

CLIMBING WALL AWARD

REMIT, SYLLABUS AND PROSPECTUS

1 REMIT

The scheme is for climbers who are in a position of responsibility when supervising climbing activities on indoor or outdoor climbing walls and towers. This includes a wide range of structures utilised for these activities which will be referred to throughout these introductory notes as 'walls'. It is primarily concerned with ensuring good practice, leading to the safe enjoyment of climbing activities, and to an understanding of the sport. It covers the supervision and management of activities such as bouldering, the teaching of basic movement skills and roped climbing, excluding the teaching of leading. Completion of a training course alone, without passing the assessment course, should not be considered as a qualification in itself, although it may be of considerable personal benefit to the trainee.

An additional module is available for those candidates who wish to supervise abseiling and top-roping activities on those walls which have secure top access.

This scheme has been designed to provide a level of basic competence for those who are in a position of responsibility during climbing activities at walls. Whilst the award does include a measure of personal competence it is not designed as such a programme, and should not be used as either an entry requirement or measure of suitability for individuals who wish to climb on climbing walls.

It is valid throughout the UK.

For the purposes of this scheme, a climbing wall is:

- An artificial structure, designed for the purpose of being used for climbing activities (this includes towers and mobile climbing walls)
- Indoors or outdoors
- A structure which has safety equipment such as top anchors in place and is maintained through a management regime

It is the duty of the employer or organising authority to decide whether a leader possesses the personal attributes needed to take responsibility for the appropriate care and management of participants and for ensuring that Child Protection requirements are met. It is the combination of technical skills, breadth of experience and personal qualities that form the basis for effective supervision. This scheme assesses the technical skills and experience; the employer or organising authority must gauge the personal qualities.

It will be the responsibility of the employer or organising authority to develop management strategies if wishing to deploy Award Holders beyond the terms of this remit.

The scheme does not cover:

- The rock climbing skills needed to climb and / or supervise others on natural crags (these are covered in the Single Pitch Award scheme)
- Multi-pitch rock climbing skills
- The teaching, or supervision, of leading
- The gauging of candidates' personal qualities.
- A Criminal Records Bureau check

If you are in doubt about a particular venue then members of the Association of Mountaineering Instructors or the British Mountain Guides or the officers of Mountain Leader Training are the appropriate people to approach for advice.

2 PROSPECTUS

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The numbers of individuals who are introduced to climbing on an artificial structure has expanded enormously in recent years. MLTUK and its constituent bodies, in consultation with many interested parties, have devised the Climbing Wall Award to seek to ensure that high standards of supervision are maintained, safety techniques are inculcated and that participants are coached in such a way that both enjoyment and safety are enhanced whilst personal abilities are developed. High standards of supervision and organisation are best achieved through breadth of experience, personal qualities, quality training and rigorous validation.

2.2 STAGES IN THE SCHEME

Progress through the basic scheme is composed of:

- Registration (with MLTE / MLTNI / MLTS / MLTW), if necessary joining a mountaineering council or an affiliated mountaineering or climbing club and being issued with a personal logbook
- Fulfilling experience requirements for attendance on training
- Attending a training course of a minimum of 12 hours direct contact time

- Undertaking a consolidation period between training and assessment**
- Attending, and passing, an assessment course of a minimum of 6 hours duration.
- Continuing experience entered in logbook

Should candidates wish to undertake the top-roping/abseiling module they should:

- Have completed module 1 training prior to attending module 2 training
- Attend a further training course of 4 hours direct contact time
- Undertake a further consolidation period**
- Have completed the assessment of module 1 prior to attending assessment for module 2
- Attend and pass a minimum 2 hour assessment course.

** (This consolidation is highly recommended for all but the most experienced of candidates)

2.3 REGISTRATION

Candidates wishing to register with the Award should:

- Have a genuine interest in climbing and the supervision of groups on climbing walls
- Have at least 6 months experience of using a variety of climbing walls.
- Be not less than 17 years of age at the date of registration. Candidates may undertake training after their 17th birthday but may not attend an assessment course until after their 18th birthday.
- Be an individual or club member (of an affiliated club) of a Mountaineering Council.

Candidates should allow fifteen working days for their application for registration to be processed and returned.

