may look to you for guidance on how to continue walking independently or to develop their skills further. A rounded knowledge of suitable opportunities is therefore very useful.

Many walks in appropriate Hill and Moorland terrain will fall within the scope of the Adventurous Activity Licensing Regulations. Candidates should be aware of the implications of this for any work they may undertake with those under 18.



Chapter 10 Planning to look after people

Chapter 11 Hazards and risk management



Key practice points

- Explore what different organisations or employers expect from you as a leader with regards to your responsibilities.
- Look at the AALA scope and regulations and work out how, when or if they might apply to you. An introduction to the regulations can be found [here](#).
- Try to design some routes on the map aimed at specific groups with specific aims. (e.g. A Silver DofE training walk or an adult group seeking to ascend all the points above 2000 feet.)
- Research opportunities for developing skills or finding walking companions that might be suitable for a range of groups and individuals.



2. Leadership and decision making

2.1 The Leader demonstrates adaptable leadership behaviours and decision making.

- 2.1.1 Monitor the group, environmental conditions and activity, and can adapt their behaviours and decisions to meet ongoing safety, group and task requirements.
- 2.1.2 Be consistent and confident in their decision making to achieve positive outcomes and communicate these clearly to the group.



VISION - The leader is a positive role model and aims to inspire others.

- 2.2 Articulate clear and agreed values for their group; lead by example; behave how they want the group to behave.

SUPPORT - The leader creates a positive and supportive environment for the group.

- 2.3 Recognise, respect and adapt to individual needs, differences, strengths and abilities.
- 2.4 Encourage independent learning; establish an environment where mistakes are seen as learning opportunities and provide clear and positive feedback to support this.

CHALLENGE - The leader provides relevant and appropriately challenging experiences.

- 2.5 Agree group goals and calibrate the level of challenge to individual abilities and motivations.
- 2.6 Encourage and support the group and individuals to be part of the decision making process and encourage them to solve their own problems.

The leader understands the Mountain Training ethos of leadership and has developed their own. They should be able to:

- 2.7 Articulate their own leadership ethos and beliefs along with those of Mountain Training.
- 2.8 Acknowledge and describe a range of leadership approaches, models and associated ethos.

Guidance

The Hill and Moorland Leader needs to demonstrate the basic skills and decision making of adaptive leadership. They should have a well-researched plan for their group which incorporates factors such as the groups' abilities and needs, the weather and ground conditions, as well as the location and intended route. What is most important is to match their leadership choices with the desired outcomes for the group.

In spite of the best made plans, things can and do change – be it the weather, the group, the equipment, or whatever. A good leader will notice, and be on the look out for, these changes before a problem arises and adapt their approach accordingly. For example: if there is more wind than forecast, then the route may need moving to lower or more sheltered ground.



There are seven components of leadership that contribute to the effectiveness of the leader:

1. Leadership style: controlling versus non-controlling.
2. Decision making: what informs this and how to make them.
3. Leader observations: what they should be and how to make them.
4. Leader communication skills: verbal and non-verbal, listening.
5. Experience and ability: how this influences decision making.
6. Emotional intelligence: to support individuals
7. Group management: techniques, styles and influences.

Candidates should reflect on these when leading groups and seek to develop them over their career.

Underpinning the role of a leader are the values, beliefs, and ethos that shape every individual's view of what leadership should be. All leaders tend to have preferred behaviours (leadership styles) that are heavily influenced by these and their personality traits. Leaders will need to adapt their preferred behaviour to an appropriate set of actions required to balance the needs of both the situation and the group.

The 'Vision, Support, Challenge' model of transformational leadership provides a framework that leaders can use to plan, execute and review their leadership behaviours. In this way, groups who receive the right balance of the three categories can be encouraged to perform beyond their own expectations. Transformational leadership is a model of positive (INSPIRE) behaviours that leaders can use to promote the best outcomes for their groups:

Inspire and motivate your followers with a unified vision.

Nurture an environment of team-focused goals

Set the example you want to see in your followers.

Praise, and give constructive feedback to help your followers develop.

Insist on setting high standards, relative to each individual.

Recognise and respond to each individual's needs.

Encourage followers to create and implement their own solutions.



