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**Abseil Module**

**Skills checklist**

**Introduction**

This skills checklist is designed to enable you, as an Abseil Module 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 Abseil Module candidate handbook. In addition the Mountain Training publication – “Rock Climbing” – details many of the techniques that might be used by an instructor when abseiling 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** | | | | |
| Instructors who have passed the Abseil Module will be able to identify and evaluate commonly used top-roping and abseiling equipment and demonstrate its use to individuals during a top-roping/abseil session. They will be personally competent in a range of indoor climbing techniques used in top-roping and abseiling sessions and be able to provide clear demonstration and effective tuition to novice climbers. They will be able to: | | | | |
| **1 Equipment** | **Learning stage** | | **Notes** | |
| 1.1. Select and fit suitable climbing equipment for top-roping and abseiling. |  | |  | |
| 1.2. Demonstrate an ability to evaluate the condition of personal abseiling equipment and ensure appropriate use, care and maintenance in line with manufacturer’s guidance. |  | |  | |
| 1.3. Demonstrate an ability to evaluate the condition of climbing wall equipment and ensure appropriate use of: |  | |  | |
| 1.3.1. In-situ ropes. |  | |  | |
| 1.3.2. Anchors/lower offs and fixed equipment. |  | |  | |
|  | | | | |
| **2 Personal safety** | **Learning stage** | | **Notes** | |
| 2.1. Demonstrate appropriate methods of protecting themselves while operating at height during all activities. |  | |  | |
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| **3 Belaying** | **Learning stage** | | **Notes** | |
| 3.1 Tie into the rope. Attach group members to the rope with an without a karabiner. |  | |  | |
| 3.2 Demonstrate the use of indirect and direct belay systems at the tope of a climbing wall, and choose the most appropriate for a given situation. |  | |  | |
| 3.3 Set up top-rope systems and choose the most appropriate for a given situation. |  | |  | |
| 3.4 Hold falls and control lowers. |  | |  | |
| 3.5 Supervise others belaying. |  | |  | |
| 3.6 Attach self and others to the belay system and abseil ropes. |  | |  | |
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| **4 Abseiling** | **Learning stage** | | **Notes** | |
| 4.1 Abseil without requiring a back-up safety rope. |  | |  | |
| 4.2 Demonstrate methods of safeguarding a novice abseiling. |  | |  | |
| 4.3 Utilise belay points for both abseil and safety ropes. |  | |  | |
| 4.4 Use common devices for abseiling competently and choose the most appropriate for a given situation. |  | |  | |
| 4.5 Demonstrate techniques for managing the safety of participants at the top of walls. |  | |  | |
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| **Management and decision making** | | | | |
| Instructors who have passed the Abseil Module should be able to independently organise, plan, manage and deliver top-roping and/or abseiling sessions to a wide range of participants, from novices to experienced climbers, often with support from an assistant. They should be able to: | | | | |
| **5 Leadership and decision-making** | **Learning stage** | | **Notes** | |
| 5.1 Demonstrate adaptable leadership behaviours and decision-making. |  | |  | |
|  | | | | |
| **6. Managing/supervising other staff** | | **Learning stage** | **Notes** | |
| 6.1 Describe the role and scope of an assistant. Describe the opportunities and liabilities presented by using an assistant in a session. | |  |  | |
| 6.2 Manage an assistant. | |  |  | |
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| **7. Knowledge and demonstration of techniques** | | **Learning stage** | | **Notes** |
| 7.1. Deliver technical abseiling instruction to individuals and the group. | |  | |  |
|  | | | | |
| **8. Hazards and emergency procedures** | | **Learning stage** | | **Notes** |
| 8.1 Manage the safety of those arriving at the top of a wall. | |  | |  |
| 8.2 Avoid common abseiling and top-roping problems. | |  | |  |
| 8.3 Deal with common abseiling and top-roping problems if they occur. | |  | |  |
|  | |  | |  |
| **Teaching and learning skills** | | | | |
| Climbing Wall Instructors will frequently need to give tuition and support to a range of climbers from novices to experienced practitioners in basic top-roping and/or abseiling techniques. They should be able to: | | | | |
| **9. Teaching and learning skills** | | **Learning stage** | | **Notes** |
| 9.1 Demonstrate an ability to adapt the teaching style to meet group needs. | |  | |  |
| 9.2 Identify and use appropriate tasks to develop safe group activity. | |  | |  |
| 9.3 Demonstrate an understanding of the reasons for evaluating a session and success of the outcome. | |  | |  |

**Appendix:**

**Assessment requirements**

Before you book onto an Abseil Module assessment, make sure you have done the following:

* You must have attended an Abseil Module training course.
* You must have passed the Climbing Wall Instructor assessment.
* You must have observed or assisted on a minimum of 5 abseil/top-rope sessions.