On receipt of the registration form and appropriate fee, MLTE / MLTNI / MLTS / MLTW will issue a logbook. Candidates' personal details will be recorded and progression through the scheme will be detailed on the MLTUK Database.

2.4 TRAINING

Before attending a training course, candidates must be registered with the Climbing Wall Award (CWA) (see 1.4 above). They must be 17 years of age or older. Candidates must have at least 6 months climbing experience and have climbed at three different walls on at least 15 different occasions; this must include at least one major public wall. They should have led routes on walls. They should have an understanding of the wider sport of climbing and ideally have climbed outdoors

Training courses are run by approved providers (full list available from MLTE / MLTNI / MLTS / MLTW websites), and will normally be run over a period of time involving a minimum of 12 hours contact time for the first module. Contact time for the second (abseiling) module is a minimum of 4 hours. Training courses will be run with a minimum of four candidates and a maximum of twelve. The maximum trainer/candidate ratio is 1:6. Larger courses have varied benefits: the varied experience of the candidates enables an interchange of ideas, enables individual to see how their own skills compare to others and they will also benefit from the opinion of two trainers.

The training course is for potential group supervisors and assumes basic competence as a climber with experience of leading climbs (see Experience Requirements). It will emphasise those skills which candidates might have difficulty in learning without expert guidance. A few minor aspects of the syllabus may not be covered during the training course and candidates are expected to deal with these items themselves.

The Director of Training will give oral comments to each candidate and will endorse the training course report page of the logbook with comments about the programme, walls used and situations encountered. Candidates will receive individual recommendations for the consolidation period. The training course does not involve any written reports concerning the performance or standard of candidates. An approved sticker will be put on the endorsement page of the logbook by the Director of Training and will show the date and course provider number specific to your trainer. In exceptional circumstances it may be possible to register on, or immediately after, the course, but the trainer is obliged to submit a report to MLTE / MLTNI / MLTS / MLTW containing all registered candidates' details within a limited time of the course end. Should candidates not have presented their registration details by that time then their attendance on the training course will not be entered on their candidate record.

Candidates are encouraged to use the skills checklist provided in their logbook to evaluate their current skills and to plan, with their trainers, their particular route towards assessment.

2.5 LOGBOOK

Experience gained by candidates should be recorded in the logbook. Entries should be concise, easily read and should include all rock climbing and other relevant experience.

The logbook is divided into five sections:

- Personal details, contents and endorsement pages
- Course reports and personal profile
- Personal and group leading experience
- Experience requirements, definitions, sample pages and skills checklist
- Additional training information

The logbook is designed to help candidates demonstrate previous experience to others. Candidates **must** fill it in before a training course to enable trainers to discuss particular needs and to agree which areas of the syllabus candidates need to concentrate on before presenting themselves for assessment. Few of us can remember every time we have gone climbing or visited a climbing wall, but this is no reason to avoid using the logbook. Candidates should list a variety of experiences gained, and give details of the most notable sessions. The information given does not have to be verified by a third party but will form the basis for discussion at training and be part of the assessment.

2.6 CONSOLIDATION PERIOD

Candidates will generally see new ideas and techniques during training and will therefore need some time to practise and evaluate these before attending an assessment. During this period of consolidation, candidates are advised to climb at as wide a range of venues as possible, both as an individual and when assisting with the supervision of others. MLTE / MLTNI / MLTS / MLTW recommend that all but the most experienced candidates allow a *minimum of three months* between training and assessment. There is currently no time limit on the validity of a training course.

2.7 ASSESSMENT

Before attending an assessment course, candidates must:

- Have registered with one of the Boards for the CWA scheme
- Be at least 18 years of age
- Have attended a training course or been granted exemption from training and have the relevant training page in their logbook
- In the case of those attending an abseiling module assessment they should have the relevant pass page for level one and a level two training page

- Have gained the relevant further experience (see Experience Requirements)
- Be proficient in the use of a wide variety of climbing walls
- Have recorded a minimum of 30 visits to at least three different climbing walls
- Additionally, have assisted a qualified supervisor on at least 15 instructional sessions on at least two different walls including a large public facility. This should include a variety of groups and objectives.
- Hold a valid First Aid Certificate

During the assessment course, candidates will be tested in accordance with the syllabus requirements. The assessment is run by MLT approved providers.