Leaders need to develop trust amongst their group. This requires an appropriate balance of consultation, empathy and instruction to engineer success. Effective leaders will, for example, adapt the way they communicate to best suit their group and will give different degrees of responsibility to groups of varying ability and experience.



Chapter 10 Planning to look after people

Chapter 11 Hazards and risk management

Key practice points

- Make sure your group is ready to receive instruction when you need to give it – gather them together and make sure they are all looking at you before you speak.
- Challenge by choice. Calibrating and establishing agreed goals is the art of good leadership. Too low and they will become disengaged, too high and you will lose their trust.
- Praise in public, give constructive criticism in private. Call people aside if you need to challenge their behaviour, unless it was directed at someone else.
- Explain your thinking. Followers have a right to know why you are telling them to do something; but retain your authority.





3. Planning and weather

Prior planning

- 3.1 Demonstrate an understanding of the scope of the Hill and Moorland Leader qualification and plan walks that lie within this terrain.
- 3.2 Know where to find information to assist with the planning of walks.
- 3.3 Choose objectives appropriate to the experience, skills and motivation level of the group, the prevailing conditions and the leader's own experience and ability.
- 3.4 Complete detailed preparations and ensure that the group is adequately equipped and briefed.
- 3.5 Build in flexibility when planning routes; respond to changing circumstances.

Weather

- 3.6 Interpret and use reliable sources of weather information.
- 3.7 Demonstrate an elementary understanding of weather maps and resulting weather conditions on the hill.
- 3.8 Recognise and continuously evaluate the effect of weather on route selection, equipment choice and activity.

Guidance

The ability to plan a hill or moorland walk is an essential skill for a Hill and Moorland Leader and is linked to their knowledge of the group as well as an understanding of weather forecasts and how weather influences walking conditions. Many organisations will require a formal record of the planned trip and different ways of recording and communicating the plan (e.g. route card, annotated map) should be practised. A well-considered plan is useful for acknowledging any alternative routes and identifying the key places along the route where decisions will need to be made.

A suitable plan will also accommodate the needs of specific groups or individuals which may influence the route choice. Measurable factors such as distance, time and gradient will be considered as well as hazards or features such as boggy or tussocky ground, stiles, streams and holes in the ground (such as caves, mines and quarries).

It is impossible to make any walk free from hazard or risk and it is the way in which



those risks are managed that is the hallmark of a competent leader. Many organisations have standard procedures for leaders to follow with regards to risk assessments and it is vital that the risk assessment is not simply a file 'back at base' but that there is ongoing, 'dynamic' risk assessment being undertaken throughout the walk. A route intended to cross a stream flowing from a large catchment or 'horseshoe' at the end of a day of heavy rain may need to be re-thought if there is no bridge to use.

The weather forecast is therefore inextricably linked with the route plan and can have a significant impact on the walk and the enjoyment and safety of the participants. Specialist mountain and hill forecasts available will help provide a fuller picture of the expected weather for the intended route, particularly if the walk is over exposed ground.. An understanding of the major weather systems that affect the UK and Ireland will aid interpretation of the forecast particularly with regards to temperature and precipitation. Observation skills while on the hill will also help you anticipate the speed and severity of possible changes in the weather which might influence your route mid-journey.



Chapter 1 Movement skills and route finding

Chapter 9 The weather

Chapter 12 Specific hazards

Key practice points

- Make it a habit to get a detailed forecast and spend some time noting what you encounter whilst out on walks. Is the weather more or less severe than expected, does the weather change at the forecast times or is it moving at a different speed to that forecast?
- Familiarise yourself with the main air streams that impact on the UK and Ireland, particularly regarding the likely temperature and humidity of the air masses involved.
- Check on the sequence of clouds that might indicate an incoming warm front and see if you can identify those clouds when out on the hill.



4. Hazards and emergency procedures

Hazards

- 4.1 Demonstrate the ability to recognise and manage common hazards in the environment whilst leading groups, including:
 - 4.1.1 Recognition and avoidance of steep and broken ground.
 - 4.1.2 Recognition of water hazards, including marshes and streams.
 - 4.1.3 Poor visibility weather conditions

Emergency procedures

- 4.2 Be able to select an appropriate first aid kit and additional group equipment suited to the environment and prevailing conditions.
- 4.3 Manage self and group in a variety of different weather conditions including heat, cold, rain and high winds.
- 4.4 Deal with common injuries and medical problems in the hills.



