

**Winter Mountaineering and Climbing Instructor**

**Skills Checklist**

**Introduction**

This skills checklist is designed to enable you, as a Winter Mountaineering and Climbing 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 Winter Mountaineering and Climbing Instructor candidate handbook. In addition, the Mountain Training publications – “Rock Climbing” and “Winter Skills” – detail many of the techniques that might be used by a Winter Mountaineering and Climbing Instructor 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 Winter Mountaineering and Climbing Instructor.

**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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| **Competencies (the syllabus)** |
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| **1. Personal Skills** | **Learning stage** | **Notes** |
| 1.1 Demonstrate safe and assured leadership on multi-pitch snow and ice climbs up to Grade III. |  |  |
| 1.2. Demonstrate efficient movement over all types of mountain terrain. |  |  |
| 1.3. Have a theoretical and practical understanding of snow and avalanche conditions. |  |  |
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| **2. Winter Mountaineering Instruction** | **Learning stage** | **Notes** |
| 2.1. Instruct all elements of winter navigation. |  |  |
| 2.2 Structure teaching sessions and give demonstrations of appropriate techniques in all aspects of the basic winter mountaineering skills. |  |  |
| 2.3 Demonstrate and instruct the use of standard equipment such as an ice axe, crampons and belay devices. |  |  |
| 2.4 Understand the limitations of winter camp craft and the use of alternative methods, planned and emergency. |  |  |
| 2.5 Demonstrate the technical skills required to safeguard a party on difficult terrain, including the use of short-rope techniques as appropriate. |  |  |
| 2.6 Demonstrate the ability to select a suitable route, given the ability and aspirations of the party and the likely weather and conditions. |  |  |
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| **3. Winter Climbing Instruction** | **Learning stage** | **Notes** |
| 3.1. Demonstrate safe and assured leadership on multi-pitch winter climbs up to Grade III. |  |  |
| 3.2 Supervise and control a party in descent or retreat from winter climbs or steep and broken ground. |  |  |
| 3.3 Select a suitable winter climb, taking into account the ability and aspirations of the party and the likely weather and conditions. |  |  |
| 3.4 Provide safe and enjoyable instruction on winter climbs up to Grade III. |  |  |
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| **4. National Qualifications** | **Learning stage** | **Notes** |
| 4.1 Where appropriate, instruct and assess on Winter Mountain Leader courses. |  |  |

**Appendix:**

**Assessment requirements**

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

The **minimum** requirements during this period are:

* 10 days in the mountains managing parties in winter conditions
* 5 days climbing experience at Grade III or above
* A valid first aid certificate

The Winter Mountaineering and Climbing Instructor assessment is 4 days long.

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| A black and grey text  Description automatically generated | **Winter Mountaineering and Climbing Instructor** **ACTION PLAN** |
| What is the timescale for doing your assessment? |  |
| How many quality mountain days as a leader in sole charge of a group have you completed? After training and prior to assessment you must have a minimum of 10 days in the mountains managing parties in winter conditions. |  |
| How many winter climbing days have you completed? After training and prior to assessment you must have completed a minimum of 5 days climbing experience at Grade III or above. |  |
| Which syllabus areas do you feel most confident in? |  |
| Which syllabus areas require further practice? |  |
| What opportunities can you foresee for gaining experience to develop your Winter Mountaineering and Climbing Instructor skillset? |  |
| Given your answers to the above, briefly outline your way forward for becoming a Winter Mountaineering and Climbing Instructor, including workshops, additional courses, shadowing and mentoring. |  |