The minimum contact time for those undertaking the first module assessment is 6 hours; minimum contact time for the abseiling module assessment is 2 hours. Assessors work on a ratio of 1:4 (minimum 1:2). The overall course size may range from two candidates to eight. Larger courses can have some benefits; allowing for a wider interchange of ideas and experience which may provide individuals with better opportunities for comparing skills. On larger courses each candidate will receive the opinion of two assessors.

The Director of Assessment will endorse the logbook in one of three ways:

PASS: where satisfactory knowledge and application of the syllabus and the necessary experience, skills, knowledge and attributes were demonstrated.

DEFER: where the performance was generally up to standard but complete proficiency was not attained in some aspects of the syllabus. Some form of re-assessment will be required. Where an appropriate First Aid qualification is not produced the candidate will be deferred until such time as they can produce a current, and acceptable, First Aid certificate.

FAIL: where the performance has been generally weak, or the necessary experience and attributes have not been shown. Further training may be recommended before another complete assessment is taken.

In all cases the result will be discussed with candidates and recorded in their logbook (the report page is inserted by the course provider/director). Candidates who are deferred or failed will receive specific written feedback, including an action plan. This will include the reasons for the result, recommendations on the additional experience needed and details of the timing and format for subsequent re-assessment.

In considering the decision of the assessors, candidates are asked to listen to all elements of the final interview and wherever possible to raise any concerns at that time. If, on reflection, the discussion and the written report do not fit your

impression of the assessment and your performance, then contact the course provider/director for additional clarification, in writing if necessary.

2.8 EXEMPTION

Experienced climbers who already have substantial personal climbing experience and experience of supervising groups on climbing walls may apply to MLTE / MLTNI / MLTS / MLTW to be exempted from attendance at a training course. There is no exemption from assessment.

Before applying for exemption, candidates should consider the following points:

- The training course is not a personal skills climbing course. It introduces candidates to the skills necessary for supervising on climbing walls.
- It includes material that might be unfamiliar to even experienced climbers

Candidates applying for exemption should:

- Be registered with the scheme
- Complete an exemption application form
- Submit a copy of the completed logbook experience pages with the exemption application form and fee to MLTE / MLTNI / MLTS / MLTW

Exemption application forms and details of fees are available on request from MLTE / MLTNI / MLTS / MLTW

2.9 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

Mountain Leader Training is committed to promoting equal opportunities for all participants in climbing and mountaineering. Candidates, trainers and assessors should express a positive attitude towards equal opportunities and act as positive role models.

2.10 FIRST AID

Prior to attendance on an assessment course candidates must hold a valid first aid qualification. Courses must involve at least eight hours of instruction, include an element of assessment and cover basic life support and emergency aid.

2.11 COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS PROCEDURE

The CWA scheme is subject to continual monitoring, culminating in a formal review once every four years. Candidates with feedback on their courses are encouraged to submit written comments to the Provider or to their Board.

If for any reason you find it necessary to complain about an aspect of your training or assessment then you should contact the Course Director or the relevant officer within Mountain Leader Training.

If you feel that aspects of your assessment were unfair you should:

- make contact with the Course Provider, explain your concerns and seek clarification.
- if this does not resolve your concerns, contact the Secretary of your board for advice and for details of the appeals procedure. The decision of the board will be final.

3 SYLLABUS (Level One / basic Climbing Wall Award)

3.1 TECHNICAL COMPETENCE

Candidates must demonstrate competence in the following areas:

3.1.1 Equipment

- Identify equipment suitable for personal and group use at any given climbing wall
- Demonstrate an ability to evaluate the condition of equipment and ensure appropriate care and maintenance
- Demonstrate the ability to use climbing wall equipment appropriately

3.1.2 Belaying

- Connect self and others to the rope
- Attach self and others to the belay system
- Demonstrate the use of direct and indirect belays
- Use a variety of different belay techniques/devices competently and choose the most appropriate for a given situation
- Set up bottom rope systems and choose the most appropriate system for a given situation
- Hold falls and carry out lowers
- Supervise others carrying out belaying

3.1.3 Personal Climbing Skills

- Choose and lead routes suited to personal ability
- Move with confidence on appropriate climbs
- Demonstrate a basic understanding of the safety chain