- 4.5 Explain the causes, symptoms, prevention, and treatment of sunburn, dehydration, hypothermia, cold injuries and heat disorders.
- 4.6 Take appropriate action to ensure the group and the casualty's well-being in the event of an incident or accident including knowing how to get appropriate assistance.
- 4.7 Describe Mountain Rescue and how it is organised.
- 4.8 Ensure the casualty's safety until help arrives.
- 4.9 Demonstrate emergency bivouac skills.
- 4.10 Plan and follow 'escape routes', using appropriate navigational techniques, to nearby assistance.
- 4.11 Manage a group to perform a small-scale search for a missing person.
- 4.12 Demonstrate improvised rescue techniques and describe their limitations.

Guidance

There are a number of distinct types of hazard that might be encountered when walking in the hills. These may include steep ground, marshes and streams, high winds and extreme weather conditions. These are best considered separately, although avoiding or dealing with them may involve many of the same principles.

A hazard need not imply that there is an immediate danger to the individual or group, rather that there is a potential threat that needs to be managed by the group leader. Risk assessment should be an on-going, dynamic process with the leader constantly evaluating the group, the terrain and the conditions to identify and avoid the potential for serious consequences.

There is a clear need for Hill and Moorland Leaders to be able to identify and avoid steep ground and cliff edges. Steep ground in this context is either broken, vegetated slopes possibly with a proportion of visible rock, well-defined outcrops or very steep, unbroken vegetated slopes. Some moorland areas have steep escarpments; these hazards must be avoided when planning routes. It is an assumption within the definition of moorland areas that these hazardous features can be easily avoided by walking around them.

Major environmental hazards include flooding, lightning, high winds and unstable ground surfaces. These hazards can best be managed through careful planning and observation.



Candidates may have encountered a limited range of water hazards such as stream crossings and dealing with bogs and marshes. The potentially serious nature of other water hazards such as rivers and fast-flowing streams cannot be overemphasised. The severity of water hazards can seldom be separated from the prevailing weather conditions. Candidates must show by way of good route choice, interpretation of likely weather conditions and leadership that they can avoid these hazards.

Depending upon the terrain, the prevailing weather conditions and the experience of the group, the potential severity of any hazard will lie on a progressive scale. A simple stumble for an experienced walker on flat ground has far less 'emergency potential' than a stumble happening to an inexperienced walker on steep, wet ground. Getting wet feet towards the end of a summer walk may be a source of amusement; half way through a high walk in cold and windy conditions it could be more serious.

A leader should be able to react to all these variables in a manner that safeguards those in their charge. It is possible that a group may encounter another party that has experienced difficulties, so a leader should be thoroughly prepared to deal with a variety of situations, while keeping the needs of their own group paramount. Emergency situations may develop from accidents or from errors of judgement. Leaders will experience extra pressures when something goes wrong. Therefore they should be clear about suitable responses for any given emergency on a journey. It is important that a balanced understanding of what constitutes an emergency is developed. A well-equipped, fit party being delayed for a few hours may create logistic problems but rarely constitutes an emergency whereas a broken leg should be treated as an emergency under any circumstances.

Candidates should be aware of the procedures for requesting rescue if that should be necessary. They should also recognise that rescue is not necessarily an immediate solution and should try to ensure that they and their group are equipped sufficiently to remain on the hill for a period of time.



Chapter 11 Hazards and risk management

Chapter 12 Specific hazards

Chapter 13 Dealing with incidents

Chapter 14 Dealing with injuries

Key practice points

- When planning routes, prepare some ways of shortening them if necessary; these may be needed if the group is slower than anticipated.



- Perhaps the most common hazards encountered on a hill walk are steep slopes and water (either bog or stream). Try to develop some strategies for avoidance and group management in those situations.
- See how much equipment you need to be comfortable during an overnight bivouac. Think about what equipment you might carry and how you might manage a group in order to make a night out bearable.

Technical competence



Hill and Moorland Leaders will be personally competent hill walkers who are able to provide safe walking experiences for novice groups and individuals. To fulfil this role effectively they will be able to:

5. Equipment

- 5.1 Demonstrate knowledge of personal and group equipment required for day walks considering the environment and prevailing weather conditions.
- 5.2 Choose appropriate food and drink for day walks.
- 5.3 Demonstrate an understanding of additional equipment required by a leader.



- 5.4 Be able to pack equipment effectively for personal and group use.
- 5.5 Demonstrate an understanding of the design and construction of equipment, including its material characteristics, care and maintenance.

Guidance

As a Hill and Moorland Leader your ability to equip yourself appropriately for a variety of conditions will enable you to carry out your role effectively. Given the nature of the environment and present conditions your choice of equipment will have a huge impact on the success of the journey. You are also likely to offer advice to novices on choice and suitability of clothing and equipment and this advice will need to consider the intended use and available budget; less expensive alternatives can often perform nearly as well as more expensive, branded, outdoor clothing and will be perfectly adequate for those starting out in relatively benign conditions. Appropriate knowledge and understanding of what is available on the market is therefore useful.

Food and drink for the walk should meet the two main requirements of being easy to carry and providing a good return of energy. Appropriate food and drink will vary based on the expected journey time, the nutritional value of the food as well as its weight and bulk. An understanding of the basics of nutrition will enable you to offer advice on the benefits of different foods.

Whilst the leader should not be overburdened it is important that some extra kit is carried in case of unforeseen circumstances. It may be that some form of assistance might be given to others as well as having to deal with needs amongst their own group. This kit can be shared amongst the group if appropriate and might include spare clothing, spare food, a group shelter and walking poles.



Chapter 4 Clothing and equipment

Chapter 5 Living in the mountains

Key practice points

- Go out for walks in foul weather! Evaluate your kit during and after the walk for its effectiveness at keeping you relatively comfortable.
- Compile a variety of kit lists for walks at different times of the year, with different forecasts, with a variety of groups and a variety of locations.



- Keep a look out for budget priced clothing and equipment and try to evaluate its effectiveness. A recommended kit list for a novice walker could be priced with a variety of budgets in mind.



6. Walking skills

- 6.1 Demonstrate good practice with regard to individual walking skills: pace, rhythm, foot placement, conservation of energy, balance, and coordination.

Guidance

Walking across uneven ground is commonplace in the hills and moorlands can be a new skill for some participants. As a Hill and Moorland Leader you may need to provide some coaching or support to the members of your group about how to move safely and efficiently. Moorland covered in grassy tussocks, heather or bracken will provide different movement challenges to crossing a stile and your guidance will be invaluable to novice or nervous walkers.

The pace of the walk is also your responsibility and different strategies can be employed depending on the size and make up of the group and their relative fitness levels. A



suitable pace, based upon an appropriate timing formula for the group, will help novice walkers not to travel too quickly; especially if travelling uphill. It is important that an accurate view of the capabilities of the group is factored into this. Try to maintain a pace that allows you to talk to others whilst you are moving; and allows them to talk to you as well.



Chapter 1 Movement skills and route finding

Key practice points

- Between training and assessment try to get plenty of full day walks under your belt; ideally carrying the kit that you might need as the leader of a group.
- Measure your speed to start developing an understanding of how quickly you move over certain types of terrain.
- Consider what advice you might give to someone crossing a tussocky area for the first time. What information might help them feel more comfortable?





7. Navigation

Hill and Moorland Leaders should have the ability to choose from a range of techniques and select those that are appropriate to the terrain and conditions. They should be able to:

- 7.1 Navigate using a variety of commonly used maps and understand the use of scales and symbols.
- 7.2 Demonstrate an understanding of how contours and other cartographic methods are used to represent relief and use them to effectively to navigate in the terrain. Be able to recognise topographical features in the landscape
- 7.3 Relate the map to the ground and vice versa. Recognise key features in the landscape and identify them on a map.
- 7.4 Be able to relocate efficiently in a range of situations. Provide six figure grid reference on doing so.
- 7.5 Measure distance accurately on a variety of maps and calculate how long it will take to get from one location to another.
- 7.6 Effectively measure distance travelled on the ground using appropriate techniques inc. accurate pacing and timing.
- 7.7 Use a compass effectively to navigate in complex terrain.
- 7.8 Navigate competently in poor visibility due to weather conditions or darkness.
- 7.9 Explain and use the information given on maps with regard to rights of way and access to land.
- 7.10 Describe the benefits and limitations of using handheld GPS devices