3.1.4 Background Knowledge

- Demonstrate an understanding of:
 - The history, traditions and ethics of UK rock climbing
 - The Home Nation Training Boards and MLTUK
 - The club system and the Mountaineering Councils
 - The development of climbing walls in the UK
 - Competition climbing

3.2 THE CLIMBING WALL ENVIRONMENT

Candidates must demonstrate competence in the following areas:

3.2.1 Using Climbing Walls

- Interpret and use effectively the information given at walls and through other sources of information
- Show an awareness of, and ability to obtain information on and ability to comply with, both general as well as locally important rules and regulations
- Access climbing walls for personal use

3.2.2 Etiquette

- Demonstrate an awareness of responsibilities to the general public, including other facility users and the wider climbing community
- Operate a flexible programme of activities in order to accommodate other site users
- Be aware of the hazards presented to other site users by the actions of a group, and act in such a way that these are minimised
- Demonstrate an awareness of the site-specific requirements and agreements relating to different climbing walls and artificial structures

3.3 SUPERVISION

Candidates must demonstrate that they are competent to:

3.3.1 Organisation

- Plan both individual sessions and programmes of activities
- Assess the abilities and objectives of the group participating in this plan
- Check underlying aims and the objectives of the event
- Demonstrate an awareness of responsibility to any authorising organisation, parents, individual group members, the group as a whole and other site users
- Demonstrate an understanding of the impact of weather on climbing, if appropriate

- Have built-in flexibility when planning activities in order to respond to changing circumstances
- Know where to find and use basic first aid equipment in the case of an accident or injury and:
 - know how to call for expert help if necessary.

3.3.2 Movement Skills

- Demonstrate an understanding of warming up and injury avoidance techniques
- Demonstrate the use of bouldering activities with groups, including using appropriate games and activities, including setting simple boulder problems
- Coach participants in basic climbing movement skills
- Be able to aid the development of climbing movement skills over a period of time
- Understand the dangers of over-training for different age groups
- Understand the needs of those with physical and mental disabilities and medical conditions

3.3.3 Group Management

- Know a range of appropriate group management strategies and techniques and use them effectively
- Demonstrate the safe and responsible management of all group members irrespective of whether or not they are directly involved in the climbing activity
- Brief individuals and the group appropriately
- Manage the individuals and the group effectively by:
 - Good communication skills
 - Setting and reviewing targets
 - Identifying and reacting to the needs of the group in relation to involvement, interest, enjoyment and achievement
- Supervise a group of novice climbers belaying
- Supervise a group of novice climbers bouldering
- Manage time appropriately in relation to the plan, activity and conditions

3.3.4 Supervising the Session

For bouldering and roped climbing:

- Issue appropriate rock climbing equipment and check correct fitting and use

- Demonstrate an understanding of how to deal with common problems if they occur
- For roped climbing:
- Deliver technical instruction to individuals and the group including:
 - Choice and fitting of suitable harnesses
 - Attaching the rope to the harness
 - Advice, demonstration and coaching on climbing movement
 - Demonstration of effective use of chosen belay device
- Demonstrate an understanding of how to avoid common problems such as a stuck climber

4. SYLLABUS (Module Two: Top access and abseiling)

4.1. Equipment

- Identify equipment suitable for top roping and abseiling at any given climbing wall
- Demonstrate an ability to evaluate the condition of abseiling equipment and ensure appropriate care and maintenance
- Demonstrate the ability to use abseiling equipment appropriately

4.2 Belaying

- Connect self and others to the rope
- Utilise belay systems at the top of a climbing wall
- Attach self and others to the belay system and abseil ropes
- Demonstrate the use of belay techniques
- Use a variety of different belay techniques/devices competently and choose the most appropriate for a given situation
- Set up top rope systems and choose the most appropriate system for a given situation
- Hold falls and carry out lowers
- Manage the safety of those arriving at the top of a wall
- Be aware of potential common problems and their solutions
- Demonstrate an understanding of how to deal with common problems if they occur

4.3 Abseiling

- Utilise belay points for both abseil and safety ropes
- Attach participants to both abseil rope and safety rope
- Be aware of potential common problems and their solutions
- Be aware of techniques for managing the safety of participants at the top of walls

4.4 Management of groups accessing the tops of walls

- Evaluate risks of groups of participants accessing the top of walls
- Select appropriate management techniques to safeguard participants and supervisor(s)