Guidance

Navigation is a fundamental skill for a Hill and Moorland Leader and a key element in a leader's ability to maintain a flexible approach and to react to changing conditions. The more comfortable you are navigating, the easier it will be to focus on looking after the group and achieving the aims for the day. The navigation skills described in the syllabus encompass the key competencies you should practise and master prior to assessment. Candidates should also be aware of methods that they might use to introduce the basic skills of navigation to others.



You should attempt to gain as much experience as possible in navigating across unfamiliar non-mountainous upland terrain. Practice in a variety of terrain and conditions builds the skills required to select an appropriate itinerary and to follow that route on the ground. A conscious effort should be made to leave the path and navigate cross-country.

Moorland terrain can be quite different from mountainous terrain and can require the use of different navigational techniques and strategies. Navigation involves a range of skills as outlined in the syllabus. Rarely will all of these skills be required on any single navigation leg. Therefore a large part of the skill of the navigator is the choice of appropriate and efficient techniques. For example, walking on a bearing in good visibility while on a defined terrain feature would be inappropriate; orientation of map to ground would be the more efficient technique.

Conversely, trying to use the map alone across a featureless plateau in poor visibility may easily cause the leader to become disorientated and here the technique of using a compass bearing as a direction indicator and using timing and/or pacing to estimate distance would be more appropriate.

An efficient navigator will adapt their chosen navigation techniques to the terrain, the prevailing conditions and the group. The wider and more varied your hill walking experience, the better equipped you will be to make these decisions.



Chapter 2 Navigation tools

Chapter 3 Navigation techniques

Key practice points

- Orienteering can be a useful and accessible form of micro-navigation training that tends to focus on map to ground interpretation. Bear in mind that the navigation skills developed in such events may differ in emphasis from those required when walking in wild upland terrain.
- Try to navigate some 'legs' using a variety of techniques. Go from A to B following a compass bearing, using 'handrail features' or simply contour interpretation. See which way seems most efficient for the conditions you are in.
- Practice the habit of thinking ahead on your route so that when you come to a decision point like a path junction you already know which way to go. Also keep looking ahead so that difficulties such as boggy ground don't come as a surprise.



8. Teaching and learning skills

- 8.1 Demonstrate an ability to adapt the teaching style to meet group needs.
- 8.2 Identify and use appropriate tasks to develop safe group activity.
- 8.3 Demonstrate an understanding of the reasons for evaluating a journey and success of the outcome.

Guidance

Hill and Moorland Leaders need to quickly create an environment of trust and confidence within their group so that participants feel relaxed and comfortable to tackle new and challenging activities. The hill and moorland environment can feel inhospitable at times and the activity and terrain can feel overwhelming to the uninitiated.

Age, ability, individual requirements, confidence and energy levels amongst the group will require different approaches to achieve success. Good communication skills are key. The ability to create rapport, communicate at an appropriate level, use positive language, provide a variety of demonstration techniques, check for understanding through skilled questioning and give useful feedback and encouragement to individuals are the foundations of effective teaching.



In addition to these communication skills, effective teaching requires Lowland Leaders to be able to observe and assess participants' abilities, confidence levels and group dynamics, adapting their approach accordingly.



[See all Learning to Lead boxes](#)

Key practice points

- Develop a set of 'lesson plans' for teaching common tasks such as developing contour analysis or walking on a bearing.
- Consider how you might teach a particular skill in a very direct, instructional style and how you would teach the same skill in a student-centred way. What might be the pros and cons of each?
- Consider how you might change your approach to teaching key skills in challenging weather.

The walking environment





9. Access, conservation and the environment

- 9.1 Inspire and enthuse their groups in hill and moorland terrain in the United Kingdom and Ireland and expand their personal knowledge*, appreciation, and understanding of these environments.
- 9.2 Demonstrate knowledge of permissive access agreements, rights of way and access legislation such as CRoW Act 2000 and Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 and the importance of being aware of, and adhering to, access restrictions where relevant.
- 9.3 Explain how to obtain information about access to hill and moorland terrain and know how, and to whom, access issues are reported.
- 9.4 Explain relevant campaigns and codes of good practice such as Countryside Code, Scottish Outdoor Access Code and Leave No Trace, and acknowledge one's responsibility to minimise impact and promote sustainable use of the outdoors.
- 9.5 Demonstrate knowledge of land management in hill and moorland terrain and the long-term effects of the human pressures created by its multiple uses.
- 9.6 Demonstrate knowledge of relevant conservation legislation as well as the nature of specially designated areas and limitations on their use. Leaders should also show an appreciation for the challenge and complexity of conservation in hill and moorland terrain.

*examples of relevant personal knowledge include flora, fauna, geology, landform processes (geomorphology), local history, heritage and language, place names, folklore, the evolution of our landscape and future challenges.

Guidance

It is important for qualified Hill and Moorland Leaders to have sound general knowledge of the upland environment often defined as hill, moor, down, heath, bog or fell. A journey will be greatly enhanced by a leader if they can talk knowledgeably about a range of subjects and make the most of learning opportunities when they arise, as the group travel through the uplands. The benefits of this to group members are myriad and may include:

- fostering a deeper appreciation of the natural world and our uplands
- the importance of conservation and sustainable recreation, a greater understanding of pressures and constraints caused by varied land use and ownership



- an understanding of access legislation and local arrangements
- a greater appreciation of local culture, heritage and language

Having the ability to educate groups on a range of subjects may also be used as a subtle and effective leadership strategy as it will enable a leader to pause the walk to give group members a rest or to keep the group together without bringing attention to individuals or situations developing within the group. Land use in hill and moorland areas can include recreation, arable crops and livestock farming, forestry, water treatment, Ministry of Defence operations, hunting, game bird and wildfowl shooting, habitat restoration and renewable energy production. Each of these can form an interesting discussion topic for a group prior to, during, or after a journey.

Hill and Moorland Leaders should be conscious of the impacts of increased recreation activity, including path erosion, conflict between different recreation activities and the effect on host communities. As an absolute minimum, any led group should conform to codes of good practice, comply with relevant access legislation and any prevailing local arrangements. Hill and Moorland Leaders should, therefore, always be mindful of setting a good example, demonstrating good practice and explaining the purpose of the codes which are designed to minimise the impact of recreational use on the environment and rural communities by encouraging certain behaviours.

Areas with a special designation might be Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Special Areas of Conservation or Special Protection Areas, within which activities that are likely to damage the natural features for which the site is designated may require official consent or be forbidden.

Occasionally, a led group may encounter a temporary restriction or change to access arrangements on a chosen route. Under such circumstances, Hill and Moorland Leaders should be familiar with sourcing relevant information as required and capable of adopting a flexible and diplomatic approach to minimise conflict. Sources of information include: local authorities, local community groups, local access forums, national access forums, National Park Authorities, guidebooks, maps, countryside agencies, internet, apps, and mountaineering councils. In addition, Hill and Moorland Leaders should recognise that all walkers have a role in maintaining access, especially in situations where access is not formally defined.

As all candidates will be members of a mountaineering council it is expected that they should be familiar with the work undertaken by the councils with regard to access, conservation and the environment.



Chapter 6 Where can we go?

Chapter 7 Protecting it for the future

Chapter 8 Understanding the environment



10. Background knowledge

10.1 Explain the role and ethos of Mountain Training and its schemes, the mountaineering councils and walking clubs. Demonstrate an awareness of the history, traditions and ethics of recreational walking in the UK and Ireland.

Mountain Training

The network of awarding organisations who administer skills courses and leadership qualifications. Approved providers deliver the courses.

Mountaineering councils

The councils protect the interests of walkers, climbers and mountaineers and the cliffs, hills and mountains they enjoy.



Mountain Training Association

Mountain Training's membership association providing support and development opportunities for trainee and qualified candidates.



Guidance

The nature of walking as a recreational activity doesn't require a formal system of governance, however there is a web of support for all walkers, comprising the national Mountain Training organisations, the Mountain Training Association and the mountaineering councils, among other organisations. These organisations directly and indirectly support and enable activity across the spectrum, from youth groups and challenge events to independent adults and professional instructors.

The Mountain Training part of this network provides skills training and nationally recognised leadership qualifications as well as information on good practice through a range of publications. Gaining a Mountain Training qualification is the formalisation of your experience and competence to be responsible for others while camping, walking, climbing or mountaineering. Through a network of approved course providers across the UK and Ireland, over 10,000 candidates attend a Mountain Training course each year and go on to lead and inspire millions of people. Mountain Training's vision, mission and ethos underpins all decision making and activity.

Candidates can join Mountain Training's Association (MTA) as a Trainee or Full member. In joining the association, you will have access to training opportunities to support your development and become part of a community of trainee and qualified leaders with a shared interest. By providing the highest quality personal development opportunities including workshops, webinars and a quarterly magazine, Mountain Training's Association supports and develops its members to excel.

The British Mountaineering Council, Mountaineering Scotland and Mountaineering Ireland work to protect the interests of walkers, climbers and mountaineers and the cliffs, hills and mountains they enjoy. Without their work, access to these spaces would be curtailed for all, including for leaders, coaches and instructors. By joining a mountaineering council, you are helping to ensure this access today and for the future.

Hill walking clubs and organisations can be useful in guiding participants into long-term independent participation; they include well-established local or national clubs and less formal online groups. As a leader novices may look to you for advice on how to find other people to walk with and how to develop confidence and competence. Your ability to direct them to appropriate courses such as Mountain Training's Hill & Mountain Skills scheme or guidance on finding a club can lead to a lifetime of enjoyment.



Appendix 1 - Definitions

Hill and moorland terrain

For the purpose of the Hill and Moorland Leader qualification, 'hill and moorland terrain' is defined as:

- Open, uncultivated, non-mountainous high or remote country known variously as upland, moor, bog, fell, hill or down.
- Areas enclosed by well-defined geographical or man-made boundaries such as classified roads.
- Areas of remoteness that are easily exited in a few hours, returning to a refuge or an accessible road.
- Areas where no vement on steep or rocky terrain is not required (in either a planned or unplanned situation)

In the United Kingdom and Ireland hill and moorland areas include*:

- Pentland Hills
- Hills of Cromdale
- Campsie Fells
- Dartmoor
- Peak District
- North York Moors
- Bannau Brycheiniog/Brecon Beacons
- Cambrian Mountains
- Sperrins
- Slieve Bloom Mountains

*This list is not exhaustive and there are many more areas across the UK and Ireland that are considered appropriate terrain.



Quality Hill Day

A 'Quality Hill Day' for the Hill and Moorland Leader should take place in hill and moorland terrain in the UK or Ireland.

The quality element lies in such things as the conditions experienced both overhead and underfoot, the exploration of new areas, the terrain covered, the skills deployed and the physical and mental challenge. The experience of a quality day should contribute to knowledge, personal development and associated skill acquisition.

All the following criteria should be fulfilled:

- The individual takes part in the planning and leadership.
- An unfamiliar locality is explored.
- Navigation skills are required.
- Knowledge is increased and relevant skills practised.
- Judgement and decision making is required.
- Four hours or more journey time.

These criteria mean that days as a course member under instruction, a member of a group practising skills, or days spent repeating familiar routes are very unlikely to meet the requirements of a quality day.

Summer and winter conditions

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

'Winter conditions' can be defined as the time when snow and ice prevail, and travel requires the skills and equipment required to cope with the special hazards of winter conditions. Mountain Training Scotland's Winter Mountain Leader scheme provides specific training and assessment for winter conditions in the hills and mountains of the UK and Ireland.

Neither term can be defined by a portion of the year i.e. 'summer conditions' can prevail during the winter months; likewise it is possible, especially in high mountain areas of Scotland, for extensive snow and ice, and hence 'winter conditions', to prevail well into summer.



Poor visibility/darkness

The terms 'poor visibility' and/or 'darkness' are used to describe situations where an individual's line of sight i.e. how far they can see, may be limited by weather (e.g. mist/low cloud, heavy driving rain), environment (e.g. plantation woodland, complex rolling terrain) and/or time of day (e.g. night time).

Any combination of any or all of these can severely restrict a person's line of sight requiring specialist navigation skills to navigate their journey safely and efficiently. Nighttime alone does not in and of itself equate to darkness. During the summer months in Scotland, assuming clear skies, it never really gets dark. Likewise in clear weather with a full moon it is unlikely to be dark enough to warrant reliance on specialist navigational techniques and skills.





Appendix 2 - Additional information

Leadership experience

Days spent leading groups, including peer groups, are valuable experience and can be counted as quality hill and moorland days as long as they meet the quality day criteria, which includes making decisions for the group, and do not repeat routes. This experience often pays dividends at assessment.

Days assisting a more experienced leader are also very valuable but do not count as quality days (and should be logged separately). Whilst you are assisting a leader, they are the one ultimately making the judgements and decisions and having overall responsibility; you may be picking up tips about how to manage groups but your personal abilities will not be being stretched.

Overseas experience

Whilst overseas experience can be useful as an indication of breadth of experience, these days, if used as part of your logged 'quality days', should be in similar terrain and conditions to those found in the UK and Ireland to be truly relevant as preparation for assessment.

Experience gained in areas other than the UK and Ireland can be recorded if undertaken in similar conditions.

The majority of your experience however, at least 50% of the minimum requirements, should be in the UK or Ireland.

Course delivery

Mountain Training courses are delivered by approved providers throughout the UK and Ireland. Providers of Hill and Moorland Leader courses will appoint a course director for each course.

Courses can be found by searching on the Candidate Management System (CMS) <https://mt.tahdah.me> or on our website <http://www.mountain-training.org/find/find-a-course>.

Your training and assessment result will be recorded on the Candidate Management System (CMS).



Exemption from training

Candidates who have completed Mountain Leader training do not need to apply for exemption from Hill and Moorland Leader training. You will still need to register for the qualification and book a Hill and Moorland Leader assessment.

Candidates who have not attended a training course and already have substantial personal experience in lowland terrain as well as experience in the leadership of groups may apply for exemption from training. To qualify for exemption candidates must, at the very least, meet the minimum experience requirements for attendance at an assessment course. They should also have at least two years recent experience of leading groups in lowland areas of the UK and Ireland.

Further details of the exemption process can be found on the Mountain Training website.

There is no exemption from assessment.

Further experience

Once you have passed Hill and Moorland Leader assessment you are responsible for remaining current and up to date with good practice for as long as you are using your qualification. Mountain Training would like to encourage you to regularly dedicate some time to your development both as a walker and as a Lowland Leader.

According to the Health and Safety Executive there are four ways to demonstrate the competence of leaders. These are:

- to hold the relevant qualification
- to hold an equivalent qualification
- to have received appropriate in-house training
- to be competent through experience

Mountain Training endorses this view, while emphasising that nationally recognised qualifications are the key components in such an approach. Remaining current and competent can be achieved in various ways, one of which is to join an association.

The Mountain Training Association is a membership association designed to support both trainee and qualified candidates by providing access to developmental workshops, conferences and peer learning events among other member benefits.



Mountain Training

Association

Our association is a membership organisation that can help you as you work towards one of our qualifications.

As a membership association we are building a community of confident and expert leaders, instructors and coaches, that we hope you will join.

We can help you with:

- Big savings on clothing and equipment
- A wide range of accredited development workshops, events and opportunities for continuing personal/professional development
- Specialist mentoring for your qualification
- Regional networks and opportunities to build connections with others in the sector
- The Professional Mountaineer magazine offering advice, tips and guidance from experts and peers within the profession
- Specially negotiated rates for liability insurance for qualified members

Anyone can join from the moment they register for a Mountain Training qualification, and can join anytime when working towards a qualification or when qualified.

Join via your account on the Mountain Training Candidate Management System (Tahdah – CMS).

“The workshops I’ve done have been brilliant and have definitely made me a better leader” Alex, Association member.

“The Association offers an excellent range of CPD, which has given me a broader understanding of the role, skills and expertise required to be a great leader. Definitely recommend.” Charlie, Association member.